

# Libertarian Forum

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## The State As An Immoral Teacher

by Ouida

**Editor's Note:** Marie Louise Ramé, who wrote under the penname of her lifelong nickname "Ouida", was a prominent English writer of many romantic and sometimes scandalous novels in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most of her life she lived in her beloved Italy. It was little realized at the time, and certainly forgotten since, that Ouida was a hard-hitting and thoroughgoing libertarian; in middle-age, during the 1890's, she wrote lucid libertarian articles, of which the following, published in the *North American Review*, Volume 153, pages 193-204, was one of her finest. In "The State as an Immoral Teacher" we find Ouida's lucid and impassioned hatred of the State as the eternal oppressor of the individual, and her intertwined belief in both the civil liberty and the property rights of the individual is both clearly and nobly expressed. Her trenchant opposition to what most people concede to be a legitimate duty of the State — compulsory vaccination — takes on important modern overtones in these days of trumped up government hysteria over the "swine flu" scare. The one place where a modern libertarian would disagree is Ouida's going so far as to defend a degree of parental child abuse, but this is surely a minor blot on Ouida's libertarian escutcheon.

The tendency of the last years of the nineteenth century is toward increase in the powers of the state and decrease in the powers of the individual citizen. Whether the government of a country be at this moment nominally free, or whether it be avowedly despotic, whether it be an empire, a republic, a constitutional monarchy, or a self-governing and neutralized principality, the actual government is a substitution of state machinery for individual choice and individual liberty. In Servia, in Bulgaria, in France, in Germany, in England, in America, in Australia, anywhere you will, the outward forms of government differ widely, but beneath all there is the same interference of the state with personal volition, the same obligation for the individual to accept the dictum of the state in lieu of his own judgment. The only difference is that such a pretension is natural and excusable in an autocracy: in a constitutional or republican state it is an anomaly, even an absurdity. But whether it be considered admirable or accursed, the fact is conspicuous that every year adds to the pretensions and powers of the state, and every year diminishes the personal freedom of the man.

To whatever the fact be traceable, it is there; and it is probably due to the increase of a purely doctrinaire education, which with itself increases the number of persons who look upon humanity as a drill-sergeant looks upon battalions of conscripts: the battalions must learn to move mechanically in masses, and no single unit of them must be allowed to murmur or to fall out of the ranks. That this conscript or that may be in torture all the while matters nothing whatever to the drill-sergeant. That what would have been an excellent citizen makes a rebellious or

inefficient conscript is not his business either: he only requires a battalion which moves with mechanical precision. The state is but a drill-sergeant on a large scale, with a whole nationality marched out on the parade-ground.

Whatever were in other respects the evils attendant on other ages that this, those ages were favorable to the development of individuality, and therefore of genius. The present age is opposed to such development; and the more the state manipulates the man, the more completely will individuality and originality be destroyed. The state requires a military machine in which there is no hitch, an exchequer in which there is never a deficit, and a public monotonous, obedient, colorless, spiritless, moving unanimately and humbly like a flock of sheep along a straight high road between two walls. That is the ideal of every bureaucracy; and what is the state except a crystallized bureaucracy? It is the habit of those who uphold the despotism of government to speak as though it were some impersonal entity, some unerring guide, some half-divine thing like the pillar of fire which the Israelites imagined conducted them in their exodus. In actual fact, the state is only the executive; representing the momentary decisions of a majority which is not even at all times a genuine majority, but is in frequent cases a fabricated and fictitious preponderance, artificially and arbitrarily produced. There can be nothing noble, sacred, or unerring in such a majority: in the right, it is fallible and fallacious; it may be in the right, it may be in the wrong; it may light by accident on wisdom, or it may plunge by panic into folly. There is nothing in its origin or its construction which can render it imposing in the sight of an intelligent and high-spirited man. But the mass of men are not intelligent and not high-spirited, and so the incubus which lies on them through it they support as the camel his burden, sweating beneath it at every pore. The state is the empty cap of Gessler, to which all but Tell consent to bow.

It has been made a reproach to the centuries preceding this one that in them privilege occupied the place of law; but, though privilege was capricious and often unjust, it was always elastic, sometimes benignant: law — civil law, such as the state frames and enforces — is never elastic and is never benignant. It is an engine which rolls on its own iron lines, and crushes what it finds opposed to it, without any regard to the excellence of what it may destroy.

The nation, like the child, becomes either brutalized by over-drilling, or emasculated by having all its actions and opinions continually prescribed for it. It is to be doubted whether any precautions or any system could compass what the state in many countries is now endeavoring to do, by regulation and prohibition, to prevent the spread of

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infectious maladies. But it is certain that the nervous terrors inspired by state laws and by-laws beget a malady of the mind more injurious than the bodily ills which so absorb the state. Whether Pasteur's inoculation for rabies be a curse or a boon to mankind, there can be no question that the exaggerated ideas which it creates, the fictitious importance which it lends to what was previously a most rare malady, the nightmare horrors it invokes, and the lies which its propagandists, to justify its pretences, find themselves compelled to invent, produce a dementia and hysteria in the public mind which is a disease far more widespread and dangerous than mere rabies (unassisted by science and government) could ever have become.

The dissemination of cowardice is a greater evil than would be the increase of any physical ill whatever. To direct the minds of men in nervous terror to their own bodies is to make of them a trembling and shivering pack of prostrate poltroons. The microbe may or may not exist; but the nervous terrors generated in the microbe's name are worse evils than any bacillus. It is the physiologist's trade to increase these terrors; he lives by them, and by them alone has his being; but when the state takes his crotchets and quackeries in earnest and forces them upon the public as law, the effect is physically and mentally disastrous. The cholera as a disease is bad enough; but worse than itself by far are the brutal egotism, the palsied terror, the convulsive agonies, with which it is met and which the state in all countries does so much to increase. Fear alone kills five-tenths of its victims, and during its latest visitation in the streets of Naples people would spring up from their seats, shriek that they had cholera, and fall dead in convulsions caused by sheer panic, whilst in many country places the villagers fired on railway trains which they imagined might carry the dreaded malady amongst them. This kind of panic cannot be entirely controlled by any state, but it might be mitigated by judicious moderation, instead of being, as it is, intensified and hounded on by the press, the physiologists, and the governments all over the known world.

