

SECULAR DECEPTION

How American Secularists Hid the Truth for Decades

In order to protect their worldview, American secularists destroyed the reputation of William Jennings Bryan. Following World War II, secularists suppressed information that should have vindicated Bryan.

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Introduction

The day before he testified in the Scopes Trial, William Jennings Bryan addressed a crowd of supporters in Pikesville, Tennessee. According to the late historian Lawrence W. Levine, Bryan spoke of a, “gigantic conspiracy among atheists and agnostics against the Christian religion.” I understand that most people would dismiss Bryan’s allegation as the words of a buffoon, but what if he was right? Isn’t it possible that this three-time presidential nominee and secretary of state might have been correct? No less an expert in the field of biology than Stephen Jay Gould, stated that after reading *Headquarters Nights* and *The Science of Power* that he, “came to understand Bryan’s fears and even to agree in part.” Why are so few Americans unaware of this remarkable admission? **Because the true story of what happened at the Scopes Trial is still a dagger aimed at the heart of secularism.**

Bryan was leading a counter-revolution against the secular takeover that was almost complete by 1925. Dr. Christian Smith tells us that this Secular Revolution was the work of secular activists who were mainly academics and journalists. According to Smith, this revolution lasted from 1870 until 1930. Bryan was a threat, and he had to be destroyed. Even though the evidence shows that Bryan was not humiliated and exposed during his testimony, that is the story we tell our children. It is a fact, that Bryan more than held his own, but it was scored a knockout by an activist press that even included the defendant. How many Americans are aware that John Scopes wrote stories proclaiming Bryan’s defeat, that were distributed to newspapers across the country? How many Americans know that Bryan’s closing argument was later published and in this argument he brought up a passage from *The Descent of Man* which was particularly damaging to the cause of secularism? The words of this passage would be echoed by the Nazi film, *Dasein ohne Leben*. This fact was neatly concealed from the American people by the secular cabal. How is it that Richard Hofstadter came out of nowhere to write a book that would be so universally praised? Merle Curti was very well connected and very well aware of the threat posed to secularism by Nazi euthanasia. Curti had written a book on Bryan and had probably read his *Last Speech*. In 1933, American newspapers told of the Nazi plan to kill the weak. How convenient that Curti guided Hofstadter to finish his *SDAT* by 1944. Just in time to act as a firewall to protect Darwin from the stain of Nazi euthanasia. Darwin has been portrayed as the mild mannered naturalist by secularists and as a result of Hofstadter’s work, secularists have been able to convince people that there is nothing wrong with Darwinism, it was just those mean old Social Darwinists who hijacked his theory. **In truth, it was Darwin who gave the Nazis the idea to go into asylums and murder the weak.**

The Secular Revolution

In order to understand the journalistic assault that was aimed at Bryan, we must have the proper framework. This framework has been provided by sociologist Christian Smith. In his 2003 book entitled, *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, Dr. Smith wrote the following.

“History is written by the victors. And for this reason, perhaps, we are not accustomed to thinking about the secularization of American public life as the successful outcome of an intentional political struggle by secularizing activists to overthrow a religious establishment’s control over socially legitimate knowledge. Rather, we have been taught to think of secularization as the natural and inevitable by-product of

Smith, Christian. *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*. Berkeley: U of California, 2003.

"modernization". Smith went on to state that these secular activists effected "profound changes that altered American institutions between 1870 and 1930."

Smith described these secularists as a "rebel insurgency (which) consisted of waves of networks of activists who were largely skeptical, freethinking, agnostic, atheist, or theologically liberal. . ." Smith stated that "almost all of these activists were intellectual elites - professional definers, producers, legitimators, and distributors of social knowledge. They belonged to the American knowledge class - the academic, scientific, and literary intelligentsia of their day. These belonged to the class of educated people that previous generations sometimes called "men of letters": writers, researchers, university presidents, college faculty, publishers, lawyers, public lecturers, reformers, and so on. Those intellectuals most responsible for the historical secularization of American public life came largely from the first two traditions - they were scientific intellectuals and romantic intellectuals. The former were mostly academics and scientists...The romantic intellectuals, on the other hand, were mostly journalists, independent writers, and other artists."

Olasky, Marvin. "When World Views Collide: Journalists and the Great Monkey Trial." Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention. Norman, Oklahoma. 6 Aug. 1986.

Christopher Smith makes clear that the overthrow of the Protestant Establishment was the work of secularizing activists. These activists were mainly academics and journalists. They were responsible for creating profound cultural change in the United States from 1870 to 1930. It is not surprising then that they treated William Jennings Bryan as a threat. Bryan was leading counter-revolution and threatening to undo what had taken decades to accomplish. As a result, the secularists brought almost every weapon in their formidable arsenal to bear against him. The chief among these was the wit and literary skill of H. L. Mencken.

Journalistic Activism at the Scopes Trial

Far from being impartial and unbiased, Mencken and the other journalists who covered the Scopes Trial were more akin to combatants than observers. These men relished their role as "legitimizers of social knowledge." A little known essay written by Marvin Olasky makes clear the degree to which these journalists diverted from their role as observers to become advocates.

