

Graffiti for intellectuals



Simon Says



By Si Frumkin

THE TRUTH-TELLER LIED

This is about all kinds of different things. What Paul Hegness found in an old box at an auction warehouse. A confession from one of America's great authors. Pencils that changed their appearance after June 1940. Two Italian immigrants to America whose deaths aroused the world. And not least, the sad fact that many idols have feet of clay.

Paul Hegness bought Lot 217 for \$100. He wasn't sure why he did it. He had been looking for something more interesting and valuable – first-edition books and artworks. This was just a box full of old papers and holiday cards. And then he saw a letter that was addressed to John Beardsley, Esq in Los Angeles, but the return address was "Upton Sinclair, Long Beach".

exported Soviet ammonia to produce fertilizer in the United States; most of it was excavated by Gulag slaves who worked for nothing and Hammer made quite a bit of money on cheap Soviet ammonia. But I digress...

Paul Hegness was amazed by the letter. Upton Sinclair was one of America's most honored authors. He had written over 90 books, ran for governor of California in 1926 and 1934 (got 600,000 and 900,000 votes respectively), was translated into dozens of languages and was seen by millions – especially in Europe – as the epitome of honesty and virtue. As a child I read – and was horrified by – his book "The Jungle", an expose of the horrible conditions in Chicago meatpacking plants that prompted clean food laws. He had also written "Boston", a book about the Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants who spoke little English and were found guilty of murdering two men in a shoe factory robbery. Sinclair called the trial a sham and a murder of two innocents. His opinion was shared by American and European luminaries like Dorothy Thompson, John Dos Passos, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, the future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and many others.

had framed a set of alibis for them."

Sinclair writes, "I faced the most difficult ethical problem of my life" but he decided to perpetuate the lie. He had two motives: loyalty to the socialist ideal and fear of losing readers.



In a letter in the Indiana University archives, Sinclair tells a confidant at the Socialist Daily Worker in 1924 that his wife had warned him that if he told what he really believed, he would be called a traitor to the

movement and may not live to finish the book.

And he worried about losing readers: "It is much better copy as a naïve defense of Sacco and Vanzetti because this is what my foreign readers expect, and they are 90% of my public," he wrote.

Upton Sinclair died in 1968 without ever publicly disclosing his doubts, his reputation as America's foremost truth-teller intact.

Paul Hegness kept the letter for a decade before recently donating it to the University of Indiana archives where other Sinclair letters, including those to the Daily Worker, had been stored for many years. It is curious that Sinclair scholars, professors and historians, now express surprise at these revelations – as if the materials had not been available to them. In addition, Ideale Gambera, a retired English professor whose father Giovanni was a Boston anarchist in the 1920s and a member of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, was told by his father before he died in 1982 that Sacco was one of the killers. "They all lied," said Gambera. "They did it for the cause."

I suppose that being a leftist means that you never have to say you're sorry. ☐



Now the pencils. When I was a kid in Lithuania all our pencils were made in Germany and had the name Eberhard Faber imprinted on them. In

1940 the Soviets came, we became a Soviet Socialist republic and little by little the Faber pencils disappeared and instead we had similar pencils with a different name: "Sacco and Vanzetti".

It didn't bother me – the pencils wrote and that's all I cared about. But I was a curious kid and wanted to find out who these two Italian guys were and I did: they were two fearless fighters for the freedom and liberty of the oppressed American working class who were cruelly murdered by the fascist lackeys of the capitalist bosses who controlled America and exploited the workers. Later, when Armand Hammer, a good American capitalist who loved the Soviet Union, built a pencil factory in Moscow, the factory was named Sacco and Vanzetti in honor of the two martyrs. This is how all the Lithuanian – and Latvian and Estonian – kids got these new pencils as soon as they became Soviet kids.

Mr. Hammer was a great friend of the Soviet Union. Shortly after the revolution he imported Russian art and Czarist treasures to America, sold them and shared the money with the Soviets. More recently, in the 1960s and 70s his Occidental Petroleum company



But here, Paul Hegness was looking at a letter by Upton Sinclair in which the author admitted that he had been wrong! Sinclair's letter to his attorney instructed him to keep the contents secret. "Stick it away in your safe, and some time in the distant future the world may know the real truth about the matter. I am here trying to make plain my own part in the story."

Sinclair wrote that he met Fred Moore, the immigrants' attorney, while gathering material for his "Boston" book.

"Alone in a hotel room with Fred, I begged him to tell me the full truth," Sinclair wrote. "...He then told me that the men were guilty, and he told me in every detail how he



THE LONG WAR

BY WILLIAM KRISTOL, WEEKLY STANDARD, 3/6/2006

Demagogues to the right of them, appeasers to the left of them, media in front of them, volleying and thundering. Can the Bush administration continue to charge ahead? Does it have the will--and the competence--to lead the nation for the next three years toward victory in the long war against radical Islamism?

