

PRAISE FOR THE MYTH OF NATURAL RIGHTS

Rollins has made hash of the logical connections in Rothbard's argument.

— Robert Anton Wilson, *Natural Law*

An important book, which every reader interested in libertarian theory should acquire.

— Jeff Rigenbach, *New Libertarian*

Rollins does a fabulous job of making fools out of many a libertarian's philosophical heroes.

— Justin Weinberg, *Guillotine*

An argument could be made that a book like this is potentially pretty damn dangerous.

— Pat Hartman, *Salon: A Journal of Aesthetics*

Rollins' brief work is packed with enough analytical insight to send proponents of natural-law theory into hiding.

— Jorge Amador, *The Pragmatist*

The
MYTH
of
NATURAL RIGHTS
and
OTHER ESSAYS

L. A. ROLLINS



NINE-BANDED BOOKS
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The Myth of Natural Rights and Other Essays

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This book is dedicated to the two I love.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 1988 and I had just flunked out of high school. With few prospects and no clue as to what I would do with “my future,” I signed on for back-to-back summer classes. The idea was to belatedly collect my diploma, then buy some time by enrolling at a low-rung state college. I don't remember much about summer school, except that it was grim. I kept a low profile. I took the work seriously enough to secure the requisite marks. There was a lot of down time. So I read.

Two books are nestled up with my recollection of this time. The first was a dog-eared paperback edition of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. I remember it was set in miniscule typeface on age-oxidized high-acid paper. I would read a few pages and my eyes would itch from the strain. But having recently made my first acquaintance with the wily world of libertarianism, I was determined. I was seeking out the

usual rites with the usual sense of pixilated teenage loner-nerd self-importance. Galt's Gulch was an unavoidable stop on that well-trod path.

So I dutifully plowed through Rand's beloved magnum opus. And found myself hating it. The characters were humorless cartoons. The plot was straight-up silly. Even the ideas—the ostensible attraction—were presented with such inelegant, overwrought, didactic insistence as to induce a fugue. Somehow, I couldn't get past that heavyhanded prose, either. I still recall Rand's cloying, tic-like overuse of the term "inexplicable." Irritating.

When the eyestrain got the better of me, or when I had grown tired of being lectured—with all those "inexplicables"—about the self-evident virtues of Rachmaninoff and chain smoking and objectivist epistemology, I would turn to the second book in my summerschool satchel, a bright red Loompanics curio that I borrowed from a friend. That book was *Lucifer's Lexicon*, by L.A. Rollins. Ayn Rand would have hated it.

Styled after Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*, Rollins' book was a strange bird. Where Bierce's acidic wordplay sought to expose the folly of humanity, Rollins'

aphoristic spleen just as often pricked at the reality-challenged pretenses of libertarianism in its various flavors and guises. Real inside stuff. The “libertarian movement” was defined as “a herd of individualists stampeding toward freedom.” A “Randian” was a “Galt-ridden individual.” “Egoism – the only ‘ism’ for me.” I might have chuckled at that last one.

But there was something else about the book. Interlaced with the inside puns and one-liners, there were these digressive currents centering on the vicissitudes of Holocaust revisionism (that’s the term they used back then). At the time, I didn’t know a damn thing about *that* intellectual powder-keg. All I knew was that a TV miniseries had scared the shit out of me when I was a kid. Yet there it was. It seemed at times as though Rollins was in the revisionist camp himself. At other times, he seemed to hold revisionists out for wicked ridicule. I don’t know if it occurred to me that this might not signal a contradiction. I just couldn’t get a fix on it. I knew it was a huge subject. I knew what I was supposed to think. I let it go.

Anyways. After I said good riddance to Rand and shelved the *Lexicon*, I sent off a 7-11 money order and soon received

a copy of Rollins' earlier book, *The Myth of Natural Rights*. There I discovered a somewhat different voice—that of a working-class scholar. An accidental iconoclast. Rollins' bristling wit was on display, but restrained in the service of a more focused argument. I read *The Myth*, right on the heels of Rand and Rothbard, and I never really looked back. At least not through the same lens. In the wake of Rollins' shrewd work, those Aristotelian circularities tasted like stale beer. And daddy Rothbard's pronouncements from on high reeked of nature-faking flummery. It was one of those books. Deceptively simple. You couldn't unthink it.

I still voted for Andre Marrou. Chalk it up to habit. If I were serious, I suppose I could have become a lobbyist.

Years went by and I never heard much more about L.A. Rollins. Occasionally, I would see his satirical definitions tucked in the pages of obscure zines, soon to be forgotten. I spotted his byline in Pat Hartman's defunct journal *Salon* (not to be confused with the ad-laden webzine), where he was again trading zetetic riffs on the Holocaust bugaboo. Interesting. But no more books. I may have wondered what happened.

Around the time I was struggling to get *Nine-Banded*

Books off the ground, I found myself re-reading *The Myth of Natural Rights*. By this time I no longer gave much thought to libertarian metaphysics, but I found that the book held up well. After more than two decades, it still seemed marginally important. I went online to see if Rollins hosted a website. He didn't. After a few minutes of searching, I found an archived discussion thread where some old-school libertarians asserted that Rollins had gone off the deep-end—that he had become some kind of self-styled crypto-Nazi. Or something. I wondered if it might be true.

It wasn't, though I can't say that I cared. Loompanics had folded, and I didn't like the idea that L.A. Rollins' work would be left for dust. I wanted to republish *The Myth*, or at least to try. I had no idea how to contact the man, but I was in close touch with Bradley Smith, author of the first Nine-Banded Book, *The Man Who Saw His Own Liver*. Bradley knew Rollins from way back. He said he'd see what he could do. And so, after running the idea past Lou—that's the "L" in L.A.—Bradley put us in touch. Soon, a deal was in the offing. This is how it's done, I suppose.

The original idea was to simply re-publish *The Myth*

of Natural Rights, perhaps with a new introduction and afterword. But when I spoke with Lou, he mentioned that he had been knocking off scads of new definitions for an updated edition of *Lucifer's Lexicon*. Maybe some of those could go in? I asked him about the Holocaust stuff and he mentioned that he had written a piece for Sam Konkin's long defunct *New Libertarian* magazine—something critical of revisionism. Maybe that could go in as well?

So Lou began sending me the material. Loads of it. In overstuffed double-stamped white envelopes, almost all of it in longhand (he isn't online and doesn't own a computer). It was more than padding. There was enough new *Lexicon* material to justify a sequel. There was a deliciously bellicose bit of fatwa-bait called "An Open Letter to Allah." There were satirical verses and old essays from dodgy newsletters. Not all of it would make it in, but before long it was clear that the project had morphed into a collection. *The Myth* would retain top billing, but you want to give the kids their money's worth. As L.A. Rollins is fond of saying, *make the most of it*.

Of course, there was help along the way. There were folks who provided new content or who came through when I

was scouring to verify obscure sources. Folks who offered encouragement and editorial assistance. Blurbs and permissions and free press. I want to thank them.

First and foremost, I want to thank Bradley Smith for setting things in motion. I want to thank TGGP for contributing a sharp and insightful new introduction to *The Myth of Natural Rights*. I want to thank Joseph Clagg for designing the cover. I want to thank Mike Hoy for allowing us to reprint the original Loompanics promotional copy for *The Myth*. I want to thank my wife, Erin, for assisting with the transcription. And of course, I want to thank L.A. Rollins for everything.

I also want to acknowledge a number of other hominids who helped, whether they know it or not. My special thanks go to Michael A. Hoffman II, Pat Hartman, Victor Koman, Richard Widmann, Jonathan Price, Adam Parfrey, Charliqua X. Shabazz Elijah Jefferson Krafft, Aschwin de Wolf, Julie Herrada, Alex Kasavin, Jim Crawford, Kevin Slaughter, Andy Nowicki, Paul Bingham, Jack Malebranche, Peter Sotos, and David E. Williams.

Chip Smith
August 2008

PART I

THE

MYTH OF

NATURAL

RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION
AGAINST THE LAW

IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU WANT. If you want to understand what Jefferson was thinking, read Locke. If you want to know how the modern libertarian movement got started, go ahead and wade through your Rand and Rothbard, or pick and choose from the wrecking yard of less benighted luminaries. It's a safe ritual, and not without rewards.

On the other hand, if at some point you should wish to cut through all that carefully guarded architecture to see how the fragile edifice of libertarian ethics holds up under critical scrutiny, you can do no better than L.A. Rollins' short and shrewdly reasoned monograph, *The Myth of Natural Rights*. First published in 1983 by the late, great Loompanics Unlimited, it remains an essential touchstone for those who take their shibboleths with a shaker of salt.

A cursory review of the literature relating to "natural law"

or “natural rights” is certain to reveal countless references to nonsense-peddler Jeremy Bentham’s sharply tuned phrase “nonsense on stilts,” but the most dedicated student must scour the footnotes to find a single citation of this deceptively slim explosion of the central tenet of modern libertarian theory.

No, you won’t encounter the name “L.A. Rollins” in any philosophy course. He holds no academic position and has no acolytes to push his ideas into the ivory tower. Though he edited the marginally influential individualist journal *Invictus* for the better part of a decade and has written for the flagship libertarian magazine, *Reason*, Rollins remains *persona non grata* in the demimonde of cerebrally nuanced libertarianism.

This is a shame. Because for all its two-fisted truculence and bluster, *The Myth of Natural Rights* is perhaps the most important work on the subject to date. In a few concise and precise turns, Rollins soundly reduces hallowed libertarian axioms to phlogistons. Reading *The Myth* is like discovering that rare gadget that lives up to the infomercial hype. It renders every precedent text obsolete.

Without giving the game away, it is perhaps better to

start out by saying what natural rights are *not* than what they are. If one were to begin a sentence with the phrase “natural rights are,” that sentence would already be false. Natural rights are *not*. That they do not exist is the blunt thesis of *The Myth*. Natural rights are the tooth-fairies of political philosophy, claiming no more substance than the epiphenomenal gremlins inhabiting Daniel Dennett’s car engine. Despite the carefully parsed semantic rigging, a “natural right” is nowhere to be found in nature, and unlike an actual legal or customary right, it confers no protection upon its claimant.

In their smug overconfidence, many exponents of this curious doctrine cast themselves as disinterested researchers who have “discovered” a pluperfect system of “natural laws” in some rarefied “science of liberty.” The difference, of course, is that rocket science, done properly, results in actual rockets.

Steering past vast thickets of rhetorical buncombe, it soon becomes apparent that the metaphysical claims extolled by natural lawyers merit as much admiration as one might reserve for Wernher von Braun had he simply set aside his slide-rule and said “Hey, wouldn’t it be great if we

could go to the moon?”

Properly understood, natural rights are metaphors aping existent things. Or, stated differently, their existence—if the term may be allowed—is merely and necessarily metaphorical. This is the most salient point in *The Myth*, and Rollins hammers it to great effect. These dogma-drunk scholars who claim to have “discovered” something about the world in which we live are shown not to inform, but to delude. They do not know; they merely wish.

A false statement, like “ $0=1$,” when permitted in mathematics allows one to prove anything one wishes. Similarly, permitting these purveyors of falsehood to claim their arbitrary and imaginary rights as metaphysically deducible axioms leads to myriad bogus results trajecting in every contradictory direction one cares or dares to imagine. Under the yoke of natural rights, various parties may trumpet their sundry demands on others with neither the means nor the authority to enforce their compliance. Rollins shows this structure of “rights” to be without any real foundation. And that which lacks foundation must inevitably collapse.

Natural rights theory finds its origin in the ideas of

medieval scholastics who thought that through reason they could elucidate God's will over His subjects. During the Enlightenment, the idea of divinely endowed rights would assume new currency with Protestant thinkers, among whom we may count the Deists, who sought transcendent justification for their cherished liberal ideals. Thus we come to see how malleable is this metaphysician's elixir, which can be custom-fitted to suit the vested interests of a modern liberal social order just as well as those of the illiberal Middle Ages.

In view of G.E Moore's explication of the naturalistic fallacy, one might have expected ethical philosophers to stop churning out such circular appeals. But then one would be operating under the assumption that ethical philosophers were vested with an interest in actual progress, in which case they could get jobs doing something more productive than boring students and playing incestuous word games with other philosophers. In the context of abstract philosophical disputation, logical flaws and vague, meaningless babble can slide with little or no immediate consequence. Errors and mistakes do not blow up in one's face as engineering flaws do.

It distills to basic economics: when there is no cost to laziness and incompetence, you get a lot of it. And so, emboldened by their safely fortified arrogance, natural law gurus are thus free to coast on their reputations and take easy comfort in verbally bloated soap bubbles without overmuch concern. And if some reclusive morality-mocking pariah calls them on their shuck and jive, who's going to notice?

Though the torch of natural rights rhetoric would eventually be passed on to fire-breathing atheist libertarians, at its core the doctrine has remained essentially religious in character. As such, it is deftly exposed by Rollins, who, like his amoralist-egoist forebear, Max Stirner, reveals the atheist "freethinkers" of his day to be God-intoxicated men in masquerade. The difference between Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* and Rollins' *Myth* is that the former is more deeply animated by the author's iconoclastic *elan* than by the rigorous strictures of analytical discourse. Where Stirner was mirthfully content to spin logomachian webs and toss Young Hegelianisms at Young Hegelians, Rollins sets out not to declare his defiance toward an impotent God, but to carefully deprive believers of their deity. And Rollins' act

of Deicide is accomplished in cutting measures, without pomp or apologies or safe humanistic palliatives.

Theists and atheists alike may recoil from the “amoralist” stance that Rollins adopts in the absence of rational appeal to transcendent moral verities, and Rollins’ unrepentant flirtation with full-on nihilism won’t be the only morsel to stick in the craw of some readers. For others the line will be drawn around Rollins’ altogether unnecessary, show-stopping declaration that he is a skeptic of “the Holocaust in general and the six million Jews supposedly killed by the Nazis in particular.” Though he briefly implicates Hitler for his tacit appeal to something like a natural right to enslave conquered peoples, Rollins’ casual dalliance with the most unseemly currents of contemporary crimethink will be enough to jar the sensibilities of many readers—readers who are constitutionally incapable of seeing beyond the neo-Nazi cartoon afterimages. Similarly, Rollins’ attack on Rothbard’s argument against race-based slavery could be read to imply covert support for the peculiar institution.

If such pronouncements linger in your mind strongly enough to poison the well, so be it. Run for the hills if you must. Because it is to Rollins’ ultimate credit that he

does not sugarcoat his message or attempt to associate his intellectual reputation with anything most libertarians would look upon with favor. Had he set out to present himself as a likable and agreeable sort of person, he might have sought the auspices of ISI or Cato, or some other influence-peddling think tank. But Rollins refuses to don the good guy badge. His iconoclasm is universal acid. Nothing is sacred.

It may strike some as ironic that Rollins reserves his most strident attacks for those who, like him, call themselves “egoists” while proponents of more altruistic ethics—exemplified by Robert LeFevre—are cited with approval. But there are reasons. Randian “egoists,” having decided it is in their interest to bind others with moral proscriptions, hastily set about flim-flamming their votaries into thinking they have no choice if they are to act rationally in pursuit of their own ends. This tactic stands in contradistinction to LeFevre’s stance, which, out of selfless commitment to a moral code justified by nothing other than its own goodness, remains philosophically exposed to the unbound predations of the amoralist.

If Randian “egoists” recognize that their preferred ethical

system rests on simple self-interest, Rollins turns this justification upside-down by showing how their vaunted “right to life” must lead to man’s self-sacrifice and death. (By beating the Randians at their own game, Rollins betters Sidney Parker’s deft unpacking of Ragnar Redbeard’s *Might is Right*, whose bombastic power philosophy Parker reduces to comic spirals of self-contradictory moralizing.)

For the altruist, the choice between egoism and preferential morality has already been decided in favor of the latter, and so it is to the “ethical egoist” that this combination must be shown to be incompatible. Rand and her followers are thus revealed as “bleeding-heart libertarians.” No better than the liberals they mock.

It is likely that most readers of *The Myth* are going to be libertarians. Upon finishing, such readers will have a number of options before them. They may insist that Rollins is simply wrong and that the doctrine of natural law remains somehow unscathed. Considering the persistence of creationism, this would not be an unprecedented response to good evidence and argument. Alternately, they may claim that Rollins’ critique does not take proper account of moral justifications marshaled under the mantle of

utilitarianism or argumentation-ethics, though this would probably be uncommon since it would mean shedding the last tethers of moral absolutism. They could abandon their commitment to libertarianism—and perhaps ideology altogether—adopting something akin to Jeffrey Friedman’s more skeptical “post-libertarianism.” Or they could push for an amoral contractarianism such as that suggested by Benjamin Tucker or David Gauthier. Surely, there are yet other options. Binge drinking, perhaps?

Whatever they do, one thing is certain. It will violate nobody’s natural rights.

TGGP,
March 2008

Since late Neolithic times men in their political capacity have lived almost exclusively by myths.

— James J. Martin

1

ONE OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL MYTHS of the modern age has been the myth of “natural rights,” the myth of rights with which human beings are supposedly endowed by nature. This myth was enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence as well as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. And although the myth has lost much of its power during the last two centuries, it nevertheless survives and in some regions even flourishes—in the fevered imaginations of contemporary libertarians, for instance.

“Natural rights”—variously referred to as “man’s rights,” “the rights of man,” “human rights,” “individual rights,” “Lockean rights,” or “moral rights”—are rights that people are supposed to possess simply because they are human beings. Or, to put it another way, natural rights are rights that people supposedly possess simply by virtue of their human

nature. Since natural rights are supposedly possessed simply because one is human, such rights are therefore considered to be universal: possessed by all people. Furthermore, they are considered to be inalienable: not subject to being taken away. And, it is held, all people have the same, or equal, natural rights.

The myth of natural rights is an offspring of the related myth of natural law. As Murray Rothbard, “Mr. Libertarian,” puts it, “‘Natural rights’ is the cornerstone of a political philosophy which, in turn, is embedded in a greater structure of natural law.”¹ Similarly, Ronald Cooney sees the notion of natural rights originating in “the Roman Stoic idea of a ‘law above the law,’ of an unwritten law which precedes and is superior to man-made law.”² This “superior” form of law is, of course, the “natural law.” (This “natural law,” it must be emphasized, is a moral law which prescribes how people *ought* to act. It is distinct from scientifically established laws, sometimes called “natural laws,” which describe how natural phenomena regularly *do* act.)

Now what do I mean by calling natural rights “mythical”? Well, just as iconoclastic psychiatrist Thomas Szasz

1 Rothbard, Murray N., *For a New Liberty*, Macmillan, 1973, p. 25.

2 Cooney, Ronald, “Natural Rights,” *The Freeman*, October 1972, p.628

has said that mental illness is mythical and is really a fake or metaphorical illness,³ so I say that natural rights are mythical and are really fake or metaphorical rights. By the same token, I say that natural law is mythical and is really fake or metaphorical law.

The metaphorical nature of natural rights is obvious in many statements by natural rights mythologizers. Consider a few examples. According to Ronald Dworkin, “Individual rights are political trumps held by individuals.”⁴ But will Dworkin’s individual rights *literally* trump the guns held by a bunch of cops enforcing an “unjust” law? Can shrimps whistle? John Hospers writes, “And so I put up a ‘no trespassing’ sign, which marks off the area of my right. Each individual’s right is his ‘no trespassing’ sign in relation to me and others.”⁵ Of course, unlike a real, literal “no trespassing” sign, natural rights are invisible. But what use is an invisible “no trespassing” sign? Another natural rights mythologizer is Eric Mack who says, “Lockean rights alone provide the moral philosophical barrier against the State’s encroachment upon Society.”⁶ But a “moral philo-

3 Szasz, Thomas, *The Myth of Psychotherapy*, Anchor, 1979, p. xv.

4 Dworkin, Ronald, *Taking Rights Seriously*, Harvard University, 1978, p. xi.

5 Hospers, John, *Libertarianism*, reason press, 1971, p. 58

6 Mack, Eric, “Society’s Foe,” *Reason*, September 1976, p. 35.

sophical barrier” is merely a metaphorical barrier, and it will no more prevent the State’s encroachment upon “Society” than a moral philosophical shield will stop an arrow from piercing your body.

But if natural rights are merely fake or metaphorical rights, what then are real rights? Real rights are those rights actually conferred and enforced by the laws of a State or the customs of a social group. Such rights are sometimes called “positive rights.” As Maurice Cranston puts it, “Positive rights are facts. They are what men actually have.”⁷ In short, positive rights are actual, factual rights. Natural rights, by contrast, are rights that supposedly “ought” to be conferred and enforced by law or custom, rights that people supposedly “ought” to have. But, as Jeremy Bentham said, “Right is the child of law; from real laws come real rights, but from imaginary laws, from the ‘laws of nature’ come imaginary rights.”⁸ Thus, natural rights are imaginary rights.

In my view, natural law and natural rights are human *inventions* (not *discoveries*) intended to further the interests

7 Cranston, Maurice, “What are Human Rights?,” *The Human Rights Reader*, edited by Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, New American Library, 1979, p. 17.

8 Bentham, Jeremy, *Anarchical Fallacies*, quoted in Maurice Cranston, *op. cit.*, p. 18

of the inventors. As Laurence Labadie put it, “All theories of ‘rights’ are merely human inventions, used by one party or another in order to enhance, as they think, their ability in getting along in the world.”⁹ It is misleading, therefore, to contrast natural law with man-made law, for natural law is just as surely man-made as any governmental law. The difference is that laws made by government are enforced by the punishment of detected violators by the government while natural laws are not enforced by the punishment of violators by nature. Ironically, this latter point is well made by Robert LeFevre in his essay “Moral Law,” wherein he explains that he is “looking for a natural law.” LeFevre writes:

Here is a man who spends his life cheating, stealing and robbing others. Is there something in nature which decrees that sooner or later he will suffer for his negative and unwanted actions? Studies indicate that there is no natural retaliation. While it may be true that some thieves will suffer; it is equally true that some will not. The miscreant has to protect himself from his outraged neighbors who know of his excesses, but the rain and the sun treat him the same way they treat others. All

⁹ Labadie, Laurence, *Selected Essays*, Ralph Myles, 1978, p. 48.

the laws of nature behave toward the thief exactly as they behave toward his victim.¹⁰

By contrast, Samuel Edward Konkin III will not concede this truth, and so he pompously pontificates:

LeFevre chooses to look at the world from the irrational eyes of the aggressor who wishes to initiate his action and be free of its consequences. I have no intention of faking reality for the violence-initiators. Perhaps he can evade apprehension for his theft or blow as one who jumps [off] a cliff can be wafted away on a strong updraft; but the natural consequence of gravity is falling to one's death and the natural consequence of invasion is restoration.¹¹

Konkin says he has no intention of faking reality, but it looks more like he has no intention of *facing* reality. I have never jumped off a cliff precisely because my experience with jumps from lesser heights leads me to agree that the natural consequence of jumping off a cliff (without something like a hang-glider to break one's descent) is death or at least serious injury. However, I have plenty of experience

10 LeFevre, Robert, "Moral Law," *Rampart Individualist*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 15.

11 Konkin, Samuel Edward, III, "Reply to LeFevre," *Strategy of the New Libertarian Alliance*, No. 1, p. 28.

with “invasion,” both as an invader and an invadee. And I know from that experience that “restoration” is *not* the natural consequence of “invasion.” It was over ten years ago that my cassette recorder with built-in AM/FM radio was stolen from my car which I had foolishly left unlocked while parked in a college parking lot. Under the circumstances, I had not the faintest clue as to who might have stolen it and, thus, no means of getting them to return it. It has not been returned to me to this day. I repeat: restoration is *not* the natural consequence of invasion. Natural law is not enforced by nature.

Since the many different inventors of natural laws and natural rights have had different interests to further, it is not surprising that they have invented a wide variety of different and conflicting natural laws and natural rights. As George H. Smith has written, “In its various manifestations throughout history, natural law theory has been used to justify oligarchy, feudalism, theocracy, and even socialism.”¹² Aristotle, for example, held that some men are slaves “by nature.”¹³ But Etienne de la Boetie claimed that

12 Smith, George H., review of *Natural Law in Political Thought* by Paul E. Sigmond, *Libertarian Review*, December 1974, p. 1.

13 Meltzer, Milton, *Slavery*, Dell, 1877, p. 55.

“we are all naturally free.”¹⁴ Concerning “the doctrine that every man has a natural right to certain freedoms simply because he is a man,” Alisdair Macintyre writes, “Diggers and Levellers gave different interpretations to this doctrine at the economic level; the Diggers believed in community of goods, and especially in common ownership of land, the Levellers in private property.”¹⁵ According to Russell Kirk, Hugo Grotius “had argued that one of the laws of nature is this: that a conqueror has the right to slaughter or perpetually enslave a whole people whose armies he has defeated.”¹⁶ But Montesquieu said this would deny the natural law of preservation of life.¹⁷ John Locke asserted that there is a natural right to punish violators of the natural law.¹⁸ Herbert Morris has gone so far as to claim that such violators themselves have a right to be punished!¹⁹ But Robert LeFevre asserts that to coercively punish a violator of rights is simply to violate the “inalienable rights” of the

14 Boetie, Etienne de la, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*, Free Life, 1975, pp. 56-57.

15 Macintyre, Alisdair, *A Short History of Ethics*, Macmillan, 1966, p. 135.

16 Kirk, Russell, *The Roots of American Order*, Open Court, 1978, p. 353.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Locke, John, *The Second Treatise of Government*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1952, p. 6.

19 Machan, Tibor R., *A Rationale for Human Rights Theory*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, p. 146.

rights-violator. In 1796, followers of Babeuf, the French egalitarian and communist, proclaimed, "Nature has given every man an equal right to the enjoyment of its goods."²⁰ But this, of course, is contradicted by anti-egalitarian exponents of the natural rights myth. Mortimer Adler asserts that "our primary natural right is the right to the pursuit of happiness."²¹ From this he then derives various "subsidiary natural rights—rights to life, security of life and limb, a decent livelihood, freedom from coercion, political liberty, educational opportunities, medical care, sufficient free time for the pursuits of leisure, and so on..."²² But many libertarian exponents of natural rights would reject at least four of the eight "subsidiary natural rights" listed by Adler. According to Jeffrey Paul, Alan Gewirth "defends redistribution [of property] as the appropriate means to protect the right to well-being," but this displeases the libertarian Paul, who sees this as conflicting with his own cherished "property rights."²³ Even Adolf Hitler appealed to "the eternal law of nature" to justify the enslavement of Slavs:

20 Babouvists, the, "Analysis of the Doctrine of Babeuf," *Socialist Thought*, edited by Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders, Anchor, 1964, p. 55.

21 Adler, Mortimer, *The Time of Our Lives*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, p. 143.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Paul, Jeffrey, "Resurrecting Rights," *Reason*, December 1979, p. 37.

It is the eternal law of nature that gives Germany as the stronger power the right before history to subjugate these peoples of inferior race, to dominate them and to coerce them into performing useful labors. I admit this has nothing to do with Christian ethics, but the very fact that it is according to the more ancient and well-tried laws of nature makes it the more likely to last a long while.²⁴

Thus as George Smith has written, “When libertarians claim that coercion is contrary to natural law (or the nature of man), they must realize that, aside from the truth or falsity of this assertion, such an appeal to ‘nature’ places them in a confused and nebulous political tradition.”²⁵ Confused and nebulous indeed.

24 Irving, David, *Hitler's War*, Viking, 1977, p. 315.

25 Smith, *loc. cit.*

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AS I'VE SAID, NATURAL LAWS and natural rights are inventions intended to advance the interests of the inventors (whom I shall call "natural legislators"). What is often involved is an attempt to manipulate other people into behaving as desired by a natural legislator, by duping them into accepting the values of the natural legislator as the values of nature. Thus, the personal, subjective preferences of a natural legislator are passed off as the impersonal, objective requirements of nature. For example, Frederick D. Wilhelmsen writes that, "Natural law insists that pornography ... is bad and that it is bad not just for me, but for everybody, and it equally insists that not only must I not invade my neighbor's property but that he must not invade mine or anybody else's."²⁶ In other words, *Frederick*

²⁶ Wilhemson, Frederick D., ed., *Christianity and Political Philosophy*, University of Georgia, 1978, p.176.

Wilhelmsen insists that pornography is bad for everybody, and *he* equally insists that no one must invade anybody else's property. But in order to give his personal preferences greater authority, *Wilhelmsen* pretends that it is nature who is doing all the insisting.

Related to the myth of natural rights is the myth of duty. As John Hospers explains:

We speak of "natural rights" or "human rights"—rights that human beings have "because of their very nature as human beings": for example, the right to life, the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. What specifically do these rights involve?