"By the 1920s the theory of evolution was accepted as scientific fact at most universities. It also provided new hope for those who no longer accepted biblical Christianity. As the New York Times editorialized, modern man needed "faith, even of a grain of mustard seed, in the evolution of life..." The Times quoted Bernard Shaw's statement that "The world without the conception of evolution would be a world wherein men of strong mind could only despair" -- for their only hope would be in a God to whom such modernists would not pray.

Olasky continued. "reporters tended to follow the example of the brilliant Mencken, who attacked the Dayton creationists (before he had set foot in the town) as "local primates ... yokels... morons... half-wits."

Olasky made the following remarks about the trial's penultimate and climactic day in which Bryan took the stand. "More useful is a report from the generally neutral (on this issue) Los Angeles Times, which concluded that "Bryan emerges in a better light than his rival." Also useful is a report from the pro-evolution (but attuned to local culture) Arkansas Gazette, which reported that Bryan: "stood up before Darrow at times and defied him to do his worst...[He gave] a deeply emotional religious appeal that struck the hearts of many of those who sat in front of him...today's performance puts the defense of this case where Mr. Bryan has tried to maneuver it -- into the field of opposition to the Bible, among the scientific agnosticism that follows Darrow...[Bryan] set his face to the one goal -- the defense of revealed religion, as he and his followers believe it. They number millions and they will applaud him in this struggle. He will be a brave figure to them after today. He emerges as a hero."

Once again, though, New York and Chicago-based reporters declared Bryan a humiliated loser. The New York Times called Bryan's testimony "an absurdly pathetic performance, with a famous American the chief creator and butt of a crowd's rude laughter." The next day the Times was at it again, saying of Bryan that "It was a Black Monday for him when he exposed himself...It has long been known to many that he was only a voice calling from a poorly-furnished brain-room." The Herald Tribune's McGeehan wrote that Bryan was "losing his temper and becoming to all intents and purposes a mammal."

As we will see, historian Paul Boyer makes clear that Darrow was in fact the butt of the crowd's laughter.

The final quotation from Olasky's essay that we examine is telling.

The desire of reporters to get away from the physical and spiritual heat of Dayton created particularly severe problems on the last day of the trial, which turned from pro forma wrap-up to sensation when Bryan and Darrow had their famous confrontation. Many reporters were off swimming or carousing, with the result that other reporters, after telegraphing their own stories, hastily rewrote parts and sent them to the missing reporters' newspapers in order to cover their friends. Scopes himself was asked by several reporters to write parts of the new articles, so journalistic coverage of the trial concluded with a bizarre touch: the defendant reporting on his own case under someone else's byline."

When viewed separately, Smith's concept of a Secular Revolution and Olasky's documentation of the biased coverage of the Scopes Trial may seem fairly innocuous. When taken together, these sources provide us with powerful incite as to why one of the greatest political figures in the history of this nation was savagely assaulted by the journalists of his day and why his reputation continues to lay in tatters.

Secular activists viewed Bryan as a threat to their control of the "power structures which governed the nation." These activists set out to destroy any credibility that he had with the American people. As a result, these journalists created a narrative of the trial which is largely fiction. Historian Paul Boyer went beyond the newspaper sources from which the history of the trial was written and examined the court transcripts. The following remarks made by Boyer about his research, were included in the *American Experience* episode entitled *Monkey Trial* which aired on PBS.

"It is fascinating to read the transcript of the trial. Bryan had the local audience very much in the palm of his hand. Time and again in the transcript

when Bryan responds to one of Darrow's questions, the person who was recording the events would write "applause...laughter'" over and over again.

Bryan was their champion and they were egging him on. It was very much like a sporting event. You know, cheering your hero. And I think Bryan won the local battle overwhelmingly.

Darrow of course understood that the real battle was being fought out nationwide, and he was playing to a larger audience."

Belief and Skepticism

Phillip E. Johnson has been a consistent critic of what he labeled as the "stereotype of the public debate about creation and evolution." According to Johnson, this stereotype has been perpetuated by the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee play entitled *Inherit the Wind*. This play which was first produced on Broadway in 1955, was made into a movie starring Spencer Tracey in 1960. Johnson wrote the following in his *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*. **"Inherit the Wind is a masterpiece of propaganda, promoting a stereotype of public debate about creation and evolution that gives all virtue and intelligence to the Darwinists."**

Unfortunately, Johnson went on to make the following statement in the same work. **"Bryan truly was a scientific ignoramus, and the wily Darrow really did make a fool of him."** We have already seen evidence calling into question the traditional narrative of the encounter between Bryan and Darrow on the trial's penultimate day. Johnson's characterization of Bryan as a scientific ignoramus is unfair. It would be more accurate to refer to Bryan as a skeptic in regards to science. It is important to clearly define what science he was skeptical of. In his summation at the Scopes Trial, which he was prevented from delivering but which was later disseminated in print form, Bryan wrote the following about the benefits of science, **"mankind is indebted to science for benefits conferred by the discovery of the laws of nature and by the designing of machinery for the utilization of these laws. Give science a fact and it is not only invincible, but it is of incalculable service to man."** Bryan was not skeptical of science in general, he was however, skeptical of certain theories which he considered to be nothing more than guesses. These theories involved human origins and the age of the earth.