The state has already passed its cold, hard, iron-plated arms between the parent and the offspring, and is daily dragging and forcing them asunder. The old moral law may say, "Honor your father and mother," etc., etc., but the state says, on the contrary: "Leave your mother ill and untended whilst you attend to your own education; and summon your father to be fined and imprisoned if he dare lay a hand on you when you disgrace and deride him." The other day a workingman in London was sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment with hard labor, because being justly angry with his little girl for disobeying his orders and staying out night after night in the streets, he struck her twice with a leathern strap, and she was "slightly bruised." The man asked pertinently what was the world coming to if a parent might not correct his child as he thought fit. What can be the relations of this father and daughter when he leaves the prison to which she sent him? What authority can he have in her sight? What obedience will he be able to exact from her? The bruises from the strap would soon pass away, but the rupture, by the sentence of the tribunal, of parental and filial ties can never be healed. The moral injury done to the girl by this interference of the state is irreparable, ineffaceable. The state has practically told her that disobedience is no offense, and has allowed her to be the accuser and jailer of one who, by another canon of law, is said to be set in authority over her both by God and man.

The moral and the civil law alone decree and enforce the inviolability of property: anything which is the property of another, be it but of the value of a copper coin, cannot be taken by you without your becoming liable to punishment as a thief. This, by the general consent of mankind, has been esteemed correct, just, and necessary. But the state breaks this law, derides it, rides rough-shod over it, when for its own purposes it requires the property of a private person: it calls the process by various names — condemnation, expropriation, annexation, etc.; but it is seizure, violent seizure, and essentially seizure against the owner's will. If a man enter your kitchen-garden and take a few onions or a few potatoes, you can seize, prosecute, and imprison him: the state takes the whole garden, and turns you out of it, and turns it into anything else which for the moment seems to the state excellent or advantageous, and against the impersonal robber you can do naught. The state considers it compensation enough to pay an arbitrary value; but not only are there many possessions, notably in land, for the loss of which no equivalent could reconcile us, but the state herein sets up a

principle which is never accorded in law. If the man who steals the onions offers to pay their value, he is not allowed to do so, nor is the owner of the onions allowed to accept such compensation: it is called "compounding a felony." The state alone may commit this felony with impunity.

The state continually tampers with and tramples on private property, taking for itself what and where and how it pleases: the example given to the public is profoundly immoral. The plea put forth in excuse for its action by the state is that of public benefit: the interests of the public cannot, it avers, be sacrificed to private interest or ownership or rights of any sort. But herein it sets up a dangerous precedent. The man who steals the potatoes might argue in his own justification that it is better in the interest of the public that one person should lose a few potatoes than that another person should starve for want of them, and so either in prison or in poorhouse become chargeable to the nation. If private rights and the sacredness of property can be set at naught by the state for its own purposes, they cannot be logically held to be sacred in its courts of law for any individual. The state claims immunity for theft on the score of convenience: so then may the individual.

If the civil law be in conflict with and contradiction of religious law, as had been shown elsewhere, \* it is none the less in perpetual opposition to moral law and to all the finer and more generous instincts of the human soul. It preaches egotism as the first duty of man, and studiously inculcates cowardice as the highest wisdom. In its strenuous endeavor to cure physical ills it does not heed what infamies it may sow broadcast in the spiritual fields of the mind and heart. It treats altruism as criminal when altruism means indifference to the contagion of any infectious malady. The precautions enjoined in any such malady stripped bare of their pretences, really mean the naked selfishness of the *saue qui peut*. The pole-axe used on the herd which has been in contact with another herd infected by pleuro-pneumonia or anthrax would be used on the human herd suffering from typhoid, or small-pox, or yellowfever, or diphtheria, if the state had the courage to follow out its own teachings to their logical conclusions. Who shall say that it will not be so used some day in the future, when increase of population shall have made mere numbers of trifling account, and the terrors excited by physiologists of ungovernable force?

We have gained little by the emancipation of human society from the tyranny of the churches if in its stead we substitute the tyranny of the state. One may as well be burned at the stake as compelled to submit to the prophylactic of Pasteur or the lymph of Koch. When once we admit that the law should compel vaccination for small-pox, there is no logical reason for refusing to admit that the law shall enforce any infusion or inoculation which its chemical and medical advisors may suggest to it.

On the first day of May, 1890, a French surgeon, M. Lannelongue, had a little imbecile child in his hospital; he fancied that he should like to try trepanning on the child as a cure for imbecility. In the words of the report:

"Il tailiait la suture sagittale et parallelement avec elle une longue et étroite incision cranienne depuis la suture frontale a la suture occipitale; il en resulta pour la partie osseuse une perte de substance longue de 9 centimetres et large de 6 millimetres, et il en resulta pour le cerveau un vértiable débridement."

If this child live, and be no longer imbecile, the parents of all idiots will presumably be compelled by law to submit their children to this operation of trepanning and excision. Such a law would be the only logical issue of existing hygienic laws.

In the battlefield the state requires from its sons the most unflinching fortitude; but in civil life it allows them, even bids them, to be unblushing poltroons.

An officer, being sent out by the English War Office this year to fill a distinguished post in Hong Kong, was ordered to be vaccinated before going to it; and the vaccination was made a condition of the appointment. In this instance a man thirty years old was thought worthy of confidence and employment by the state, but such a fool or babe in his own affairs that he could not be trusted to look after his own health. You cannot make a human character fearful and nervous, and then call upon it for the highest

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\* See article "Has Christianity Failed?" — NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, February, 1891.

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qualities or resolve, or capacity, and of courage. You cannot coerce and torment a man, and then expect from him intrepidity, presence of mind, and ready invention in perilous moments.