... When a man claims that he has a certain right, he is making a large claim: for there is a logical relation between the rights of A and the duties of others (B, C, D, etc.) and, similarly, if B has a right, then A, C, D, etc. have a duty. If A has a right to something, then others have a duty not to behave in such a way as to violate that right.²⁷

So one person's (natural) right is everyone else's duty. But what is this thing called "duty"? Otto F. Kraushaar defines duty as "Whatever is necessary or required, or whatever

²⁷ Hospers, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

one is morally obliged to do, as opposed to what one may be pleased or inclined to do.”²⁸ According to Ayn Rand, “The meaning of the term duty is: the moral necessity to perform certain actions for no other reason than obedience to some higher authority, without regard to any personal goal, motive, desire or interest.”²⁹ Or, as P.H. Nowell-Smith puts it, “The language of ‘You ought’ and particularly of ‘duty’ is frequently used in cases where the agent has no reason for doing what he is told other than the fact that it is his duty.”³⁰

However, Nowell-Smith gives the game away when he goes on to say, “The connexion between duties and the demands of others comes out clearly in the fact that we use the word ‘obligation’ as a synonym for ‘duty’; and this word is derived from a root meaning ‘tied,’ an obvious metaphor for coercion.”³¹ Thus duty is a matter of metaphorical or fake coercion. If you want someone to do something which he has no personal reason for doing, but you are unable or unwilling (perhaps afraid) to use real coercion to get him to do it, then you can try to get him to do it by means of the

28 Runes, Dagobert D, ed., *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Littlefield, Adams, 1971, p. 85.

29 Rand, Ayn, “Causality Versus Duty,” *The Objectivist*, July 1970, p. 1.

30 Nowell-Smith, P.H., *Ethics*, Penguin, 1954, p. 200.

31 *Ibid.*

metaphorical or fake coercion of duty. Or, as John Badcock put it, “Given a believer in duty, it becomes possible for him to be enslaved with his own consent.”³²

But, as Ayn Rand has pointed out, “Reality confronts a man with a great many ‘musts,’ but all of them are conditional. The formula of realistic necessity is: ‘You must, if’—and the ‘if’ stands for man’s choice; ‘—if you want to achieve a certain goal.’” In the terminology of Immanuel Kant, such a conditional “must” is a hypothetical imperative; for example, “if you want to be happy for the rest of your life, never make a pretty woman your wife.”

There are no unconditional “musts” or “oughts,” no categorical imperatives (to again use Kantian phrasing). That is why, although I am an egoist of sorts, I nevertheless reject what Brian Medlin calls the principle of “universal categorical egoism,” to wit, “that we all ought to observe our own interests, *because that is what we ought to do.*”³³ I say, to the contrary, that it is up to each individual, insofar as he has freedom of choice in the matter, to decide for himself whether or not to pursue his own interests.

If there are no unconditional “musts” or “oughts,” then

32 Badcock, John, *Slaves to Duty*, Laurence Labadie edition, n.d., p. 35.

33 Rand, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

there are no “duties” or “moral obligations.” Which means there is no “morality,” no “system of the principles and duties of right and wrong conduct.”³⁴ Morality (like natural law and natural rights, which are specific examples of “moral” ideas) is a myth invented to promote the interests/desires/purposes of the inventors. Morality is a device for controlling the gullible with words. “You ‘must not’ commit murder!” Why not? “Because murder is ‘wrong!’ Murder is ‘immoral!’” Bunk! Murder may be impractical or excessively risky or just not worth the trouble. There are all sorts of reasons why I might refrain from committing murder even if I would like to do so. But murder is not “wrong.” Murder is not “immoral.” And the same goes for rape, robbery, assault, battery, burglary, buggery, bestiality, incest, treason, torturing children, suicide, cannibalism, cannabism, etc. Moralist Alan Wheelis says, “Morality is a wall. On it is written: Whatever passion impel you, whatever goal you pursue, beyond this limit you may not go.”³⁵ But if morality is a wall, it is a metaphorical or fake wall, a wall built with words, not bricks; a wall that will not stop us amoralists. So

34 Medlin, Brian, “Ultimate Principles of Ethical Egoism,” *Morality and Rational Self-Interest*, edited by David P. Gauthier, Prentice Hall, 1970, p. 58.

35 *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Reader's Digest Association, 1968, p. 880.

if you want to be safe from us, Alan Wheelis, you'd better build some *real* walls.

I've said that morality is a myth and have dubbed myself an "amoralist." But, according to moralist Tibor R. Machan, "all people *must* play the moral game."³⁶ Why? Machan writes:

This we see by noting that it is perfectly natural to ask questions pertaining to the moral worthiness of people in *any* circumstances, provided they are capable of thinking for themselves and choosing between various alternative ways of thinking and acting. Such notions that someone *ought to have* done otherwise than he did, that we should have behaved differently from how we did behave, or that we should do this or that when we get into this or that situation—all these are tied to our human way of life. It is our way of life which attests to the necessity of morality.³⁷

It may be "perfectly natural" for Machan, a moralist, to ask questions about the "moral worthiness" of people, but why is it *necessary* for all people to ask such questions? Machan says that various kinds of moral discourse "are

³⁶ Wheelis, Allen, *The Moralist*, Penguin, 1973, p. 74.

³⁷ Machan, Tibor R., "A Rational for Human Rights," *The Personalist*, Spring 1971, p. 228.

thoroughly tied to our human way of life,” and that “it is our way of life which attests to the necessity of morality.” But while I would grant that “our human way of life” makes it *possible* for people to play the “moral game,” Machan has not explained why, or proven that we all *must* play the “moral game.”

There are those who agree with me that there are no unconditional musts or oughts, but who nevertheless write about something they call morality. For example, George H. Smith has written about something he calls “rational morality,” as distinguished from “religious morality.” But Smith’s “rational morality” is based on positing happiness as “man’s ultimate value.” And Smith himself says,

I will not argue that all men actually pursue happiness, nor that all men ‘ought’ to pursue happiness (whatever such an assertion might mean); rather, I shall offer happiness as a hypothetical goal. In other words, *if* a man desires happiness, *then* he ought to be concerned with those conditions, those values, that are conducive to man’s happiness.³⁸

Smith’s “rational morality,” to paraphrase Harry Browne,

38 Smith, George, *Atheism: The Case Against God*, Nash, 1974, p. 228.

is neither an absolute nor a universal morality. It is merely a personal morality. It is binding or obligatory only on those who, like Smith presumably, pursue happiness as their ultimate value. Of course, many people pursue other values as their ultimate value, for example, survival, or autonomy, or family, or duty. And whatever one posits as one's ultimate value, there will be certain subsidiary values deemed conducive to the achievement of that ultimate value. I wonder why it is only the pursuit of happiness as an ultimate value that provides a basis for "*rational* morality"? Is it, for example, *irrational* to pursue personal autonomy as one's highest value? In any case, I want to emphasize that Smith's "rational morality" is not morality in the sense in which I (and I think most people) use the term, since his "rational morality" does not involve any element of duty or unconditional obligation.

As I've already said, to claim a natural right for yourself is to assert a corresponding duty for others, to wit, the duty to refrain from acting contrary to your natural right. If, for example, you claim a natural right to life, then you also assert that I have a duty to refrain from murdering you, regardless of what my personal goals, motives, desires or

interests might be. No matter how much I might gain from murdering you, I “must not” murder you. Why not? Simply because I “must not.” This “must not” is unconditional and absolute. But, as such, it is merely an arbitrary, unprovable assumption. As James J. Martin makes clear:

Since it has no anatomical locus (nobody really knows where your natural rights are like they know, for instance, where your pancreas is), [the idea of natural rights] involves an ability to deal with intangible things of this sort. They amount to matters that have no dimensions and I call them religious ideas—there is no challenging them. Someone who supports a religious idea involving the Trinity or Transubstantiation or a number of other religious doctrines is irrefutable. There is no way of proving these things and there’s no way of disproving them. If someone wishes to maintain that he has these intangible things called rights, well, what is one to say about it? You can’t disprove it—but again there’s no way of proving them either.³⁹

As a matter of fact, some devotees of the myth of natural rights admit that their claims about natural rights are simply

39 Martin, James J., “Introducing Revisionism: An Interview With James J. Martin,” *Reason*, January 1976, p. 19.

unproven assumptions. For example, Ronald Dworkin, sympathetically explicating the views of John Rawls, writes that “justice as fairness rests on the assumption of a natural right of all men and women to equality of concern and respect, a right they possess not by virtue of birth or characteristic or merit or excellence but simply as human beings with the capacity to make plans and give justice.”⁴⁰

But some natural rights mythologizers seem to think that their belief in natural rights is something more than an unprovable assumption. They have presented arguments that purport to rationally demonstrate the reality of natural rights. In the remaining chapters, I’m going to examine some such arguments to see if they demonstrate anything beyond the wishful thinking and faulty logic of the exponents of the myth.

⁴⁰ Dworkin, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

3

IRONICALLY, AYN RAND, WHO DEBUNKED the myth of “duty” by pointing out that in reality all “musts” are conditional, was nevertheless an influential exponent of the myth of natural rights. In an essay on “Man’s Rights,” Rand wrote as follows:

The concept of individual rights is so new in human history that most men have not grasped it fully to this day. In accordance with the two theories of ethics, the mystical or the social, some men assert that rights are a gift of God—others, that rights are a gift of society. But, in fact, the source of man’s rights is man’s nature.

The Declaration of Independence stated that men “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Whether one believes that man is the product of a Creator or of nature, the issue of man’s origin does not alter the fact that he is an entity of a specific

kind—a rational being—that he cannot function successfully under coercion, and that rights are a necessary condition of his particular mode of survival.

“The source of man’s rights is not divine law or congressional law, but the law of identity. A is A—and Man is Man. *Rights* are conditions of existence required by man’s nature for his proper survival. If man is to live on earth, it is *right* for him to use his mind, it is *right* to act on his own free judgement, it is *right* to work for his own values and keep the product of his work. If life on this earth is his purpose, he has a *right* to live as a rational being; nature forbids him the irrational.” (*Atlas Shrugged*)⁴¹

According to Rand, rights are a necessary condition of “man’s” particular mode of survival. This ties in with her assertion that “man” is “an entity of a specific kind—a rational being” and “cannot function successfully under coercion.” But, while there is some truth in the claim that “man” cannot function successfully under coercion, the claim is nevertheless far from being a universal truth. Obviously, few people are able to function successfully under coercion in the form of a bullet fired into their brain without their

41 Rand, Ayn, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, New American Library, pp. 94-95.

consent. And there are, of course, other forms of coercion which might impair to some degree a person's ability to function successfully. But some of the less drastic forms of coercion, though inconvenient to the coerced, are not necessarily incompatible with his functioning successfully. Consider: all of us who live in State-dominated societies and who are not members or beneficiaries of the State-apparatus, are living under some degree of coercion, if only by dint of being forced to pay taxes. Yet, despite living under State coercion, many people still manage to function successfully. Ayn Rand herself provided a good example of someone who was able to function successfully despite living under coercion by the State.

As Albert Ellis has written:

Because a man is supposedly a rational being, Miss Rand *assumes* that he cannot function successfully under coercion. Actually, the more rational he is *the more* successfully he can function under almost any conditions, including coercion. It is fairly obvious that he can function *better* without than with coercion; but even this is not always true. Children often function better with some degree of forced discipline or coercion; and hordes of so-called adults, too! Even if man does get

along better without coercion, individual rights that preclude his being too coerced socially are hardly a *necessary* condition of his particular mode of survival. We know that he survives without such individual rights; we can only say that he usually survives *better* or *more happily* with them.⁴²

Furthermore, insofar as it *is* true that “man” cannot function successfully under coercion, it *is* also true that *animals* cannot function successfully under coercion. Being shot in the head is just as detrimental to the successful functioning of a deer as it is to the successful functioning of a “man.” Therefore, if a “right” to freedom from coercion is a necessary condition of “man’s” particular mode of survival, then a “right” to freedom from coercion is also a necessary condition of a deer’s particular mode of survival. And, by the same token, a “right” to freedom from coercion must also be a necessary condition of every animal’s and every plant’s particular mode of survival, inasmuch as every animal and every plant is vulnerable to being injured or killed by coercive action.

Although his views may no longer be the same, George Smith made essentially the same point in his essay, “Ayn

42 Ellis, Albert, *Is Objectivism a Religion?*, Lyle Stuart, 1968, p. 146.

Rand and the Right to Life: A Critical Evaluation.” Smith writes:

...it should be apparent that Rand’s prerequisite for the right to life is equally applicable to any life form. A steer “cannot function successfully under coercion” either; a steer being led to slaughter requires the recognition of his means of survival *if* he is to continue living; “rights are a necessary condition of his particular mode of survival” as well. If the steer is to survive, the creatures capable of moral action—the creatures capable of recognizing an obligation—must recognize the steer’s “right” to his own life.

If the metaphysical requirements of an organism’s survival (concerning its relationship with volitional creatures) constitutes a *criterion* for the possession of the right to life sanction, then this moral sanction must properly apply to all life, insofar as these organisms enter into relationships with men.

Ultimately, Rand’s only possible source for her right to life is a moral sanction on the process *as such*, life as the ultimate value of each individual organism. This would mean that moral creatures (men) are obligated not to interfere *via* the initiation of force with the life processes of all other organisms (including other men);

to do so would be a violation of a right and, hence, immoral. *Man's* right to life, then, would be merely a specific application of the general life sanction.⁴³

But if all living things possess a “right” to life, what then? Smith spells out the enormously significant implications as follows:

My argument is this: Ayn Rand’s derivation of man’s inalienable right to his own life rests *implicitly* on a moral sanction of life *as such*; and, if she is to be at all consistent, Rand must apply her rights concept to all life forms. A sanction on all life, however, is inconsistent with man’s survival. To live, man must kill other life—he cannot survive on inorganic matter. To posit that every living organism has a “right to life” results in the absurd situation that man, in order to be “moral” (i.e., in order not to violate any rights), must sacrifice his own life. The mere sustaining of man’s life would necessarily entail immoral action on his part. Taken to its logical consequences, then, Rand’s use of the right to life proves to be diametrically opposed to her philosophical egoism.⁴⁴

43 Smith, George H., “Ayn Rand and the Right to Life: A Critical Evaluation,” *Invictus* 17, p. 8.

44 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Thus Rand's argument for "man's rights" is self defeating. "Man" has a "right to life." But if "man" has a right to life, then so does every living thing. And, in that case, "man" cannot "morally" survive. To be "moral," he must not sustain his life, since that means violating the "right to life" of some other organism. Ironically, therefore, "man's *right to life*" is inimical to "man's" *life*.

The source of this paradox is that Rand based "man's rights" on what "man" *needs* for survival. "Rights," as Rand put it, "are a necessary condition of man's particular mode of survival." But, since, for every form of life, there are necessary conditions (needs) for its particular mode of survival, Rand's argument implies that every form of life has rights.

But, as Rand herself sometimes said, *need is not a claim*. "Man's" need of freedom from coercion, for example, does not constitute a claim or a right to such freedom any more than "man's" need of food constitutes a claim or right to food. Those who believe that "man's" need of food does constitute a claim or right to food, and who believe that the government must guarantee that "man" has food, are sometimes known as "bleeding heart liberals." By the same token, those who believe that "man's" need of freedom from

coercion constitutes a claim or right to freedom from coercion, and who believe that the government must guarantee that “man” has freedom from coercion, could be called “bleeding heart libertarians.”

There is another aspect of Rand’s argument for “man’s rights” which is open to criticism. Consider this passage:

If a man is to live on earth, it is *right* for him to use his mind, it is *right* for him to act on his own judgement, it is *right* to work for his values and to keep the product of his work. If life on earth is his purpose, he has a *right* to live as a rational being; nature forbids him the irrational.

As John W. Robbins has pointed out, “The first three times the word ‘right’ is used, it appears as an adjective modifying an action; at the last it appears as a noun, denoting the attribute of a person. The connection between the two concepts is not mentioned but the reader is expected to believe there is one, for no better reason than that the two words are spelled and pronounced alike.”⁴⁵ To argue that because it *is right* for “man” to act on his own free judgment he therefore *has a right* to do so, is similar to arguing that

45 Robbins, John W., *Answer to Ayn Rand*, self-published, 1974, p. 118.

because my chest *is cold* I therefore *have a cold* in my chest. To establish that something *is right* for “man” simply does not imply that “man” *has a right* to it.

But what is all this talk about “man”? “Man,” after all, is only an abstraction and is not a real living being. It is only *men* (that is, people) who live, not “man.” And men are all unique individuals with unique physiognomies, temperaments, metabolisms, body chemistries, personalities, mentalities, tastes, preferences, prejudices, talents, aptitudes, abilities, beliefs, desires, interests, values and purposes. By talking about “man” and what is right for “man,” Rand obscures the fact that what is right for one man may conflict with what is right for another man. While it may be right for one man to act on his own free judgment, it may also be right for another man to act on his own free judgment to prevent the first man from doing so. Such conflicts between what is right for one man and what is right for another man mean that it is absurd to assert that all men have a right to what is right for them.

Max Stirner said, “He who is infatuated with *Man* leaves persons out of account so far as that infatuation exists, and floats in an ideal, sacred interest. *Man* you see, is not a per-

son, but an ideal, a spook.”⁴⁶ Rand was infatuated with “man” and, as Stirner said, she floated “in an ideal, sacred interest.” As George Smith pointed out, Rand’s arguments for “man’s” right to life rested on a “moral sanction” on “man’s life.” In other words, Rand believed that “man’s life” is sacred. Rand never said this in so many words (though one of her followers, Stanley Lieberman, has done so⁴⁷), but she came very close to saying it in her introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of *The Fountainhead*. There Rand complained that such concepts as “exaltation,” “worship,” “reverence,” and “sacred” have been monopolized by religion. “But,” she said, “such concepts do name actual emotions even though no supernatural dimension exists.”⁴⁸ So, she continued, “It is the highest level of man’s emotions that has to be redeemed from the muck of mysticism and redirected at its proper object: man.”⁴⁹ She then identified the “sense of life” dramatized in *The Fountainhead* as “man worship.” As Max Stirner observed, “Our atheists are pious people.”⁵⁰

Rand, it seems, considered “man” and “man’s life” to be

46 Stirner, Max, *The Ego and His Own*, Libertarian Book Club, 1963, p. 79.

47 Lieberman, Stanley, “Certain Unalienable Rights,” *A is A Newsletter*, May 1972, p. 4.

48 Rand, Ayn, *The Fountainhead*, New American Library, 1968, p. ix.

49 *Ibid.*

50 Stirner, *op. cit.*

sacred. But I say: Nothing is sacred. Nothing is “entitled to reverence.” Nothing is “inviolable.” However, Daniel C. Maguire insists that:

The notion of sacredness is more basic than the notion of God. Even those who dispense with the idea of God must deal with the sacred... It is a functioning category of human existence without which the human animal cannot be understood. If nothing is sacred, human life becomes absurd, and ethical discourse is rendered inane.⁵¹

But, contrary to Maguire, “the sacred” is a category necessary to the understanding only of *some* human animals, specifically those two-legged sheep who believe in “the sacred.” Maguire says that “if nothing is sacred, human life becomes absurd, and ethical discourse is rendered inane.” But so what? If human life *is* absurd and ethical discourse *is* inane, then so be it. Apparently, Maguire cannot face the possibility that that’s the way it is, and so he clings to “the sacred” like Linus clutching his security blanket. Max Stirner said, “Everything sacred is a tie, a fetter.”⁵² But, fortunately for us amoralistic egoists, “the sacred” is only

51 Maguire, Daniel C., *The Moral Choice*, Doubleday, 1978, p. 73.

52 Stirner, *op. cit.*

a metaphorical tie, a metaphorical fetter, and can restrain only those who, like Maguire, choose to be bound and shackled by it.

According to Rand, “If life on earth is his purpose, he [man] has a right to live as a rational being; nature forbids him the irrational.” Rand took the truth that irrationality *can* be incompatible with living on earth and, by means of typically Randian overgeneralization, turned it into a falsehood. In fact, nature “permits” a helluva lot of irrationality. How, for example, could Christianity have survived for nearly two millennia if nature “forbids” the irrational? How could maniacs like Jack Van Impe, Tim LaHaye and Pastor John Hagee survive and even prosper if nature “forbids” the irrational? For that matter, considering the irrational aspects of her own philosophy, such as her doctrine of “man’s rights,” how was it possible for Rand to live such a long and successful life if nature “forbids” the irrational?

Nathaniel Branden, who for years was designated by Rand as her “intellectual heir,” once dubbed her “Mrs. Logic,” but whatever else may have justified this appellation, the fact remains that when Rand argued for “man’s rights,” she was not “Mrs. Logic.” She was “Mrs. Illogic.”

4

ANOTHER EXPONENT OF THE NATURAL rights myth is the Rand-influenced philosopher, Tibor R. Machan, aka, “Mr. Morality.” Whereas Rand wrote about “man’s rights,” Machan writes about “human rights.” But Machan’s “human rights” are also “natural rights,” since they supposedly derive from “human nature,” specifically, from the interrelated human traits of rationality (the capacity to think conceptually) and freedom (the capacity to choose whether or not to think conceptually).

According to Machan, a “morally good” person is one who is “fully aware.”⁵³ Or, as he also puts it, “...moral perfection amounts, in the final analysis, to a person’s being as fully conceptually aware as his capacities allow him to be.”⁵⁴ Or, as he also says, “...basic virtue (being morally

53 Machan, *A Rational for Human Rights Theory*, p. 124.

54 Machan, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

good) consists in living by the exercise of one's mind to the highest potential."⁵⁵ This is all somewhat vague, whether Machan is taking about being as fully aware as possible or about using one's mind to the highest potential. But things get a bit confused when it turns out that using one's mind to its *fullest* capacity is not the same thing as using it to its *highest* capacity. Machan says, "Thus, for instance, a philosopher is at his moral best when he exercises his mind to ITS FULLEST (not just highest) capacity on his particular level AS man AND philosopher."⁵⁶ Machan gives not the faintest clue as to what the difference is between using one's mind to its fullest capacity and using it to its highest capacity. But, for some unspecified reason, he thinks the former is better than the latter. (Was Machan at his "moral best," using his mind to its fullest capacity, when he wrote his doctoral dissertation, from which I am quoting?)

In any case, having set up this nebulous criterion of "morality," Machan proceeds to derive the "human right to liberty" as follows:

Human rights pertain to what claims men have made

⁵⁵ Machan, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁵⁶ Machan, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

vis-à-vis each other and how we are to judge between them. The connection between what a human right is and a conception of a good human life may be conceived as follows: What is morally right for a human being as an individual (what he should do) relates to what is good for him within OR outside a human community. In this sense, the “good” and “right” of political conditions are prudential, utilitarian: they are good and right because they serve the purpose of making a morally good life possible for people. (Without the right to be free, for instance, and, thus, in a condition of coercion, it would be impossible to be either good or bad; one would have no chance for freedom of action, that is, to be an agent, to produce or do what is good or evil.) Depending on the context, what is morally appropriate will emerge. Thus, if a good human life is indeed a life guided by a fullest degree of awareness, then within the context of society this condition would have to be sought after. What, in short, can secure the social conditions right for man to fulfill his moral purpose, his utmost degree of human awareness, his fullest degree of humanity? What social conditions facilitate and enable the moral growth of individual human beings?

We have seen that a man’s moral goodness depends on whether he chooses to be as fully aware as possible

to him. In order for man to reach HIS highest level of awareness and act on it, he must be free to judge and to act on his judgments. This is true for EVERY man... If interference upon this freedom occurs, the person who has been interfered with has been robbed of his opportunity and responsibility as a moral agent; if his judgment has been inhibited, his actions interfered with, he cannot be considered fully free and responsible. And this again is true of all men, all to whom human rights must be accorded. Thus, it is not necessary to specify that human freedom is LIMITED by the rights of other persons. If all men are to be free to judge and act upon their judgments, that already tells us that such action cannot involve interference with others' freedom.

The human right which emerges from this analysis is the right to be free. Of course it is a right which arises out of the moral value of individual human life and of free judgment and action. Political liberty, for this is what we are talking about, is based on the legal implementation of human rights, on the implicit or explicit recognition by all of a given community of men that each man's life is of supreme value and that a human life requires freedom of judgment and action to develop morally.⁵⁷

57 Machan, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

(Notice that Machan, having previously distinguished between using one's mind to its fullest potential and using it to its highest potential, now, in the first two sentences of the second paragraph of the above-quoted passage, treats these as being equivalent. Obviously, whatever Machan's criterion of "morality" amounts to, it is no more clear to Machan than it is to me.)

Machan begins by asserting that "moral goodness" depends on whether or not a person chooses to be as fully aware as possible. But then, without explanation, he changes this to make "moral goodness" contingent upon a person's being as fully aware as possible and acting on that awareness. Thus, he says, "Without the right to be free for instance, and, thus, in a condition of coercion, it would be impossible to be either good or bad; one would have no chance for freedom of action, that is, to be an agent, to produce or do what is either good or evil." But Machan simply contradicts himself when he makes a person's "moral goodness" depend on whether or not other people coerce him and thereby restrict his freedom of action. Previously Machan asserted that, "...the most important act for purposes of moral philosophy, the act for which all men can

be held responsible if they fail to perform it because it lies at the base of all other acts and is itself undetermined FOR US but determined BY US to be or not to be performed, is the act of conceptual consciousness, the act to think.”⁵⁸ And, according to Machan, man, by his very nature, possesses the freedom to choose to think or to not think. So even if a man’s external freedom of action is limited by coercion, he still retains his internal freedom to choose to think or to not think and can be judged accordingly. Thus, there is no reason whatever for Machan’s assertion that being in a condition of coercion makes it impossible for a person to be either “good” or “bad.” A person in a condition of coercion can still be “morally good” in Machan’s sense of being “as fully aware as possible.” Thus, Machan’s own premises negate his conclusion that a “right to be free” is a necessary condition for men to be “morally good” in a social context.

But even if one accepted the notion that being “morally good” depends upon being as fully aware as possible *and* acting on the basis of that awareness, this might, at best, prove the necessity of a rather limited degree of political freedom. As long as a person is not totally deprived of freedom of

⁵⁸ Machan, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

action, for example by being bound hand-and-foot, then, even in a state of coercion, he can think and judge and act on his judgments. Even if the government prohibits some activity, such as publicly criticizing the government, and threatens to punish those who violate the prohibition, an individual can still think about and judge the government's prohibition and can, on the basis of his thinking and judging, determine whether or not to obey that prohibition. So Machan's criterion of "morality" would still be applicable even in a condition of coercion and, thus, Machan has not proven that a "right to be free" is necessary for people to be able to be "morally good."

But even if Machan had proven this point, another question would arise: why is Machan concerned with whether or not *other people* are able to live "morally good" lives? Why does he want *all* men to be free to judge and act on their judgments? Machan says that "each man's life is of supreme value," but what does this mean? To whom is each man's life of supreme value? To himself? To everybody? To Machan? My life is of supreme value to me; Machan's life is not. Even if I wanted to live a "morally good" life (in Machan's sense), why would I (or "should" I) care whether

or not *Machan* is able to live such a “morally good” life? I’d like to see how Machan, the ostensible egoist, answers that question.

Machan’s doctoral dissertation is entitled *A Rationale for Human Rights Theory*. But, considering my above-stated criticisms of it, I think a better title would be *A Rationalization for Human Rights Theory*.

5

A LEADING CONTEMPORARY EXPONENT OF the myth of natural rights is Murray N. Rothbard. Rothbard's political creed is based on the "axiom" (i.e., dogma) of "nonaggression against anyone's person and property."⁵⁹ Rothbard finds a foundation for this axiom in "natural rights." Here is part of Rothbard's argument:

Let us turn to the natural-rights basis for the libertarian creed, a basis which, in one form or another, has been adopted by most of the libertarians, past and present. "Natural rights" is the cornerstone of a political philosophy which, in turn, is embedded in a greater structure of "natural law." Natural law theory rests on the insight that we live in a world of more than one—in fact, a vast number—of entities, and that each entity has distinct and specific properties, a distinct "nature," which can

59 Rothbard, Murray N., *For A New Liberty*, Macmillan, 1973, p.23.

be investigated by man's reason, by his sense of perception and mental faculties. Copper has a distinct nature and behaves in a certain way, and so does iron, salt, etc. The species man, therefore, has a specifiable nature, as does the world around him and the ways of interaction between them. To put it with undue brevity, the activity of each inorganic and organic entity is determined by its own nature and by the nature of the other entities with which it comes in contact. Specifically, while the behaviors of plants and at least the lower animals is determined by their biological nature or perhaps by their "instincts," the nature of man is such that each individual person must, in order to act, choose his own ends and employ his own means in order to attain them. Possessing no automatic instincts, each man must learn about himself and the world, use his mind to select values, learn about cause and effect, and act purposively to maintain himself and advance his life. Since men can think, feel, evaluate, and act only as individuals, it becomes vitally necessary for each man's survival and prosperity that he be free to learn, choose, develop his faculties, and act upon his knowledge and values. This is the necessary path of human nature; to interfere with and cripple this process by using violence goes profoundly against what is necessary by man's nature

for his life and prosperity. Violent interference with a man's learning and choices is therefore profoundly "antihuman," it violates the natural law of man's needs.⁶⁰

Essentially, Rothbard's argument is that each man needs to be free to learn, choose, develop his faculties and act upon his values in order to maintain and advance his life. To interfere with his process by violence goes against what is necessary by "man's" nature for his life and prosperity. "Violent interference with a man's learning and choices is therefore profoundly 'antihuman,' it violates the natural law of man's needs." But, granted that violent interference with a man's freedom generally tends to undercut his ability to live and prosper, the question is: Why should one man refrain from violently interfering with the freedom of another man simply because the other man (like all men) needs freedom? Why should I refrain from violently interfering with Murray Rothbard's freedom simply because Murray Rothbard needs freedom? If I can advance my life by violent interference with Murray Rothbard's freedom, why should I care what Murray Rothbard needs?