From Copenhagen to Samara, the radical Islamists are on the offensive. From Tehran to Damascus, the dictators are trying to



regain the upper hand in the Middle East. From Moscow to Beijing, the enemies of liberal democracy are working to weaken the United States. Across the world, the forces of terror and tyranny are fighting back. Are we up to the challenge?

It's not clear that we are. Many liberals, here and in Europe, long ago lost the nerve to wage war--or even to defend themselves--against illiberalism. Parts of the conservative movement now seem to be losing their nerve as well. In response to an apparent clash of civilizations, they would retrench, hunker down, and let large parts of the world go to hell in a hand basket, hoping that the hand basket won't blow up in our faces.

Remember: The United States of America and its allies--regimes that seek to embody, or at least to move towards, the principles of decent, civilized, liberal democracy--did not seek this war. But we are at war, and we could lose it. Victory is not inevitable.

Does that make Bush-supporting, liberal-democracy-promoting, Iraq-war-defending neoconservative "Leninists," as Francis Fukuyama has recently charged? No. Does it mean we believe--as Fukuyama defines Leninism--that "history can be pushed along with the right application of power and will"? Does it mean that history does not automatically move in the right direction, that justice does not necessarily or easily prevail? Yes.

It would be nice to believe, as Fukuyama does, that "a long-term process of social evolution" is under way that will inevitably

produce liberal democracy. It would be nice to enjoy the comfortable complacency of a historical determinism that suggests--as Fukuyama has it--that what we most need to do is to embrace a "good governance agenda" on behalf of a long-term process of "democracy promotion" that "has to await the gradual ripening of political and economic conditions to be effective."

Indeed, it would be nice if we lived in a world in which we didn't have to take the enemies of liberal democracy seriously--a world without jihadists who want to kill and clerics who want to intimidate and tyrants who want to terrorize. It would be nice to wait until we were certain conditions were ripe before we had to act, a world in which the obstacles are trivial and the enemies fold up. Unfortunately, that is not the world we live in.



To govern is to choose, and to accept responsibility for one's choices. To govern is not wishfully to await the end of history. To govern is not fatalistically to watch a clash of civilizations from the sidelines.

As Marshall Wittmann of the Democratic Leadership Council observed last week, "We are in the midst of a jihadist offensive. The bombing of [Iraq's] Askariya Shiite Shrine is another indication of the world-wide jihadist offensive against the West. From the cartoon jihad to the Hamas victory to the Iranian effort to obtain nuclear weapons to the attempt by al Qaeda to foment an Iraqi civil war--our enemy is taking the

initiative. And the West is on its heels."

The Bush administration leads the West. If the West seems to be on its heels, it is because the administration seems to be on its heels. The fact that the left is utterly irresponsible, and some of the right is silly, is no excuse.

Wittmann continued, "Many mistakes have been made since 9/11. But at the end of the day, we should recognize that we are all Americans and part of the West that is under assault by a truly evil foe. Our bravest are on the front lines in this war. The least we can do at home is to demonstrate some moral seriousness that the moment demands."

Moral seriousness in this case means political seriousness. Insist on going ahead with the ports deal so that Arab governments

who have stood with us in the war on terror are not told to get lost when one of their companies acquires port management contracts in the United States. Make a real effort to destabilize Ahmadinejad in Iran. Do what it takes to defeat Zarqawi and secure Iraq. Stand with Denmark, and moderate Muslims, against the radical mob. This is no time for dishonorable retreat. It is time for resolve--and competence.

After all, it would be most unfortunate if the administration summoned its nerve and charged ahead--only to meet the fate of Tenyson's Light Brigade! Ω



ALL PRAISE, ALAN DERSHOWITZ!

Tony Blankley, Washington Times, 2/22/06

Next week a vastly important book will be published: "Preemption, A Knife That Cuts Both Ways" by Alan Dershowitz. Yes, that Alan Dershowitz: the very liberal civil libertarian, anti-capital punishment Harvard Law School professor. And but for my lack of his legal scholarship, there is nary a sentence in the book that I - a very conservative editor of The Washington Times and former press secretary to Newt Gingrich - couldn't have written.

The premise of his book is that in this age of terror, there is a potential need for such devices as profiling, preventive detention, anticipatory mass inoculation, prior restraint of dangerous speech, targeted extrajudicial executions of terrorists and preemptive military action, including full-scale preventive war.

In his own words, from his introduction: "The shift from responding to past events to preventing future harms is part of one of the most significant but unnoticed trends in the world today. It challenges our traditional reliance on a model of human behavior that presupposes a rational person capable of being deterred by the threat of punishment. The classic theory of deterrence postulates a calculating evildoer who can evaluate the cost-benefits of proposed actions and will act - and forbear from acting - on the basis of these calculations. It also presupposes society's ability (and willingness) to withstand the blows we seek to deter and to use the visible punishment of those blows as threats capable of deterring future harms. These assumptions are now being widely questioned as the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of suicide terrorists becomes more realistic and as our ability to deter such harms by classic rational cost-benefit threats and promises becomes less realistic."