Much of the criticism that journalists aimed at Bryan for his testimony at the Scopes Trial could be classified under two broad headings. These journalists criticized Bryan for his belief in the Bible and for his skepticism in regards to certain scientific theories. A telling example of the journalistic assault aimed at Bryan comes from the New York Times account of Bryan's climactic testimony which was published on July 21, 1925. **"Have you ever investigated to find out how long man has been on the earth?"** asked Darrow. **"I have never found it necessary,"** said Mr. Bryan. **Mr. Bryan's complete lack of interest in many things closely connected with such religious questions as he has been supporting for many years was strikingly shown again and again by Mr. Darrow. He had never made a study of the ancient civilizations of China, or Egypt, he did not know how far back they went, but he did know that they couldn't go back beyond the time of creation as given in the Bible. "I think you give the preference to anybody who opposes the Bible, and I give the preference to the Bible,""**

The concluding statement of this passage is the key to understanding Bryan's testimony. Modern observers look back at the trial, decades removed from the Secular Revolution. Bryan's life experience

was shaped by this time of cultural upheaval. During his youth, the Protestant establishment was still firmly in control of the nation. As an adult, he witnessed the secular takeover of the country. He was greatly alarmed by the sweeping change that came to America's institutions of higher learning. He saw how these institutions gave preference to ideas in opposition to the Bible. Bryan wrote the following in a work entitled *The Menace of Darwinism*.

"The materialist has always rejected the Bible account of Creation and, during the last half century, the Darwinian doctrine has been the means of shaking the faith of millions...James H. Leuba, a professor of Psychology in Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, wrote a book five years ago, entitled "Belief in God and Immortality." ...Leuba has discarded belief in a personal God and in personal immortality. He asserts that belief in a personal God and personal immortality is declining in the United States, and he furnishes proof...He takes a book containing the names of fifty-five hundred scientists—the names of practically all American scientists of prominence, he affirms—and sends them questions. Upon the answers received he asserts that more than one half of the prominent scientists of the United States, those teaching Biology, Psychology, Geology and History especially, have discarded belief in a personal God and in personal immortality.

Ozment, Steven E. *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2004. Print.

This is what the doctrine of evolution is doing for those who teach our children. They first discard the Mosaic account of man's creation, and they do it on the ground that there are no miracles. This in itself constitutes a practical repudiation of the Bible...

The evil influence of these Materialistic, Atheistic or Agnostic professors is disclosed by further investigation made by Leuba. He questioned the students of nine representative colleges, and upon their answers declares that, while only fifteen per cent, of the freshmen have discarded the Christian religion, thirty per cent, of the juniors and that forty to forty-five per cent, of the men graduates have abandoned the cardinal principles of the Christian faith. Can Christians be indifferent to such statistics?

Imported from Germany

Bryan's counter-revolution was aimed not only at dangers of Darwinism, but it also focused on the impact made by the German "higher critics" on the Christian worldview. There can be little doubt that Bryan understood that the secular ideas that conquered America had their roots in Germany. Secular revolution had come to that nation years before it reached the United States. According to historian Steven Ozment, "German thinkers were drawn early and enthusiastically to the French Revolution." Ozment continued, "What drew Germany to the French Enlightenment and Revolution were the latter's liberation clauses; equality at law, the abolition of clerical and noble privilege, and the hiring and promotion of workers on the basis of ability and skill rather than social class...In 1819 a radical student named Carl Sand assassinated a popular reactionary writer, August von Kotzebue. That action gave the princes a pretext to ban university fraternities and shut down urban newspapers, then the twin media of revolutionary speech...Both philosophically and politically the new radical thinkers looked to simplify and resolve. Assuming reason's absolute

sovereignty and declaring independent transcendental realities nonexistent, they sorted out and declaimed over a demystified post-Enlightenment world. In rapid succession the core beliefs of the old regime, beginning with classical Christianity, came under attack. Unlike Kant and Hegel, who rationalized and moralized Christianity, the left-wing Hegelians dismissed it as mythical and even harmful. In his *Life of Jesus*, published in 1835, David Friedrich Strauss, a Church historian and student of Hegel, denied the historicity of Jesus and portrayed classical Christian beliefs as historical myths no different than those of other world religions."

Theologian/Historian Alister McGrath wrote the following passage in a work entitled, *The Twilight of Atheism*. "The social realities of Germany at this time were such that radical change could not be brought about by political action. The best means of securing irreversible changes in the long term was to change the way in which people thought. The battleground for reform was thus not the courts, but the universities of Germany. If the ideas on which traditional social structures were based could be shown to be hopelessly outmoded, the collapse of those structures could not be far away. And one of the most important social institutions of the era, playing a pivotal role in underpinning the old order, was the Lutheran church."

The foundation of the Lutheran church was the Bible and the so called "higher critics" began a blistering assault against it. These men were not impartial, unbiased seekers of truth. They were driven by a radical agenda to change the social order in Germany. Strauss went so far as to suggest that Jesus never existed. No reputable historian would dare make that claim today. Bryan viewed men like Strauss as a great danger to society. The following passage is taken from Bryan's *In His Image* which was published in 1922. At about that time, Bryan was engaged in a battle against modernists in his own denomination. As part of this campaign, he sought to be elected as the moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1923.

