Once again, dear reader, your own Lib. Forum has made the mass media: The fact that the reference, though prominent, was also malicious, distorted, and absurd, should not make us despair. However distorted an American, the name is spelled right” and it was, some of the tens of thousands out there who read about us might have the urge to look into us more closely, to see the Devil plain as it were, and then their conversion is always possible.

The story begins with the Socialist Scholars Conference, which, confusedly, is the name both for an organization of socialist scholars and for conferences they have held in New York every year since 1965. Not being a socialist, I am not a member of the SSC organization, but I have attended many of their conferences, for many of their papers and panels have been lively, interesting, and informative. Never having much influence on the Left, the SSC conferences have been declining in recent years, since they have suffered, along with the rest of the Left, from a growing unreason that has overcome the Left in recent years.

Enter La Widener. From the beginning, into these pleasant if not earth-shaking sessions strode one Mrs. Alice Widener, wealthy owner and editor of an unimportant, Red-baiting newsletter called USA. A self-styled “authority” on the Left, La Widener arrived every year at the SSC sessions, and reported on them with unwavering mininterpretation and ignorance of what the whole thing was all about. La Widener trying to make sense of all the nuances of social philosophy was truly a bull let loose in a china shop. One famous gaffe of hers was the time she attended a session on slavery featuring Eugene D. Genovese and Herbert Aptheker. Trying desperately to link slavery, Genovese and Herbert Aptheker, Widener had them in solid agreement, which was all about. La Widener trying to make sense of the conference by the SSC organizers; there is not a word of what was going on in the world of Left scholarship.

Well, comes 1970 and the June 13-14 meeting, and Professor Leonard Liggio and myself were invited to speak at a panel to be organized by Professor Liggio, and devoted to “Left/Rightism”—specifically, to a reassessment of the Old Right and how it prefigured much of the New Left criticisms of welfare-warfare America. We devoted considerable care to preparation of the papers, and I must say that much enjoyment was had by all, although how much influence we had on the assembled Left is dubious, since the overwhelming majority of our audience were our own libertarians, with an occasional leftist wandering in who didn’t seem to know the difference between Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt. At any rate, our entire panel was devoted to an appreciative portrayal of the hard-hitting views of the Old Right and their libertarian approach to war, foreign policy and militarism, as well as the education, state-monopoly-capitalism, decentralization, the judiciary, and civil liberties. Especially lauded by us were such “Old Rightists” as Senator Taft, John T. Flynn, Frank Chodorov, Albert Jay Nock, Garet Garrett, Felix Morley, Senator Borah, H. L. Mencken, Rep. Howard Beffert, etc.

Enter La Widener. (USA, June 19-July 3; Barron’s, July 13.) Or rather, enter La Widener by remote control, since it is all too clear that she did not attend any of the Conference. Her entire report is taken up with lengthy quotes from unimportant position papers issued ahead of the Conference by the SSC organizers; there is not a word on any of the panels, that is, on the content of the Conference itself, except, miserable dictum, on ours! To our panel came her assistant, one Falzone, accompanied by a certain Miss Poor from the Orlando Sentinel. (In thus ignoring all the other panels, Widener-Poor-Falzone completely missed the real story of the Conference, which was its total domination by the crazed forces of Women’s Liberation, whose well-attended and almost continuous panels barred The Enemy—men—from daring to attend. Seconded, I might add, by singularly conscious and unscholarly youths from the Free Joan Bird Committee.)

So there we are, Leonard Liggio and myself, with our names spelled correctly, on the front page of the mighty (Continued on page 2)
SOCIALIST SCHOLARS CAPER — (Continued from page 1)

Barron's! There, Poor-Falzon-Widener report that in introducing me, Professor Ronald Radoah, moderator of the panel, made "snide remarks" about the American flag (Oh no! Good God! Not that!), and added that I had once, somewhere, described the flag as a "rag", and they noted that I did not immediately leap up and protest this attribution. So much for what I didn't say at the panel. Next, in a truly cutting piece of reporting that must leave us all agog, our intrepid authority on social movements finds repeated links between Professor Liglio and myself (Oh, wow!). From there, our indefatigable scholar goes on to find what she believes to be the key, the key evil article which set the line for the entire Socialist Scholars Conference, and since we already know that the SSC in turn functions as the Polit-buro of the Left, for the entire Left-wing in America. And that article, dear reader, is none other than Leonard Liglio's "State of the Movement", which comprised the Lib. Forum of May 15. So there we are, emblazoned on the front page of Barron's as kingpin of the entire Left in America! There follows two quotes from the Liglio article: one in which Leonard dared to quote favorably from Julius Lester (in a highly intelligent attack that he had levelled on the ultramilitantism of the Panthers), and another in which she scoffs at an example of Liggio's "so-called Libertarian thinking, the example being praise for early SDS opposition to the draft!"