Rothbard says such interference is "antihuman." But, while violent interference with Murray Rothbard's freedom

⁶⁰ Rothbard, *op. cit.* pp. 30-31.

may be anti-Rothbardian, if it helps me, a human, advance my life, then how can it be unequivocally “antihuman”? If I violently interfere with Murray Rothbard’s freedom, my action may be contrary to Rothbard’s nature, but it is not contrary to my nature.

According to John A. Goodson and David M. Longinotti,

There are ... a number of problems with the derivation of natural rights, but one is fundamental. In defining man’s nature, the savage characteristics are dismissed as being not proper to man. For Ayn Rand, “man’s survival *qua* man” means a rational, productive existence, and anything else is nonhuman. But to assert that a human can have characteristics that are not human is to assert that A can be not-A, thus attempting to deny the law of identity. If, as Rothbard points out, “the activity of each inorganic and organic entity is determined by its own nature,” then is it not true that the *violent* activity of an organism (for example, man) is also determined by its nature? And if, as John Hospers writes in *Libertarianism*, an organism “acts for its survival by means implanted in it by nature,” then must not the predatory acts of one man against another also be implanted by nature?

The point is that an organism’s “nature” is what it *is*,

or can be. It is not within an elephant's nature to fly; it *is* within a man's nature to steal.⁶¹

While it is in "man's nature" to be free from violent interference by other men, it is also in "man's nature" to violently interfere with the freedom of other men. Again, if I violently interfere with Murray Rothbard's freedom, this may violate the "natural law" of Murray Rothbard's needs, but it doesn't violate the "natural law" of *my* needs.

Rothbard continues his natural rights argument as follows:

The most viable method of elaborating the natural rights statement of the libertarian position is to divide it into parts, and to begin with the basic axiom of the "right to self-ownership." The right to self-ownership asserts the absolute right of each man, by virtue of his (or her) being a human being, to "own" his or her own body; that is, to control that body free of coercive interference. Since each individual must think, learn, value, and choose his or her ends and means in order to survive and flourish, the right to self-ownership gives man the right to perform these vital activities without being

61 Goodson, John A. and David M. Longinnotti, "Those 'Natural' Rights Aren't," *Reason*, September, 1977, p. 35.

hampered by coercive molestation.⁶²

Rothbard's "right to self-ownership," like Rand's "right to life," is based on what men *need* to survive and flourish. But, as I've already said, *need is not a claim*. Rothbard's argument shows that he is just another bleeding-heart libertarian.

Rothbard's argument bases "human rights" on human survival needs, which raises the question: Why don't the survival needs of all other organisms generate "rights" for those organisms? After all, they need freedom from violent interference with their survival activities as much men do. Rothbard, however, clearly does not believe that animals have "rights." He says, "Animals are 'economic land,' since they are original nature-given resources."⁶³ And he presumably also considers plants to be "economic land." But the unanswered question is: Why aren't other men also "economic land"? Why can't (or "shouldn't") they also be viewed as "original nature-given resources"?

Rothbard's argument for the "right to self-ownership" continues:

62 Rothbard, *op. cit.*, 26-27.

63 Rothbard, Murray N., *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays*, Libertarian Review Press, 1974, p. 63.

Consider ... the consequences of denying each man a right to his own person. There are only two alternatives: either (1) a certain class of people, A, have a right to own another class, B, or (2) everyone has the right to own his own equal quotal share of everyone else. The first alternative implies that while Class A deserves the rights of being human, Class B is in reality subhuman and therefore deserves no such rights. But since they are indeed human beings, the first alternative contradicts itself in denying natural human rights to one set of humans. Moreover, as we shall see, allowing Class A to own Class B means that the former is allowed to exploit, and therefore to live parasitically, at the expense of the latter. But this parasitism itself violates the basic economic requirement for life: production and exchange.⁶⁴

According to Rothbard, there are only these two alternatives to his claim that each man has a “right” to his own person. But, as George I. Mavrodes has pointed out, Rothbard “neglects others that would seem initially more plausible—if for no other reason than that they have actually been practiced and recognized in the legal systems of slave-owning societies.”⁶⁵ And Rothbard neglects an-

64 Rothbard, *For A New Liberty*, p. 27.

65 Mavrodes, George I., “A Challenge to Self-Ownership,” *Reason*, March 1978, p. 30.

other alternative, to wit, that nobody has any “right” to own any person. By neglecting to consider certain alternatives, Rothbard renders his arguments inconclusive at best.

But what about Rothbard’s criticism of the first alternative he mentions, that a certain class of people, A, has the right to own another class, B? Rothbard says that this alternative implies that Class B is subhuman and does not deserve the rights of being human. And since they *are* human, this alternative supposedly contradicts itself in denying “human rights” to one class of humans. But this criticism rests on the unproven assumption that rights must be “human rights,” deserved by all human beings or none. But suppose Class A claims their right to own Class B, not on the ground that they are human beings, but because they are some particular kind of human beings (members of a “superior” race, for example). In that case, the denial of rights of Class B would not imply that Class B is subhuman, only that they are not the right kind of human to deserve rights. And there is no necessary contradiction in such a claim. It may be unprovable that one kind of human being deserves rights while another kind does not. But it is no more *unprovable* than Rothbard’s own position that one

kind of organism (the human kind) deserves rights while other kinds do not.

Rothbard also criticizes alternative 1 on the grounds that the parasitism of Class A at the expense of Class B “violates the basic economic requirement for life: production and exchange.” But the basic economic requirement of life is simply the acquisition of the necessities of life by whatever means, whether by production or predation. If parasitism is incompatible with the basic economic requirement for life, then why haven’t men in all slavery-based societies simply died off? Obviously, some people must produce the necessities of life if anyone is going to survive. But this doesn’t imply that everyone must engage in production for everyone to survive. For example, in a slave system, the lives of both master and slave may be sustained by the productivity of the slave. Thus, parasitism can be a viable means of survival, one which is not necessarily incompatible with the survival of the victims. If there is something “wrong” with such parasitism, Rothbard hasn’t proven it.

I am not going to discuss the second alternative postulated by Rothbard, “participatory communalism,” because I agree with him that it is not a practicable alternative.

Rothbard, having criticized and rejected two alternatives to his beloved “right to self-ownership,” concludes by adopting as his “primary axiom” the universal “right to self-ownership.” But George I. Mavrodes has made a telling point against Rothbard’s argument:

Even if we were to list every form which the ownership of human beings could possibly take and were then to find arguments ruling out all of them except self-ownership, we would still not have established the propriety of this last system. In order to justify that conclusion we should have to add still another premise to the argument—the premise that every human being is, or ought to be, owned by somebody or other. We need this premise to keep us from rejecting self-ownership right along with the other forms, concluding that human beings are not owned by anyone at all.

Rothbard does not argue in this connection for the claim that everyone is owned by somebody or another. He does not even mention it. He rather seems to assume it as something so obvious that it hardly rises into consciousness at all. But is it obvious? Why should there not simply be unowned people?⁶⁶

Rothbard’s argument for the “right to self-ownership”

⁶⁶ Mavrodes, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

has more holes in it than a slice of Swiss cheese and doesn't prove a damned thing.

Ironically, Rothbard himself has insisted “that it is not enough for an intellectual or social scientist to proclaim his value judgments—that these judgments must be rationally defensible and must be demonstrable to be valid, cogent and correct.”⁶⁷ But, as I have shown, Rothbard fails to live up to these standards. His value judgments in favor of “self-ownership” and “nonaggression” have not been shown to be valid, cogent and correct. And interestingly enough, David Gordon, a sympathetic commentator on Rothbard's case for the “right to self-ownership,” to whom Rothbard's argument seems “entirely convincing,”⁶⁸ nevertheless agrees with me on this point. Gordon says that to present the case in the way that Rothbard does “is in part to rely on one's moral intuitions, e.g., in seeing that slavery is wrong; and this Rothbard would see as a defect.”⁶⁹ Since Rothbard's case for the “right to self-ownership” relies on his “moral intuition” or value judgment that slavery is “wrong,” he has not demonstrated, but merely assumed, the correctness of his value judgments.

67 Rothbard, *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays*, p. 3.

68 Gordon, David, “Man vs. the State,” *Inquiry*, July 1982, p. 37.

69 *Ibid.*

6

ANOTHER NATURAL RIGHTS MYTHOLOGIZER is Paul Lepanto, an unauthorized exponent of Ayn Rand's Objectivism, "the only rational school of contemporary philosophy."⁷⁰ Lepanto, like Rand, views "man's life" as the standard of "morality." Also like Rand, he wants to rule out certain kinds of actions that men can and do sometimes perform to sustain or enhance their lives. He tries to do so in the following passage, which essentially presents his argument for rights, though without yet using that term:

Presumably each member of a society wishes to advance his life. What if one man (or group of men) tries to live by means of harming another man?

The first step in arriving at a solution to this problem is to see that such an attempt cannot be rationally justified.

70 Lepanto, Paul, *Return to Reason*, Exposition Press, 1971, p. 11.

Consider two men. Both have the same nature. Both (we assume) want to live and prosper. Both face the fundamental alternatives of life and death. These facts establish a kind of metaphysical equality between any two men.

Now, suppose that A tries to live at the involuntary expense of B, and suppose it is claimed that such an attempt is justified. Such a claim must rest on the assumption that A and B are unequal in some fundamental way, some way that justifies A's throttling the life of B. Unless it can be shown that A is somehow superior to B, his attempt to live at B's involuntary expense simply cannot be justified.

But there is no basis on which to claim, let alone prove, such inequality; the metaphysical equality that exists among men precludes it. Hence the attempt of one man to live at the involuntary expense of another is irrational—and therefore immoral.⁷¹

Lepanto's argument rests on the unexplained and unproven assumption that a man's actions "must" be "rationally justified." Lepanto has us suppose that A tries to live at the involuntary expense of B and that it is claimed that such an attempt is justified. But suppose, instead, that

71 Lepanto, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

A tries to live at the involuntary expense of B and that it is *not* claimed that such an attempt is justified. What would Lepanto say about that? How would he prove that it is necessary to “rationally justify” one’s actions?

In any case, it is not clear to me what Lepanto means in calling for “rational justification” of one’s actions. For an egoist, the only “justification” for one’s actions is that those actions benefit oneself. If, by means of reason, A concludes that he will benefit from living at the involuntary expense of B, then an egoist would agree that A is “rationally justified” in doing so. Lepanto, an exponent of Objectivism, is supposedly an egoist. But, for some reason, he expects some sort of non-egoistic “rational justification” for one’s actions.

According to Lepanto, a claim that A is “justified” in trying to live at the involuntary expense of B must rest on the assumption that A and B are unequal in some fundamental (metaphysical) way and that A is superior to B. But for an egoist, as I’ve said, the only “justification” for an action is that it benefits him. Thus, if A is rationally convinced that he will benefit from trying to live at the involuntary expense of B, then he is “rationally justified” in doing so.

From this point of view it is entirely irrelevant whether or not A is “metaphysically superior” to B. If I were rationally convinced that I could benefit myself at Lepanto’s involuntary expense, then I would be “rationally justified” in doing so, even if Lepanto were “metaphysically superior” to me.

Of course, Lepanto does not claim to be “metaphysically superior” to me; he claims that we are “metaphysically equal.” Why is this so? Supposedly because we have the same nature, we both want to live and prosper and we both face the fundamental alternatives of life and death. But every living thing faces the fundamental alternatives of life and death. That doesn’t mean that every living thing is “metaphysically equal,” does it? And even though both Lepanto and I want to live and prosper, the chances are that one of us desires this more intensely than the other, in which case, are we “metaphysically equal”? As for the two of us having the same “nature,” what this amounts to is that we are both human and, thus, share some biological traits. There is, therefore, some degree of similarity between the two of us, a higher degree of similarity than that which exists between either of us and any nonhuman thing. But similarity is not “equality.” As Murray Rothbard has said:

A and B are “equal” if they are identical to each other with respect to a given attribute. Thus, if Smith and Jones are both exactly six feet in height, then they may be said to be “equal” in height. If two sticks are identical in length, then their lengths are “equal,” etc. There is one and only one way, then, in which any two people can really be “equal” in the fullest sense: they must be identical in all attributes.⁷²

Of course, with the possible exceptions of identical twins and clones, no two people ever are identical in all their attributes. On the contrary, every individual is unique, not exactly like any other individual.

Biochemist Roger J. Williams has discussed in great detail the phenomenon of human diversity:

Individuals differ from each other even in the minutest details of anatomy and body chemistry and physics: finger and toe prints; microscopic texture of hair; hair pattern on the body; ridges and “moons” on the finger and toe nails; thickness of skin, its color, its tendency to blister; distribution of nerve endings on the surface of the body; size and shape of ears, of ear canals, of semicircular canals; length of fingers; character of brain

⁷² Rothbard, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

waves (tiny electrical impulses given off by the brain); exact number of muscles in the body; heart action; strength of blood vessels; blood groups; rate of clotting of blood—and so on almost *ad infinitum*.⁷³

Furthermore, individual differences in behavior and personality are observable soon after birth:

At the Menninger Foundation a few years ago two investigators, a psychologist and a psychiatrist, found abundant evidence of distinctiveness in 128 babies that they observed carefully from four weeks to thirty-two weeks of age. Everything about them was observed—from diaper wetting and soiling, to feeding, sleeping, playing, crying and bathing. Some babies were found to be bold; others were shy; some reacted quickly to outside stimuli; some were slow. Some were aggressive and persistent when reaching for toys, etc.; others gave up easily. Some babies were very regular in their eating, sleeping, or bowel-movement patterns; others were correspondingly irregular. Some could tolerate tensions and frustrations readily; others couldn't take it. Marked personality differences showed up as early as

⁷³ Williams, Roger J., *Free and Unequal: The Biological Basis of Individual Liberty*, Liberty Press, 1979, pp. 46-47.

they could be observed.⁷⁴

Thus, as Murray Rothbard writes, “men are not uniform ... the species, mankind, is uniquely characterized by a high degree of variety, diversity, differentiation; in short, inequality.”⁷⁵ But if, as a matter of fact, people are not “equal,” then Lepanto’s talk about the “metaphysical equality” of all men is merely metaphysical mumbo-jumbo.

If people, by their biological nature, are unequal, then egalitarianism is, as Rothbard has said, a revolt against nature.⁷⁶ But libertarianism, the advocacy of “a free society” in which people enjoy “equal freedom” and “equal rights,” is actually just a specific form of egalitarianism. As such, libertarianism itself is a revolt against nature. If people, by their very biological nature, are unequal in all the attributes necessary to achieving and preserving “freedom” and “rights,” e.g., strength, courage, aggressiveness, persistence, determination, intelligence, etc., then there is no way that people can enjoy “equal freedom” or “equal rights.” If “a free society” is conceived as a society of “equal freedom,” then there ain’t no such thing as “a free society.”

⁷⁴ Williams, Roger J., *You Are Extraordinary*, Pyramid, 1971, pp. 69-70.

⁷⁵ Rothbard, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Rothbard, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

7

AMONG THE EXPONENTS OF THE MYTH of natural rights, Ronald Cooney is decidedly one of the lesser lights. Nevertheless, his essay, “Natural Rights,” is of interest because of its unique arguments. Its arguments for natural rights are essentially negative arguments, pointing out the supposed horrible implications of denying natural rights. Let’s examine what Cooney calls “the ethical arguments in favor of natural rights.”

If it is true that men have only the rights the State has seen fit to give them, what is to stop the State, at any time and for any reason, from taking back those rights? Furthermore, how can we say that the State acts wrongly if it chooses to take that action? By the logic of the opponents of natural rights, the Nazi regime had a perfect justification for recalling the rights, including the right to life of 6,000,000 human beings, and should

not be condemned or thought evil for simply exercising the prerogative to which, as a state, it was clearly entitled. Thus, the denial of natural rights quickly resolves itself into a rejection of the ethical differences between governments, making a slave-state the moral equal of a republic.⁷⁷

It is a fairly minor point, but Cooney is somewhat misleading in equating the denial of natural rights with the claim that “men have only the rights that the State has seen fit to give them.” Somewhat misleading because, the denial of natural rights does not entail the denial that man may have rights in state-less societies. But such rights as men may have in state-less societies are a matter of custom, not “natural law,” and may be called customary rights. And such customary rights can vary according to time and place, like state-granted rights and unlike supposed “natural rights.” So, to rephrase Cooney’s first question, if there are no natural rights over and above the rights the State has seen fit to grant men, what is to stop the State, at any time and for any reason, from taking back those rights? But one could just as well ask Cooney: Even if the people do have natural rights, what is to stop the State, at any time

⁷⁷ Cooney, Ronald, “Natural Rights,” *The Freeman*, October, 1972, pp. 630-631.

and for any reason, from taking back whatever rights it had previously granted? Have Cooney's (and other Americans') supposed natural rights stopped the American State from taking back many previously-granted rights? Of course not. The only thing that can prevent any state from taking back previously-granted rights is the *power* to prevent it from doing so. And that is so regardless of whether there are any natural rights. So Cooney's question proves nothing about the reality of natural rights.

But Cooney asks another question: If there are no natural rights, then how can we say that the State acts wrongly if it takes back rights it has previously granted? Taking that question literally, I would ask Cooney in return: Assuming you are not mute, what's to stop you from saying that the State acts wrongly? Yet I don't think Cooney meant the question literally. I think he meant something like this: If there are no natural rights, then what "moral justification" could we have for saying the State acts wrongly in taking back rights it previously granted? This question I will answer bluntly: None whatever. But I will point out that if Cooney really thinks there is something to be gained by saying the State acts wrongly in taking back previously-

granted rights, then he *can* say that, even without any “moral justification” for saying it. Cooney apparently thinks he must have a “moral justification” for criticizing the State in “moral” terms. But if one sees through the myth of morality, one realizes that one does not need a “moral justification” (and that there *is* no “moral justification”) for anything one does or says. Since nothing is “morally wrong,” it is not “morally wrong” to say the State is “morally wrong” in taking back previously-granted rights even though it really isn’t “morally wrong” for the State to do so. Thus the denial of natural rights does not preclude the expression of “moral” criticisms of the State.

But even if a denial of natural rights did preclude such “moral” phrasing, I would ask: So what? Making moral criticisms of the State is not going to effect the State’s course of action. Cooney can condemn the State ’till he’s blue in the face, but his protests will not dissuade the State from taking back previously-granted rights if the State has decided to do so.

Cooney goes on to assert that, “By the logic of the opponents of natural rights, the Nazi regime had a perfect justification for recalling the rights, including the right to

life, of 6,000,000 human beings, and should not be condemned or thought evil for simply exercising the prerogative to which, as a state, it was clearly entitled.” Cooney is obviously referring to the Holocaust, the supposed extermination of six million Jews by the Nazi State. It so happens that I am a skeptic regarding the Holocaust in general and the six million Jews supposedly killed by the Nazis in particular. But, for the sake of argument, I will assume the truth of the conventional wisdom about the Holocaust and will respond to Cooney on that basis.

So what about Cooney’s claim that those who reject the idea of natural rights must conclude that the Nazi regime “had a perfect justification for recalling the rights, including the right to life” of six million Jews? Well, I find it interesting that moralists like Cooney seem incapable of looking at things from the amoral point of view. They almost invariably present amoralism in “moral” terms. But it is only the moralists who think in “moral” terms, who think that actions are, or are not, “perfectly justified.” As I’ve already said, if one sees through the myth of morality, one realizes that there is no “moral justification” for anything anyone does. So the rejection of the idea of natural rights does not

entail the conclusion that the Nazis were “perfectly justified” in killing six million Jews. Rather, the rejection of the idea of natural rights entails the conclusion that the Nazi were neither “justified” nor “unjustified” in killing six million Jews.

Cooney also claims that those who reject the idea of natural rights must conclude that the Nazi regime “should not be condemned or thought of as evil for simply exercising the prerogative to which, as a state, it was clearly entitled.” But here again Cooney is presenting the amoral point of view in “moral” terms. While the amoralist may not condemn the Nazi regime or think it “evil” for killing six million Jews, the amoralist would not assert that others “should not” do so. The amoralist is also an individualist and believes “to each his own.” If somebody wants to condemn the Nazi regime or think it “evil,” that’s their business. Furthermore, it is particularly absurd to claim that those who reject the idea of natural rights must conclude that the Nazi regime was “clearly entitled” to revoke the natural right to life of six million Jews. If there are no natural rights, then obviously the Nazi regime had no natural right to kill anybody. (Of course, as a matter of fact, the Nazi regime may have

had a *legal* right to kill Jews, but that is irrelevant to the issue of natural rights.)

But suppose Cooney were right and every Jew in Nazi-occupied Europe had a natural right to life. I would then ask: What good did the Jews' natural right to life do them? How many Jewish lives were saved by their natural right to life? The answer, of course, is: Zero. According to Cooney, "Natural law ... provides protection for individuals' rights from violation ... by the State itself."⁷⁸ But natural law obviously didn't protect the Jews' natural rights from violation by the Nazi State. If all Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe had a natural right to life, yet the Nazi regime was able to kill six million of them, then clearly natural rights are of no value whatever as protective devices. A bullet-proof vest may protect a person against being shot, but a natural right has never stopped a single slug. A gas mask may protect a person against gas poisoning, but a natural right has never saved a single person from being gassed to death.

Cooney concludes, "Thus, the denial of natural rights quickly resolves itself into a rejection of the ethical differences between governments, making a slave-state the moral equal of a republic." To which I reply: So

⁷⁸ Cooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 628.

what? To deny that there are ethical differences between governments is not to deny that there are other kinds of differences between governments, differences which can be of great practical importance. Cooney obviously wants to believe that a republic is “morally superior” to a “slave-state,” and sees natural rights as providing a justification for that belief. But this is not really an argument for natural rights; it is merely a confession of what Cooney wants to believe.

And who cares what Cooney wants to believe?

Not I.

8

I'VE SAID THAT THE IDEA OF NATURAL rights is an unprovable assumption. In any case, those whose arguments I've criticized have not proven the reality of natural rights. All their arguments prove is the aptness of certain remarks made by Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again and again how innocent they are ... but that they are not honest enough in their work, although they make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem about truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had reached their real opinions through the self-development of cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic (as opposed to the mystics of every rank, who are more honest and doltish—and talk of “inspiration”); while at bottom it is an assumption, a hunch, indeed a

kind of “inspiration”—most often a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract—that they defend with reasons that they have sought after the fact. They are all advocates who resent that name, and for the most part even wily spokesmen for their prejudices which they baptize “truths.”⁷⁹

When believers in the myth of natural rights argue for that belief, philosophy becomes philosophistry.

In the introduction to his book, *Heresies*, Thomas Szasz writes:

Most of the heresies in this book . . . pertain to matters where language is used in two ways, literally and metaphorically; where the true believer speaks metaphorically but claims that he asserts literal truths; and where heresy may consist of no more than insisting that a metaphoric truth may be a literal falsehood.⁸⁰

The true believer in the myth of natural rights speaks metaphorically but claims to assert a literal truth. The purpose of this essay has been to insist that their affirmation of the existence of natural rights is a literal falsehood.

If this be heresy, then make the most of it.

79 Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage, 1966, pp. 12-13.

80 Szasz, Thomas, *Heresies*, Anchor, 1976, p. 2.

A REPLY TO MY REVIEWERS

AUTHOR'S NOTE (2008)

*T*HE *MYTH OF NATURAL RIGHTS* WAS originally published by Loompanics Unlimited in 1983. In 1985, Samuel Edward Konkin III devoted two issues of his magazine, *New Libertarian*, to a debate on “natural rights.” The first of those issues (Vol. 4, No. 13, April 1985) included reviews of *The Myth* by Jeff Riggensbach (favorable) and George H. Smith (unfavorable), along with a piece by Murray N. Rothbard endearingly entitled “On the Duty of Natural Outlaws to Shut Up.” Rothbard did not review my book, nor did he deign to mention it. Instead, he asserted that “anarcho-Stirnerites” and “anarcho-pragmatists”—unnamed except, perhaps, Jorge Amador—should “shut up” for the good of the libertarian movement, and presumably for their

own good.

The second of those two issues of *New Libertarian* (Vol. 4, No. 15, August-October 1985), included “Natural Law, or Don’t Put a Rubber on Your Willy,” a spirited essay by the late Robert Anton Wilson, which commented on the aforementioned pieces by Smith and Rothbard. In a series of editorial footnotes, Konkin argued with Wilson’s piece, criticizing his major points and indulging in occasional fits of what has since come to be known as “snarking.” This apparently annoyed Wilson enough that he expanded his essay into a more detailed monograph of the same title, which would also be published by Loompanics Unlimited in 1987. Wilson’s short book is an excellent and entertaining piece of polemical skepticism, and I take some measure of satisfaction in having helped to inspire it.

Also included in that issue were the essays, “Natural Rights!” by Robert LeFevre, “Some Further Notes on Rights,” by Jeff Riggenbach, and my own contribution, “A Reply to My Reviewers,” in which I responded mainly to George Smith’s criticisms of *The Myth*. Divorced from its original context, my rejoinder essay is reprinted here, with a few minor edits, for whatever it might be worth. Read-

ers who wish to experience the old-school libertarian hue and cry firsthand are encouraged to procure copies of the original issues of *New Libertarian*, which, at the time of this printing, are still available for purchase from KoPubCo, 5942 Edinger St., Ste. 113 PMB 164, Huntington Beach, CA 92649.

A REPLY TO MY REVIEWERS

New Libertarian, 1985

IN HIS REVIEW OF *The Myth of Natural Rights*, George Smith says he agrees with *some* of my objections to *some* specific arguments for “natural rights,” while he disagrees with others. “But,” he comments, “faulty arguments by particular advocates within an intellectual discipline do not allow us to dismiss the discipline *per se* as flawed or nonsensical.”

Smith has a point. But it’s a point that’s beside the point, since I do not claim that faulty arguments for “natural rights” prove the inherently flawed or nonsensical nature of “the discipline.” Indeed, before I criticized arguments by Rand, Rothbard, Machan, and a couple of lesser lights, I approvingly quoted the opinion of James J. Martin:

There is no way of proving these things and there’s no way of disproving them. If someone wishes to maintain that he has these intangible things called “rights,” well, what is one to say about it? You can’t disprove it—but again there’s no way of proving them either.

Does Smith disagree? If so, *why*?

In any case, if proof is possible and necessary in this controversy, isn't it up to the believers in "natural rights" to prove the existence of that which they believe, just as it is up to believers in "God," "flying saucers," or, "The Holocaust" to prove the existence of such elusive entities or alleged events? In short, doesn't the burden of proof rest upon those who assert the existence of ... something?

I note that Samuel Konkin has promised that Smith will be arguing "The Case for Natural Law 'n' Rights" in the issue for which I am writing this reply. Does this mean that at long last someone is finally going to prove the existence of "natural rights?" We'll see.

Meanwhile, Smith makes a number of points based on the erroneous premise that I regard scientific "laws" (descriptions of how natural phenomena regularly do act) as the only "valid" concept of law. Somehow he has read quite a lot into the parenthetical distinction I made between two different meanings of the expression "natural law"—the scientific one just mentioned, and the "moral" one. My reason for making the distinction was to make it clear that I was discussing and criticizing only the "moral" meaning

of “natural law,” not the scientific one. Although, now that Smith has raised the issue, I am, in fact, inclined to regard both senses of “natural law” as metaphorical uses of the concept of law.

To be clear, however, nowhere in *The Myth of Natural Rights* did I assert or imply that scientific “law” is the only “valid” concept of law. I did write that “Real rights are those rights actually conferred and enforced by the laws of a State or the customs of a social group.” By the same token, I would say that real laws are those rules, regulations, commands, decrees, ukases, etc., which are actually enforced by members or minions of a State.