"Besides open enemies, the Bible has enemies who are less frank--enemies who, while claiming to be friends of Christianity, spend their time undermining faith in God, faith in the Bible, and faith in Christ. These professed friends call themselves higher critics--a title which--though explained by them as purely technical--smacks of an insufferable egotism. They assume an air of superior intelligence and look down with mingled pity and contempt upon what they regard as poor, credulous humanity. The higher critic is more dangerous than the open enemy. The atheist approaches you boldly and tries to blow out your light, but, as you know who he is, what he is trying to do and why, you can protect yourself. The higher critic, however, comes to you in the guise of a friend and politely inquires: "Isn't the light too near your eyes? I fear it will injure your sight." Then he moves the light away, a little at a time, until it is only a speck and then--invisible."

Bryan continues. "The higher critic (I speak now of the rule and not of the exceptions) begins his investigations with his opinion already formed. After he has discarded the Bible because he cannot harmonize it with the doctrine of evolution, he labours to find evidence to support his preconceived notions. In matters of religion the higher critic is usually a "dyspeptic." The Bible does not agree with him; he has not the spiritual fluids in sufficient quantity to enable him to digest the miracle and the supernatural. He is a doubter and spreads doubts."

Bryan goes on to include the following quotation. "In Volume 2 of "Fundamentals" (page 84), Sir Robert Anderson has this to say:

"The effect of this 'Higher Criticism' is extremely grave. For it has dethroned the Bible in the home, and the good old practice of 'family worship' is rapidly dying out. And great national interests also are involved. For who can doubt that the prosperity and power of the nations of the world are due to the influence of the Bible upon the character and conduct? Races of men who for generations have been taught to think for themselves in matters of the highest moment will naturally excel in every sphere of effort or of enterprise. And more than this, no one who is trained in the fear of God will fail in his duty to his neighbour, but will prove himself a good citizen. **But the dethronement of the Bible leads practically to the dethronement of God; and in Germany and America, and now in England, the effects of this are declaring themselves in ways, and to an extent, well fitted to cause anxiety for the future.**"

This quote that Bryan uses from Anderson is significant in that it presents a sequence. The Bible had been dethroned first in Germany and then in America. No other nation impacted American higher learning during this period like Germany. This helps to explain Bryan's skepticism toward certain scientific theories. Many of these ideas had originated in Germany and had later been transplanted in America. Bryan was particularly concerned about those ideas that had contributed to the rise of German militarism.

Gould Admits that Bryan was Right

Surprisingly, one of the leading American evolutionary biologists of the late 20th century, Steven Jay Gould, acknowledged in an article published in *Natural History* in November of 1987, that Bryan was right to be concerned about the way science was being used in Germany.

"I wish I could stop here with a snide comment on Bryan as Yahoo and a ringing defense for science's proper interpretation of Darwinism, But I cannot, for Bryan was right in one crucial way. Lord only knows he understood precious little about science, and he wins no medals for logic of argument. **But when he said that Darwinism had been widely portrayed as a defense of war, domination, and domestic exploitation, he was right.** Scientists would not be to blame for this if we had always maintained proper caution in interpretation and proper humility in resisting the extension of our findings into inappropriate domains. But many of these insidious and harmful misinterpretations had been promoted by scientists. Several of the German generals who traded arguments with Kellogg had been university professors of biology. Just one example from a striking source. In his *Last Evolution Argument*, Bryan charged that evolutionists had misused science to present moral opinions about the social order as though they represented facts of nature.

'By paralyzing the hope of reform, it discourages those who labor for the improvement of man's condition ... Its only program for man is scientific breeding, a system under which a few supposedly superior intellects, self-appointed, would direct the mating and the movements of the mass of mankind - an impossible system!'

Bryan was quite correct here, One of the saddest chapters in all the history of science involves the extensive misuse of data to support biological determinism, the claim that social inequalities based on race, sex, or class cannot be altered because they reflect the innate and inferior genetic endowments of the disadvantaged (see my book, *The Mismeasure of Man*)."

Gould admits that Bryan was right to be concerned about how Darwinism was being used in Germany during World War I. Bryan's concern caused him to lead a

Nazi Euthanasia

In 1939, the Nazis began the mass murder of the mentally and physically disabled. The Nazis labeled this murderous campaign as Aktion T-4 but today it is commonly known as the T-4 program and it is also referred to as Nazi euthanasia. The first victims were children but later adults would be included among the over 200,000 victims. These victims were transported to hospitals which had been converted into killing centers. Upon their arrival, they were taken into rooms disguised as showers where they were murdered. Doctors would stand at the doors of these gas chambers monitoring the horrific process. Yet according to an essay written by historian Michael Burleigh entitled *Euthanasia and the Third Reich* which was published in *History Today*, **“none of the physicians who worked in the extermination asylums ever served one day of a prison sentence.”** Burleigh also pointed out that many of these physicians continued to treat patients for decades to come.

Bryan Sounded the Alarm

Back in 1925, the Scopes Trial had helped the intellectuals secure their ascension to power. However, the seeds of their possible demise were contained within the pages of a little known book that was published after the trial. The name of this book was *Bryan's Last Speech* and it contained the closing argument that William Jennings Bryan was never allowed to deliver. Bryan had worked for months on his summation and he hoped it would be compared favorably to his famous “Cross of Gold” speech. Fearing that the tide of the culture war might be turned if Bryan delivered such a memorable speech, Clarence Darrow chose not to give a closing argument. This meant that Bryan would not be allowed to give his summation. Darrow however, could not prevent Bryan's closing argument from being published. In 1945, intellectuals feared that under the correct circumstances and if the dots were to be connected for the American people, Bryan could deliver a death blow to evolution from beyond the grave.