I suppose we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that there are people in this world so divorced from reality that they really believe that Leonard Liggio and the Lib. Forum are the high panjandrums of the American Left—just as there are people who believe that the world is being run by twelve secret Jewish Illuminati. And I suppose we must accept the fact that there are "authorities" on political philosophy so lame-brained as to believe that a libertarian is someone who approves of the draft. But what is this nonsense doing on the front page of Barron's?

But, and here we rise from the merely stupid to the slightly sinister, isn't it odd that in all the concentration by Mrs. Widener on our panel, there is not a single word of what we actually said at the panel, at the content of our ancillary and recommended readings. Like all prospective readers, they are welcome. Why did we put on this panel at the Socialist Scholars Conference? Because we were asked. I am sure that we would do the same at a conference of conservative intellectuals; but the important point is that we have not been asked by any such conference, which says a great deal about the current ideological scene. At any rate, I have written a letter of protest to Barron's setting the record straight, which has of this writing not been printed (perhaps following the Randian line of denouncing but not "giving sanction to" The Enemy?). If it is printed, then the Great Socialist Scholars Caper will have one more installment.

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More On Ardrey

Some further notes on Jerry Tuccille's critique of the Ardrey-Lorenz ad among libertarians:

1. The "territorial imperative" thesis can be, and has been, used far more readily to defend not individual private property but collective-herd property, as well as interstate wars. Thus, dogs prefer to use land marks which other dogs have also used, thereby displaying a collective tribal "property" "instinct"?

2. The "instinct" concept is generally tacked on when we lack a genuine explanation for a phenomenon. Thus, even Adam Smith explained the universal phenomenon of exchange and market, not in terms of mutually rational advantage, but of an innate "instinct", or "propensity to truck and barter". Man, in particular, must use his mind to learn, to formulate his goals and the means to attain them. He has no inborn instinct to guide him automatically to the correct...
A subject getting much attention lately is the studies on evolution and human behavior performed by a new breed of ethnologists whose chief pioneers are Konrad Lorenz, Robert Ardrey, and Desmond Morris. *Playboy* covered the new ethnologists in an article by Morton Hunt appearing in the July, 1970 issue, and the *New York Times Magazine* recently published an interview with Konrad Lorenz. Basically, what the ethnologists are saying, is that man has survived, at man's drive for private chunks of real estate, for a private plot of earth over which he can reign supreme, is an integral part of his nature as a violent being. According to Ardrey, it is useless for the social engineers to try to "socialize" man, to take away his property and make him share his possessions with the multitudes, because he was the most murderous and most savage of all the primates. The primordial ancestors of man were the first to develop the use of weapons, and in the struggle for survival through evolutionary time, man emerged triumphant because he learned the art of murder and violence better than his competitors. Man, according to the ethnologists, is still largely driven by violent genetic instincts which set him off from time to time on an orgy of war and mass destruction.

The part of this theory which is of primary concern to propertarians is the claim that man's hunger for real estate, for a private plot of earth over which man can reign supreme, is an integral part of his nature as a violent being. According to Ardrey, it is useless for the social engineers to try to "socialize" man, to take away his property and make him share his possessions with the multitudes, because to do so is to tamper with the basic nature of man as a private, acquisitive animal. What the socialists are doing is forcing man to act in variance with his own nature, and thus they are setting the stage for revolutionary uprisings against their governments. The "territorial imperative", man's drive for private chunks of real estate, for a private plot of earth over which he can reign supreme, is an integral part of his nature as a violent being. Ardrey argues that since this instinct is inborn in man it will be part of his genetic makeup as long as he exists. It is better to leave man alone, to let him have his land and possessions, since to tinkering with his instincts will only increase his penchant for violence.