Smith mentions my anecdote about the cassette recorder stolen from my car years ago never to be seen again by me. I recounted this anecdote to rebut Samuel Konkin’s claim that “the natural consequence of invasion is restoration,” in the same sense that the natural consequence of jumping off a cliff is falling to one’s death. “But,” counters Smith, “there is a *positive*, (i.e., State-decreed) ‘law’ against theft, is there not? Did this ‘law’ prevent the theft, restore his property, or apprehend the culprit? No. By Rollins’ standard, therefore, State ‘laws’ are as metaphorical and mythical as moral ‘laws’

Smith's conclusion, once again, is based on the erroneous premise that I regard scientific "law" as the only "valid" concept of law. So this argument against my position is not sound. Indeed, if, as I actually assert, State law is the original and literal meaning of "law," then there's simply no way that State law can be just as metaphorical and mythical as "moral law." Of course, as Smith's criticism indicates, State laws may be "mythical" insofar as they go unenforced by the State in question. But to the extent that State laws are actually enforced, they are most definitely real.

I will concede that, by the same token, natural laws may be "real" to the extent that they are actually enforced by some Natural Lawman or other. If George Smith should strap on his six-guns and start acting like a one-man State, enforcing "natural laws" by force and violence, he might give these "natural laws" the same sort of reality possessed by State laws. In that case, realistic individuals within Smith's "jurisdiction" would have to take account of his enforcement activities in calculating their own actions, just as they have to take account of the activities of any State whose arms are long enough to reach them. But, of course, enforcing "natural laws" by the same sorts of coercive methods States

use to enforce their laws is not the same thing as arguing for the existence of a universally-valid objectively existing system of “natural laws.”

Smith writes:

There is a sense in which positive laws may be said to constitute a “barrier” to (say) theft. If a potential thief *believes* that he will be caught and punished, this belief may deter him. But the same may be said for moral law. If a potential thief *believes* in the validity of moral law, this may deter him as well. Moral laws constitute as much of a “barrier” (more, in my opinion) to theft as positive laws.

But I did not assert that State laws are real because they constitute a “barrier” to (say) theft. Rather, I said, in response to a statement by Erick Mack, that if “natural rights” are a “moral-philosophical barrier against the State’s encroachment upon Society” they are a metaphorical barrier and not a real one.

Although State laws may indeed have some deterrent effect on potential thieves, for example, the reality of State laws consists not in the deterrent effects of those laws, but in their actual enforcement, that is, in the actual catching

and punishing of those who act contrary to the stipulations of such laws.

Perhaps Smith is to some extent correct about the deterrent effect of sincere belief in “moral law” (although I know from my own experience that such a belief is compatible with habitual shoplifting over a period of years). But how can we ever know to what extent people actually are deterred from thievery, for example, by their belief in “moral law”? Even if it were possible to identify with confidence certain persons as both sincere believers in “moral law” and scrupulous compliers with the requirements of such “law,” how can we tell which is the cause and which is the effect? In other words, how can we tell whether they scrupulously abide by “moral law” because they believe in it, or whether they believe in “moral law” because they have no desire to do what it forbids? Is there any real basis for Smith’s opinion that “moral laws” have a greater deterrent effect than State laws?

But even if Smith is right in thinking that belief in “moral laws” has great deterrent effect, this implies only that moral beliefs such as natural rights might be more useful than I asserted in *The Myth*. It does not confirm the objective

truth of such moral beliefs.

In reply to my statement that "... natural law and natural rights are human *inventions* (not *discoveries*) intended to further the interests of the inventors," Smith writes:

This is a peculiar claim indeed, coming as it does from a self-proclaimed demolisher of intellectual arrogance and pretension. Just where did Rollins acquire this information? How does he know the secret motivations of *every* defender of natural rights? Is it not at least *possible* that *one* defender of natural rights – somewhere, sometime—defended natural rights because he believed the doctrine to be *true*? If Rollins has the ability to peer into secret motives, then he might consider becoming a professional psychic. If, however, he acquires his knowledge like ordinary mortals, then it is appropriate to inquire where he learned this juicy tidbit.

Very funny, Smith.

But since you asked, I found this "juicy tidbit" in *The National Enquirer* (for inquiring minds) in a column by Jeanne Dixon. Thus, contrary to your snide insinuates, my claim in no way implies any claim to psychic powers on my part. So there.

But seriously ladies and germs, Smith has a point. How

do I know that each and every exponent of “natural rights” consciously intends to further his own interests, to feather his own nest, by means of expounding this idea? Well, when it comes down to it, I suppose I don’t know it (any more than Smith really knows that belief in “natural rights” has some significant deterrent effect against theft).

According to Smith,

Rollins stresses the conflicting claims made in the name of natural law. To this I say, so what? Conflicting claims occur in every intellectual discipline ... The diversity of natural law theories, strictly speaking, proves nothing. To the extent that diversity serves as an indicator, however, it suggests that natural law theory, far from being an irrational dogma (as Rollins suggests), is a vital, ongoing discipline.

Smith is right in saying that conflicting claims do not *prove* that “natural law theory” is an “irrational dogma.” And to this I say, so what? I devoted about two pages of *The Myth of Natural Rights* to illustrating the extent of such conflicting claims by citing numerous examples. I did not claim, however, that this *proves* “natural law theory” to be an “irrational dogma.” I did assert, in agreement with

the statement I quoted from another writer, that these conflicting claims indicate that “When libertarians claim that coercion is contrary to natural law (or the nature of man), they must realize that, aside from the truth or falsity of this assertion, such an appeal to ‘nature’ places them in a confused and nebulous political tradition.” The writer from whom I quoted this statement, incidentally, was George Smith (haven’t I heard of him somewhere?) in a book review published back in 1974. Does Smith’s current position that “natural law theory” is “a vital, ongoing discipline” mean that he now rejects his earlier view of it as “a confused and nebulous political tradition?” Or does he now believe both?

Rather than discuss Smith’s sketchy remarks on “ethical theory,” I will wait for his forthcoming (full blown?) argument for “natural law” and “natural rights.”

For the time being, at least, I’m going to ignore Murray Rothbard’s attack on “anarcho-pragmatists” and “anarcho-Stirnerites” since I am neither. I will simply point out that Rothbard did not respond to the criticism of his “natural rights” argument that I made in *The Myth of Natural Rights*.

Jeff Riggenbach perhaps overpraises *The Myth of Natural Rights*. In any case, I appreciate his appreciation of my modest venture in philosophical muckraking, and I see no selfish reason to contradict his assertion that “everyone interested in libertarian theory should acquire” a copy.

While Riggenbach’s remarks on *The Myth of Natural Rights* give me little, if anything, to complain about, there are some points in his essay that I find questionable. Because of a looming deadline and space limitations, I am going to confine myself to asking a series of questions, inspired by some of his statements. Here goes.

First, who (or what) is “the individual?” What does “unmitigated political freedom for the individual” mean—in practical terms? Can we really be sure that “the State” is “an institution whose only function is to ensure that at least some of the individuals within its reach will not be free?” Isn’t it possible for “the State” to increase the freedom of some individuals by limiting the freedom of some others? Is it possible to abolish “the State as such,” as opposed to destroying one state only to see it quickly replaced by a new State? Has any State in history ever been abolished for good? If, as Riggenbach asserts, “individual liberty can only

be achieved through the abolition of the State,” does this mean that one should therefore advocate such abolition? Or does it mean that “individual liberty” is impossible?

INSTEAD OF AN AFTERWORD (2008)

IF, IN THE QUARTER-CENTURY since the publication of *The Myth of Natural Rights*, George H. Smith, Murray Rothbard, Tibor Machan, or anyone else has succeeded in providing a proof of the objective, literal reality of “natural rights,” the news has yet to reach me. I can’t rule out the possibility. Such a miraculous event may have occurred. There has undoubtedly been much philosophical material published over the past few decades that I have never seen or heard about. But again, if somebody, somewhere, has managed to set forth some unassailable proof that natural rights exist, I simply didn’t get the memo. And so, I have not changed my mind. I still reject belief in the objective and literal reality of “natural rights.”

(Incidentally, George Smith’s promised case for natural

law and natural rights—the one that Sam Konkin said would appear in the same issue of *New Libertarian* as my “Reply to My Reviewers”—did not appear in that issue, nor did it appear in any subsequent issue that I saw.)

One publication defending “natural rights” which I have seen since the original edition of *The Myth of Natural Rights* came out is a literary oddity entitled *On the Steppes of Central Asia*. For some reason, I received a free copy of this book several years ago. It appears to be a novel—a novel largely consisting of philosophical and political dialogues—set in an imaginary anarchist society in post-Communist Mongolia.

Mongolia? Yes, Mongolia.

In any case, the author seems to be one Richard D. Fuerle, though his name appears only at the end of the book, while the name of the novel’s protagonist, “Matt Stone,” appears on the cover and the title page. Go figure.

Recently, I forced myself to plow through the thing (with a little skimming and skipping), just in case it delivered a knockdown argument for natural rights. But as far as I can tell, it doesn’t.

The author—let’s just agree to call him Fuerle – *does*

espouse a natural rights philosophy. Indeed, at one point, one of the Mongolian anarchist dialecticians confidently asserts that rights are “discovered, not created,” thereby flatly contradicting what I have long argued. But Fuerle’s *argument*, such as it is, seems to rest on some unproven assumptions.

In one respect, Fuerle’s argument is reminiscent of Paul Lepanto’s in *Return to Reason*. Lepanto, you’ll recall, is the guy who claims that people are “metaphysically equal.” Similarly, Fuerle says that people have “equal moral status.” But as far as I can tell, he doesn’t prove it.

This is not to say Fuerle doesn’t fashion an argument for his assertion. He does, sort of, albeit in a backhanded way, by trying to put the burden of proof on anyone who does not accept this assertion and act accordingly. Thus, starting from the unproven assumption that someone has a right to a piece of property, Fuerle submits that no one can prove that his (or her) desire to possess that piece of property should supersede the right of the original owner and, thereby, justify taking it away from him (or her). This is supposedly because it is impossible to compare the importance of the values of two different individuals (an idea

which, if I remember correctly, comes up in Austrian economics).

But even if this much is taken to be true (and I'm not conceding that it is), so what? Fuerle, like many moralists, assumes without proof that, for some unexplained reason, everybody has to be a moralist, that each and every one of us is somehow obligated to *justify* our actions with moral arguments. He has not answered the question that I posed to "Mr. Morality," Tibor Machan, in *The Myth of Natural Rights*, to wit: *Why does everyone have to play the moral game?*

In this connection, I will point out that Fuerle relies on the assumption that, whenever someone does something, he (or she) is supposedly expressing, at least implicitly, a general approval of doing that kind of thing. For example, if you commit robbery, you are supposedly expressing a general approval of robbery, so that, implicitly at least, you are agreeing that robbery committed against you is kosher. Of course, if you had good reason to believe you could commit robbery and remain undetected, this would not constitute a *practical* argument against committing robbery.

In any event, Fuerle doesn't prove this assumption; he

merely asserts it. Nor does he pause to ponder certain possible objections to his asserted assumption.

Take the case of an athlete who sets an Olympic record. If performing a certain kind of action implies general approval of people performing that kind of action, this would imply that he (or she) approves of other people doing the same kind of thing, i.e., setting an Olympic record in the same event. But what if it turns out that the record-holding athlete in question is proud, intensely competitive, even egomaniacal, and that consequently he (or she) *hates to be outdone*? In this case, he (or she) assuredly would *not* approve of another athlete doing the same kind of thing that he (or she) has done.

Anywise, with specific reference to “rights-violating” types of action, Fuerle makes things easy for himself by discussing “rights-violating” acts, such as robbery, only in the most general terms. But suppose someone commits robbery only of the rich, thereby expressing approval only of robbing the rich, and not of just any Tom, Dick or Harry (or Jane). Suppose further that this robber of the rich never becomes rich himself, perhaps because he opts to share his loot with the poor. In such a hypothetical case, Fuerle’s

argument that a robber's action implies approval of robbery in general, and therefore of robbery of himself, falls apart. And if there is any reason why one *must* think of rights-violating types of actions only in the most general terms and not in more limited terms such as in the preceding example, Fuerle hasn't bothered to tell us about it, much less prove it.

Another of Fuerle's unproven assumptions is that a modified Lockean theory of the origin of the right to own land (mixing one's labor with the land) is the true theory. He fails to mention, let alone refute, competing theories of land ownership, such as those espoused by Robert LeFevre (claiming a piece of land and putting up a boundary marker to notify the world of your claim), Joshua K. Ingalls (temporary ownership of only as much land as you can cultivate by your own labor) or Henry George ("public" ownership of land with private profit-making users of land paying "rent," i.e., the famous "single tax," to the government). Neither does he mention American Indian societies that reputedly had no individual land ownership (no individual right to *exclusive* use of land). Nor does he attempt to prove that such societies were violating natural

law and pissing off nature.

I suppose that's enough about Richard D. Fuerle and his unproven assumptions. At least for now.

Another occurrence following the publication of *The Myth of Natural Rights* was the publication of an essay by Hans-Hermann Hoppe in the September 1988 issue of *Liberty* magazine, allegedly containing an argument, if not for natural rights precisely, then for some sort of Lockean-libertarian rights. The "argument" seems to be that the mere fact that people engage in argumentation somehow implies that individuals own themselves and their homesteaded property.

In a "symposium" published in a subsequent issue of *Liberty*, Murray Rothbard joyously hailed Hoppe's "argument," calling it "a dazzling breakthrough for political philosophy in general and for libertarianism in particular." However, other participants did a good job of demolishing Hoppe's "argument." Check out the contributions by David Friedman, Leland Yeager, Ethan O. Waters, David Ramsay Steele, and Douglas B. Rassmussen.

One review of *The Myth of Natural Rights* that was, to my knowledge, unique, was published by Pat Hartman in

Salon: A Journal of Aesthetics (No. 21, 1993). In that review, she castigated me for ignoring “the law of karma.” Thus, as Hartman explained this “law,” if something bad is done to someone in this life, such as having one’s tape recorder stolen, it might be punishment for something he (or she) did in a previous life. For example, when Gandhi was assassinated, it might have been his due for having assassinated someone in a previous life. Likewise for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And, of course, for the fabled Six Million Jews murdered by the Nazis, who might have murdered Six Million Nazis in some previous incarnation.

So it follows that even if a dirty, rotten, amoral scoundrel should get away with murder (or whatever) in this life, he (or she) just might get his (or her) comeuppance in his (or her) next life, or the one after that, or ... whenever.

It’s true. I did ignore “the law of karma.” I don’t believe in reincarnation, or any other competing version of the afterlife. I don’t *deny* the truth of such theories, but being that I’ve never been dead (that I recall), I have no first-hand knowledge by which to verify any theory about life after death.

Furthermore, even if there is such a thing as reincarnation,

that would not imply the reality of “the law of karma.” For Hindus, I suppose, reincarnation and karma are a package deal. But I’m not a Hindu, and I can easily conceive of reincarnation without any moralistic goody-two-shoes “law of karma” attached.

Has anyone ever *proven* the reality of karma? Pat Hartman didn’t even try. As far as I know (though I’m no expert on Hinduism), karma is an unproven—and probably unprovable—Hindu dogma. And so I continue to ignore karma, as I expect I will in my next life as well.

PART 2

NOTHING SACRED:

**ROLLINS ON
THE HOLOCAUST**

THE HOLOCAUST AS SACRED COW
(1983)

Men become civilized, not in proportion to their willingness to believe, but in proportion to their readiness to doubt.

— H.L. Mencken

That one man or ten thousand or ten million men find a dogma acceptable does not argue for its soundness.

— David Starr Jordan

Dogma demands authority, rather than intelligent thought, as the source of opinion; it requires persecution of heretics and hostility to unbelievers; it asks of its disciples that they should inhibit natural kindness in favor of systematic hatred.

— Bertrand Russell

EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST. In barest essentials, the Nazi State, on Adolf Hitler's orders, planned and attempted to kill all European Jews, and succeeded in killing six million of them, mainly in gas chambers in such death camps as Auschwitz and Treblinka. Everybody knows this.

A few years ago, I got into a discussion with the brother of a friend of mine. He had recently returned from Israel, where he had been living for a few years. (He is not Jewish, but had gone to Israel with his Israeli-Jewish wife.) Eventually we ended up debating the merits of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and, in the course of that debate, he brought up the six million Jews who, so the familiar story goes, were killed by the Nazis. Since a few years before this I had become a skeptic regarding the Holocaust in general and the six million Jewish victims in particular, I asked him if he was sure that the Nazis had killed six million Jews. He then told me of a visit he had made to Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the "martyrs and heroes" of the Holocaust. He told me that he had seen the names of the victims of the

Nazis. I asked if he had counted the names. Of course, he had not, but he informed me that he didn't need to count the names to know that there were six million of them.

This fellow's remarkable ability to determine the number of names at Yad Vashem without counting becomes even more remarkable if one knows that, in fact, Yad Vashem has thus far managed to collect only about three million names of supposed Jewish victims of the Nazis. According to *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Dial Torgerson in a 25 October 1980 story from Jerusalem: "In the somber Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, are the names of nearly 3 million Jews who died in the Nazi death camps of the 1930s and '40s." Yet, despite this, my friend's brother somehow "knew" that he had seen six million names of Jewish victims at Yad Vashem! This fellow's will-to-believe in the Six Million murdered Jews was so strong that he imagined a non-fact (the six million names at Yad Vashem) to give support to his belief. Such are the absurdities of which a true believer is capable.

But this is by no means a unique case of dogmatism. For many people, the six million figure is not a fact, although they call it that; rather it is an article of faith, believed in

not because of compelling evidence in its support, but because of compelling psychological reasons. For such people, the six million figure is a Sacred Truth, not to be doubted and, if necessary, to be defended with dogmatism, mysticism, illogic, fantasy or even downright lies. (Such pious frauds, or holy lies, have a venerable pedigree, going back to the early Christians who attributed their writings to other persons better known and more revered than themselves, to the pre-Christian Jewish writers who forged pro-Jewish versions of the *Sybilline Oracles*, and to even earlier true believers.)

In April of 1982, controversy swirled about a Los Angeles teacher, George Ashley, who had reportedly told a class of students that the number of Jewish deaths in the Holocaust had been greatly exaggerated, that, perhaps, one million had died, rather than the familiar six million. Among the responses to the news reports of Ashley's heresy was a letter published in the *Los Angeles Times* signed by one Joseph Rosenfeld, which proclaimed: "All reputable scholars have accepted the 6 million figure—a figure reached painfully and painstakingly by poring over countless lists of concentration camp victims, family histories, body counts,

and every conceivable heartbreaking method available to social scientists and historians.”

But Rosenfeld’s story of how the six million figure was arrived at is pure fantasy. In fact, as early as 1943, two years before the end of the Holocaust, the narrator of Ben Hecht’s propaganda play *We Will Never Die*, was already claiming that two million Jews had been killed and that four million more would die by the end of the war. Thus, the six million figure was never more than a very rough estimate of Jewish deaths. How could it have been anything more, given that, as Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel wrote in their 1967 book, *The Incomparable Crime*, “No figures have been published giving the numbers of Jews left alive in the Soviet Union; the estimates differ widely, and lie between 1.6 and 2.6 million.” Of course, the number of Jews killed in the Soviet Union is a correlative of the number of Jews left alive. The more Jews that were killed, the fewer that would have been left alive. The fewer that were killed, the more that would have been left alive. If the estimates of the numbers of Jews left alive in the Soviet Union differ by as much as one million, then, by implication, the estimates of the numbers of Jews killed in the Soviet Union

must also differ by as much as one million. And so I repeat: Rosenfeld's story of how the six million figure was "painfully and painstakingly" arrived at is pure fantasy. It is akin to, though not nearly as entertaining as, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Rosenfeld's assertion that all reputable historians have accepted the six million figure smacks of a tautology. If he defines "reputable historians" to mean "historians who have accepted the six million figure," then what he says is, by definition, true, but also trivial because there is no reason why anyone else should accept such an obviously loaded definition. On the other hand, if he does not define his terms in a loaded manner, then he has the problem of explaining how French-Jewish historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, in an essay devoted primarily to criticizing revisionism regarding the Holocaust, could say that "nothing must be considered sacred. The figure of the six million Jews exterminated, which originated at Nuremberg [not true, as I've already pointed out] has nothing sacred or definitive about it, and many historians arrived at a somewhat lower figure."

Among the historians who have arrived at lower figures are two prominent Holocaust historians (hereinafter

Holocaustorians), Raul Hilberg and Gerald Reitlinger, both firm believers in Nazi genocide and the gas chambers. Hilberg estimated that about 5.1 million European Jews died during World War II, while Reitlinger estimated between 4.2 and 4.6 million dead. An appendix to Nora Levin's *The Holocaust* (pages 715-718) gives the estimates of Hilberg and Reitlinger as well as the more conventional estimates of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry Regarding the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine (5,721,500) and of Jacob Lestchinsky (5,957,000). As Levin explains:

Reitlinger's considerably lower estimates are traceable largely to what he calls "highly conjectural estimates" of losses in territory presently controlled by the Soviet Union and losses in Romania. He has also pointed to the "widely differing estimates of the Jewish populations of Russia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Balkans" before the war.

One wonders if Rosenfeld would dismiss Hilberg and Reitlinger as disreputable. If so, then it would only be fair to dismiss Rosenfeld as an incorrigible dogmatist.

In any case, Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal, "the aveng-

ing angel of the Holocaust,” has his own fantasy about the six million figure. In the wake of a brief but favorable commentary by British author Colin Wilson on a booklet titled *Did Six Million Really Die?*, Wiesenthal wrote a letter, published in the April 1975 issue of *Books and Bookmen*. According to Wiesenthal: “Scientific researchers and historians in various countries reached the conclusion, based on German documents, that the figure of exterminated Jews was between five million eight hundred thousand and six million two hundred thousand. They agreed to a round figure of six million.”

I think I’ve already given enough information about the widely divergent estimates of Jewish deaths to show that this is just another fairy story. The only question is: does Wiesenthal himself actually believe it?

Another letter published in the *Los Angeles Times* concerning the aforementioned Ashley affair was signed by one Robert Glasser, self-identified as “the Anti-Defamation League’s staff person handling the case of George Ashley.” Glasser insisted that “the question regarding this instructor is not ... one of academic freedom. It is simply a fact that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, and any attempt

to teach otherwise is akin to teaching that 1 plus 1 equals 3.” But, as I’ve already demonstrated, the six million figure is not a fact; it is, at best, an estimate, an estimate disputed even by some prominent Holocaustorians. If Glasser is not simply a tale-spinner, his assertion can best be explained as a result of ignorance and dogmatism, which so frequently go hand-in-hand. As Montaigne said, “Nothing is so firmly believed as that which we least know.”

In any case, Robert Glasser is not the only ADLer in L.A. given to making dogmatic assertions about the six million figure. *The Los Angeles Times* of 3 May 1981 quoted ADL attorney David Lehrer’s comment on the claim that the Holocaust is a myth: “It’s a historical fact and we’re not going to debate it. Are there any reputable historians who deny that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust?”

Yes, Mr. Lehrer, there are “reputable” historians, i.e., Holocaustorians, who deny that six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. But, in any case, if the Holocaust is a historical fact, rather than an article of faith, why is Lehrer unwilling to debate it? Is it not because, as Learned Hand said, “All discussion, all debate, all dissidence tends to question, and in consequence to upset existing convictions”?

Apparently, Lehrer cannot tolerate the thought that existing convictions about the Holocaust might be upset by open discussion and debate, and so he simply refuses to debate.

My point that the six million figure is sacred to many people is explicitly confirmed by the oath sworn by attendees of the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in June of 1981: “We vow we shall never let the sacred memory of our perished 6 million be scorned or erased.” But the belief in the six million figure is only one of the tenets comprising what might be called the Holocaust Creed. And, though some may not regard the six million figure as sacred, they may nevertheless consider other tenets of the Holocaust Creed to be sacred and unquestionable.

For example, Eugene Wetzler, a Jewish Marxist, has written an essay largely devoted to attacking Noam Chomsky, the libertarian socialist and MIT linguist, because of his defense of the civil liberties of French Holocaust revisionist Robert Faurisson. Wetzler writes:

The often quoted figure of 6,000,000 may be an underestimate. It was the figure given by the Allied Tribunal at Nuremberg. Studies of objective facts that tend to lower or raise the figure are acceptable ... None of this

brings into question the fact that genocide was indeed committed.

For Wetzler, to raise or lower the six million figure is acceptable, but to bring into question “the fact” of genocide is not. Thus, for Wetzler, “the fact” of genocide is a Sacred Truth, not to be doubted or questioned.

But I propose to question this Sacred Truth of genocide. Did the Nazi State attempt to kill all European Jews? Consider this passage from Goebbels’s diary of 27 March 1942, which is sometimes cited as evidence of Goebbels’s supposed knowledge of a program to exterminate all Jews:

Beginning with Lublin, the Jews in the General Government [German-occupied central Poland] are now being evacuated eastward. The procedure is a pretty barbaric one and not to be described here more definitely. Not much will remain of the Jews. On the whole it can be said that about 60 per cent of them will have to be liquidated whereas only about 40 per cent can be used for forced labor.

Assuming the authenticity of the passage, and assuming that “liquidated” meant “killed,” then Goebbels was projecting the killing of about 60 per cent of the Jews, with

the others to be used for forced labor. While such an interpretation does give support to a charge of mass murder committed by certain Nazis, it does not support a charge of genocide, of total extermination.

Now consider the postwar confessions of Rudolph Höss, commandant of Auschwitz. Höss repeatedly said that in June of 1941 he received from Himmler an order for the total extermination of European Jewry. There are, however, a number of oddities in Höss's confessions, including his reference to an "extermination camp" named "Wolzek," which nobody else on Planet Earth ever heard of. Also, the confessions Höss made as a prisoner of the British and at Nuremberg differ in some respects from the confessions he later made as a prisoner of the Polish Communists. For example, in his later confessions he reduced his estimate of the number of Jews killed at Auschwitz from about 2.5 million to about 1.25 million. And he modified his story about the extermination order he said he received from Himmler. While he still claimed to have received such an order, he also claimed that Himmler had soon modified the order to exempt from extermination Jews capable of war work. As Höss put it:

Originally all the Jews transported to Auschwitz on the authority of Eichmann's office were, in accordance with orders of the Reichsführer SS, to be destroyed without exception. This also applied to the Jews from Upper Silesia, but on the arrival of the first transports of German Jews, the order was given that all those who were able-bodied, whether men or women, were to be segregated and employed in war work. This happened before the construction of the women's camp, since the need for a women's camp in Auschwitz only arose as a result of this order. (*Commandant of Auschwitz*, Popular Library, pp. 178-179.)

Putting it more succinctly, Höss wrote that, "When the Reichsführer SS modified his original Extermination Order of 1941, by which all Jews without exception were to be destroyed, and ordered instead that those capable of work were to be separated from the rest and employed in the armaments industry, Auschwitz became a Jewish camp."

Whatever one may think of Höss's confessions, it is a fact, acknowledged by nearly all Holocaustorians, that many Jews were used by the Nazis for forced labor. So, if there was an extermination program, it is hard to see how it could have been a program for total extermination, for

genocide. Thus, Eugene Wetzler's unquestionable "fact" of genocide is questionable indeed.

Of course, dogmatism comes as easily to a Marxist intellectual like Wetzler as swimming does to a fish. But consider the way in which 34 French historians responded to the heresies of Holocaust revisionist Robert Faurisson. These historians signed a declaration, published in *Le Monde* on 21 February 1979, which concluded thusly:

Every one is free to interpret a phenomenon like the Hitlerite genocide according to his own philosophy. Everyone is free to compare it with other enterprises of murder committed earlier, at the same time, later. Everyone is free to offer such or such kind of explanation; everyone is free, to the limit, to imagine or to dream that these monstrous deeds did not take place. Unfortunately they did take place and no one can deny their existence without committing an outrage on the truth. It is not necessary to ask how technically such mass murder was possible. It was technically possible, seeing that it took place. That is the required point of departure of every historical inquiry on this subject. This truth it behooves us to remember in simple terms: there is not and there cannot be a debate about the existence of the gas chambers.

But who, other than two-legged sheep, would take seriously such a dogmatic declaration? For all I know, there may have been gas chambers used for the mass murder of Jews in some of the Nazi camps. But I refuse to believe in such gas chambers merely because some gang of would-be intellectual dictators tries to lay down the law. As the late novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand once said, speaking through John Galt, the hero of her novel, *Atlas Shrugged*,

Independence is the recognition of the fact that yours is the responsibility of judgment and nothing can help you escape it—that no substitute can do your thinking, as no pinchhitter can live your life—that the vilest form of self-abasement and self-destruction is the subordination of your mind to the mind of another, the acceptance of an authority over your brain, the acceptance of his assertions as facts, his say-so as truth, his edicts as middle-man between your consciousness and your existence.