So what had Bryan written back in 1925 that was so potentially impactful? Bryan had quoted a passage from Darwin's *The Descent of Man* which had been published in 1871.

“With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated, and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination, we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick: we institute poor laws and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to smallpox. Thus the weak members of civilized society propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.

The aid which we felt impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature.

*** * * We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak serving and propagating their kind."**

Bryan then made the following comments regarding this passage.

"Darwin reveals the barbarous sentiment that runs through evolution and dwarfs the moral nature of those who become obsessed with it. Let us analyze the quotation just given. Darwin speaks with approval of the savage custom of eliminating the weak so that only the strong will survive, and complains that "we civilized men do our utmost to check the process of elimination." How inhuman such a doctrine as this! He thinks it injurious to "build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick" or to care for the poor. Even medical men come in for criticism because they "exert their utmost skill to save the life of everyone to the last moment." And then note his hostility to vaccination because it has "preserved thousands who, from a weak constitution would have succumbed to small pox!" All of the sympathetic activities of civilized society are condemned because they enable "the weak members to propagate their kind." Then he drags mankind down to the level of the brute and compares the freedom given to man unfavorably with the restraint that we put on barnyard beasts."

Some today might argue that the second paragraph that Bryan quoted from *The Descent of Man*, indicates that Darwin was not really promoting the killing of the weak. In light of the mass murder that had just taken place in asylums across Germany, intellectuals knew that this was an argument they could not win in 1945. It would have been an impossible argument for secularists to win if the American people would have seen the propaganda films made by the Nazis to support euthanasia. The following passages come from a Nazi film entitled *Dasein ohne Leben (Existence without Life)* that was released in 1942. Notice how closely the words of this film parallel what Darwin had written in *The Descent of Man*.

"Private and state asylums were established in the midst of Germany's beautiful countryside. New and ever larger asylums were built which met all the requirements of modern medicine. And so arose the immense number of state and private asylums in Germany which today house almost 400,000 mental patients, idiots and feeble minded who are tended by over 2,000 doctors and almost 40,000 nurses, attendants, and ancillary staff."

"Despite all the efforts of our psychiatry a large percentage of our mental patients remain incurable. Often these helpless cases need forced feeding and attention to their bodily needs. What greatness of spirit it requires to put aside one's natural claims to life and happiness in order to bury oneself alive in such a house of pain. But it is unnatural and intolerable in terms of a higher morality that whole generations of healthy young people should grow old caring for the incurably idiotic and mad. All their sacrifices merely help to maintain and prolong an existence without life."

Historian Michael Burleigh stated in his groundbreaking documentary, *Selling Murder: The Killing Films of the Third Reich* that *Dasein ohne Leben* vanished in early 1945. Burleigh also tells us that the script was filed away in the Federal German Archives in Potsdam. So this damning film disappeared and its script was safely hidden behind the iron curtain for decades.

Bartov's Sequence - Stage 1

We now examine the first stage of an important sequence presented by historian Omer Bartov in his book, *Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*. Dr. Bartov wrote these words in his introduction to Michael Burleigh's essay entitled, *Psychiatry, German Society and the Nazi "euthanasia program"* Stage

1 of this sequence leads us into a discussion regarding how the Allies structured the Nazi war crimes trial. We will take up the second stage of this sequence later in relation to academic suppression

“The history of the German medical profession’s complicity in the crimes committed by the Nazi regime has been written from many perspectives. Initially, it was common to speak of such monsters and Dr. Mengele and his horrifying medical “experiments” in Auschwitz. Later on it was discovered that the involvement of physicians in Nazi policies was anything but limited to a few cranks. It thus appeared that the profession as a whole had become polluted by Nazi thinking. Yet thanks to further research we now know that this was not a one-sided relationship. It is not just that German doctors were influenced by Nazi racial thinking, but just as much that Nazi racial thinking was derived from ideas and theories propagated by well-respected scientists.”

The first stage of this sequence leads us into a discussion regarding how the Allies structured the Nazi war crimes trials. Dr. Bartov states that **“initially it was common to focus on monsters like Mengele.”** I believe that this was by design. It was the direct result of the way in which the Allied governments structured the Nazi war crimes trials. According to the United States Holocaust Museum website, at the first Hadamar Trial in the fall of 1945, U.S. prosecutors planned to indict the physicians, nurses, and bureaucratic staff at Hadamar for the murders of 15,000 German patients killed at that institution. The site states that the prosecutors discovered that they had no jurisdiction. If they had been allowed to indict these physicians for the mass murder of the physically and mentally disabled, then the press in the United States would have had to report on such a trial. This would have increased the likelihood of the Darwinian connection to these atrocities being made known to the public. Instead, American prosecutors were only allowed to try the German personnel at the Hadamar facility for the murder of 476 Soviet and Polish laborers who had been sent there.