A few years ago nobody thought it a matter of the slightest consequence to be bitten by a healthy dog; as a veterinary surgeon has justly said, a scratch from a rusty nail or the jagged tin of a sardine-box is much more truly dangerous than a dog's tooth. Yet in the last five years the physiologists and the state, which in all countries protects them, have succeeded in so inoculating the public mind with senseless terrors that even the accidental touch of a puppy's lips or the kindly lick of his tongue throws thousands of people into an insanity of fear. Dr. Bell has justly said: "Pasteur does not cure rabies: he creates it." In like manner the state does not cure either folly or fear: it creates both.

The state is the enemy of all volition in the individual: hence it is the enemy of all manliness, of all force, of all independence, and of all originality. The exigencies of the state, from its monstrous taxation to its irritating by-laws, are in continual antagonism with all those who have character uncowed and vision unobscured. Under the terrorizing generic term of law, the state cunningly, and for its own purposes, confounds its own petty regulations and fiscal exactions with the genuine solemnity of moral and criminal laws. The latter any man who is not a criminal will feel bound to respect; the former no man who has an opinion and courage of his own will care to observe. Trumpery police and municipal regulations are merged by the ingenuity of the state into a nominal identity with genuine law; and for all its purposes, whether of social tyranny or of fiscal extortion, the union is to the state as useful as it is fictitious. The state has everywhere discovered that it is lucrative and imposing to worry and fleece the honest citizen; and everywhere it shapes its civil code, therefore, mercilessly and cunningly towards this end.

Under the incessant meddling of government and its offspring, bureaucracy, the man becomes poor of spirit and helpless. He is like a child who, never being permitted to have its own way, has no knowledge of taking care of itself or of avoiding accidents. As, here and there, a child is of rare and strong enough stuff to break his leading-strings, and grows, when recaptured, dogged and sullen, so are there men who resist the dogma and dictation of the state, and when coerced and chastised become rebels to its rules. The petty tyrannies of the state gall and fret them at every step; and the citizen who is law-abiding, so far as the greater moral code is concerned, is stung and whipped into continual contumacy by the impertinent interference of the civil code with his daily life.

Why should a man fill up a census-return, declare his income to a tax-gatherer, muzzle his dog, send his children to schools he disapproves, ask permission of the state to marry, or do perpetually what he dislikes or condemns, because the state wishes him to do these things? When a man is a criminal, the state has a right to lay hands on him; but whilst he is innocent of all crime his opinions and his objections should be respected. There may be many reasons — harmless or excellent reasons — why publicity about his life is offensive or injurious to him: what right has the state to pry into his privacy and force him to write its details in staring letters for all who run to read? The state only teaches him to lie.

"You ask me things that I have no right to tell you," replied Jeanne d'Arc to her judges. So may the innocent man, tormented by the state, reply to the state, which has no business with his private life until he has made it forfeit by a crime.

The moment that the state leaves the broad lines of public affairs to meddle with the private interests and actions of its people, it is compelled to enlist in its service spies and informers. Without these it cannot make up its long lists of transgressions; it cannot know whom to summon and what to prosecute.

That duplicity which is in the Italian character, so universally ingrained there that the noblest natures are tainted by it, — a duplicity which makes entire confidence impossible, and secrecy an instinct strong as life, — can be philosophically trained to the influences which the constant dread of the *sbirri* and *spie* employed under their various governments for so many centuries has left upon their national temperament. Dissimulation, so long made necessary, has become part and parcel of the essence of their being. Such secretiveness is the

inevitable product of domestic espionage and trivial interference from the state, as the imposition of a gate-tax makes the peasantry who pass the gate ingenious in concealment and in subterfuge.

The requisitions and regulations of the state dress themselves vainly in the pomp of law; they set themselves up side by side with moral law; but they are not it, and cannot possess its impressiveness. Even a thief will acknowledge that "Thou shalt not steal" is a just and solemn commandment: but that to carry across a frontier, without declaring it, a roll of tobacco (which you honestly bought, and which is strictly your own) is also a heinous crime, both common-sense and conscience refuse to admit. The Irish peasant could never be brought to see why the private illicit whiskey-still was illicit, and as such was condemned and destroyed, and the convictions which followed its destruction were amongst the bitterest causes of Irish disaffection. A man caught in the act of taking his neighbor's goods knows that his punishment is deserved; but a man punished for using or enjoying his own is filled with chafing rage against the injustice of his lot. Between a moral law and a fiscal or municipal or communal imposition or decree, there is as much difference as there is between a living body and a galvanized corpse. When in a great war a nation is urged by high appeal to sacrifice its last ounce of gold, its last shred of treasure, to save the country, the response is willingly made from patriotism; but when the revenue officer and the taxgatherer demand, threaten, fine, and seize, the contributor can only feel the irritating impoverishment of such a process, and yields his purse reluctantly. Electoral rights are considered to give him a compensating share in the control of public expenditure; but this is mere fiction: he may disapprove in every item the expenditure of the state; he cannot alter it.

Tolstoi has constantly affirmed that there is no necessity for any government anywhere: it is not a government, but all governments, on which he wages war. He considers that all are alike corrupt, tyrannical, and opposed to a fine and free ideal of life. It is certain that they are not "the control of the fittest" in any actual sense, for the whole aspect of public life tends every year more and more to alienate from it those whose capacity and character are higher than those of their fellows: it becomes more and more a routine, an engrenage, a trade.

From a military, as from a financial, point of view this result is of advantage to the government, whether it be imperial or republican; but it is hostile to the character of a nation, morally and aesthetically. In its best aspect, the state is like a parent who seeks to play Providence to his offspring, to foresee and ward off all accident and all evil, and to provide for all possible contingencies, bad and good. As the parent inevitably fails in doing this, so the state fails, and must fail, in such a task.

Strikes, with their concomitant evils, are only another form of tyranny; but they have this good in them — that they are opposed to the tyranny of the state, and tend to lessen it by the unpleasant shock which they give to its self-conceit and self-complacency. Trades-unions turn to their own purposes the lesson which the state has taught them — i. e., a brutal sacrifice of individual will and welfare to a despotic majority.