The insistence of 34 French historians that the mass murder of Jews in gas chambers was technically possible because “it took place” is reminiscent of the argument of Joseph Glanvill in *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681): “Matters of fact well proved ought not to be denied, because we

cannot conceive how they can be performed. Nor is it a reasonable method of inference, first to presume the thing impossible, and thence to conclude that the fact cannot be proved." What were the "matters of fact well proved" that Glanvill thought should not be denied? They were the well proved "facts" of the existence of witches and witchcraft.

It should be pointed out, however, that, unlike those who denied the existence of witches and witchcraft because, as Glanvill said, they "presumed" it to be impossible, Robert Faurisson does not simply presume the Nazi gas chambers to have been impossible. Rather, he presents arguments based on allegedly factual information about the properties of Zyklon B, the gas allegedly used for mass murder at Auschwitz. For example, in "The Gas Chambers of Auschwitz Appear to be Physically Inconceivable," (*The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1981), Faurisson writes that, "This gas is inflammable and explosive; there must not be any naked flame in the vicinity and, most definitely, it is necessary not to smoke." He then cites the testimony of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss that immediately after opening the door of a gas chamber, following the gassing, prisoners would begin to remove the corpses, smoking

and eating as they worked. Faurisson asks:

How could they smoke in a place with vapors from an inflammable and explosive gas? How could all of that be done near the doors of the crematory ovens in which they were burning thousands of bodies? [The gas chambers were allegedly housed in the same buildings as the crematory ovens.] Who are these beings endowed with supernatural powers? From what world do these tremendous creatures come? Do they belong to our world which is ruled by inflexible, known laws of the physicist, the doctor, the chemist, the toxicologist? Or do they indeed belong to the world of the imagination where all those laws, even the law of gravity, are overcome by magic or disappear by enchantment?

Assuming that Faurisson is right about the inflammability and explosiveness of Zyklon B, he has raised some pertinent (and impertinent) questions about the physical possibility of the notorious Nazi gas chambers, questions which deserve to be answered by those who maintain that those gas chambers really existed. But, rather than answer Faurisson's questions, 34 French historians dogmatically insist that the alleged mass murder with Zyklon B was possible because "it took place." Such dogmatism regarding the gas chambers

is the intellectual equivalent of the dogmatism of Catholic historians who insist that it was possible for the sun to plunge toward the earth above Fatima because “it took place,” as attested by thousands of eyewitnesses. As some people believe in the Holy Ghost, others believe in the Holocaust.

However, Lucy Dawidowicz, one of the leading Jewish Holocaustorians, actually approves of the French historians’ dogmatic declaration, which, she says, “could well serve as a guide to American historians.” Dawidowicz would undoubtedly be pleased, therefore, to know that some American academics have reacted to Holocaust revisionism with the same degree of open-mindedness as was displayed by the astronomers who refused to look through Galileo’s telescope but nevertheless “knew” that he could not possibly have discovered any new heavenly bodies with it. One of the reactions to newspaper reports about Holocaust revisionist Arthur Butz and his book, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, was a letter to the *New York Times* by one Professor Gerard R. Wolfe of New York University. Wolfe said that Northwestern University, where Butz teaches electrical engineering and computer sciences,

should bring him up on charges of “academic incompetence” and “moral turpitude” for having written a book whose title he gave as *Fabrication of a Hoax*. Wolfe had seen the *New York Times* story which reported this incorrect title, but he had not seen the book itself. Noam Chomsky has written that, “No rational person will condemn a book, however outlandish its conclusions may seem, without at least reading it carefully ... checking the documentation offered, and so on.” But Professor Wolfe is not a rational person, at least, not in relation to Holocaust revisionism.

Another true believer who was moved to comment on “the Faurisson affair” was a Michael Blankfort of Los Angeles, perhaps the same Michael Blankfort who was a playwright, novelist, and screenwriter, and who, in an interview given shortly before his death in July 1982, spoke of a visit he made to Israel in 1948 which resulted in “the onset of a devotion to Israel that is without parallel in my life.” In a letter published in *The Nation*, Blankfort wrote, “Anyone who claims the Holocaust never happened is insane. Why shouldn’t a university fire a crazy teacher who might harm his students with his criminal delusions?” Coincidentally, iconoclastic psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, in *The Manufacture*

of Madness, mentioned a doctor of the Sorbonne who wrote in 1609 that the witches' sabbat was an objective fact, disbelieved only by those of unsound mind. The parallel is obvious, and ominous.

Blankfort's dogmatic assertion that anyone who says the Holocaust never happened is insane, is an example of one of the most common ploys of Holocaust dogmatists, a fallacy Ayn Rand identified as "the Argument from Intimidation," which, as she explained,

... is not an argument, but a means of forestalling debate and extorting an opponent's agreement with one's undiscussed notions. It is a method of by-passing logic by means of psychological pressure.

... the psychological pressure method consists of threatening to impeach an opponent's character by means of his argument, thus impeaching the argument without debate.

The essential characteristic of the Argument from Intimidation is its appeal to moral self-doubt and its reliance on the fear, guilt or ignorance of the victim. It is used in the form of an ultimatum demanding that the victim renounce a given idea without discussion, under threat of being considered morally unworthy. The

pattern is always: Only those who are evil (dishonest, heartless, insensitive, ignorant, etc.) can hold such an idea.

In Blankfort's case, "the Argument from Intimidation" took the form: Only those who are insane can hold such an idea, i.e., the idea that the Holocaust never happened. But, as Rand said, "The Argument from Intimidation is a confession of intellectual impotence."

Another true believer is my very own Congressman, Representative Henry A. Waxman. In a column published in *The B'nai B'rith Messenger* of Los Angeles, Waxman waxed abusive:

To be realistic, we must note that the recognition of the horrors of the Holocaust in civilized circles has been sharply answered by an incredible repudiation of the Holocaust by those who would destroy us. How perverse, how deranged and utterly sick are the people behind the "debunking of the Holocaust?"

Who are these people who offer prizes to anyone who can prove a single Jew died in the concentration camps?

It appears that Waxman does not even know what he's

talking about. The Institute for Historical Review has offered a reward of \$50,000 to the first person to prove to its satisfaction, in accord with American legal standards, that Jews were gassed to death at Auschwitz, but no one has offered prizes “to anyone who can prove that a single Jew died in the concentration camps.” In any case, Waxman’s response to Holocaust revisionism is simply a variation of “the Argument from Intimidation”: Only the perverse, the deranged or the utterly sick can engage in debunking the Holocaust. Another confession of intellectual impotence.

One more variation of “the Argument from Intimidation” was employed by British writer Alan “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner” Sillitoe in a letter published in *Books and Bookmen*, April 1975. Responding to Colin Wilson’s aforementioned favorable comments on *Did Six Million Really Die?*, Sillitoe declared: “To disbelieve that an act of colossal and monstrous injustice has been committed is an act of injustice in itself.” In other words: Only the unjust can disbelieve the Holocaust. Yet another confession of intellectual impotence. Some true believers, however, are not content merely to censure Holocaust heretics; they want to censor them as well. For example, Professor Frank-

lin H. Littell of the religious studies department at Temple University, who is a member of the U.S. Council on the Holocaust, warned participants in a Jerusalem symposium on anti-Semitism that the damage being done by revisionists [*what* damage?] should be taken seriously. According to *The Jerusalem Post* International Edition, 19–25 October 1980, Littell announced, “You can’t ‘discuss’ the truth of the Holocaust. That’s a distortion of free speech,” and was applauded when he declared, “The U.S. should emulate West Germany, which outlaws such public exercises. We now have to deal with a minimum of violence; later, we’ll have to fight them in the streets.” Thus, in true Orwellian fashion, Littell declares: Censorship is free speech. But, as Ayn Rand wrote in her book, *For the New Intellectual*:

Let no man posture as an advocate of freedom if he claims the right to establish his version of a good society where individual dissenters are to be suppressed by means of physical force. Let no man posture as an intellectual if he proposes to elevate a thug into the position of final authority over the intellect.

No advocate of reason can claim the right to force his ideas on others. No advocate of the free mind can claim the right to force the minds of others. No rational

society, no cooperation, no agreement, no understanding, no discussion are possible among men who propose to substitute guns for rational persuasion.

Since Littell proposes precisely to substitute guns for rational persuasion, no discussion of the truth of the Holocaust is possible *with him*. So I have only one thing to say to Littell: just try and stop me from discussing the truth of the Holocaust! Wendell Phillips once said: "If there is anything in the universe that can't stand discussion, let it crack." And I say: If the Sacred Truth of the Holocaust can't stand discussion, let it crack.

Another confirmation of my point about the sacredness of the Holocaust for true believers can be found in what I call the canonization of the survivors. With rare exceptions, such as Roman Polanski, Holocaust survivors are seen as Semitic saints. Instead of halos over their heads, though, concentration camp numbers tattooed on their arms serve as the insignia of their sainthood. This canonization of survivors is reflected in their immunity from criticism, or even skepticism, by the minions of the mass media of communications. How often have you seen or read any mass-medium journalist doubting or disputing the word of

a Holocaust survivor? Rarely, if ever, I'll wager.

Yet another manifestation of the sacredness of the Holocaust is revealed in the headline of a *Los Angeles Times* story about the increasing numbers of people visiting the site of the Dachau concentration camp. The headline: "Record Number Visit Shrine to Nazi Victims." Thus, Dachau is a shrine, one of many, to which the pious make pilgrimages. But if for so many people the Holocaust is a sacred cow, a matter of blind faith, the question is: Why? I think that Jewish psychohistorian Howard F. Stein has given at least part of the answer in "The Holocaust and the Myth of the Past as History," (*The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1980):

...why, for Jews, the Holocaust? What, in sanctifying the Holocaust, do Jews not want to know about that grim era? Whatever be the "facts" of the Holocaust, it is experienced as a necessity, as part of a recurrent historic pattern. Reality must be made to conform to fantasy. Whatever did happen in the Holocaust must be made to conform to the group-fantasy of what ought to have happened. For the Jews, the term "Holocaust" does not simply denote a single catastrophic era in history, but is a grim metaphor for *the meaning of Jewish history*.

... the “reality” of the Holocaust is inextricably part of the myth in which it is woven—and for which myth it serves as further confirmatory evidence—for the timeless Jewish theme that the world is in conspiracy to annihilate them, one way or another, at least eventually.

Jean-Louis Tristani, one of the contributors to the book *Intolerable Intolerance*, gives an analysis which I think complements that of Howard Stein:

The Holocaust, which represents one of the most popular themes of contemporary Judaism, thus falls into a long tradition. It is bound up with what it would be necessary to call the “invention of Israel,” of the Israel of today. The Hitlerian genocide perpetrated in the gas chambers, the Exodus and the creation of the Israeli state, do they not attain in effect the lofty meaning which the servitude in Egypt, the Exodus, and the installation in the Promised Land once had?

Judaic scholar Jacob Neusner, in his book, *Stranger at Home*, treats the Holocaust as part of a myth of “Holocaust and redemption.”

The myth is that “the Holocaust” is a unique event, which, despite its “uniqueness,” teaches compelling

lessons about why Jews must be Jewish, and, in consequence of that fact, do certain things known in advance (which have nothing to do with the extermination of European Jewry). The redemptive part of the myth maintains that the State of Israel is the “guarantee” that “the Holocaust” will not happen again, that it is that State and its achievements which give meaning and significance, even fulfillment, to “the Holocaust.”

... so if you want to know why be Jewish, you have to remember that (1) the gentiles wiped out the Jews of Europe, so are not to be trusted, let alone joined; (2) if there had been “Israel,” meaning the State of Israel, there would have been no “Holocaust”; and so (3) for the sake of your personal safety, you have to “support Israel.”

If we synthesize these three analyses, we get the following conclusions: (1) the Holocaust is a metaphor for the meaning of Jewish history, that is, that the world is in conspiracy to annihilate the Jews; (2) the Holocaust is part of a myth, comparable to earlier Jewish myths, encompassing the Holocaust, the Exodus and the Rebirth of the State of Israel; and (3) this myth explains to Jews why they must support the State of Israel.

Thus, it is not surprising to find Alfred Lilienthal reporting, in *The Zionist Connection*:

To ingrain the State of Israel more deeply into the Jewish consciousness, the International Association of Conservative Rabbis incorporated the events of the last 2,000 years in prayer. The death of the six million as well as the establishment of Israel, the June war, and the reunification of Jerusalem was all woven into the revised liturgy.

One Holocaust prayer can be found in Bernard Martin's *Prayer in Judaism*. It is "An Elegy for the Six Million" by David Polish. (Polish, incidentally, makes use of numerous variations on the mythic theme that the fat of murdered Jews was used by the Nazis to make soap.)

As Howard Stein says, the Holocaust—the alleged Nazi extermination of European Jewry—is a metaphor for the meaning of Jewish history. The question is: is it anything more than a metaphor? In his book *Heresies*, Thomas Szasz says, "Most of the heresies in the book . . . pertain to matters where language is used in two ways, literally and metaphorically: where the true believer speaks metaphorically but claims that he asserts literal truths; and where heresy

may consist in no more than insisting that a metaphorical truth may be a literal falsehood.”

Szasz, however, believes that the metaphor of the Holocaust expresses a literal truth, so let me be the one to commit the heresy of insisting that the metaphorical truth of the Holocaust may be a literal falsehood.

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REVISING HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

AUTHOR'S NOTE (2008)

IN 1974, ABOUT FIVE YEARS BEFORE I got interested in Holocaust revisionism, I discovered historical revisionism, particularly those strains regarding World War II and other wars. My interest grew out of my broader involvement in the early libertarian movement (which should be distinguished from the Randian or “objectivist” movement). Libertarians such as Murray Rothbard, along with his friends, associates, and disciples, were promoting revisionism regarding various American wars in an effort to debunk or at least defang the propaganda and mythology that had been used to justify military intervention as a means of legitimizing State power. (Incidentally, one of these libertarian revisionists was Roy Childs, who was the “libertarian friend” to whom

I refer in the opening of “Revising Holocaust Revisionism.” Since Roy is dead, it occurs to me that it might not matter that I should mention that now.)

Anyway, before I waded into the swamp that has come to be known as “Holocaust revisionism”—or “denialism,” as the kids say these days—I was already interested in and sympathetic to other aspects of World War II revisionist scholarship and other brands of revisionist history. I cut my chops on William Henry Chamberlin’s *America’s Second Crusade*, which I reviewed for Academic Associates’ *Book News* when George H. Smith was the editor. I read *Containment and Revolution*, an anthology of Cold War revisionist essays edited by the pre-apostate David Horowitz, which I reviewed in the pages of *Books for Libertarians*. I read *Harry Elmer Barnes: Learned Crusader*, which discussed Barnes’ seminal contribution to twentieth century war revisionism. I read James J. Martin’s *American Liberalism and World Politics, 1931–1941*, and his essay collection *Revisionist Viewpoints*. Other books informing my early study of broadly “revisionist” history include *Containment and Change*, by Charles Oglesby, *Free World Colossus*, also by David Horowitz, *The Lusitania*, by Colin Simpson, *The De-*

struction of Dresden, by David Irving, and *American Power and the New Mandarins*, by Noam Chomsky. The point being that I was already something of a revisionist before my first brush with “Holocaust revisionism.”

It may be worth noting that the term “Holocaust revisionism,” as used in this essay, is actually an anachronism when used in regard to the early and middle 1970s. “The Holocaust” did not become a household word until the late ’70s, when the television miniseries *Holocaust* was broadcast. Only after that event did the term “Holocaust revisionism” begin to gain currency in some circles. Thus, circa 1974, when I first encountered “Holocaust revisionism,” it was actually referred to in such terms as “revisionism regarding the Nazi concentration camps and the alleged extermination of Jews by gassing.” Whatever else may be said about the later term, it is certainly shorter.

I wrote “Revising Holocaust Revisionism” in 1983 for Sam Konkin’s *New Libertarian* magazine. However, Konkin, after asking that I expand the piece, which I did, then held it for a year or two and ended up shelving it indefinitely. Seeing as Mr. Konkin has since gone on to feed the worms, this is its first publication.

REVISING HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM (1983)

I N THE EARLY 1970S, I WATCHED the TV-movie *QBVII* with a libertarian friend. The movie was based on the novel of the same name by Leon Uris, which, in turn, was based on an actual court case in England, in which Uris and his publisher were sued for libel over some statements made in Uris's earlier novel, *Exodus*, about a Polish-born doctor who had worked as such while imprisoned at Auschwitz.

Watching this Holocaust-related teledrama inspired my friend to tell me that James J. Martin, the revisionist historian, did not believe the widely accepted claim that the Nazis killed six million Jews. I have no vivid recollection of how I reacted to this intellectual bombshell, but I assume that surprise and puzzlement were dominant elements.

In any case, my first substantial encounter with Holocaust revisionism came during the Labor Day weekend of 1974 when I attended one day of a two-day seminar on World War II revisionism given by none other than James

J. Martin. It so happened that Dr. Martin devoted a good deal of time to presenting (quite uncritically I realize in retrospect) some of the writings of former Buchenwald inmate and pioneer Holocaust revisionist, Paul Rassinier. (It was the first time I had ever heard of Rassinier and in my notes I misspelled his name "Recinier.") Thus I became acquainted with some of the reasons for doubt about the Holocaust. I was by no means immediately converted into an outright denier, but my curiosity and skepticism were aroused.

A few months after attending Dr. Martin's seminar, I spotted a classified ad in *Reason* magazine for a publication called *Did Six Million Really Die?* I recognized the address as that of an English libertarian with whom I had previously corresponded. I sent off a dollar and subsequently received a booklet with the above-mentioned title as well as a photocopy of a review of the booklet by David Ramsey Steele, apparently another English libertarian. After reading and re-reading this material I became sufficiently intrigued by the possibility that the Holocaust might be a propaganda fabrication that I began to acquire and study the standard historical literature on the Holocaust,

which I had never before bothered to read, as well as the burgeoning literature of Holocaust revisionism. I decided, with perhaps unrealistic ambitiousness, to determine for myself “the truth” about the Holocaust. Almost a decade later, my study of the controversy continues and I have yet to determine to my own satisfaction exactly what “the truth” about the Holocaust is. As of now, I am a skeptic regarding both the Holocaust *and* Holocaust revisionism.

For reasons which can be gleaned from the above introductory remarks, it was with much interest that I read James J. Martin’s essay, “On the Latest Crisis Provoked by Revisionism” (New Libertarian, No. 10), which was in effect a defense of the Institute for Historical Review’s promotion of Holocaust revisionism. In his characteristically biting style, Dr. Martin made several points with which I could not take exception. Still, there were a number of things that bothered me. I propose to discuss some of the points in his essay—points which are, in my view, open to criticism. “Revisionism” is sometimes defined in terms of setting the record straight. Thus, I see no reason why the writings of avowed revisionists should be exempt from revisionism.

Dr. Martin is on solid ground in pointing out the “Stalinist

and post-Stalinist vested interests in the Holocaust saga.” Zionists are by no means alone in exploiting the Holocaust for political purposes. In fact, I would point out that the political establishments of various Western democracies also find in the Holocaust a useful ruse in justifying their legitimacy to citizens. But there are a number of problems with Dr. Martin’s discussion of the Communists and the Holocaust.

According to Dr. Martin:

...there are well-developed Communist legends of six million murdered in ‘gas chambers’ by the Germans and their allies, 1941-1944, though these largely ignore that any Jews were involved. The Polish Communist tales downplay if not exclude Jews among the deceased, and insist the dead were all Polish gentiles. The Soviet six-million story alleges they were all Soviet citizens of some ethnic composition or other and as time goes by virtually omits Jews from the totals of the dead.

But I have yet to encounter any such Soviet six-million story as alleged by Dr. Martin. Apparently there *is* a Soviet *seven*-million story. In *The Holocaust and the Historians*, Lucy Dawidowicz writes: “According to the *Great Soviet*

Encyclopedia, Soviet military and civilian losses amounted to some 20 million. Other sources estimate Soviet losses at about 11 million combatants and 7 million civilians.” But this Soviet seven-million story does not allege that all the victims were killed in gas chambers, nor does it allege that all the dead were Slavs. Dawidowicz quotes a 23 June 1976 *Pravda* story about the unveiling of a monument at Babi Yar:

A terrible tragedy broke out at Babi Yar at the end of September 1941. Tens of thousands of totally blameless, peaceful residents of Kiev, including many children, women and old people, were shot to death there within a period of a few days. The invaders murdered Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Byelorussians, Poles.

It is true, as Dr. Martin asserts and as Lucy Dawidowicz complains, that the Soviets commonly fail to specify Jews as among the Soviet victims of the Nazis, but it is not true, as Dr. Martin alleges that the Soviets go so far as to claim that all the victims were Slavs.

There *is*, as Dr. Martin says, a Polish Communist six-million story, but contrary to what Dr. Martin says, it is *not* a story of six million Poles killed by the Nazis in gas

chambers, nor is it a story of six million Polish gentiles killed by the Nazis. The alleged six million Polish dead are officially divided into four categories, the second half of which includes “victims of death camps, raids, executions, annihilation of ghettos, etc.” The official total for this category is 3,577,000 deaths. Thus, the Polish Communists claim a maximum of 3.5 million Poles killed in gas chambers. Furthermore, while the Polish Communists, like their Soviet counterparts, commonly fail to specify Jews as being among the victims, the Polish Communist six million story does not explicitly exclude Polish Jews from among the dead, nor does it insist the dead were all Polish gentiles. In his essay, Dr. Martin did not bother to cite any sources that might substantiate his claims about the Polish Communist six million story, but in a letter of 30 July 1976 he wrote:

A booklet I have in hand issued in English from Warsaw titled *Transfer of the German Population from Poland*, asserts on p. 1 of the introduction that “Six million Polish citizens were murdered,” and doesn’t in the slightest mention Jews. Later on it alleges that many Jews were “exterminated,” too, so their story must be a 12 million and not a six million legend.

To be clear, even if the booklet “doesn’t in the slightest mention Jews” in claiming six million dead, that is still not the same thing as explicitly excluding Jews from among the dead or insisting that all the dead were Polish gentiles. But according to Dr. Martin himself, the booklet *does* mention Jews. He says it “alleges that many Jews were ‘exterminated,’ too.” Note that the word “too” is apparently Dr. Martin’s own and not the booklet’s. (He doesn’t put it in quotation marks.) Thus Dr. Martin really has no basis for concluding that the Polish Communists must have a 12-million story (six million Poles plus six million Jews). In fact, the Polish Communist and Jewish six-million stories overlap. Each of them includes the three million Polish Jews who were allegedly killed by the Nazis.

According to Dr. Martin, “It was the Red Army which captured the German concentration camps in the East, and made the first astronomic claims of people done to death, not the publicity departments of the Zionist organizations.” But, to my knowledge, the first astronomic claims of people done to death that originated with the Red Army were made in late July and early August of 1944, shortly after the capture of the Maidanek concentration camp near Lublin,

Poland. (It was claimed that about 1.5 million people were killed at Maidanek.) And the Zionist publicity departments were making astronomic claims of people done to death as early as a year before the Red Army captured Maidanek. For example, on 26 August 1943, the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress made public their publication, *Hitler's Ten Year War on the Jews*, in which it was claimed that 1,702,500 European Jews had fallen victim to “organized murder” and that over three million had died from all causes. Dr. Martin presumably knows this. Why? Because, in the article, “Raphael Lemkin and the Invention of ‘Genocide’” (The Journal of Historical Review, Vol. 2, No. 1), he discusses this book along with another IJA publication, *Starvation Over Europe: Made in Germany*. As Dr. Martin explains,

It is significant that these two books were published under the aegis of one Zorach Warhaftig, [a] Jewish lawyer from Warsaw, but also a fierce Zionist, who disappeared from Poland in 1939, surfacing in New York in 1943 as deputy director of this Institute for Jewish Affairs, a post he held until 1947. Feverishly active in the post-May 1945 effort to get as many as possible of Europe's displaced-person Jews to Palestine,

Warhaftig subsequently followed them there. Becoming a signer of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel in 1948, as well as a member of the Executive Council of the World Jewish Congress, Warhaftig from 1951-1965 was Deputy Minister of Religion in various Israeli governments.

Given Dr. Martin's familiarity with *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews* and its Zionist sponsorship, one wonders why, in his *New Libertarian* essay, he nevertheless gives the Red Army "credit" for making the first astronomic claims of people done to death.

Whatever the reason, Dr. Martin's tendency to magnify the role of the Communists in the creation of the Holocaust story is evident in the following passage:

It has been remarked that a school of historiography is indeed a peculiar one when it is based almost entirely on *confessions*. This is the case of the "Holocaust" saga in Poland, resting mainly on statements extracted from the captured German commandants of the Auschwitz and Treblinka concentration camps by their Stalinist captors.

Dr. Martin is here referring to the confessions of Rudolf

Höss, commandant of Auschwitz, and Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka. But Rudolf Höss was captured by, and made his first confessions to members of the British Field Security Police in occupied Germany. He later repeated those confessions at Nuremberg where he was held in American custody. Only after his appearance at Nuremberg was Höss handed over to the Stalinists, i.e., the Polish Communists, to whom he then made some more (and, in some respects, different) confessions before they honored him with a necktie party.

I recently pointed all this out to Dr. Martin in correspondence and asked him if Höss's British and/or American captors were Stalinists. I found his reply, in a letter of 12 July 1983, less than satisfactory, though entertaining. Regarding Höss, Dr. Martin writes:

...It is unimportant to me whether Höss was intercepted in the outer orbit of the planet of Neptune and interrogated by the police of Andorra and the Andaman Islands. He was hung by a piece of Communist rope in Poland and the manuscript of his 'book' was prepared in Communist Poland with the Polish KGB presumably still holding the original, which I can't remember anyone outside Communist circles ever examining

or comparing with what circulates about the world in various kinds of translations. What he said to the British is immaterial; Hoggan points out that even that super Holocaustian [*sic*] Reitlinger rejected that.

Thus, Dr. Martin acknowledges that Höss made his first confessions to British interrogators, but he insists that what Höss said to the British is “immaterial” because David Hoggan, author of *The Myth of the Six Million*, “points out” that even Gerald Reitlinger, author of *The Final Solution*, “rejected that.” To be exact, Hoggan “points out” that “Even Gerald Reitlinger, who grasps at every straw to document the extermination program, rejects the Nuremberg trial testimony of Höss as hopelessly untrustworthy.”

In his letter of 12 July 1983, Dr. Martin further says:

I do not claim to be anything other than an interested and sometimes enthusiastic amateur on anything related to the “Holocaust,” since I cannot read Russian, Polish or Yiddish expressed in Hebrew characters. So my views are “received” insofar as they emerge from people who know the basic literature.

People like David Hoggan? Well, David Hoggan may be familiar with the basic literature on the Holocaust, but

anyone who takes David Hoggan's word for anything is just plain begging to be duped. To borrow a line from boxer Randall "Tex" Cobb, Hoggan is so full of shit his eyes are brown. Even the marginally esteemed Holocaust revisionist Arthur Butz, in *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, called *The Myth of the Six Million* "terrible and a clear retrogression in relation to the prior work of Rassinier." And here, for good measure, is what Butz has to say about the work of Rassinier:

...it is necessary to check up on Rassinier in his interpretation of sources; some do not check out and, in addition, he employs some clearly unreliable sources at a few points. There are also some glaring but relatively irrelevant errors of fact.

If Hoggan's book is worse than the work of Rassinier, it must be terrible indeed. And indeed it is. Contrary to what Hoggan claims, Reitlinger does not reject Höss's Nuremberg testimony (for practical purposes identical to his confessions to the British) as "hopelessly untrustworthy." On pages 104-105 of the Perpetua edition of *The Final Solution*, Reitlinger rejects three specific points: First, Höss's "admission" to having murdered 2.5 million people. (He also re-

jects the official Soviet estimate of four-million killed at Auschwitz as “ridiculous” and says that “...little less than a million human beings perished in Auschwitz...” Second, he rejects Höss’s claim to have received orders from Himmler *in June, 1941*, directing the extermination of Jews at Auschwitz. (He says that “...it was in the summer of 1942 that Himmler decided on Auschwitz as the extermination centre for the Jews of Western Europe.”) And, third, he rejects Höss’s claim that Himmler selected Auschwitz as an extermination center because of its “easy access by rail.” (He says that, “In reality Himmler preferred Auschwitz to the other Polish death camps, not because of its railway junction, which was nothing exceptional, but because of the camouflage status it had acquired through the plans to make it the center of a huge synthetic oil and rubber industry.”)