The trend involved here is that most free-market libertarians base their arguments for private property and free trade on reason: the private-property, free-trade system is better because it is the most rational way for man to exist. What Ardrey is saying, at least implicitly, is that a socialist society is somehow more rational and would be a less violent way for man to live. But since man is more instinct-driven, more apt to act on irrational instincts than he will on rational considerations, and since this is part of his basic, unchanging nature, it is better to leave him alone with his selfishness, his greed, his drive for land and gadgets.

Both Ardrey and Lorenz seem to be contradicting themselves later when they state that man does have the capacity, because of his evolving brain, to overcome his violent nature. Both Ardrey and Lorenz declare explicitly that man's emerging capacity for reason may enable him to chain down his murderous instincts and live in harmony with his fellows. They have put themselves in the precarious position of saying, on the one hand, that man can never overcome his violent nature because it is permanent in his gene's hand, on the other, that man's reason does give him a chance for peace after all. They are attempting to have it both ways and therefore their arguments in favor of man the competitive property owner are tenuous at best.

The great weakness in this position, it seems to me, rests in the fact that the ethnologists attribute man's survival over the millennia to his "violence-prone" nature. If it is true that the ancestors of man (and here a layman has to defer to the knowledge obtained through years of scientific studies) survived by developing weapons and slaughtering their fellow primates, does this necessarily mean that they did so because they were instinctively murderous? If original man created tools and weapons half a million years ago it is indicative that, even then, he was beginning to develop his capacity for reason. Ardrey admits that it was a time of fantastic hardship for all living creatures on the continent of Africa, where he claims our species first emerged. If this is the case and the various primate species were forced down from the trees onto the land in their quest for a dwindling food supply, it follows that the creatures who survived would be those who were best able to defend their food and land from marauding bands. In the age of pre-civilization there simply was not enough to go around. Many had to die, and only a limited few were able to stay alive and procreate their species. Does this mean that the few, those who developed the means of survival were "murderous" and "savage"?

For one to reason this way he would also have to believe that, in a present crisis, if the earth were savaged by a massive famine with not enough food to feed the world, only the most violent and murderous would survive. This is simply not the case. It is the most rational, the most capable and productive of our species who would outlast the rest. Murder would be primarily an act of self-defense committed against those who were also capable of murdering for a crust of bread.

If the originals of our species were able to survive the perils of the ice age, as well as the designs of less-acquisitive, less-inventive creatures, they are to be commended instead of denigrated as "savages" and "murderers". We surely have a great inheritance to live up to. They have shown us that our drive for property, food and comfort is ours because it is good and rational, and not because we are genetically-driven killers. It is here, in their basic premise, that Ardrey and his colleagues have gone astray.

One of the best statements to date on the question of abortion reform appears in the August, 1970 issue of *Ramparts*. In an article entitled, "Abortion Reform: The New Tokenism", Lucinda Cisler, president of New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal, warns against the enthusiasm engendered by the sudden rush to liberalize abortion laws in many of our states. Cisler's message is directed primarily at feminists, but her reasoning has ecumenical appeal because of its basic libertarian foundation. She begins by listing the usual arguments given by legislators for their endorsement of abortion law reform: "they are concerned with important issues like the public health problem presented by illegal abortions, the doctor's right to offer patients good medical care, the suffering of unwanted children and unhappy families, and the burgeoning of our population at a rate too high for any economic system to handle."

(Continued on page 4)
RECOMMENDED READING


"With reasonable men, I will reason; with humane men, I will plead; but to tyrants, I will give no quarter..." — William Lloyd Garrison

MORE ON ARDREY — (Continued from page 2)

choices, as the bird or the salmon are supposed to be guided.

3. The whole basis for the "territorial imperative" among animals rests on the fact that animals are bound within the environment in which they find themselves. If a group of animals are adapted only to the environment of a certain area, X, and they are forced to leave X they will die. They must then defend this environment to the death. Man, on the contrary, is unique among living beings for his capacity to change his environment, to leave, transform, and alter his circumstances on behalf of his own survival and progress. Man is not bound to a fixed plot of earth and all the environmental conditions upon it; he can move, he can build shelter against the elements, he can transform the earth, etc. And so the animal-derived argument for territory cannot apply to man.

4. As for scholarly authority, a friend of mine tried to organize a scholarly conference of biologists, ethnologists, etc. to discuss the Lorenz thesis; try as he might, he could not find one scholar to take the Lorenz side. All the others had flatly rejected it.

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