There is more or less truth and justification in all revolutions because they are protests against bureaucracy. When they are successful, they abjure their own origin and become in their turn the bureaucratic tyranny, sometimes modified, sometimes exaggerated, but always tending towards reproduction of that which they destroyed. And the bureaucratic influence is always immoral and unwholesome, were it only in the impatience which it excites in all courageous men and the apathy to which it reduces all those who are without courage. Its manifold and emasculating commands are to all real strength as the cords in which Gulliver was bound by the pygmies.

The state only aims at instilling those qualities in its public by which its demands are obeyed and its exchequer is filled. Its highest attainment is the reduction of mankind to clockwork. In its atmosphere all those finer and more delicate liberties which require liberal treatment and spacious expansion inevitably dry up and perish. Take a homely instance. A poor, hard-working family found a little stray dog; they took it in, sheltered, fed it, and attached themselves to it; it was in one of the streets of London; the police after a time summoned them for keeping a dog without a license; the woman, who was a widow, pleaded that she had taken it out of pity, that they had tried to lose it, but that it always came back to them; she was ordered to pay the amount of the dog-tax and two guineas'

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costs; i.e., the state said to her: "Charity is the costliest of indulgencies; you are poor; you have no right to be humane." The lesson given by the state was the vilest and meanest which could be given. The woman's children, growing up, will remember that she was ruined for being kind; they will harden their hearts, in accordance with the lesson; if they become brutal to animals and men, it is the state which will have made them so.

All the state's edicts in all countries inculcate similar egotism; generosity is in its sight a lawless and unlawful thing: it is so busied in urging the use of disinfectants and ordering the destruction of buildings and of beasts, the exile of families and the closing of drains, that it never sees the logical issue of its injunctions, which is to leave the sick man alone and flee from his infected vicinity: it is so intent on insisting on the value of state education that it never perceives that it is enjoining on the child to advance itself at any cost and leave its procreators in their hovel. The virtues of self-sacrifice, of disinterested affection, of humanity, of self-effacement, are nothing to it; by its own form of organism it is debarred from even admiring them; they come in its way; they obstruct it; it destroys them.

Mr. Ruskin, in one of the papers of his *Fors Clavigera*, speaks of an acacia tree, young and beautiful, green as acacias only are green in Venice, where no dust ever is; it grew beside the water steps of the Academy of the Arts and was a morning and evening joy to him. One day he found a man belonging to the municipality cutting it down root and branch. "Why do you murder that tree?" he asked. The man replied "Per far pulizia" (to clean the place). The acacia and the municipality of Venice are an allegory of the human soul and its controller, the state. The acacia was a thing of grace and verdure, a sunrise and sunset pleasure to a great soul; it had fragrance in its white blossoms and shade in its fair branches; it fitly accompanied the steps which lead to the feasts of Carpaccio and the pageants of Gian. Bellini. But in the sight of the Venetian municipality it was irregular and unclean. So are all the graces and greenness of the human soul to the state, which merely requires a community taxpaying, decree-obeying, passionless, enduring as the ass, meek as the lamb, with neither will nor wishes; a featureless humanity practising the goose-step in eternal routine and obedience.

When the man has become a passive creature, with no will of his own, taking the military yoke unquestioningly, assigning his property, educating his family, holding his tenures, ordering his daily life, in strict accord with the regulations of the state, he will have his spirit and his individuality annihilated, and he will, in compensation to himself, be brutal to all those over whom he has power. The cowed conscript of Prussia becomes the hectoring bully of Alsace.\*

\*Whoever may care to study the brutal treatment of conscripts and soldiers in Germany by their officers is referred to the revelations published this year by Kurt Abel and Captain Miller, both eye-witnesses of these tortures.

"*Libera chiesa-in libero stato*" is the favorite stock phrase of Italian politicians; but it is an untruth — nay, an impossibility — not only in Italy, but in the whole world. The Church cannot be liberal because liberality stultifies itself; the state cannot be liberal because its whole existence is bound up with dominion. In all the political schemes which exist now, working themselves out in actuality, or proposed as a panacea to the world, there is no true liberality; there is only a choice between despotism and anarchy. In religious institutions it is the same: they are all egotisms in disguise. Socialism wants what it calls equality; but its idea of equality is to cut down all tall trees that the brushwood may not feel itself overtopped. Plutocracy, like its almost extinct predecessor, aristocracy, wishes, on the other hand, to keep all the brushwood low, so that it may grow above it at its own pace and liking. Which is the better of the two?

Civil liberty is the first quality of a truly free life; and in the present age the tendency of the state is everywhere to admit this in theory; but to deny it in practice. To be able to go through the comedy of the voting-urn is considered privilege enough to atone for the loss of civil and moral freedom in all other things. If it be true that a nation has the government which it deserves to have, then the merits of all the nations are small

indeed. With some the state assumes the guise of a police officer, and in others of a cuirassier, and in others of an attorney; but in all it is a despot issuing its petty laws with the pomp of Jove; thrusting its truncheon, or its sword, or its quill into the heart of domestic life, and breaking the backbone of the man who has spirit enough to resist it. The views of the state are like those of the Venetian municipality concerning the acacia. Its one aim is a methodical, monotonous, mathematically-measured regularity: it admits of no expansion; it tolerates no exceptions; of beauty it has no consciousness; of any range beyond that covered by its own vision it is ignorant. It may work on a large scale,—even on an enormous scale,—but it cannot work on a great one. Greatness can be the offspring alone of volition and of genius: it is everywhere the continual effort of the state to coerce the one and to suffocate the other. ■

## Our Apologies

"We apologize to our subscribers for delays in the publication of *Libertarian Forum*. Both the editor and publisher have been traveling abroad at different times over the last few months and, of necessity, were unable to maintain our normal production schedule. LF is a labor of love, not profit. The work involved in its publication is carried on in addition to, and interspersed with, our normal professional obligations. We trust our friends will bear with us in that spirit as we move towards the completion of our seventh year of publication."