Not long after the first Hadamar Trial, the Allied governments changed their stance and decided that Allied courts could try German personnel for crimes against German civilians under the charge of “crimes against humanity”. At the Nuremberg Medical Trial, four chief planners of the T-4 Program were tried for euthanasia. However, nineteen other Nazis were also tried on a variety of other charges. Euthanasia was addressed at the bottom of page ten of a twelve page indictment. The bulk of the indictment dealt with horrific medical experiments which had been conducted on prisoners. Some of these experiments tested the effects of high altitude, malaria, freezing, mustard gas, poison, and incendiary bombs on the human body. As a result of the hideous nature of these experiments, the American press paid little attention to the euthanasia portion of the trial and instead focused on the more sensational aspects of the proceedings. An example of such reporting can be found in a piece written by Dana Adams Schmidt which was published in the New York Times. Schmidt gave an accurate overview of the trial but did not devote even a full sentence to euthanasia. By including such a macabre list of offenses as were tried along with euthanasia at the Nuremberg Medical Trial, the American press was free to hide the truth in plain sight.

Euthanasia was the key to connecting Charles Darwin to Nazi mass murder. Nazi euthanasia could not be blamed on religious bigotry or racial hatred but was clearly the product of Darwinian ideology. Intellectuals understood that they had to obscure the role science played in these atrocities. They did so by taking the focus off of science in general and placing it specifically on monsters like Mengele just as was indicated in Bartov’s sequence. They successfully accomplished this as a result of the way in which the Nuremberg Medical Trial was structured. I do not want to give the false impression that there were no other war crimes trials which focused on euthanasia. These trials however were conducted by German courts and little coverage was given to the trials in American newspapers.

Firewalls

In 1925, William Jennings Bryan wrote these words which were published in Bryan's Last Speech. **"The Christians who have allowed themselves to be deceived into believing that evolution is beneficial, or even a rational process have been associating with those who either do not understand its implications or dare not avow their knowledge of these implications."** As World War II came to a conclusion, the implications of Darwinism were about to be on full display for the world to see. However, the intellectual elites had already developed a plan to protect Darwin from the stain of Nazi atrocity. They had years to develop this strategy.

The New York Times carried an Associated Press story on the Nazi plan to murder the disabled on October 8, 1933. I believe that this story was the cause of great concern for at least some of America's elites. They understood that if the Nazis were to take such action it would vindicate William Jennings Bryan and cause many to vilify Charles Darwin. I have no evidence that these intellectuals worked together to formulate a plan to diffuse the issue, but I believe that the proof of such cooperation is evident when we examine the action that was taken. The intellectual elites created two firewalls to protect Darwin. The first of these was in place by 1944, with the publishing of Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought (1860-1915)*. Today, many historians have recognized that Hofstadter's version of Social Darwinism was a fabrication. Princeton professor Thomas Leonard said this in his 2007 essay *Origins of the myth of Social Darwinism: The Ambiguous Legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought*.

"Nazis Plan to Kill Incurables to End Pain;
German Religious Groups Oppose Move
BERLIN, Oct. 7. – The Ministry of Justice in a detailed memorandum explaining the Nazi aims regarding the German penal code today announced its intention to authorize physicians to end the sufferings of incurable patients. The memorandum, still lacking the force of law, proposed that "it shall be made possible for physicians to end the tortures of incurable patients, upon request, in the interest of true humanity". This proposed legal recognition of euthanasia - the act of providing a painless and peaceful death – raised a number of fundamental problems of a religious, scientific and legal nature."

"Today Darwinism enjoys enormous prestige and influence, arguably more than at any time since the publication of the *Origin of Species*. And yet, social Darwinism, in marked contrast, today functions as an omnibus term of abuse, enough that essentially on one has ever self applied the term.

This essay inquires into the implied historical puzzle: how is it that "social Darwinism" which should refer neutrally to the application of Darwinian ideas to society, has instead come to be an indictment? It is Hofstadter who attached the epithet "social Darwinism" to biological justification of free markets and who offered an account that, as Donald Bellomy put it, depicted "heroic liberals snatching helpless social science from the clutches of vile Social Darwinists"

The firewall that Hofstadter created with his *Social Darwinism in American Thought* was used to deflect criticism away from the theory itself. As a result, intellectuals could convince people that nothing was wrong with the theory itself, it was simply hijacked by Social Darwinists. The success of this strategy is ironic given the fact that Darwin was one of the first to suggest the elimination of society's weaker members. Historian Ron Numbers provides us with even more explanation in his 2011 lecture entitled, *The Myth of Social Darwinism?* in which he said the following. **"What has happened at least in the last 60 or 70 years is that scholars have gone back and labeled everything that could have been**

influenced by Darwin that they didn't like as Social Darwinism." So thanks to Hofstadter, the intellectuals had a formidable firewall in place by the time the war ended.

By the mid-1950s, the second of these walls was in place. This was the false wall of separation that was created to divide Nazism's Jewish victims from its mentally and physically disabled victims. Intellectuals recognized that if they could isolate the Jewish Holocaust from Nazi Euthanasia then they could better hide the scientific roots of Nazi genocide. If every time an instructor taught a class about Nazi genocide that instructor had to mention euthanasia, then it would be very difficult to hide these scientific roots. Conversely, if instructors could be freed to speak only of the Jewish Holocaust, then the role science played in Nazi atrocities could be completely ignored.

Historian Henry Friedlander was one of the first to recognize the false nature of this wall. He wrote these words in his 1995 work, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide from Euthanasia to the Final Solution*.