Reitlinger’s rejection of these three claims by no means constitutes a complete rejection of Höss’s Nuremberg testimony, as claimed by Hoggan. Furthermore, one of the claims rejected by Reitlinger, the claim that Höss received extermination orders from Himmler in the summer of 1941, was common to *all* of Höss’s confessions, including

those he made under Stalinist auspices. Thus, Reitlinger did *not* reject the confessions Höss gave to the British (and repeated at Nuremberg) in favor of those he later gave the Polish Communists. Like his fellow exponents of the Holocaust saga, Reitlinger basically accepts *all* of Höss's confessions, picking and choosing statements from among them as he finds convenient. Thus, Dr. Martin cannot legitimately dismiss Höss's confessions to the British as "immaterial" on the grounds that Reitlinger rejects those confessions. Reitlinger doesn't reject them. Furthermore, one could ask Dr. Martin: if what Höss said to the British (and then repeated at Nuremberg) is "immaterial," then why does Arthur Butz devote a sizable portion of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* to a dissection of the 5 April 1946 affidavit Höss signed at Nuremberg?

In any case, Dr. Martin also refers to the statements "extracted" from Treblinka commandant Franz Stangl by *his* "Stalinist captors." But Stangl was arrested in 1967 by Brazilian police, then extradited to West Germany, where he was imprisoned up to the time of his death while awaiting word of his appeal of the sentence he had received at his trial. If any of Stangl's captors were Stalinists this is

not self-evident. In my correspondence with Dr. Martin, I asked him if Stangl's Brazilian and/or West German captors were Stalinists. Apparently he was unable to answer this question affirmatively, for he gave no direct reply to it.

Dr. Martin's attempt to pin the confessions of Höss and Stangl exclusively on the Stalinists is a failure. Moreover, in asserting that the Holocaust saga in Poland rests mainly on the confessions of Höss and Stangl, Dr. Martin has slighted a number of other confessions, including those of Joseph Kramer, Pery Broad and Hans Kremer, concerning Auschwitz. And he has most especially slighted the famous statements of Kurt Gerstein concerning Belzec, which are almost equal in prominence to the Höss confessions. Of course, ignoring the Joseph Kramer and Pery Broad confessions (given to the British) and the Gerstein statements (given to the Americans and the French) does serve Dr. Martin's purpose in magnifying the role of the Stalinists in all of this. But it doesn't serve historical accuracy.

According to Dr. Martin,

Between 1945 and 1960, hundreds of persons perjured themselves (perhaps M. Rassinier was excessively charitable in describing them as "vulgar false witnesses")

in German and other courts testifying to seeing “gas chambers” in various concentration camps in Germany. In 1962, their own sponsors betrayed them by admitting officially that there were not and had never been any such installations anywhere on the territory of Germany as constituted territorially in 1937.

Presumably, Dr. Martin is referring to the letter, by Dr. Martin Broszat of Munich’s Institute for Contemporary History, which appeared in *Die Zeit* on 19 August 1960 (not 1962). Holocaust revisionists are fond of citing Dr. Broszat’s supposed admission that there were no gas chambers located within Germany’s pre-war borders. But that is not precisely what Dr. Broszat “admitted.” Here are the first two sentences of the Broszat letter: “Neither in Dachau, nor in Bergen-Belsen, nor in Buchenwald have Jews or other prisoners been gassed. The gas chamber in Dachau was never quite finished or put into operation.” Thus, Dr. Broszat “admitted” that no prisoners were gassed in various German concentration camps, but he also referred quite explicitly to “the gas chamber in Dachau,” which he said was “never quite finished or put into operation.” So, in fact, Dr. Broszat affirmed the existence of at least one (unfin-

ished and unused) gas chamber within a German concentration camp. Dr. Broszat has more recently been quoted by journalist Gitta Sereny on the subject of gas chambers, to wit: "Mauthausen, Natzweiler had one. Sachsenhausen, too, I think. They used them toward the end to replace the shootings and injections of small groups of prisoners, which had become so demoralizing to the staff." (See "The Men Who Whitewash Hitler," *The New Statesman*, 2 November 1979.) Neither Mauthausen nor Natzweiler was located within Germany's 1937 borders, but Sachsenhausen was. So Dr. Broszat has affirmed the existence of gas chambers at two concentration camps (Dachau and Sachsenhausen) located within those 1937 German borders. And, therefore, Dr. Martin cannot legitimately use Dr. Broszat as his authority in denouncing as perjurers *all* who ever testified to seeing gas chambers in concentration camps within Germany.

And even if Dr. Broszat actually had "admitted" that there were no gas chambers in any concentration camp within Germany, I would ask, "So what?" Dr. Broszat's *Die Zeit* letter consists only of assertions. It contains no explanation whatever of *how* he reached the conclusions as-

serted. Why do a few assertions of a State-supported West German historian, assertions made without any supporting argument or discussion of evidence, carry such weight as to conclusively prove that any and all testimony to the contrary by witnesses was perjured? Methinks I smell an “argument from authority” here. Is it possible that Dr. Martin treats these unsupported assertions by Dr. Broszat as definitive simply because they tend to confirm what Dr. Martin wants to believe, i.e., that there were no gas chambers in the Nazi concentration camps? After all, Dr. Martin does *not* regard Dr. Broszat’s assertions as definitive when Dr. Broszat asserts that the Jews were mass-extermiated in gas chambers in camps in Poland, which Dr. Broszat does assert in the very same letter—the letter in which he “admitted” there were no gassings in the camps in Germany. You can’t have it both ways. Either all of Dr. Broszat’s unsupported assertions are authoritative, or none of them are. Take your choice.

In the following passage, Dr. Martin discusses the nature of history as an intellectual discipline:

Students of my time who got their early training in history from tough old manuals such as the *Introduction*

to the Study of History by Langlois and Seignobos were taught that history is a science of reasoning based on documents, and the degree to which an account of the past is not based on documents is the degree to which such an account cannot properly be called history.

Dr. Martin relies on this notion of what history is when he writes:

If the Institute for Historical Review and its *Journal* are in existence to spread falsehood, it is up to its critics to prove that. And it has to be done with documentary evidence, not incensed testimony, hysterical opinion, and self-serving unsupported emotional allegations and affidavits.

Note the false dichotomy: EITHER documentary evidence OR *incensed* testimony, *hysterical* opinion, and *self-serving unsupported emotional* allegations and affidavits. Apparently, in Dr. Martin's mental world, there is no such thing as *non-incensed* testimony, *unhysterical* opinion, or *non-self-serving, non-emotional* allegations and affidavits.

Years ago, in the pages of *The Nation*, Ernest Zaugg wrote that Paul Rassinier suffered from "documentitis." Rassinier seemed to think that nothing could be proven except by

means of official documents. But Dr. Martin also suffers from “documentitis.” For him, documents are the only acceptable form of historical evidence. To which I say: “Bunk!” Documents, of course, are important, but they are not the *alpha* and *omega* of history. History is the attempt to know and to recount (some of) what has happened in the past. To that end, historians may legitimately use any relevant and credible evidence, whether documentary or not.

For example, one category of evidence which Dr. Martin implicitly rejects is what might be called “archeological” evidence. I am referring to any sort of discernable traces of human activity that are left in the wake of such activity, including tangible artifacts. Consider the question of whether or not people were gassed to death at the Maidanek concentration camp. So far as I know, there are no official German documents referring to such gassings. On the other hand, there has been a good deal of post-war testimony to the effect that people were gassed there. But perhaps most importantly, the alleged gas chambers of Maidanek are still standing and intact (unlike the alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor). Surely these structures, alleged to be gas

chambers, constitute evidence of some sort in regard to the question of whether people were gassed at Maidanek. The *quality* of this evidence may be questioned, but evidence it is. (I for one have long wondered why the exponents of the conventional wisdom about the Holocaust have made such little use of the evidence provided by the alleged gas chambers at Maidanek. Perhaps, for some reason, the alleged gas chambers of Maidanek do not provide convincing evidence of gassing.* In any case, Dr. Martin's insistence on documentary evidence, to the exclusion of all other kinds of evidence, is as absurd as the claim that a man cannot prove he was born unless he has a birth certificate.

There is another point to be made about documentary evidence, to wit, that it is not above criticism. The fact that something is asserted in an official document by no means guarantees that the assertion is true. By the same token, the fact that an action or event is not mentioned in any official document does not necessarily mean that no such action or event took place. Documents are made by human beings, and human beings are fallible, capable of error. Further-

* For a relatively recent revisionist study of Maidanek, see "The Gas Chambers of Majdenek," by Carlo Mattogno, in *Dissecting the Holocaust*, edited by Ernst Grauss, aka Germar Rudolf, Theses and Dissertations Press (2000). — L.A.R., 2008.

more, human beings sometimes think it in their interest to lie. From 1980 to 1981, I worked for an electronic security company, monitoring the security systems of my employer's clients. One of the duties of the job was the keeping of a log of all significant events during one's shift. I know that in many cases the contents of that log did not accurately reflect what actually transpired. There were, for example, times when there were so many significant events happening that, by the time I got around to logging them, I was no longer able to recall precisely what had happened. And there were times when I or one of my fellow monitors decided to cover up some error or failure to follow prescribed company procedure by means of intentional falsification of the log. Are those who create government documents beyond any such human shortcomings? I see no reason to think so. So just as the value of witness testimony may be vitiated by the fallibility or the dishonesty of the witness, likewise the value of documentary evidence has to be scrutinized and judged for credibility like any other form of human testimony.

Now, what about Dr. Martin's challenge to critics of the Institute for Historical Review to prove that it and its

Journal “are in existence to spread falsehood”? Well, it so happens that, overall, I support the IHR’s publication and dissemination of revisionist writings. In fact, I have myself been published in the IHR’s *Journal of Historical Review* (see the Winter 1982 and Spring 1983 issues). So I have no intention of trying to prove that the IHR and its *Journal* exist for the specific purpose of spreading falsehood. Nevertheless, I can prove that the IHR and its *Journal* have, in fact, spread falsehood. Or, to be more specific, I can prove that they have spread *some* falsehood along with the truth they have spread.

Consider the IHR’s Winter 1982/83 booklist. Among the publications you will find offered for sale are *The Methods of Re-education*, a booklet by Udo Walendy; *The Six Million Swindle*, a booklet by Austin J. App; *Debunking the Genocide Myth*, a collection of writings by the aforementioned Paul Rassinier; and *Six Million Lost and Found*, by “Richard Harwood,” i.e., Richard Verrall, which was originally titled *Did Six Million Really Die?* Demonstrable falsehoods can be found in each of these publications.

Udo Walendy’s booklet contains a choice falsehood on page 7, where Walendy misquotes Sefton Delmer’s auto-

biography, *Black Boomerang*, wherein Delmer described his wartime activities supervising Britain's "black" radio propaganda campaigns against Germany. According to Walendy, Delmer wrote that,

... as we put out news bulletin after news bulletin and service programme after service programme an entire system of atrocity campaigns developed.

But Delmer *actually* wrote:

... as we put out news bulletin after news bulletin and service programme after service programme an entire system of *subversive* campaigns developed. (emphasis added.)

By substituting the word "atrocity" for the word "subversive," Walendy fabricated a confession by Delmer of the British use of atrocity propaganda during World War II. Ironically, in another booklet, concerning allegedly forged atrocity photos, Walendy writes that, "... someone who knowingly uses retouched, clipped, transposed, drawn or otherwise altered photos and alleges that they are 'authentic photographs' is *guilty of fraud or forgery*." But, of course, the same is true of someone who knowingly uses altered

quotations and alleges that they are “authentic quotations.” Walendy also asserts that “Scientists and official institutions who allege that falsified pictures are authentic evidence, not only make themselves suspect with regard to these pictures but with regard to all their statements.” By presenting an altered Sefton Delmer quotation as authentic evidence, Udo Walendy makes *himself* suspect with regard to all his statements, including his unsupported allegation about Sefton Delmer appearing at the end of page 8 of *The Methods of Re-education*.

On the first page of *The Six Million Swindle*, Austin App declares that “... a search for the truth is mandatory.” But his booklet nevertheless contains at least two falsehoods. On page 28, App writes:

On February 22, 1948, probably unconscious of the implications, and therefor [sic] objective, Hanson Baldwin and the *New York Times*, after a world-wide census, reported that “there were between 18,000,000 and 19,000,000 Jews in the world.

But, in fact, the *Times* military affairs editor Hanson Baldwin, in an article on the Middle East situation, referred to “...the 15 to 18 million Jews of the world.” Further-

more, the figures *actually* given by Baldwin were supposedly based on a world-wide census only according to the testimony of one Benjamin H. Freedman. But Freedman was apparently App's source for the above-quoted falsified version of Baldwin's figures. (App refers to a statement by Freedman dated October, 1966.) So Freedman's claim that he visited Baldwin in 1948 and was shown the results of such a world-wide census is clearly open to doubt.

On pages 28 and 29, App refers to Ben Hecht, who, according to App, "complained that his ancestors had not hacked Jesus up and fed him to the lions, so that the symbol of the cross would not have been revered." But the statement to which App refers was made by a fictional character in *A Jew In Love*, a novel by Hecht. According to Morris Kominsky, this character "is a very offensive, reactionary, anti-Communist degenerate by the name of Boshere." During a conversation, Boshere (the fictional character) says,

One of the finest things ever done by the mob was the crucifixion of Christ. Intellectually it was a splendid gesture. But trust the mob to bungle. If I'd have been there, if I'd had charge of executing Christ, I'd have

handled it differently. You see, what I would have done was had him shipped to Rome and fed to the lions. They could never have made a savior out of mince meat. I would do the same thing to the radicals today.

As Morris Kominksy remarked, “Just imagine what confusion and dishonesty there would be in attributing to Shakespeare himself all the utterances of characters in his plays.”

Debunking the Genocide Myth, the collection of writings by Paul Rassinier, includes *The Drama of the European Jews*, a reply to Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*. This work alone contains enough falsehoods to choke a correspondent for *The National Enquirer*. For starters, there is Rassinier’s falsehood that Hannah Arendt, in her reports on the Eichmann trial, wrote that “...3 million Polish Jews were massacred during the first day of the war.” What Arendt actually wrote was that “three million Polish Jews, as everyone knew, had been massacred since the first days of the war.” A slight difference in meaning.

Then there is Rassinier’s falsehood that “...Mr. Shalom Baron ...claimed on April 4, 1961, before the Jerusalem Tribunal, that 700,000 of them [Polish Jews] were still

living in 1945 when the country was liberated by Russian troops.” But what Salo (not Shalom) Baron actually claimed, on April 24 (not April 4) was that, “according to the census carried out by the Central Jewish Committee in Poland, in August 1945, 73,955 Jews were left.”

Thus, Rassinier exaggerated the number of Polish Jewish survivors claimed by Baron by 626,045.

Then there is Rassinier’s falsehood that Raul Hilberg

...wants to prove that 1.4 million Jews were exterminated by the *Einsatzgruppen*, but after having used all means to prove it (reports of unit leaders, testimonies of witnesses who survived, etc.) he is still lacking 500,000 bodies, to come to his total, so, coolly, he adds, on his own authority, 250,000 for “omissions” and 250,000 for “gaps in our sources.

Hilberg actually reached the figure of 900,000 Jews exterminated by the *Einsatzgruppen* relying only on *Einsatzgruppen* reports and not, as Rassinier claims, by also using “testimonies of witnesses who survived, etc.” And, while it is true that Hilberg adds 250,000 for “gaps in our sources,” it is *not* true that he adds 250,000 for “omissions.” Rather, he adds 250,000 based on “other fragmentary

reports, most of which we have cited in this chapter.”

These are but three specific—and serious—falsehoods in *The Drama of the European Jews*. There are plenty more where they came from. Just follow the sources and see for yourself.

In the introduction to *Six Million Lost and Found*, aka *Did Six Million Really Die?*, author Richard Verrall piously declares, “The aim on the following pages is quite simply to tell the Truth.” But his booklet may be the most falsehood-laden specimen of Holocaust revisionism on the IHR’s booklist. It contains enough falsehoods to make any writer of Hollywood docudramas green with envy. For example, there is Verrall’s falsehood that “...after the war, the *New York Times*, February 22, 1948, placed the number of Jews in the world at a minimum of 15,600,000 and a maximum of 18,700,000.” As I’ve already pointed out, Hanson Baldwin actually referred to “the 15 to 18 million Jews of the world.” Verrall makes Baldwin’s figures more precise and larger than they actually were.

Then there is Verrall’s attempt to discredit the Kurt Gerstein statements by claiming that “Gerstein’s sister was congenitally insane and died by euthanasia, which may well

suggest a streak of instability in Gerstein himself.” But it was Gerstein’s *sister-in-law*, Berta Ebeling, who allegedly was “congenitally insane,” which suggests absolutely nothing about Gerstein himself.

Moving on, there is Verrall’s falsehood that, “The Russians refused to allow anyone to see Auschwitz until about ten years after the war, by which time they were able to alter its appearance and give some plausibility to the claim that millions of people were murdered there.” But on pages 123-128 of *Ashes and Fire* (copyright 1947), Jacob Pat describes a tour of Auschwitz that he and some friends made. He recounts that Polish troops allowed him and his friends entrance to the camp after showing a “special military pass.” Walter Lippmann, according to biographer Ronald Steel, visited Auschwitz in 1947. And, in his 1948 book, *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, Arthur Bliss Lane, U.S. Ambassador to Poland from 1944 to 1947, briefly describes the visit he made to Auschwitz during October of 1945 (if I have understood Lane’s chronology accurately). Contrary to Verrall, *some people were* allowed to visit Auschwitz fairly soon after the war.

Verrall discusses the book *Under Two Dictators* by Mar-

garete Buber, a German-Jewish woman who had been imprisoned in a Russian labor camp before being deported to Germany in 1940. Verrall's discussion contains the falsehood that, "[Buber] noted that she was the only Jewish person in her contingent of deportees from Russia who was not straight away released by the Gestapo." But this is a distortion of what Buber actually wrote. According to Buber,

At the end of the second week in Lublin, all our women were taken one by one to the Gestapo—except me. They each returned with a form on which it said that they were to return at once to their home town, wherever it was, and report there to the Gestapo within three days of their arrival ... And then they went off, leaving me alone in the cells feeling terribly downhearted and abandoned.

Buber goes on to say that, "Out of the 150 who had been handed over by the Russians, the Gestapo had retained forty men and myself. We were to go to the Police Presidium in Berlin under Gestapo escort." Buber does not say how many of those forty men were Jewish, but at least one of them was, as indicated by her reference to one of them as

“the Jew from Hungary.”

Then there is Verrall’s falsehood that “Rassinier mentions [Eugen] Kogon’s claim that a deceased former inmate, Janda Weiss, had said to Kogon alone that she had witnessed gas chambers at Auschwitz, but of course, since this person was apparently dead, Rassinier was unable to investigate the claim.” But here is what Rassinier actually says about the matter:

To my knowledge this Janda Weiss was the only person in the whole of the concentration camp literature who was said to have been present at such exterminations [by gas] and whose exact address [Brno, Czechoslovakia] was given. Unfortunately, by unhappy chance, he was in the Russian zone and only Eugen Kogon has profited by his statements.

Clearly, Rassinier did not say that Janda Weiss was either dead or apparently dead, but that he (not “she”) was in the Russian zone.

By selling these publications by Walendy, App, Rassinier and Verrall, the Institute for Historical Review is in fact spreading falsehood. And it should be added that the Institute’s *Journal of Historical Review* and other IHR

publications have also spread falsehood. One need only to turn Volume Two, issue Number Three of the flagship *Journal*, wherein were published several letters written by former IHR Director “Lewis Brandon,” i.e., David McCalden. There one can find McCalden’s falsehood contending that “Since 1960, all exterminationists have agreed that there were no gassings in the German camps; just in the Polish camps.” Not true. There are yet “Exterminationists” who do not regard Dr. Broszat’s previously-discussed and oft-misconstrued “admission” to be correct. See, for example, Germaine Tillion’s book, *Ravensbrück*, especially appendices 1-3.

Then there is McCalden’s falsehood that Gitta Sereny “wrote in the *New Statesman* of 2 November 1979 ... that many Holocaust ‘memoirs’ are faked.” Consult the source, and you will discover that Sereny actually wrote that “some” (not “many”) Holocaust memoirs have been faked, and she specifies only two such faked memoirs.

It might be noted that McCalden is no longer affiliated with the IHR. Nevertheless, McCalden’s separation from the IHR did not precipitate an end to the publication of falsehoods by the IHR. (Nor did it result in an end to the

publication of falsehoods by David McCalden, but that's another story.) Consider just a few falsehoods to be found in post-McCalden IHR publications.

First, see page 4 pf the IHR's October/November 1981 *Revisionist Newsletter*. There one will find an item concerning a column by Rabbi Yaacov Spivak in the August 21, 1981 *Jewish Press*. Spivak had discussed the taping of an episode of the *Phil Donahue Show*, the guests of which included several Holocaust survivors. According to the IHR's newsletter,

Spivak reports what happened that day during the taping: "In the middle of the show, one of the producers—obviously quite shaken—walks on camera with the startling information that 7 out of 8 callers phoning the Chicago-based program said they were sick of hearing about the Holocaust, claimed it never happened, and made many blatantly anti-Semitic statements!" Were the millions of folks who watch the Donahue show made aware of this surprising response? Of course not, which is one good reason such shows are always taped.

There are at least two falsehoods in this. The first may be found in Rabbi Spivak's distorted account, quoted ac-

curately by IHR, of what the Donahue show producer said 7 out of 8 callers had said about the Holocaust survivors. Although the producer, Sherry Singer, did say that some of the callers said, "Let's not hear about it anymore," she did *not* say that any of the callers had claimed the Holocaust never happened. But there is another falsehood in the IHR's item, to wit, the claim that millions of folks who watch the Donahue show were not made aware of the "surprising response" of the callers. In fact, Sherry Singer's report that 7 out of 8 callers were "totally unsupportive" of the Holocaust survivors was *not* edited out of the show, as implied by the IHR. I myself saw and heard Ms. Singer making those statements when the program was broadcast in Los Angeles on August 11, 1981. Since Rabbi Spivak said nothing about Singer's comments being kept hidden from Donahue's viewers, this falsehood is the IHR's baby.

Now see page 308 of Vol. 2, No. 4 of *The Journal of Historical Review*. There one can find, in a previously unpublished letter to *The Nation*, Paul Rassinier's falsehood that, "the only document which speaks of gas chambers in these camps [Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka] is the Gerstein document." But if Gerstein's statements count as a document,

then the various Rudolf Höss confessions must count as well. And at least one of the Höss confessions speaks of gas chambers at Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, and Maidanek. Furthermore, the depositions of Wilhelm Pfannenstiel speak of gas chambers at Belzec. According to both the Gerstein statements and the Pfannenstiel depositions, Pfannenstiel accompanied Gerstein to Belzec where, despite their differing accounts, they both claimed to have witnessed the gassing of Jews.

Want more? On pages 280-281 of Vol. 3, No. 3 of *The Journal of Historical Review*, Issa Nakhleh, representative of the Arab Higher Committee and Permanent Representative of the Palestine-Arab delegation in New York, tells the following tale:

The proof that Egypt was not prepared or preparing for war [in 1967] is the fact that, in the evening of June 4, 1967, a party was held for the airforce graduates in Anshas (former Farouk palace and gardens), where practically every important officer in the Egyptian airforce and all its commanders were present in that party until the early hours of the morning of June 5, when the Israelis attacked at 4 a.m. According to unimpeachable evidence in our possession, Egyptian agents of the Is-

raeli intelligence were able to put LSD in the drinks and coffee served to most important officers and top command of the Egyptian airforce. When Israeli airplanes struck at 4 a.m. on the morning of June 5, most of the Egyptian airforce officers were asleep and incapacitated by LSD. We have also unimpeachable evidence that the Israeli airplanes dropped LSD-25, a nerve gas, on Egyptian forces in Sinai and on Egyptian military airports, and were able to incapacitate the Egyptian armed forces. These facts prove that the Israeli armed forces won the 1967 war by deception, conspiracy, and using LSD-25 nerve gas.

Well, the Israeli forces may have used deception and conspiracy to win the 1967 war, but Nakhleh's unsubstantiated allegations, supposedly based on unspecified "unimpeachable evidence"—he calls these allegations "facts"—prove absolutely nothing. And Nakleh's allegations cannot be true as stated, since they depend upon the falsehood that LSD and LSD-25 are two different things. According to Nakleh, LSD is the infamous drug, while LSD-25 is a nerve gas. But LSD-25 is not a nerve gas. LSD-25 is simply LSD. That is, LSD-25 is simply a more specific designation for the drug more commonly known as LSD.

There are other reasons for skepticism about Nakleh's tale of Israeli intrigue and chemical warfare, but his falsehood that LSD-25 is a nerve gas, rather than the well-known psychoactive drug, is sufficient reason to impeach his "unimpeachable evidence."

If Issa Nakhleh actually has unimpeachable evidence to back up his accusations, I'll hump a camel.

As I write this, it is August of 1983, and the IHR has recently published a leaflet entitled "66 Questions and Answers on the Holocaust." The first question the leaflet asks is, "What proof exists that the Nazis practiced genocide or deliberately killed six million Jews?" The leaflet answers, "None." This is elaborated with two falsehoods, the first of which states, "The only evidence is the testimony of individual 'Survivors.' This testimony is contradictory and no 'survivor' claims to have actually witnessed any gassing." Contrary to the IHR's leaflet, however, the testimony of survivors is not the only evidence. The testimony of Rudolf Höss, Franz Stangl, Joseph Kramer, Pery Broad, Johann Paul Kremer, and Kurt Gerstein has already been mentioned. In addition, incriminatory testimony was also given by Wilhelm Hoettl, Dieter Wisliceny, Otto

Ohlendorf and other former minions of the Third Reich. And, again contrary to the IHR's leaflet, some survivors do claim to have witnessed gassings. For example, in *One Year in Treblinka*, originally published in May of 1944, Jankiel Wiernik claims to have witnessed gassings at Treblinka. Sophia Litwinska also claims to have witnessed a gassing at Auschwitz. In fact, she claims to have been pulled out of a gas chamber while a gassing was in progress! And in his book, *Eyewitness Auschwitz*, Filip Müller claims to have witnessed gassings at Auschwitz I and Birkenau while he was a member of the *Sonderkommando*.

The falsehoods I have pointed out suggest the possibility that some revisionist historians aim not to set the record straight, but parallel—with their own preconceptions. In any event, if “revisionism” means bringing history into accord with facts, as Harry Elmer Barnes put it, then some of what passes for revisionism is not revisionism at all.

It is unfortunately true that the *Journal of Historical Review* and other IHR publications, ostensibly intended for “lovers of historical truth,” have indeed spread falsehood. But, in fairness, the *Journal* has sometimes also provided a forum for exposing the falsehoods of revisionists. For

example, I was able to expose Paul Rassinier's falsehood concerning Salo Baron in the *Journal's* pages (Vol. 4, No. 1).

Nevertheless, the IHR has spread falsehood via some of the publications it sells as well as its own publications. This speaks to the validity of a point made by Steven Springer in his introduction to *Reason* magazine's special revisionism issue in February, 1976. After making the case for revisionism, Springer provides a caveat: "This is not to say, however, that the works of anyone calling himself a revisionist should be accepted without question. People can get carried away by their theories ...and invent or distort facts accordingly." Q.E.D.

However—and I want to emphasize this—I am prepared to demonstrate that exponents of the standard Holocaust narrative have themselves spread many, many falsehoods. Neither side in the Holocaust controversy claims a monopoly on falsehood. That is why I generally believe nothing I read on this subject unless and until I can verify it to my own satisfaction. This is one reason why, after almost a decade of following the controversy, I remain skeptical of both sides.

I say: Down with Holocaust dogmatism, regardless of the source.

I say: Up with Holocaust *skepticism*.

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DEIFYING DOGMA

AUTHOR'S NOTE (2008)

WHEN I WROTE “The Holocaust as Sacred Cow” and “Revising Holocaust Revisionism” in the early 1980s, there was, as yet, no debate between revisionists and orthodox Holocaustorians. The Holocausters, for years, were content to call the revisionists names, denounce the imputed motives of the revisionists, lie about what the revisionists were claiming, and to make dogmatic pronouncements about the overwhelming and indisputable Truth of Holocaust orthodoxy.

However, beginning sometime in the late 1980s, a kind of debate began to emerge as a few orthodox Holocaust scholars provided serious critical appraisals of revisionist—or “negationist”—arguments. Some anti-revisionist texts which, despite their shortcomings, might ultimately

prove to be of significant value include Pierre Vidal-Naquet's *Assassins of Memory*, Jean-Claude Pressac's *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, and *The Case for Auschwitz*, by Robert Jan van Pelt.

Denying History, by Michael Shermer of the Skeptics Society and Alex Grobman of the Simon Wiesenthal Center is an altogether different kettle of gefilte fish. Simply stated, it is one of the worst would-be refutations of Holocaust revisionism that I have yet encountered (though some of the others are pretty bad). As a general rule, shitty books are best ignored and forgotten. However, since Grobman and Shermer made the mistake of smearing me – *moi!* – in the pages of their meretricious pseudo-skeptical screed, I was willing, even eager, to review it and to point out some of the many instances where they go wrong.