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# Cold War Revisionism

by Walter E. Grinder

**A REVIEW ESSAY** *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy 1941-1949* by Lloyd C. Gardner (Quadrangle, 365 pp.) and *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy 1943-1945* by Gabriel Kolko (Random House, 685 pp.)

The interwoven dynamics of war, revolution and economic hegemony have been the supreme animating forces of Twentieth Century history. Unfortunately it is these very dynamics which are among the least understood by academics and laymen alike. A moment's pause for reflection helps us to understand why it is so difficult, in general, to piece together the pattern of meaning which flows from these animating forces; and why, in particular, it has proven so difficult to grasp the significance of these dynamics in the post-World War II period.

Very simply, the answer lies in the veil of governmental secrecy, myth, and propaganda that surrounds all governmental war-making and counter-revolutionary activity. The task of the historian is to cut through this veil and to attempt to reconstruct the truth concerning how and why the pattern of events emerged as it did. The role of the historian is therefore at once both the most difficult and the most important of all the social disciplines. It is the historian upon whom we all must depend to stand as the cutting edge in the process of demystification, in the process of seeking out the truth.

In the post-Watergate, post-Pentagon Papers era, it should be evident why historians have had such difficulty finding and putting together the pieces. Because the Second World War and the immediate post-war activities were shrouded in almost total "national security" secrecy, it has been a particularly long and arduous task to get the truth out. But although the truth has emerged only haltingly, the bits and pieces slowly but convincingly have been fitted together over the past twenty years.

The capstone of these two decades of work can be found in these two impressive and complementary volumes — *Architects of Illusion* by Lloyd C. Gardner and *The Politics of War* by Gabriel Kolko. The years covered in these volumes — 1941-1949 — are the crucial years, the years which must be understood if one is to grasp the essential nature of the Cold War.

It is impossible to touch on all or even most of the important insights of these detailed works, but there are three major themes which tie these works together and on which we will focus our attention. Hopefully by doing this, we can get to the roots of their combined thesis without doing an injustice to either of these excellent works.

First, there was the desire of United States policy makers to build a stable world political-economic order. The United States' attempt to dominate and maintain the economic system of a reconstructed "capitalist" order to be built out of the post-war rubble was to become an all-consuming passion of both wartime and post-war American policy.

Second, there were the ill-fated aspirations of the forces of change which emerged during the war. Most of these forces grew out of the Resistance against the various authoritarian regimes. They were the forces of the Left.

Third, the combustible truth was that the reality of the second rendered the wishes of the first both obsolescent and illusory from the very beginning. Plans, policies and institutions based on a vision of the world in which the United States was to dominate, even if not absolutely control, and which did not include the nationalist and liberationist aspirations of a changing world were bound to lead to endless friction and frustrated hopes and dreams.

## II

The twin economic fears which haunted United States policy makers throughout the war years were (1) the continuing depression and (2) the deterioration of international trade that had taken place during the 1930's. These policy makers were determined that the world economy must not fall back into the malaise of the 1930's. In order to stave off such a

recurrence, the United States leaders were convinced that they had to build an open world, i.e., a world congenial to American trade and investment. Only through increased foreign trade and investment could the United States insure itself and the world against continued depression. This Hobsonian belief was the determining economic premise which guided American political-economic policy both during and after the war.

After the breakdown of the 19th Century liberal order, a breakdown that occurred mainly due to World War I and the center of which was the collapse of the international gold standard, the international market fractured and ultimately divided into self-contained trading blocs. The co-Prosperity Sphere in Asia and the German domination of Central Europe were two such blocs which grew strong during the 1930's. Both of these were to be eliminated by the defeat of Japan and Germany. Two others which grew out of the aftermath of the Great War were the Ottawa Preference System (the Sterling Bloc) i.e. "western Capitalism" minus the United States, and finally there was the closed Soviet Union. A crazy, inefficient world to be sure. More importantly though, it was an international "system" which had effectively frustrated the global aspirations of the American one-world planners from Woodrow Wilson onward.

After 1943, when it became apparent that Germany and Japan were going to be defeated, the United States political-economic leadership began planning in earnest for the restructuring of the post-war world. This included, among many other things, plans for toppling the Sterling Bloc and for debolshevizing the Soviet Union.

Under the direction of William L. Clayton, the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs—and not merely incidentally one of the country's leading exporters as head of Clayton and Anderson Company, the post-war loan to England was calculated to take advantage of Great Britain's distressed financial condition in order to achieve several specific goals. The first was to break down the exclusionist provisions against American trade participation within the Ottawa Preference System. The second was to offset the English drive for postwar exports, a drive which clearly competed with America's own national goals. The third was to slow down the new Labour government's plan for the "socialization" of the British economy. Clearly the United States was not going to permit such a precedent to be set which might serve as a model for other countries to imitate. To various degrees each of these goals was achieved, and the United States had effectively penetrated the British Empire. The United States became the senior partner and undisputed leader of the "free world."

Even though the plan was eventually to be thwarted, the Morgenthau-White Plan (names for Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau and his assistant Harry Dexter White) for the economic penetration of the Soviet Union was even more ingenious than Clayton's success with Great Britain. The plan was to dismember the German economy so that no reparations could come out of current production. Then, the Soviet Union, according to the plan, would become totally dependent on the United States for a line of credit for her post-war reconstruction. The negotiation for credit then could be tied to *quid pro quo* concessions on the part of the Soviet Union for further easing of restrictions against United States exports and investments. Of course, the hardening of the Cold War led Stalin to veto the whole program; but when seen as a plan to debolshevize and penetrate the Soviet market, the Morgenthau Plan makes a great deal of sense whereas taken out of context it could be seen only as blind revenge and pastoral madness.