"By the mid-1980s, my reading of the documents had convinced me that the euthanasia program had been intimately connected to Nazi genocide. I realized that the ideology, the decision-making process, the personnel, and the killing technique tied euthanasia to the "final solution." But I still thought of euthanasia only as a prologue to genocide. In 1984, the geneticist Benno Müller-Hill published an analysis of the involvement of scientists in Nazi crimes, and his arguments forced me to reevaluate my interpretation. I began to see that euthanasia was not simply a prologue but the first chapter of Nazi genocide.

I know of course that the term "genocide" was coined to refer to the murder of national or ethnic groups. Nazi genocide, however, was not directed at national groups but at groups of human beings who supposedly shared racial characteristics. I was thus forced to define Nazi genocide – what is now commonly called the Holocaust – as the mass murder of human beings because they belonged to a biologically defined group.

Since the publication in the mid-1950s of Gerald Reitlinger's work on the so-called final solution, historians have categorized the Nazis' murder of the European Jews as totally different from their murder of other groups."

We see from the words of Dr. Friedlander, that there was no valid reason to separate Nazism's Jewish victims from its mentally and physically disabled victims. In doing so, however, intellectuals were able to successfully hide the scientific roots of Nazism for decades. This allowed them to indoctrinate two generations of Americans before the truth was revealed. In 1945, Nazi genocide was an issue that could have brought an end to secular rule in America. Instead, the firewalls of Social Darwinism and the separation of the victims of Nazism helped to successfully diffuse this issue for the intellectuals. As a result, they were able to use Nazism as a powerful force for secularization. Today Nazism is synonymous with religious bigotry not scientific atrocity.

Academic Suppression – Bartov's Sequence – Stage 2

"The history of the German medical profession's complicity in the crimes committed by the Nazi regime has been written from many perspectives. Initially, it was common to speak of such monsters and Dr. Mengele and his horrifying medical "experiments" in Auschwitz. Later on it was discovered that the involvement of physicians in Nazi policies was anything but limited to a few cranks. It thus

appeared that the profession as a whole had become polluted by Nazi thinking. Yet thanks to further research we now know that this was not a one-sided relationship. It is not just that German doctors were influenced by Nazi racial thinking, but just as much that Nazi racial thinking was derived from ideas and theories propagated by well-respected scientists."

A close examination of the second stage of this sequence reveals academics suppressed the truth about the connection between science and Nazi mass murder. Dr. Bartov gives an explanation of how over time historians came to a correct understanding of the connection between medical science and Nazi racial policy. This progression was not the result of normal scholarship but was the product of systematic academic suppression.

"Later it was discovered that the involvement of physicians in Nazi policies was anything but limited to a few cranks. It thus appeared that the profession as a whole had become polluted by Nazi thinking. Yet thanks to further research we now know that this was not a one-sided relationship. It is not just that German doctors were influenced by Nazi racial thinking, but just as much that Nazi racial thinking was derived from ideas and theories propagated by well-respected scientists." Dr. Bartov, presents what is the commonly accepted timeline. However, I believe that the facts demonstrate that the commonly accepted timeline is erroneous. If this timeline were accurate then we would have to believe that the historians of the 40s and 50s knew nothing of the role that science played in the creation of Nazi racial policies. This might have been possible had Germany been some backwater in regards to science during the decades prior to World War II. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In his book *Hitler's Scientists*, John Cornwell had this to say about Germany's scientific standing among the nations. **"In the first three decades of the twentieth century Germany stood pre-eminent in many areas of natural sciences, mathematics and technology, despite an intervening ruinous war."** Cornwell went on to state the following. **"Despite Germany's reputation as a pariah nation in the aftermath of a devastating war, despite boycotts against its participation in conferences, and cancellations of periodical subscriptions, Germany was still viewed as the Mecca of science and technology, its language a crucial condition of scientific education and advancement."** If in the years leading up to World War II, Germany was the Mecca of science and its language a prerequisite for a scientific education then how could the historians of the 40s and 50s have been unaware of role that science played in the creation of Nazi racial policy? The obvious answer is it that these historians were very aware of this relationship, they simply chose to be suppress the truth.

Further Evidence of Suppression

Geneticist Benno Müller-Hill gives us further insight into this academic suppression. The following quote is taken from his 1988 book, *Murderous Science*.

"But when I think today of the story of how genetics was once put to use in anthropology and psychiatry, I see a wasteland of desolation and destruction. The blood of human beings spilt millions of times over is resolutely forgotten. The recent history of these genetically oriented human sciences in action is full of chaos and crime as a nightmare. Yet many geneticists, anthropologists, and psychiatrists have slipped from this dream into the deep sleep of forgetfulness."

Why was it not discovered until later, **"that the involvement of physicians in Nazi policies was anything but limited to a few cranks."**? Dr. Müller-Hill explains that it was the result of resolute forgetfulness.

In his book *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany 1900-1945*, Michael Burleigh gives us an explanation of how this suppression worked in Germany.