In “Revising Holocaust Revisionism,” I concluded my critical assessment of certain revisionist claims by stating that I *could* just as easily point out falsehoods in the writings of orthodox Holocaust historians. With “Deifying Dogma,” I believe I have made good on this. Both revisionists and anti-revisionists have peddled falsehoods; it just so happens that Grobman and Shermer are swimming in them.

If Shermer and/or Grobman ever responded to my review, they didn't bother to notify me, so, as far as I know, my critique of this dynamic duo of Holocaust orthodoxy remains unanswered.

DEIFYING DOGMA

A Review of *Denying History* by Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, University of California Press, 2000.

MICHAEL SHERMER IS THE FOUNDER and editor of the *Skeptic* magazine, director of the Skeptics Society, adjunct professor of the History of Science at Occidental College in Los Angeles, as well as the author of *Why People Believe Weird Things* (1997) and *How We Believe: The Search for God in the Age of Science* (1999).

Alex Grobman is the author and editor of a number of books on the Holocaust, including *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry*. He is also the founding editor of the *Simon Wiesenthal Annual*.

In *Denying History*, Shermer, a self-described “professional skeptic,” and Grobman, a professional Jew, have teamed up to tell the hoi polloi what they’re supposed to think about various unorthodox historical claims, primarily the claims of Holocaust revisionism, or “Holocaust denial,”

as they prefer to label it.

In his foreword to Grobman and Shermer's egregious opus, prominent scholar-activist Arthur Hertzberg effuses, "They take up the contentions of the Holocaust deniers, point by point, and refute them down to the smallest detail." Shermer and Grobman likewise promise a thorough refutation of the revisionists, er, I mean, "deniers."

So how does this dynamic duo accomplish such an amazing feat of intellectual heroism? First and foremost, they have "thoroughly refuted" the revisionists by *ignoring most of what revisionists have written*. Thus, a number of significant revisionist studies are neither cited in the authors' bibliography nor mentioned in their text. There is no reference, for example, to *The Auschwitz Myth*, by William Stäglich, nor to Carlo Mattogno's *Auschwitz: The End of a Legend*, nor to Walter Sanning's *The Dissolution of European Jewry*, nor to Samuel Crowell's *The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes*, nor to Michael A. Hoffman II's *The Great Holocaust Trial*. These are substantial omissions, which seriously undermine Grobman and Shermer's claim to having put forth anything approaching a "thorough" refutation of revisionist arguments.

Revisionist books that are mentioned get short shrift. A prime example is *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* by Arthur Butz. *Hoax* gets mentioned only four times and in three of these instances Shermer and Grobman falsely cite arguments that Butz does not make. As for their one reasonably accurate reference concerning Butz's interpretation of the Wannsee Protocol, they don't bother to discuss what he actually wrote. Nor do they bother to mention the German government documents that Butz cites in support of his interpretation. The vast bulk of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, like the vast bulk of revisionist scholarship, is given the silent treatment. But again, in Grobman and Shermer's world, this is how you "thoroughly refute" an argument—by pretending it isn't there.

Another example of Grobman and Shermer's "thorough refutation" can be seen in their treatment of Fred Leuchter's conclusions regarding the infinitesimal or non-existent traces of hydrogen cyanide compounds in the alleged homicidal gas chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau. On pages 129-130 and 132, Shermer and Grobman make the false assertion that all of those alleged gas chambers are

nothing but rubble and have been completely exposed to the elements since 1945.

In fact, this is not true of the alleged gas chamber of the crematorium of Auschwitz, nor is it true of the alleged gas chamber of Crematorium II of Birkenau.

Further, the authors assume that exposure to the elements would reduce the amount of any residue of hydrogen cyanide compounds, including ferric-ferro-cyanide. Jewish revisionist David Cole challenged this unproven assumption in his manuscript, *46 Important Unanswered Questions Regarding the Nazi Gas Chambers*. Cole asked why Zyklon-B blue staining, indicative of the presence of hydrogen cyanide, is still present on the *outside* of a brick delousing building at Majdanek, against which clothing and blankets were beaten to remove gas residue after delousing (a standard prophylactic against the typhus louse, which plagued parts of Europe during WWII). Why weren't *these* blue stains washed away by the weather?

On p. 132, Shermer and Grobman do offer a reply to Cole on this point:

His question sounds reasonable, but when we visited Majdanek we could see that the blue staining on the

outside bricks is minimal. Moreover, a roof overhang has protected the bricks from rain and snow, so that the bricks at Majdanek are nowhere near as weathered as the open rubble [of the alleged homicidal gas chambers] at Auschwitz. In addition, Cole gives no citations for some of his claims.

But Shermer and Grobman give no citation for some of *their* claims, such as their assertion that exposure to the elements will reduce or remove residue of hydrogen cyanide compounds, including ferric-ferro-cyanide. While giving the impression of having answered Cole's question about Majdanek, they have not answered a similar question regarding the dark blue staining still present on an outside wall of a delousing building at Birkenau (cf. Jean-Claude Pressac, *Auschwitz*; photograph on p. 59).

The delousing building at Birkenau has a roof overhang of, at most, only several inches. The darkly stained outside wall of the delousing building at Birkenau has not been protected from rain, snow or other weather by the roof overhang. Why then are those dark blue stains still present after all these years? You won't find any answer to that question in *Denying History*.

The authors have “thoroughly refuted” Leuchter, Cole, et al., by pretending to reasonably answer one question while refusing to respond to a similar and more difficult question.

Another of their glaring omissions relates to Paul Grubach’s article, “The Leuchter Report Vindicated” (*The Journal of Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4), in which Grubach rebuts criticism of Leuchter made by Jean-Claude Pressac. Although Shermer and Grobman parrot many of Pressac’s arguments against Leuchter, they omit any mention of Grubach’s counter-arguments. Grubach’s article is listed in their bibliography however, indicating that their evasion is conscious and deliberate.

Giving the silent treatment to so much of the revisionist literature is far from the only act of intellectual dishonesty in *Denying History*. Another method favored by Shermer and Grobman is to make false claims about the content of revisionist studies.

In three of the four instances in which they condescend to refer to the contents of Arthur Butz’s *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, they falsely attribute to Butz arguments that he does not make. For example, on page 178, they write,

“Deniers claim that no extermination camp victim has given eyewitness testimony of gassings. If so many millions of Jews were exterminated surely someone could tell us what happened, Butz insists.” In their footnote for this assertion (p. 278), they cite *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 10-12. But there is nothing even vaguely resembling the argument they have attributed to Butz on these pages (or for that matter anywhere in his book that I recall).

On page 61 of *Denying History*, the authors falsely attribute to Butz the apparently contradictory statement “...that Raul Hilberg’s 1961 classic work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, was fraudulent in its reliance on eyewitness accounts of gassings at Auschwitz.” Actually, this “claim” appears to be a grossly distorted version of what Bradley Smith wrote in his memoir, *Confessions of a Holocaust Revisionist* (p.82). (Smith was attempting to discern the meaning of a reference Butz had made, in the foreword to *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, to pp. 567-571 of Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*).

In addition to Butz, victims of Shermer and Grobman’s misrepresentation include Paul Rassinier, Robert Faurisson, Mark Weber, and yours truly. Shermer and Grobman libel

me on pp. 84-85 of their tome. Quoting two definitions from my satirical dictionary, *Lucifer's Lexicon*, they declare that I have advanced "... a peculiar and paradoxical denial of mass extermination along with a hint that Hitler should have finished the job."

Now, I can understand that some very obtuse persons lacking an appreciation of satire might conceivably misconstrue my humorous definition of "The Holocaust" as being a denial of "mass extermination," even though, in reality, I don't deny "mass extermination" at all (mass extermination is not necessarily equivalent to "The Holocaust," which, according to Shermer and Grobman, signifies the destruction of at least five million Jews by means of gas chambers and other weapons, as part of an intentional plan).

What I find hard to fathom, however, is how these two cheese-puffs have managed to detect any "hint" in *Lucifer's Lexicon*, "that Hitler should have finished the job." There is no such suggestion or implication in my book. Shermer and Grobman simply fabricate the accusation in order to defame me. To facilitate their smear, they quote me selectively. They publish my definition of "Zionist Propaganda" ("Hebrew National Baloney") but overlook my definition

of “Nazi Propaganda” (“Lies that limp as they gosestep; Goebelled information.”)

The deceit continues on pp. 137-139 where the duo discuss the postwar “confessions” of SS *Unterscharführer* (i.e., sergeant) Pery Broad, who had been stationed at Auschwitz. After his arrest by the British on May 6 1945 and while working for them as an interpreter, Broad allegedly wrote a “memoir” which was “passed on” to British intelligence in July 1945. The “Broad Report” contains an account of Auschwitz as an “extermination camp,” in which some two or three million Jews were murdered. (Shermer and Grobman, who claim that about one million Jews died at Auschwitz, do not mention this discrepancy.)

In order to convince readers of the authenticity of the “Broad Report,” Shermer and Grobman assert, “In April of 1959 Broad was called to testify at a trial of captured Auschwitz SS members and acknowledged authorship of the memoir, confirmed its authenticity and retracted nothing.”

Actually, Broad was *arrested* in April 1959 and was subsequently one of the defendants in the “Auschwitz trial,” which convened in Frankfurt in January 1964. As for what

Broad actually said about the “Broad Report” of 1945 when questioned in 1964, here is what can be found on page 162 of *Auschwitz*, Bernd Naumann’s account of the trial:

After some hesitation Broad admits that he is the sole author of this report, but he says that he cannot stand behind everything in it because some of the things he wrote were based on hearsay.

Since Naumann’s book is listed in Shermer and Grobman’s bibliography, the authors presumably know that their description of Broad’s trial testimony is largely false. Yet the authors seem determined to compound their fraudulent misrepresentation, as they go on (p. 138) to quote statements from the 1945 “Broad Report” while pretending they are quoting from Broad’s 1964 trial testimony!

Next, the authors assume the mantle of word sleuths. On pages 205-206, they write of:

Another piece of evidence in our pantheon, [*Pantheon?* Do they really liken each piece of evidence for the Holocaust to a god?] is a word that appears in numerous Nazi documents referring to Jews, *ausrotten*, which means “to extirpate or exterminate.” In *Hitler’s War*, David Irving claims that *ausrotten* really means “stamp-

ing out” or “rooting out.” For instance, he translates a conversation between Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi Reich Minister for the eastern occupied territories. In Rosenberg’s discussion of handling the Jews, Irving takes *ausrotten* to mean “stamping out” and then concludes that Rosenberg meant transporting Jews out of the Reich. But modern dictionaries say *ausrotten* means “to exterminate, extirpate, or destroy.” Irving’s response to this is, “The word *ausrotten* means one thing now in 1994, but it meant something very different in the time that Adolf Hitler uses it.” Yet a check of historical dictionaries shows that *ausrotten* has always meant “exterminate.”

In the footnote to the final sentence just quoted (p. 280), the authors write, “See for example *Langenscheidt’s German-English, English-German Dictionary* (Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1942.) Under *ausrotten*, the dictionary gives ‘root out; extirpate; exterminate.’”

On the one hand, this 1942 dictionary definition tends to substantiate Shermer and Grobman’s claim that *ausrotten* has always meant “exterminate.” So, if Irving actually said that *ausrotten* never denoted “exterminate” during the Nazi era, then he was wrong on that point. On the other

hand, this 1942 definition upholds Irving's assertion that *ausrotten* means "rooting out" (at least in some cases).

Yet *Denying History* denies, by clear implication, that *ausrotten* ever meant "root out" or anything other than "exterminate," "extirpate," or "destroy." But the 1942 dictionary definition buried in a footnote in the back of their book shows that they are wrong on this point and that *they know they are wrong*. Thus, Shermer and Grobman are lying to their readers when, in various places in their text, they insinuate or insist that *ausrotten* means only "exterminate, extirpate, destroy," or even "murder" (p. 191) and has never had any other meaning. (For more on this subject, see L.J. Rather, *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas*, pp. 212-213.)

(Incidentally, Shermer and Grobman's page 191 claim that "Ausrotten meant murder," follows a supposed quotation from a lecture by SS chief Heinrich Himmler to his *Gruppen-führers* (lieutenant-generals) in January, 1937, in which he implied, according to their translation, that the Nazi State was murdering [*ausrotten*] the Communists. Unfortunately for Shermer and Grobman, in January 1937 there definitely was not any Nazi State policy of murder-

ing the Communists. The policy was to imprison them in concentration camps, which, as least at that early date, were in no sense “death camps.”)

Furthermore, although *ausrotten* does not necessarily mean “exterminate,” the word “exterminate” can have more than one meaning and does not automatically signify genocide. When British Colonel Spottiswood addressed a group of German civilians ordered to visit the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on April 24 1945, he stated, “What you will see here is the final and utter condemnation of the Nazi Party. It justifies every measure which the United Nations will take to exterminate that Party” (cf. Jon Bridgman, *The End of the Holocaust*, p. 54). Was Spottiswood saying that the United Nations intended to kill all members of the Nazi Party?

Winston Churchill, in a memorandum written on July 8 1940, said that he could see only one way to defeat Germany, and therefore proposed “...an absolutely devastating, exterminating attack by very heavy bombers from this country upon the Nazi homeland” (quoted in Max Hastings, *Bomber Command*, p. 116). Was Churchill proposing to *kill all Germans* by his use of this phrase?

Many of the familiar arguments which Shermer and Grobman use in attempting to make their case against Holocaust skepticism will bore seasoned revisionists. But in one instance, they claim to have discovered new evidence to vindicate gas chamber orthodoxy. This involves two aerial photos of Birkenau taken on May 31 1944, which appear as figure 21 on page 149 of *Denying History*. In their caption for these photographs, Shermer and Grobman write:

... image enhancement enables us to decipher a group of people seemingly being marched into Crematorium V. [It's actually Crematorium IV.] The front of the long line is turning into the Crematorium grounds through an opening in the fence; comparison of these two shots reveals some movement in the line into the crematorium grounds.

In order to interpret these photos as evidence of mass extermination by gassing, the authors make the unproven assumption that the only likely reason for a line of people to have been moving into the yard of the crematorium was to go into the crematorium to be "gassed." But even if one were to accept this unproven assumption, there would still be problems with the authors' thesis.

Examining these photos with the naked eye, I see no evidence of movement whatsoever. The dark blotches that Shermer and Grobman interpret as a queue of people in movement appear to be in the same place in both photos. In contrast, people in movement *are* evident to the naked eye in two sets of aerial photographs of Auschwitz taken on August 25 1944, which Shermer and Grobman reproduce on pages 147-148 as figures 19 and 20 (the lines of people in those photos are not alleged to be headed toward any homicidal gas chamber).

It does not seem to have occurred to the authors, who like to pose as scientific historians, to compare the two Birkenau photos of May 31, 1944 with similar Birkenau photos taken on other dates, to see if any dark blotches are visible in the same places as in the May 31 photos. If the dark blotches do appear in the same places in photos of Birkenau taken on other dates, then that would indicate a very high probability that the dark blotches in question are not people, but some sort of stationary objects, such as trees or shrubs (there were trees in the vicinity of the facilities in 1944).

So I did what Shermer and Grobman apparently did not

bother to do. I consulted revisionist researcher John Ball's book, *Air Photo Evidence* (Ball Resource Services, 1992). On page 70, I found a photo of Birkenau taken on June 26 1944, which shows most, though not all, of the area visible in the May 31 photos. Lo and behold! This photo does show dark blotches in roughly the same places as in the May 31 photos. (I say "roughly" because this photo is of poorer quality than the May 31 photos, hence the correspondence is not exact.)

Do Shermer and Grobman wish to disregard the statistical probabilities and absurdly claim that the May 31 aerial photos and the June 26 photo show two different groups of people, each headed toward "Crematorium V" [*sic*], who just happen to be in at least approximately the same place? If not, then they can kiss this supposed new evidence of gassings goodbye. (It should be noted in this regard that Shermer and Grobman argue that mass gassings did not occur as often as many people assume. This is their way of explaining why none of the aerial photos of Auschwitz, taken on several different days during 1944, show any smoke or flame emanating from the crematoria "chimneys.")

It should be conceded that *Denying History* does contain a few legitimate criticisms of revisionist claims and arguments. But considering the great number of revisionist claims and arguments that Shermer and Grobman refuse to confront, their criticisms of revisionism, legitimate or otherwise, amount to mere hypocritical sniping.

This is hypocrisy on their part because almost all of the fallacies they rightly or wrongly attribute to revisionists—quoting out of context, selective quotation, selective use of evidence, the “snapshot fallacy,” making unsupported assertions, engaging in speculation—are committed by Shermer and Grobman themselves in *Denying History*.

There is also an aspect of hypocrisy in this book that pertains solely to Shermer, who claims to be a “skeptic.” While Shermer is extremely skeptical toward the unorthodox doubts which Holocaust revisionists harbor toward the homicidal gas chamber stories, he exhibits no similar skepticism toward the claims of his fellow true believers in Holocaust orthodoxy. Indeed, he reveals himself to be a dogmatic and deceitful defender of this orthodoxy. Shermer is skeptical concerning the Doubting Thomases of his time but clings to faith in the deified dogma put forth

by the consensus of his time. Shermer's self-promoted status as a "professional skeptic" is a fraud.

I do not claim to have "thoroughly refuted" the contents of *Denying History*. Nor do I claim to have proven anything whatsoever about what occurred in Europe during the Second World War. Unlike Shermer and Grobman, I am not trying to defend any dogma at all. All I have attempted to do is to show that *Denying History* fails miserably to live up to the hyperbolic claims that the authors and their credulous supporters have advanced in promoting it. The skeptic's knife cuts in every direction.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: A slightly different version of this essay originally appeared in *Revisionist History*, No. 16, October-November 2000.

PART 3

**LUCIFER'S
LEXICON**

AN UPDATED ABRIDGMENT

A

Abdicate, v. To quit one's job as a monarch in order to avoid being fired, or fired upon.

Abstract Expressionism, n. A bastard child of MOMA and Dada.

Adam, n. The first name of the first man. His full name was "Adam Fool."

Admirer, n. One who sees himself in the mirror of another person.

Affirmative Action, n. A system of handicapping used in the contemporary American rat race.

Afrocentrism, n. Clio (and Cleopatra) in blackface. Negro Cleopatriotism.

Agnostic, n. A Godfearing atheist.

Air Superiority, n. The mother of moral superiority.

Akashic Record, the, n. An arcane archive consulted by theosophists, anthroposophists, and other sophists, in order to write their revisionist histories of the world and the universe.

Albino, n. A whiter shade of paleface.

Allah, n. One of a number of Gods, each of whom is the only God.

Ambition, n. A desire to make something of oneself, such as a nuisance, a spectacle, or a fool.

America, n. A pitiless, helpful giant; the Great Santa. The land of decree, and the home of the slave.

Amulet, n. Something worn to provide protection from harm, such as a four-leaf clover, a rabbit's foot, a St. Christopher medal, or Kevlar body-armor.

Americanist, n. One who knows that America is the freest

country on earth, but has no idea which is the second freest. One who loves the Liberty Bell, and resembles it as well.

Amoralist, *n.* One from whose eyes the scales of justice have fallen. A Lysander Knifer.

Anarchist, *n.* One who advocates the separation of Existence and State. A Thoreau-going Jeffersonian Democrat. A master-baiter. A slave of Anarchism. One who prefers Emma Goldman to Golda Meir. One who does his duty to Durruti. One who is *on* his rocker—Rudolf Rocker, that is.

Ancient, *adj.* Existing or occurring in the distant past, such as before the 1960s.

Anoint, *v.* To pour oil upon a messiah or other slippery character.

Anti-Arabism, *n.* The other anti-Semitism. Fortunately for many American bigots, this prejudice is perfectly kosher.

Anti-Semite, *n.* 1. One who hates Jews. 2. One who is hated by Jews.

Appendix, *n.* An otherwise useless organ placed in the

human body by a benevolent Creator in order to provide work for surgeons.

Armageddon Theology, *n.* Banging the Bible and beating the war drums. The Christian belief that the future looks bright, indeed, brighter than a thousand suns.

Armed Robbery, *n.* A form of practical alchemy by means of which lead can be turned into gold.

Assure, *v.* To cause to feel uncertain.

Auschwitz, *n.* A World War Two Nazi concentration camp subsequently turned into a Commie tourist trap.

B

Bachelor, n. A man in a state of nature, in which life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Banquet, n. 1. A sumptuous feast. 2. A presumptuous frozen dinner.

Barbarian, n. One who does not speak Greek. This lexicographer is a barbarian. He does not speak Greek. It's all Greek to him.

Belief, n. A fig leaf used to cover up one's ignorance.

Berserker, n. A Norse warrior who fought with frenzied fury, invulnerable to fire and iron, unlike his decadent descendants.

Bilocation, n. Being in two places at once, a piddling little miracle compared to trilocation, quadrilocation, quintilocation, etc. According to Robert Sibley in *Keepers of the Secrets*, "Legend had [Sufi] master Rumi concurrently

attending seventeen different parties, and writing a poem at each.”

Bin Laden, Osama, *n.* A freedom fighter, according to Ronald Reagan. A terrorist, according to George W. Bush.

Bircher, *n.* One who loves America no matter how much he comes to hate it.

Bisexual, *n.* A switch-hitter, able to strike out either way.

Black-eyed Peas, *n. pl.* Black-eyed beans.

Black Lung, *n.* Beautiful lung.

Black Middle Class, *n.* The jigabourgeoisie.

Blair, Tony, *n.* George W. Bush’s poodle. Not a French poodle, but a “Freedom poodle.”

Blasphemer, *n.* One who pisses on Christ and pisses off Christians.

Blood, *n.* A liquid that is thicker than water, but not as thick as oil.

Blowjob, *n.* A nice job, if you can get it.

Blues, *n.* A form of music performed by blind, illiterate blacks and enjoyed by deaf, college-educated whites.

Born-again Christian, *n.* One who has been brainwashed in the blood of the Lamb.

Bowel Movement, *n.* The only kind of movement there is.

Breast, *n.* A feminine appurtenance provided by a thoughtful Creator for the nourishment and pacification of babies of all ages.

Breatharian, *n.* One who claims that man can live by breath alone.

Broadway Musical, *n.* An extreme example of the Theater of Cruelty.

Briton, *n.* One who keeps a stiff upper lip, especially during rigor mortis, after dying in a bombing.

Budget Cut, *n.* Formerly, a decrease in government spending. Now, a decrease in the rate of increase in

government spending.

Bullshit, *n.* A fertilizer essential to the growth of civilizations.

Bureaucracy, *n.* A perpetual inertia machine.

Bush, George W., *n.* A very likeable man who is loathed and abominated by billions of people, not because of anything he has ever done, mind you, but only because of who he is, a very likeable man.

Bushwa, *n.* Anything ever said by a Bush, or a bush, especially a burning one.

C

Caffeine, *n.* The poor man's cocaine.

Cakewalk, *n.* The neoconservative euphemism for a quagmire.

Capital, *n.* A seat of deceit.

Capitalism, *n.* Moneytheism.

Captive Nations, *n.* Nations.

Case Closed, *n.* Mind closed.

Catastrophism, *n.* The theory adhered to by Fundamentalist Christian geologists attributing the present geological structure of the earth, not to gradual changes, but to catastrophic events, such as the Noachian Flood and the first and foremost catastrophe, the Creation.

Catholicism, *n.* Christian Phariseeism.

Celebrant, n. The officiating priest at the Eucharist, who consecrates bread and wine, miraculously transforming them into his bread and butter.

Chosen People, the, n. The Self-Chosen People.

Christian Conservative, n. One who is proud to be an ugly American, even though pride is a sin.

Christ, Jesus, n. The *Meshugah*.

Churchill, Winston, n. A belligerent drunk.

Civics, n. The study of a citizen's privileges, rights and duties. For example, it is a citizen's privilege to pay taxes, it is his right to be represented in the body that levies taxes, and it is his duty to evade taxes.

Civil Libertarian, n. A phony First-Amendment Fundamentalist who pretends to defend our sacred freedom to complain about our slavery.

Clairvoyeurism, n. Using one's psychic powers to be a Peeping Tom.

Cluster Bomb, *n.* A big bomb containing a lot of cute little bomblets, just the right size for maiming and killing cute little kids.

Commissar, *n.* A Commie Czar.

Compulsory Drug Testing, *n.* Urination of sheep.

Confession, *n.* An admission of wrongdoing, often obtained by wrongdoing.

Congress, *n.* A nest of vultures simultaneously feathering and fouling their habitation.

Connoisseur, *n.* One who insists on only the very best port, even in a storm.

Conscience, *n.* Nonscience.

Conscript, *n.* One forced to fight for freedom.

Conservative, *n.* One who favors limited government and total war. One who is against exercise because Jane Fonda is for it. As Franklin Roosevelt said, "A Conservative is a man with two perfectly good legs who, however, has never

learned to walk.” Of course, Roosevelt forgot to add that a Liberal is a cripple who wants to force somebody else to pay for his wheelchair.

Consistency, *n.* A straight and narrow path leading to fanaticism.

Conspiracy Theorist, *n.* One who knows all the secrets of all the secret societies. But how? Obviously, he must be a member!

Conspiracy Theory, *n.* A theory about a conspiracy that you are not supposed to believe. A theory about a conspiracy that you *are* supposed to believe is not called a “conspiracy theory,” but simply a “conspiracy,” or some synonym such as “plot.”

Convent, *n.* A hotbed of chastity.

Corporation, *n.* In the words of Ambrose Bierce, “An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility.”

Coulter, Ann, *n.* America’s favorite female impersonator. Coulter does an especially good job of simulating

stereotypical female illogicality, as, for example, when “she” writes that the fact that Jesus is still hated is the best argument there is for the truth of Christianity. This makes as much sense as saying that the fact that Muhammad (piss be upon him) is still hated is the best argument for the truth of Islam.

Credibility, *n.* Ability to deceive.

Criminal Regime, *n.* Regime.

Crusade, *n.* A jihad for Jesus.

Cui Bono? Latin for, “Who can I blame?”

Cynicism, *n.* The sin of doubting the sincerity of hypocrites.

D

Dada, *n.* Nada. Thus spake Tzarathustra.

Deadwood, *n.* The raw material used to make school boards, Federal Reserve Boards, the planks of political platforms, government bureaus and cabinets, and Presidential timber.

Decadence, *n.* The idolization of idiosyncrasy. Sleeping with Satan on satin sheets. Sowing one's Wilde oats while going against the grain.

Deflower, *v.* To boldly go where no man has gone before.

Deluge, *n.* A worldwide flood by means of which God drowned all humans and animals on earth except for the select few on Noah's Ark, proving that God is not a prolifer.

Democracy, *n.* Government of the sheep, by the shepherds, for the wolves.

Democrat, n. One who fights parsimony with sanctimony.

Depraved, adj. In touch with one's inner sinner.

Dictatorship, n. Government by force and fraud, as opposed to democracy, government by fraud and force.

Dignity, n. The stateliness and nobility of manner characteristic of a welfare mother.

Diplomacy, n. Duplicity.

Diplomat, n. A mat it is not polite to walk on, though it is sometimes done, nonetheless.

Discordian, n. An advocate of Eristocracy. A Fnordic supremacist. A Thornley in the side of Authority. One who takes religion too Siriously.

Dittohead, n. One who rushes to misjudgment.

Divine, adj. Of or pertaining to the vine, specifically the True Vine, the source of the True Wine, i.e., Dionysus.

Do-nothing, adj. Doing no harm.

Double Taxation, *n.* Taxing the income of investors or corporations twice. This is anathema to Republicans, who don't seem to mind the triple or quadruple or quintuple taxation of the income of employees.

Doubt, *n.* The philosophical device Descartes so cleverly used to prove everything he previously believed.

Draft, *n.* An ill wind from which many a young man has caught his death.

Dualism, *n.* Duelism.

E

Effeminacy, *n.* The state or quality of having feminine traits to a degree not befitting a man. It is most commonly encountered in women.

Egalitarian, *n.* One who believes inequity is iniquity. A morally superior person.

Ego, *the, n.* The spook that haunts the heads of Stirnerites.

Egoism, *n.* The only “ism” for me.

Egoist, *n.* A nation of one. A Max Monad. One who is made of Stirner stuff.

Elitist, *n.* One who looks down his snotty, snobby nose at those he regards as inferior to himself, quite possibly correctly.

Epistemology, *n.* The theory of knowledge, as distinguished from the knowledge of knowledge.

Evildoer, *n.* Anyone who does anything.

Existence Exists, A truism considered truly profound by those who do not understand that tautologies are tautological.

Existentialist, *n.* Sartre for Sartre's sake.

Experience, *n.* A capricious teacher, often indulgent, but sometimes extremely strict.

Eyewitness, *n.* One who sees things with his own eyes, then lies about them through his own teeth.

F

Faith, *n.* The power by means of which a Christian can move a mountain, assuming he also uses some high explosives.

Fascinating, *adj.* In show business, faintly interesting.