Central to the post-war planning was the rebuilding of an international monetary system that would (1) end Great Britain's international financial dominance and (2) solidify the United States control of that system into the indefinite future. Only the United States came out of the war relatively healthy. The United States was strongest, and clearly intended to stay strongest, by taking over the "burden of global leadership" which was "thrust" upon her. Only a monetary system which insured the continued dominance of the United States was acceptable to

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her leaders. Therefore, an international monetary system within which the dollar was the central pillar was constructed and driven through at Bretton Woods.

The destruction of the Sterling Bloc was thereby ultimately ensured. Because of the reserve status of the dollar, the United States would henceforth be able to export large portions of its excess inflation with economic impunity, at least in the short run. But finally and most importantly, the United States could construct a matrix of multilateral trade flows in which ready liquidity and markets for American exports would be available and for which United States financial institutions would become the principal banker. Hence American bankers and exporters were to be the principal beneficiaries of the newly constructed system, but United States policy makers were absolutely convinced that what was good for American exporters was good both for the nation and for the world. In fact, throughout this period, United States leaders were largely motivated by a mania for exports to keep the United States and the world from falling back into depression.

### III

The Resistance movements of liberation which rose up during the war had not fought to overthrow old empires merely to have a new one come and take its place. Not only had the fascist empires been toppled, but the democratic empires of the western European nations were in a state of disarray. From the Balkans to Indo-China the Resistance forces emerged very strong, and they were not likely to give up their gains of national self-determination in order to fall into line with the wishes of some aspiring new empire builders, no matter how democratic and benevolent they might sound.

In the aftermath of World War I, the Versailles Conference, and the ensuing depression, there developed a steady decline in genuine international free trade and in the free society everywhere. The New Order was entirely statist oriented; only the form and degree varied. Whether authoritarian or democratic, statism was the hallmark of the 1930's. Planning and intervention were the rule rather than the exception.

All statism by its very nature is necessarily, to one degree or another, status quo oriented, interested in maintaining its own power perquisites and the given institutional arrangements. To the degree that statism prevails in a society, it would seem, to that same degree the governing fabric of that society will be status quo oriented and conservative. Rightist, if you will; reactionary if you prefer. This, then, was the makeup of the world when the war broke out. A statist world which America's leaders, when they got into the war, planned to open up and make safe for American economic penetration and control — a New Deal for a new world.

Against this background, the forces of Resistance emerged. The very process of resistance was necessarily anti-statist and liberationist, and by definition resistance was carried out by the Left. Grasping this one point takes one a long way towards understanding the parameters and nature of the Cold War that was to follow the Second World War. The terms "liberal" and "conservative" have only to do with marginal changes within the status quo itself: clearly such has increasingly become the case throughout the 20th Century. Only the terms Right and Left seem properly to distinguish between the status quo and the disloyal opposition, between statism and revolution, and between subjection and liberation.

### IV

Perhaps the single most important misunderstanding (often seemingly contrived) of the Cold War was the American policy makers' constant jumbling together of the Left and the Soviet Union as though they were somehow one and the same. No one, not even Churchill nor Truman, could outdo Stalin in his ruthless conservatism. The first real evidence of this came with America's first confrontation with the Left.

As the Americans swept up through Italy, a precedent was set which loomed ominous for freedom fighters everywhere. First, the Russians who were member of the Allied Control Commission were given a say in the administration of the occupation of Italy. Stalin, who was wise in the ways of power and who was properly suspicious of Churchill and

Roosevelt's delaying tactics on the issue of the second front, properly took all this as a signal that the actual conquerors should have absolute control within their respective spheres of influence. Second, in practically every case, members of the Resistance were overlooked and conservative members of the previous order were reinstated in governing positions. Those of the Resistance who held out and continued to fight were ruthlessly eliminated, considered to be just as dangerous to the Allies as were the retreating Germans.

When the Soviet forces began to rumble westward, Stalin obviously took his cue from the West and installed only those who were willing to subordinate themselves to Soviet hegemony and to the Soviet's self-perceived defense needs. Just as in the Italian precedent, this policy precluded members of the genuine Left from participation.

A brief look at the Balkans and Greece is instructive. Stalin's treatment of Tito's partisans was viciously conservative and typical of his behaviour throughout the war and after. Stalin tried continually to force Tito both to merge his movement with Old Order conservatives and to submerge his own and his troops' radicalism. When Tito refused, Stalin cut him off with no aid — even though there was seemingly a strong similarity of socialist ideology between the two. Socialist solidarity never seemed to mean much to Stalin whenever his would-be colleagues and comrades began to take revolutionary change seriously. The Partisans were forced to fend for themselves because Stalin saw their success as a threat to the Soviet Union's own conservative hegemonic goals in Central Europe. Stalin's interests never had been nor were they then in favor of revolutionary change; his interests were, rather, always oriented towards maintaining his personal power and towards shoring up the defensive position of the autarchic Soviet empire. To those who have carefully studied the history of Stalin's reign, the incontrovertible conclusion emerges that these conservative aims motivated his actions throughout.

All of the "big three" — Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin — were militantly anti-revolutionary, anti-Left, from the beginning to the end. The 1944 agreements on Greece and Rumania show just how cynically conservative they were. In Greece the National Liberation Front (EAM), like Tito's Partisans in Yugoslavia, was a tough, independent-minded Resistance movement. The Communists (KKE) make up a small but significant part of this movement. By late 1943 it appeared that the EAM would be in control of Greece after the Germans were defeated. Churchill, who was trying to reassert British hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, like Stalin, was sure that the successful example of the revolutionary EAM would spread and perhaps undermine England's attempts to rebuild its empire in that area of the world. Churchill and Stalin, therefore, secretly agreed in 1944 that the Soviets should have control in Rumania in exchange for British control in Greece. Both Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull were edge about the agreement because the U. S. wanted a world totally open to U. S. businesses' penetration, but Roosevelt finally grudgingly agreed.