The Nuremberg Doctor's Trial of 1946-1947 furnished a wealth of testimony and evidence, particularly regarding aberrant medical experiments in the concentration camps. Alexander Mitscherlich, a young lecturer, attended the trial as a representative of the German medical association. No senior medical figure would undertake the task, and Mitscherlich was aware that doing so would mean the end of his career. Together with Fred Mielke, Mitscherlich produced a brochure, which received hostile criticism, and then a report, 'Science without Humanity', ten thousand copies of which were bought up and pulped by the German medical association. This report was never mentioned or reviewed in medical circles. The report was eventually published in book form as "Medicine without Humanity" in 1960. Paradoxically, this actually did the German medical profession a good turn by concentrating on a couple of dozen semi-deviant figures, whose obvious barbaric activities could be distanced from the lower-key collusion of thousands of their colleagues who had never been put on trial.

Other early post-war discussion of the 'euthanasia' programme included a short book by Alice Platen-Hallermund and Walter Schmidt's remarkable study of eight Bavarian asylums, written in 1945, shortly after he became commissary director of Eglfing-Haar following the arrest of Herman Pfannmüller. In 1946 Schmidt tried to publish his work. Distinguished professors told him 'not to fuel the flames'. He presented the manuscript to the medical facility at the University of Hamburg, it circulated for two years and then disappeared. Another version was eventually published by a religious publishing house in 1965, sinking without trace. Alice Platen-Hallermund's rather perceptive short book went into immediate critical oblivion.

....Matters improved in the early 1980's, when doctors, psychiatrists and medical historians of a different generation began to probe the past of their respective professions."

Intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic recognized that it was in their best interest to hide the truth. Without question, Germans had their own reasons for wanting to suppress information regarding Nazi euthanasia. However, the Allied governments wielded a significant amount of control over post-war Germany, so it would seem likely that the German scientific community would have needed at least the tacit approval of the Allies to suppress these works.

Caplan's Surprising Admission

An even more thorough explanation of the causes of suppression can be found in Dr. Arthur Caplan's essay entitled *The Relevance of the Holocaust to Bioethics Today*. This work was included in John J. Michalczyk's, *Medicine, Ethics, and the Third Reich: Historical and Contemporary Issues* which was published in 1994. Caplan admits that academics suppressed the truth regarding the connection between science and Nazi atrocities.

"Part of the reason for the widespread appropriation of the Holocaust through the indiscriminate invocation of the Nazi analogy is the relative silence, until recently in the field of bioethics about the Holocaust and the role in it played by Nazi medicine and biomedical science. It is only in the past few years that analyses have started to appear of the ethical issues raised by the brutal experiments in the camps and the creation of a genetically grounded euthanasia program. It is only in the past ten years that scholars such as Benno Müller-Hill, Robert Procter, Michael Kater, Bill Seidelman and others have begun to do the historical work necessary to help us understand the role scientists, public health

officials, nurses and physicians played in the Holocaust. Even with the emergence of this recent scholarship, the amount of attention paid to the question of what did Nazi doctors do, what were the ethical rationales for concentration camp experiments, and what were the reasons and justifications that people gave for their conduct, is all still relatively unexamined terrain.

There is also an aversion to taking a long hard look at what health professionals and scientists did during the years before and throughout the Holocaust. Medicine and science played such a prominent role in the Holocaust that it is hard for those who admire medicine and science to accept. We know that in the decades since the Second World War there have been many instances of large scale mass murder. Many of these more recent Holocaust have had their roots in racism. But in Germany what took place not only had its roots in racism but in a racism that found boisterous support from mainstream biomedicine. And the consequences of the racism were implemented using scientific and engineering technology administered by doctors and healers. Whether it was building a gas chamber, running a transportation network, or selecting who would die based on psychological, physical, or anthropological examination, science permeates the Holocaust. And for those who see medicine and science as bound by a higher moral code, that is a very difficult fact to accept.”

Caplan may have gone too far. His candid statements may have upset some of his colleagues. Check out his review of Ben Stein's *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. (available online) Caplan launches a vicious assault on Stein for doing essentially the same thing Caplan had done in this passage – connecting science to the Holocaust.

In this remarkably candid passage, Dr. Caplan admits that historians and bioethicists were silent for decades because they could not come to terms with the great evil that had been committed by Nazi doctors and scientists. He describes this silence and then goes on to try to explain it. He would have us believe that the silence was not the work of an organized conspiracy but simply the result of historians and bioethicists having an aversion to examining the role science and medicine played in Nazi atrocities. Are we to believe that for decades virtually no historians were willing to move beyond this aversion? Isn't it more likely that those who did, experienced the same type of resistance that German scholars encountered? The academic suppression in regards to connection between science and Nazi atrocities is an historical fact.

Conclusion

Historian Michael Kazin writes the following in his *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan*. “Mencken’s loathing was driven by fear. He predicted that Bryan would quickly become a saint to millions of “yokels” outside the big cities who were intent on turning America over to the KKK and like-minded regiments of Bible-spouting youths. The specter of a theocratic state run by idiots has haunted intellectuals ever since.” This quote helps explain why secularists destroyed William Jennings Bryan. It also helps explain why secularists suppressed information following World War II that would have vindicated Bryan and vilified Charles Darwin. In 1945, a national dialogue should have taken place in which Americans examined the horrible example of Nazi Germany. Our leaders should have made clear what happens when a nation turns its back on God. How many influential German thinkers from the 1770’s until the Nazi period led that nation toward orthodox Christianity? Where did this lead? It led to places like Hadamar and Auschwitz. Instead of leading a national dialogue, our leaders suppressed the truth. Look at how far our nation has fallen in the seventy years since.

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