Feminist, *n.* A sister who wants to be Big Brother.

Flag-burning, *n.* A form of expression protected by the First Amendment, like bra-burning, cross-burning, and book-burning.

Fountainhead, *n.* The very best kind of head, the kind that Ayn Rand used to give to Nathaniel Branden.

Freedom, *n.* One's preferred form of slavery.

G

Gawad, *n.* The name given to the Supreme Being by Southern preachers.

Gay Liberationist, *n.* One who has forgotten that forbidden fruit is the sweetest.

Glossolalia, *n.* Speech which gains in originality what it loses in intelligibility. The Holy Babble.

God-fearing, *adj.* Afraid of nothing.

God's Law, *n.* Man's law, revealed through smoke and mirrors to overawe the rubes.

Good News, *n.* In Christianity, the news that possibly, just possibly, God might decide not to torture you in Hell for all eternity if you can correctly figure out which of the 999 different denominations of Christianity is the one and only one you must join in order to be saved.

Good Samaritan, *n.* A dead Samaritan.

Gospel, *n.* The Tallest Tale Ever Told. The Cruci-fiction.

Gray Matter, *n.* The type of matter necessary for discerning shades of gray, rather than seeing things in black and white. Gray matter is not the matter with Kansas.

Great Society, *n.* America, after it went all the way with LBJ. In short, America the fucked.

Greatest Generation, *n.* A generation of vipers.

Gullible, *adj.* Capable of being a gull, such as Jonathan Livingston Seagull.

H

Halal, *adj.* Kosher for Koran-thumpers.

Hammer, *n.* A tool used to hit nails, such as fingernails and thumbnails.

Happiness, *n.* A wild goose (disguised as a bluebird) which everyone has an inalienable right to chase.

Heaven, *n.* A place where dead Christians will be happy forever. The Reverend Billy Graham has said that he expects to be able to play golf in Heaven, because Heaven has everything one needs to be happy. The Reverend Graham has also said that there is no sex in Heaven. Draw your own conclusions, brethren.

Hell, *n.* God's Gulag.

Hello, *interj.* Welcome to Hell. (See Sartre's *No Exit*.)

Higher Truth, *the, n.* The truth that is over my head.

Holiday, n. A day set aside for the celebration of getting off work or out of school.

Holocaust, the, n. A smokescreen obscuring the atrocities of the Allies and the Israelis.

Holocaust Literature, n. Grim fairy tales.

Holocaust Revisionism, n. Historiographic pornography. A thought-crime against humanity.

Holocaust Revisionist, n. One who denies that he is a denier.

Holy Ghost, the, n. The poltergeist that banged the Virgin Mary and knocked her up.

Holy War, n. A war, for God's sake.

Honesty, n. The best policy for liars.

Hope, n. The eternal deceiver. (For details see H.L. Mencken's essay, "The Cult of Hope," or see my forthcoming book, *The Mendacity of Hope*.)

Human Resources, *n. pl.*, People fit for exploitation.

Hun, *n.* A term of endearment, formerly used in reference to our good friends, the Krauts.

Hunting, *n.* A crime against animality, except in the case of hunting humans.

Hurricane, *n.* An act of God, which proves that God is a terrorist, an evildoer who should be hunted down and killed like a mad dog.

Hypocrisy, *n.* Rule by hypocrites, the only form of government there is.

Hypocrite, *n.* One who practices vice while preaching versa; a human being.

I

Iconoclast, *n.* An axiom murderer.

Ideal, *adj.* I deal.

Idealist, *n.* One who has noble, altruistic reasons for wanting to slaughter people.

Identity Christian, *n.* Fake-identity Christian.

I Do, *Adieu*—to freedom.

Immoralist, *n.* One who cannot feel guilt with a clear conscience.

Incorruptible, *adj.* Overpriced.

Individualism, *n.* A doctrine antithetical to individuality, though it is the least unrealistic form of collectivism.

Infallible, *adj.* Incapable of admitting error.

International Community, n. Me, my friends, and my stooges.

Ireland, n. The land of ire.

I.R.S., n. The Black Hand at the end of the long arm of the law.

Islamofascist, n. A Muslim follower of Mussolini. One who believes in the Koran and the Corporate State. In short, a figment of the imagination of the Ziononazi.

Islamophobia, n. Irrational fear and hatred of Islam, as distinguished from the rational fear and hatred of Islam, for which there is no word.

Isolationist, n. A selfish bastard who stubbornly doesn't want to be bothered with slaughtering foreigners.

Israel, n. The last refuge of a Jewish scoundrel. An itsy-bitsy, teeny weeny, tiny little nation surrounded by enemies, especially the Mediterranean Sea, a virulently anti-Semitic body of water just waiting for a chance to drown the Jews. Israel has a right to exist. Indeed, it is the only nation in the Middle East that has such a right.

J

Jailer, n. One who is his brother's keeper.

Jesus Christ, n. The sin of God.

Jungian, n. One who is a Freud of his own shadow.

Just, adj. Just as I want.

Justification, n. Mystification.

Just War, n. Merely war.

K

Kabbalist, *n.* A Jew who believes in Ayn Sof rather than Ayn Rand.

Kahanism, *n.* Hitlerism with a Hebrew face.

Klansperson, *n.* A racist who is not a sexist.

Koran, the, *n.* A holy source of toilet paper, like the Bible, the Talmud, The Book of Mormon, The Urantia Book, etc. The Koran is also good for children's games of "kick the Koran."

L

Labor Union, n. An association of workers organized to advance the interests of union organizers.

Las Vegans, n. pl. Hispanics who prefer their chili *sin carne*.

LDS, n. A psychedelic drug more dangerous than LSD.

Legislation, n. The poetry of power.

Liberal, n. One whose heart bleeds when the Federal budget is cut. One who believes that a woman should have the right to kill her fetus, but not with a gun. One who believes that gays should be allowed to join the military and form a Special Forces group called The Lavender Berets.

Liberal Media Bias, n. One of two reasons why the liberal media accuse George W. Bush of being a liar. The other reason is that George W. Bush is a liar.

Liberation, n. Deliverance from present forms of oppression into new and improved varieties of slavery.

Liberation Theology, n. The gospel according to St. Marx.

Libertarian, n. One who believes in liberty, just like a Christian believes in Christ.

Libertarianism, n. The doctrine that all individuals have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal rights of others to live in whatever manner they choose, etc. *ad infinitum*.

Libertarian Movement, n. A herd of individualists stampeding toward freedom.

Limited Government, n. Limited robbery, limited slavery, and limited murder. Partialitarianism. Aynarchy.

Lincoln, Abraham, n. The president who freed the slaves and enslaved the free.

Liver, n. A large glandular organ that promotes digestion, except when eaten.

Locke, John, *n.* A closing or fastening device used to prevent unauthorized entry into private property.

Logic, *n.* The law of thought, which, if violated by thinking illogically, makes one a thought criminal.

Looter, *n.* A civil riots worker.

L.S.D., *n.* Doctor of Lysergic Studies.

Lucifer, *n.* The Devil's proper name, derived from Latin and meaning "Light-bearer," or "Bringer of Enlightenment."

Lynching, *n.* An application of participatory democracy to the judicial process.

M

Mafia, *n.* A nonexistent group of perfectly respectable businessmen who just might break your legs if you say otherwise.

Mafioso, *n.* One who is *oh so* Mafia.

Mahdi, the, *n.* Another fine messiah.

Mailer, Norman, *n.* Mormon Nailer.

Majority Rule, *n.* In the U.S., rule by a minority, selected by a minority.

Man, *n.* An irrational animal whose irrationality is best demonstrated by his irrational belief in his rationality.

Marijuana, *n.* The hemp plant, whose leaves and flowering tops are exhilarating when smoked or ingested but which can cause a deterioration of mental functioning and a tendency toward paranoia in chronic non-users.

Mass Media, n. America's madrassa.

Masturbation, n. Doing one's own thing.

Militarist, n. One who is armed to the teeth that he lies through.

Miracle, n. A disaster that you are lucky enough to survive while fifty million other people die.

Misgovern, v. To institute a Reign of Error. To govern.

Mithras, n. An ancient savior-god who stabbed the bull, unlike Jesus who shot it.

Moderate, n. In American politics, one who commits crimes in the middle of the road. Someone, such as John McCain or Joe Lieberman, who only wants to slaughter hundreds of thousands of Arabs and not millions of Arabs, like some *extremists*.

Moral Clarity, n. The ethical perspicacity that enables neoconservatives to see that the intentional killing of one innocent civilian by Islamic terrorists is vastly more immoral than the unintentional killing of six billion

innocent civilians by Israeli or American anti-terrorists.

Moral Compass, n. A direction-detecting device used by American and Israeli pilots to find their bombing targets.

Morality, n. Rules of behavior that are absolutely obligatory for one's opponents or enemies.

Morkrumbo, n. The secret Mason's word. Shhh! Don't tell anyone. It's a *secret!*

Motorcade, n. A moving target.

Multiculturalism, n. The belief that Shakespeare is the equal of a spear-chucker.

Mystic, n. Anyone who disagrees with Ayn Rand or James Randi.

N

National Interest, the, *n.* The money paid periodically to the holders of the national debt.

Nationalism, *n.* According to Albert Einstein, the measles of mankind. But while Einstein sought to quarantine carriers of Nazism, a form of German measles, he himself helped to spread Zionism, the Jewish measles. An illustration of relativity, it would seem.

Natural Law, *n.* The law of nature, including the law of the jungle.

Natural Rights, *n.* Walls made of wind. “No Trespassing” signs visible only to those who are not morally depraved at heart.

Neighbor, *n.* A person whose annoying behavior conclusively proves that God must have been joking when He said, “Love thy neighbor” and “Thou shalt not kill.”

Neoconservative, n. One who believes that democratic nations should start wars to spread democracy, because democratic nations don't start wars. A Max Boot not on the ground. A great American patriot whose only regret is that you have but one life to give for Israel.

Nietzschean, n. One who is able to leap tall *bildungsromans* with a single bound.

Niggardly, adj. A word which should be avoided since it might be offensive to niggards.

Nihilist, n. One who believes nothing is sacred and venerates it.

Nirvana, n. The state of absolute felicity attained by blowing out one's brains.

No Spin Zone, n. No spine zone.

N-word, n. A word that only Ns are allowed to use.

0

Objectivist, *n.* A person of unborrowed vision, who never places any consideration above his own perception of reality, who never does violence to his own rational judgment, and who, as a result, agrees completely with Ayn Rand about everything.

Old Glory, *n.* The U.S. flag, a symbol of our freedom to pay a fine or go to jail if we desecrate it.

Ombudsman, *n.* A watchdog without teeth who works for the thief.

Omniscience, *n.* God, conceived as knowing all things by one who does not.

Open Marriage, *n.* Open adultery.

Optimism, *n.* Panglossolalia.

Optimist, *n.* One who looks at a rose bush through rose-

tinted glasses and, for some reason, doesn't see the thorns.

Orgiasts, *n, pl.* People who fornicate and fornicate.

O'Reilly, Bill, *n.* Brill O'Paddy.

Ought, *n.* This word means nought.

Our Troops, *n. pl.* Our thugs and assassins. Of course, we all support our brave thugs and assassins, because we're all cowardly conformist cunts, aren't we?

P

Pacifist, n. A fist which strikes no blows, not even in self-defense. One who, when kicked in the ass, turns the other cheek.

Pagan, n. One who foolishly worships idols that he has made with his own hands, unlike the monotheist, who wisely worships the One True God that he has created with his own mind.

Pantheist, n. One who believes God is everywhere, even in the toilet (keeping a copy of the Koran company, perhaps).

Pantomime, n. The art of boring an audience without speaking.

Parapsychology, n. Science *qua* seance.

Patron of the Arts, n. One who puts his money where his mouth is, which, oftentimes, is also where his taste is.

Peace, *n.* A popular reason for war.

Pearl Harbor, *n.* The site of Franklin Roosevelt's sneak attack on isolationism.

Pedophile, *n.* One who loves children, as so many parents do.

People, *n.* Two-legged sheep.

Person of Color, *n.* The politically correct synonym for the offensive and obsolete term, "colored person."

Petraeus, David, *n.* The Surgin' General, who realizes that war is the health of the State.

Pharmaceutical Company, *n.* A pusher with pull.

Philosopher, *n.* One who grasps at the essences of straws. One who loves wisdom, not wisely, but too well.

Picasso, Pablo, *n.* A renowned modern artist, who painted many masterpieces of shit.

Pinhead, n. One who disagrees with spinhead Bill O'Reilly.

Plagiarism, n. The most sinister form of flattery.

Planets, n., pl. Asteroids on steroids.

Platform, n. In American politics, a statement of what a party supposedly stands for. Of course, in reality, political parties do not stand for anything, although voters do.

PNAC, n. The acronym for the Project for the New American Century, aka, the Unilateral Commission.

Politically Correct, adj. Intellectually crippled.

Politics, n. The art of the possible to get away with.

Politics of Fear, n. Politics.

Pollster, n. One who measures what the public thinks about something it does not think about.

Pollyanna, n. One who sees the silver lining of every cloud, even mushroom clouds.

Populace, *n.* The all-too-common people; the masses of asses; the rank and vile.

Pornucopia, *n.* A horn of plenty for the horny.

Pray, *v.* To bray.

President, *n.* 1. The mischief executive of a republic; America's misleading man. 2. The elected chief executive of the United States and the unelected dictator of the rest of the world.

Pro-choice, *adj.* Favoring freedom of choice for some people under some circumstances.

Professional, *n.* One who does it for money. See PROSTITUTE.

Pro-life, *adj.* Opposed to killing some people (or alleged people) under some circumstances.

Prostitute, *n.* One who does it for money. See PROFESSIONAL.

Psilocybe mexicana, *n.* A mushroom with a view.

Psychopath, *n.* The path less travelled.

Principle, *n.* A general error, basic to other errors.

Public, *the, n.* The most rapacious of the special interest groups.

Purity of Arms, *n.* The Israeli term for the military practice of bending over backwards to avoid killing civilians. Unfortunately, when Israeli soldiers bend over backwards, it makes it more difficult for them to shoot straight and avoid killing civilians.

Q

Quagga, *n.* A South African equine with attributes of both the ass and the zebra, now extinct, proving it was not fit to survive. So good riddance to the quagga.

Quaker, *n.* One who follows the lunar light into outer darkness.

Quotable, *adj.* Suitable for quotation, like, for example, the wonderfully witty definitions in *this* exceptionally excellent lexicon.

R

Randian, *n.* A Galt-ridden individual.

Rationalist, *n.* One who puts Descartes before the horse sense.

Reactionary, *n.* One who longs for the good old days of the 50s. Not the 1950s, the 950s.

Real American, *n.* One who does not wear a diaper on his head, though perhaps he should, considering what a shithead he is.

Reality, *n.* An escape from drugs.

Reincarnate, *v.* To become a born-again Hindu.

Reliable Sources, *n. pl.* Sources judged to be reliable by someone whose judgment might not be.

Religion, *n.* A cult with clout.

Reparations, n. pl. To the victims go the spoils.

Reporter, n. One who covers some of the news and covers up the rest.

Republican, n. An elephant with Alzheimer's.

Revelations, n. The Hallelujacinations of St. John The Insane.

Rumsfeld, Donald, n. Formerly, a rock star who trashed not just hotel rooms, but whole hotels and even whole countries. He is, however, no longer a rock star, and his reputation now lies buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Unknowns.

S

Sacred Cow, *n.* Food for freethought.

Safer Sex, *n.* Sex with Morley Safer.

Salvation, *n.* God's merciful act of saving you from Himself.

Sanity, *n.* The madness of the majority.

Satan, *n.* The son, not the father, of lies.

Satanist, *n.* One who thinks Hell is cool.

Scientific Socialism, *n.* Socialistic scientism.

Second Amendment, *the, n.* The Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing the right to the pursuit of trigger-happiness.

Seeker, *n.* One who seeks, but, contrary to Jesus, does not

necessarily find. *Why did the seeker stick his head up his ass? Because his guru told him that to find the truth, he must look inside himself.*

Self-Censorship, n. The type of censorship preferred by self-reliant Americans.

Self-Defense, n. The God-given right to kill anyone whom you paranoically presume might possibly attack you someday.

Semen, n. The glue of love.

Senseless Murder, n. The kind of murder that makes no sense, as distinguished from a sensible murder, the only kind of murder that a sensible person, wearing sensible shoes, would commit.

Shiftless, adj. Working no shift, neither the day shift, the swing shift, the midnight shift, nor even the paradigm shift.

Shylock, n. One who wants the pound of flesh, or the flesh of Pound.

Silent Night, *n.* A Christmas Eve when no one disturbs their neighbors by singing annoying Christmas carols.

Sin, *n.* A synonym for “fun.”

Sitchinite, *n.* A disciple of Zecharia Sitchin, who believes that ancient people lacked imagination—unlike modern people, such as Zecharia Sitchin.

Skeptic, *n.* One who doubts what he does not want to believe and believes what he does not want to doubt.

Smuggler, *n.* A contrabandito.

Social Security, *n.* Subsidized senility.

Solipsist, *n.* One who has only himself to blame. One for whom masturbation is the only kind of sex possible.

Soul, *n.* An invisible, intangible, inaudible, tasteless and odorless—but marketable—entity.

Sour Grapes, *n. pl.* Fruits which, when fermented, produce fine whines.

Spitballs, *n, pl.* Weapon systems that are very low-tech and very inexpensive, and which, therefore, are of no interest to war profiteers, even though they are perfectly adequate for protecting the country against imaginary menaces.

Spontaneous Combustion, *n.* Making an ash of oneself.

Square Dance, *n.* Obviously, a dance for squares.

Steel, *n.* One of two metals from which guitars are made, the other being lead. Of course, lead guitars are much more common than steel guitars.

Subsidy, *n.* Government aid to the plunderprivileged.

Success, *n.* The bitch-goddess that failed.

Succulent, *adj.* Worthy of being sucked. This word is analogous with “fucculent,” meaning worthy of being fucked.

Suffer, *v.* According to Buddha, to be human. According to Judah, to be a Jew.

Suffrage, *n.* The right to choose the horn of a dilemma by which one shall be gored.

Suicide, *n.* Taking one's life—too seriously.

Surrealism, *n.* An advertisement for utopia.

Synchronicity, *n.* The city of meaningful coincidences where, for example, while reading a book about nanotechnology, one hears the radio play an oldie titled “Neenie Nana Nana Nunu.”

Syphilis, *n.* One of the many ills which, according to sexist Greek mythology, originally came from Pandora's box.

Szasz, *n. pl.* Tools for cutting us loose from the straight-jacket of psychiatric ideology.

T

Tax, *n.* A payment made to the government for servitude rendered.

Tax, *v.* To fleece the sheep; to pluck the geese; to milk the cowed.

Taxpayer, *n.* One who renders unto a seizer what is not the seizer's. One who feeds the mouth that puts the bite on him. An April fool.

Tender, *adj.* Readily yielding to blade or teeth: said of food, such as the tender hearts of Christian missionaries, or the tender feet of the Donner party.

Terrorism, *n.* 1. Intentional attacks on innocent civilians, such as those innocent civilians in the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. 2. Intentional attacks on innocent oil pipelines.

Terrorist, *n.* An aspiring statesman.

Tetragrammaton, *n.* A polysyllabic name for a four-letter word, YHWH.

Theodicy, *n.* The making of weak excuses for an omnipotent God. Theoidiocy.

Time, *n.* Our mortal enemy. We've got to kill time, before time kills us.

Torture, *n.* Ways of making people talk, after they've stopped screaming.

Transcendental Wisdom, *n.* Wisdom that transcends the wisdom of the wisdom teeth.

Transubstantiation, *n.* A supperstition.

Trappist, *n.* A monk who has vowed to keep his trap shut. If only all clergy would do likewise.

Trinity, *n.* Three gods for the price of one, but still no bargain.

Trotskyist, *n.* One who believes Napoleon Trotsky wouldn't have killed quite as many people as Snowball Joe Stalin.

Truman, Harry S, n. The A-hole who dropped the A-bomb.

Twilight Zone, n. The fifth dimension, where Rod Serling suffers the punishment of having to watch perpetual reruns of *Night Gallery*.

Twinfucker, n. A *doppelganger* banger.

Two-Party System, n. A political system which, in theory, gives voters 200% as much choice as a one-party system, and 20% as much choice as a Ten-party system.

U

Unanimity, *n.* Completely concealed disagreement.

Unitarian Universalism, *n.* The religion for people who think they are thinking people.

Unity, *n.* A state of general discord and mutual bullshitting.

Upbringing, *n.* A bringdown.

Utopia, *n.* The best of all impossible worlds. A product of myopia.

V

Vain, *n.* A foreign domain in which many a soldier has died.

Veal, *n.* Meat that is not merely murder, but child murder.

Vonu, *n.* Invulnerability to coercion, a condition fully attainable only by the dead.

Village, *n.* What it takes to raise a village idiot.

Virgin, *n.* A carnal ignoramus.

Virgin Mary, *the, n.* Mary, who had a little lamb.

W

Walnut, n. A type of nut which, as far as I know, is not a health nut, a gun nut, a conspiracy nut, or a religious nut.

Wannsee Protocol, the, n. The Protocol of the Learned Elders of Zyklon.

War, n. The racket that makes a racket. The answer to a war profiteer's prayer.

War on Drugs, n. A war to make the world safe for alcoholism.

War Profiteering, n. Parasitism in the name of patriotism.

The Profiteer Hymn

*From the hauls of Halliburton
To the Carlyle Group's gravy,
We have seized our country's money
From the National Treasury.
First to hype a phony menace
And to foment baseless fears,
We are proud to bear the title
Of venal war profiteers.*

Watergate, *n.* Nixon's Waterloo.

Weapons of Mass Destruction, *n. pl.* The most dangerous weapons in the world, so dangerous that they constitute an intolerable threat, even when they do not exist.

Welfare Statist, *n.* One who seeks to promote the general welfare by making welfare general.

Whiskey, *n.* The spirit of '94.

White Supremacist, *n.* An inferior white man.

Work Ethic, *n.* Slave morality.

World War II, *n.* The bigger-budget, bigger-cast sequel to World War I, which was also more successful at the box office.

X

Xmas, *n.* A day celebrating the birth of our Savior, Malcolm X.

X-Ray Vision, *n.* A superpower useful to a crimefighter, or a voyeur.

Y

Yahweh, *n.* Not my way.

Yellow Rain, *n.* A mixture of beeshit and bullshit. Not to be confused with “golden showers,” which is simply piss.

Yank, *n.* Jerk.

Yellow Ribbon, *n.* A self-awarded decoration for cowardice.

Z

Zen, n. The sound of two lips flapping.

Zen Master, n. A drill-sergeant of the spirit.

Zenophobia, n. An irrational fear and hatred of paradoxes.

Zionist Propaganda, n. Hebrew National Baloney. A commonly used synonym for “Zionist propaganda” is “the news.”

Zog, n. Formerly, the king of Albania. Not to be confused with ZOG, the current king of America.

Zygote, n. A human being, just like you and me. Hath not a zygote eyes? Hath not a zygote hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? If you prick them, do they not bleed? If you tickle them, do they not laugh? And if you wrong them, shall they not revenge?

PART 4

THE

END IS

NEAR

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALLAH

Dear Allah,

I've been reading your book, *The Holy Qur'an*. What a crock of shit!

Your book is either boring or annoying, and even the annoying stuff is repeated so often that it becomes boring, too. You're constantly bragging about being all-wise and all-knowing, but you sure don't know how to write a book, Allah. What you needed was a good editor, someone to cut the repetition down and work your crummy prose into something a little more readable. (Not that it would be worth reading, even then.) Muhammad (piss be upon him) obviously wasn't the man for the job.

And so, for example, you tell us about 57 billion different times that if we don't unquestionably believe all your bullshit and accordingly obey your every command, then

you're going to burn us forever in Hell, or worse. I suppose that would be a pretty good reason for believing your bullshit, Allah, *if* I believed that you actually existed and had such power, which I don't. I think you're a mirage of the imagination of Muhammad (piss be upon him).

You attempt to prove your own existence with arguments that are flimsy and unconvincing. You repeatedly ask hare-brained rhetorical questions, such as, "Seest thou not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green?" The answer is, "No." I don't *see* you sending down rain from the sky. In fact I don't see you doing any of the things you brag about doing.

Here's the thing, Allah. As far as I can see, you are invisible. So I *don't* see you causing night to alternate with day by controlling the sun and the moon. And by the way, Allah, do you even know the reason why night alternates with day? It's because the earth, a globe, rotates on its axis as it orbits the sun. Although you boast about being all-wise and all-knowing, you never seem to mention this established fact. I guess astronomy isn't your strong suit.

I mean, you go on about the sun and the moon and the stars, and you specifically mention Sirius, "the mighty star."

But other than the sun, which you don't seem to realize is a star, Sirius is the only star you specifically name. There's no mention of Alpha Centauri or Aldebaran or Betelgeuse. What's more, you brag about creating constellations and setting the Zodiacal signs in the sky, even though these are creations of the human mind. And you don't mention galaxies, do you? Nor do you mention planets. You don't even mention comets or meteorites, despite the Kaaba Stone in Mecca. Do you even know *anything* about our solar system, Allah?

And for the record, I didn't *see* you create man from dust or from sounding clay (whatever the fuck that is) or from a sperm-drop or from a blood-clot or from water, as you variously claim to have done. Nor did I see you create the universe. Unlike Dean Acheson, I was not present at the creation.

Just for your information, some human philosophers—Paley comes to mind—have formulated far more clever arguments for the existence of a creator-god than you have, Allah. And even if one believes in a creator-god, it doesn't automatically follow that you, Allah, are that one and only creator-god. You might just be a presumptuous

imposter, deceitfully taking credit for the handiwork of some other god, such as Yahweh, or Yaldabaoth. Indeed, if there is a creator-god, something tells me it isn't you. You're a fake, Allah. A fraud. A phony. I call 'em like I see 'em. And you, Allah, I don't even see.

Despite your incessant bragging about being some kind of all-wise, all-knowing, know-it-all, I notice that nowhere in your boring book do you demonstrate that you know much more about the earth and the universe than any Seventh-Century camel jockey. Why is that, Allah?

To judge from your utterly unconvincing creation narrative, you seem to be a member of the Flat Earth Society. At best, a pre-Copernican geocentrist. And you have the *chutzpah* to boast—endlessly—that you are all-wise and all-knowing?! Please. I can't help but notice that line in Surah 31, the bit where you say, "I loveth not any arrogant boaster." Is that your way of telling us that you hate yourself, Allah?

Yet, in spite of all your empty boasting, if I don't believe all your bullshit, you're going to burn me in Hell forever? Well, all I can say is fuck you, Allah. Fuck you and your pathetic, empty threats. Oh, and fuck your holy prophet

Muhammad, too. (Piss be upon him.)

Oh yeah, along with your empty threats, I notice you also have a penchant for name-calling. Attacking those of us who fail to be convinced by your preposterously specious arguments (such as that the falling of rain from the sky somehow proves that you caused that rain to fall), you say, “But none reject our signs except only a perfidious ungrateful (wretch)!” Well, I might be a perfidious ungrateful (wretch), but even so, you’re still full of shit, Allah. Honestly, you remind me of George W. Bush. Your supposed “signs” don’t begin to prove a damn thing. One big difference, though. I’m pretty sure George W. Bush actually exists.

So all I’ve got to say to you in closing, Allah, is take your *Holy Qur’an* and shove it straight up your nonexistent ass. I don’t believe it, and I’m going to leave it, because I don’t love it.

Yours truly,

L.A. Rollins

ODE TO EMPEROR BUSH
(EXCERPTS FROM A WORK IN PROGRESS)

*Emperor Bush is greater than Caesar.
He deserves his own salad if you ask me, sir.*

*He is greater than Alexander.
To disagree would be grave slander.*

*He is greater than Napoleon
Or Hulagu Khan, the Mongolian.*

*He is greater than Charlemagne.
The Holy Rollin' Empire is the name of his domain.*

*Emperor Bush is our best hope.
He's more infallible than the Pope.*

Emperor Bush knows more than you do.

Emperor Bush practices voodoo.

Emperor Bush makes me feel safe and warm.

There's no need to fear any gathering storm.

Emperor Bush will end all terror –

In a trillion years, if I'm not in error.

Emperor Bush – it's a safe bet;

He'll save us from every imaginary threat.

Emperor Bush – it couldn't be clearer.

To see a real threat, he should look in the mirror.

Emperor Bush is not above the law.

He is the law – hip, hip, hoorah!

Emperor Bush is defending freedom,

So where's Leon Czolgosz when we really need

him?

*Emperor Bush – I tell you, folks,
I sent him a pretzel and I hope he chokes.*

*I'd call the Emperor a piece of shit,
But that would be an insult to shit, wouldn't it?*

*I hate the Emperor and I boast of it.
If this be treason, make the most of it.*

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