Immediately after the agreement was consummated, the British began a determined campaign to decimate the EAM and to assert British control. The slaughter was swift and savage, and once again Stalin kept his part of the bargain by failing to support the Greek Communists. Curiously, however, it is here that we find the origin of the myth assuming that the Left and the Soviet Union were synonymous: it is here, beginning with the turmoil in Greece, that both Churchill and later the Americans justified waging war against the Left (in this case against the Greek Resistance) on the grounds of containing Soviet influence, of containing Soviet Communist expansionism.

Then came Yalta. Conservatism, suspicion, and misunderstanding were the order of the meetings. All sides wanted to stop the seemingly ceaseless rising tide of the Left. Everyone, including Stalin himself, thought that Stalin had more control of the situation than he actually did. He promised to put the brake on the Left and indeed tried to do so. He attempted to pressure all of the Communist parties of the world. Where his control and influence reached, his will prevailed; and where his will prevailed, he was successful in blunting the cutting edge of revolution. In Italy and in France the Communist parties resumed their accustomed Social Democratic ways. They returned to trade union politics and tactics, and in many cases became moderating members of the various governments.

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But in Yugoslavia, Tito again refused to fall in line. In China, Mao instead stepped up the revolution. Most of the Left had little contact with the Soviet Union. The genuine Left was invariably an indigenous movement, always a movement firmly rooted in local problems and offering specific local responses to those problems. Whenever the Left movements did find themselves in contact with the Soviet Union, they usually found the relationship uncongenial because the Soviets, being far away and concerned mainly with their own empire's needs, had no knowledge of or empathy with the specific social problems that had given rise to the local Left in the first place. Soviet generalities about working-class solidarity and Soviet specifics about the need to mould all revolutionary movements to fit the needs of "building socialism in one nation." (in the Soviet Union, that is) were viewed with derision by the true Left. Time and again, the Left's leaders would attempt to narrow the scope of their contacts with the Soviet Union to curtail its leaden influence on their local movement; and time and again, the Left would be driven back into the arms of the Soviets by the mindlessness of the West's equally anti-revolutionary policies.

Most of the misunderstandings about the Yalta agreements arose as a result of Stalin promising more than he could deliver. (Kolko's exposition of the Polish question is superb but too involved to go into here.) First, Roosevelt and then Truman took Stalin's inflated word at face value. They took it as both true and as readily dischargeable. Whenever Stalin failed or proved unable to deliver, his inability was always interpreted as an unwillingness to deliver.

At Potsdam, Truman saw Stalin as an intractable foot-dragger who had to be shown who was the boss. Truman was sure that he had the means to do just that. The atomic bomb was in a state of near readiness, and Truman was ready to use it as a "hammer" to "dictate our own terms at the end of the war" and to maneuver and perhaps break the unmanageable Stalin. The apparently unnecessary dropping of the bomb was carried out not primarily to defeat the Japanese, but rather, it seems clear, to impress Stalin.

Stalin was duly impressed, but rather than acquiesce he acted out the self-fulfilling prophecy of Truman and Averill Harriman's earlier expectations. As Stalin was maneuvered and finally forced into a corner by the Americans, he really began to further tighten his grip on the Soviet sphere of influence; and the Cold War began in earnest.

Thereafter, since every international move was to be defined in simplistic Soviet Union versus the United States black and white terms, it was inevitable that American leaders would characterize each gesture of self-determination as being Soviet inspired and manipulated. By equating the Left with Soviet machinations, the way was cleared for the United States to devise a strong counter-revolutionary policy. Whereas in reality even a closed Soviet Union represented only a marginal obstacle to the achievement of U. S. global aspirations, the success of the Left, on the other hand, really could block such United States domination.

But how could a war-weary and generally isolationist American public be sold on an anti-self determination crusade? In order both to save their own consciences and to enlist the support of the American people, the policy makers and their kept intellectuals had to package their plan to extirpate the Left as a crusade against a godless, Soviet-Communist international conspiracy. There was, indeed, an international revolution against imperial order throughout much of the globe, but it was being carried out by the Left and it was being undermined and thwarted every bit as much by the Soviets as by the Americans throughout the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's. In the 1970's "detente" is an open agreement to squash movements of radical self-determination wherever and whenever they develop; or, if possible, "detente" is being used as a cover behind which the Soviet Union and the United States attempt to co-opt the movements, to rob them of their radical character, and to lure them into one or the other of the detente partner's respective sphere of influence.

In order to understand American foreign policy during these all important years, it is necessary to delve deeply into the ideas, ideals, and vested interests, if any, of the major participants. It would be nice if we knew more about the minds and motivations of Soviet personnel; but the Soviet archives are not open to foreign historians, and therefore we do not yet understand the other side nearly as well as we might wish. We do,

however, have in Gardner's book a most helpful cataloging of ideas, wishes and events surrounding America's decision-making personnel. These include among others: F.D.R., H.S.T., Will Clayton, George C. Marshall, Bernard M. Baruch, Dean Acheson and others. It is impossible to understand the origins of the Cold War without peering intently into the ideological framework and the international desires of these men.

V

Libertarians in particular are deeply indebted to both Kolko and Gardner, not simply because of their masterful setting straight of the record, but also because they help to provide us with a more libertarian interpretation of the dynamics of war, revolution, and economic hegemony. No historian can provide us with all of the answers, and Kolko and Gardner are not exceptions to this rule; however, they do clear away many of the statist apologetics of the "court historians" and give us a remarkably clear view of what really did take place. Perhaps even more importantly, they give us good understanding of why the events took place the way that they did.

If there has been one overriding weakness in the developing libertarian *Weltanschauung*, it has been and continues to be an extraordinarily peculiar inclination for many libertarians to accept, without much question, the United States' orthodox propaganda concerning international affairs. A careful and honest look at the evidence leads one to realize that the United States is even far more statist (anti-freedom) abroad than it is at home. Massive amounts of money and energy of the United States for the past thirty years have gone to wipe out the aspirations of freedom around the globe in the name of stability, prosperity, and maintaining the "free world."

Hopefully, libertarians will learn from a careful study of Kolko and Gardner to see that the United States' intransigent demand for a world order that would be congenial to American business penetration and expansion was and continues to be perhaps the major and constant source of the Cold War. No nation is either more responsible or more culpable for the origination, the development, and the outcome of the Cold War than is the United States. On this the record is clear.

After libertarians carefully sift the evidence, it is furthermore hoped that they will conclude that to remain libertarian in judging, analyzing, and commenting on foreign affairs, one must side intellectually, emotionally, and morally with the revolutionary forces of liberation, with the forces of the Left; for the processes of revolution, the processes of liberation are of necessity moral and libertarian. Perhaps the most difficult reality of all to accept is that these forces of the Left are almost always, and properly so, anti-American. It really hurts to realize, as history is most likely to judge, that the United States is the chief counter-revolutionary — and therefore the most anti-self determination — force in the world, and that the United States will stop at practically nothing to protect, maintain, and extend its global empire.

Such support of the Left, of course, does not commit one to a pro-communist or pro-socialist position; for clearly the socio-economic system of socialism is but the total fulfillment of statism. As such, socialism or communism is always *status quo* oriented, rightist and anti-Left, the very antithesis of the libertarian social order. Neither, of course, does such support lead one to whitewash nor to apologize for the sins and hegemonic aspirations of the Soviet Union, but, then, this review is not meant to be a discussion of Soviet history.

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At the very least, though, what such an identification with national liberation movements does commit one to, vis a vis the United States, is a total commitment against any and all U. S. foreign interventionist activities. It has become increasingly clear that practically all American foreign aid, whether military or economic, inevitably finds its way into the coffers of reactionary, "stability oriented" regimes. Thus, for over thirty years the United States government has led and supported the parties of reaction and counter-revolution, especially in the Third World. The record, beginning during W. W. II, clearly shows that the political, economic and military support policies conceived in Washington and implemented around the globe, as commentators as diverse in their views as Lawrence Dennis and Sidney Lens saw long ago, have done more to generate interest in socialist ideology, to multiply the number of the communist faithful, and to confirm the otherwise absurd predictions of socialist theories of imperialism than all of the time, effort, teaching, planning, propaganda, wishful thinking and so forth that has gone on in the Kremlin since 1917. United States foreign policy, especially since about 1942, has been the best friend international communism ever had.

One's commitment, then, to national liberation movements both in theory and in fact, in general; and to an anti-American global interventionist policy, in particular; must surely lead one to adopt a political program which has as its object the forcing of United States' military and political-economic legions to come home, to mind their own business, and, then, to allow the chips to fall where they will. This, after all, is what the devotion to freedom and the free market is all about. One simply cannot fight socialism with socialism (or militarism and fascism) and expect the result to be libertarian either abroad or at home. Yet, this has been precisely the policy pursued by the United States and boosted by both the social-democratic liberals and the conservatives alike now for over thirty years. This is the very policy that the conservatives and the neo-conservatives in the Commentary-National Review-Public Interest clique would have us redouble our efforts to pursue. This is the policy toward which libertarians must at long last stand up and say, "No more."

Libertarians must help forge a movement which will pressure the U. S. government to cease shoring up reactionary regimes and to cease attempts to force open closed doors. The U. S. government must do one thing only, and that is to get out of the way and to permit business to proceed where business is wanted. And the United States government must under no circumstances be permitted to assume the risks for American enterprises doing business abroad. Even in our real world of social upheaval and political turmoil, this — no help, no hindrance — is what the doctrine of free trade must mean. Anything else is but a sham.

It will take several decades of such strict non-interference to convince those of the Third World and elsewhere that America's international free-trade vocabulary is not simply a verbal cloak for a more sophisticated form of imperialism. It will take several decades to break down the walls

of hate and distrust built up by the Cold Warrior empire builders. And it will likely take several decades of closed-door, socio-economic experiments before the emerging nations discover that socialism does not work. This may not make good textbook economic sense and it may be unfortunate for all concerned, but it will probably have to happen and the United States government will simply have to tolerate it. Only such a policy of non-intervention and tolerance will encourage the adoption of free trade policies among the developing countries. Only by adopting such a policy could the United States ever become a symbol of liberty and gain a measure of deserved international respect. Only then will the ideas and ideals of free trade and their political corollary — individualism and political liberty — gain credence and adoption. Only such a policy of non-intervention can lead the world towards true international progress and true freedom. Just as the aggressive policy of United States global interventionism has caused a quantum leap in statism both abroad and at home, so too, a friendly policy of minding its own business will surely lead to a safer, freer, and more productive world for all of us everywhere.

It is sad but true that the ideology of most Left movements is wrapped in socialist rhetoric and interventionist policy. But this should not be cause for surprise. If, as it does, the United States carries out its imperial policy of counter-revolution under the guise of "free enterprise," and if the United States continues its policy of buying off and exterminating unwanted socio-economic agitation under the banner of "free trade," then whenever we find someone who is shocked at the large doses of socialism and egalitarianism to be found in the rhetoric and actions of national liberation movements, we assuredly will have found one who has not very carefully thought the situation through. It seems clear that all too many libertarians have not carefully read the evidence and have not carefully thought the situation through.

In fact, one can reinforce one's free market position by identifying with the Left. For only the genuine free market is the fulfillment of all liberating processes. Only the genuine free market is truly anti-status-quo, anti-statist, anti-conservative — truly Left. Seeing the free market in this manner helps to place the implications of the free market philosophy in its wider and more nearly correct historical and strategic perspective.

We must all remember that no nation-state can "build" a stable world order; it can attempt to do so only through the massive use of statist force both at home and abroad, and even then the stability gained is at best only short run stability. A genuinely stable order of the free market develops only out of free and voluntary exchange processes. To "build a free world" is a contradiction in terms, and to persist in such a policy is at best to chase an illusion and must always lead to a perversion of the libertarian ideal.

Both Kolko and Gardner offer us a great deal of food for thought and understanding. We can hope that libertarians will not be so put off by some of their socialist views, especially on the part of Kolko, that they do not searchingly study and appreciate the evidence and analyses of these two magnificent books.

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