Yet, such policies conflict with traditional concepts of civil liberties, human rights, criminal justice, national security, foreign policy and international law. He shrewdly observes that historically, nations - including democracies - have resorted to such deviations from law and custom out of necessity, but that it has all been ad hoc, secret or deceptive. Mr. Dershowitz argues that now, rather, we need to begin to develop an honest jurisprudence of prevention to legally regulate such mechanisms. It is better, he argues, to democratically decide now, before the next disaster, this new

jurisprudence - the rules by which we will take these necessary actions.

To see the difference between traditional Anglo-American criminal jurisprudence and his proposed jurisprudence of prevention, he raises the great maxim of criminal law: better that 10 guilty go free, than one innocent be wrongly convicted. That principle led our law to require proof beyond a reasonable doubt before conviction in criminal trials. Most of us agree with that standard.



But then Mr. Dershowitz updates the maxim thusly: "Is it better for ten possibly preventable terrorist attacks to occur than for one possibly innocent suspect to be preventively detained?" I would hunch that most people would not be willing to accept ten September 11 attacks (30,000 dead) in order to protect one innocent suspect from being locked up and questioned for a while.

Is it possible to go beyond such gut instincts and ad hoc decision making during a crises, and begin to develop a thoughtful set of standards for conduct in this dangerous new world? I don't know.

As Mr. Dershowitz observes, a jurisprudence develops slowly in response to generations, centuries of adjudicated events. But to the extent we recognize the need for it and start thinking systematically, to that extent we won't be completely held hostage to the whim and discretion of a few men at moments of extreme stress.

At the minimum, an early effort at a jurisprudence of prevention would at least help in defining events. Consider the long and fruitless recent debate about the imminence of the danger from Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or the current debate on Iran's possible nuclear weapons. Under tradition-

alinternational law standards they are both classic non-imminent threat situations: "early stage acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by a state presumed to be hostile."

But as Mr. Dershowitz points out, while the threat itself is not imminent, "the opportunity to prevent the threat will soon pass." Once they have the weapons it is too late.

Or, a low price in innocent casualties might soon pass. For instance, in 1981 when Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear site at Osirak, if it had waited much longer the site would have been "radioactively hot" and massive innocent civilian casualties would have been incurred from radioactive releases. It is simply not enough anymore to say a country violates the norm by acting in its ultimate, but not imminent, self-defense. We need new standards for a new age.



The new realities of unacceptable risk require new - and lower - standards of certainty before defensive action is permitted.

As we develop a jurisprudence of prevention, we increase the chance of justice and rationality being a bigger part of such crisis decisions that our presidents will be facing for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Dershowitz's sound, practical scholarship is commendable. But what I find heartening is the political fact that a prominent scholar of the left has finally entered into a constructive conversation about how to manage our inevitably dangerous WMD/terrorist-infested future.

If such as Mr. Dershowitz and I can find common ground, there should be space there for a multitude. And from that common ground can grow a common plan for a common victory. Ω





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FIRST THEY CAME FOR ISRAEL, THEN THEY CAME FOR AMERICA . .

By Dennis Prager, Jewish World Review, February 7, 2006

In 1945, the anti-Nazi German pastor Martin Niemoller wrote the following:

"First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up, because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up for me."

This famous statement can be updated for Europeans:

First they came for Israel, and we didn't speak up because we weren't Jews. Then they came for Lebanon's Christians, and we didn't speak up because we weren't Maronites. Then they came for America, and we didn't speak up because we weren't Americans. Then they came for Sudan's blacks, and we didn't speak up because we weren't Sudanese blacks. Then they came for us, and by that time there was no one left to speak up for us.

As long as Muslim demonstrators only shouted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," Europe (and the rest of the world's Left) found reasons either to ignore the Nazi-like evil inherent in those chants (and the homicidal actions that flowed from them) or to blame America and Israel for the hatred.

But like the earlier Nazis, our generation's fascists hate anything good, not merely Jews and Americans. And now the Damascus embassy of Norway, a leading anti-Israel "peace at any price" country, has been torched. And more and more Norwegians, and Brits, and French, and Dutch, and Swedes, and the rest of the European appeasers who blamed America for 9-11 and blamed Israel for Palestinian suicide bombings, are beginning to wonder whether there just might be something morally troubling within the Islamic world.

Some on the Left here and in Europe are

beginning to reassess whether America and Israel or their Islamic enemies are at fault.

The fact that major newspapers in most Western European countries published some or all of the cartoons that triggered the riots against Denmark, the country in which the offending cartoons of Muhammad first appeared, was a statement that at least some in Europe have had it with appeasement of Islamic violence.

And here in America, a left-of-center columnist for the Los Angeles Times, Tim Rutten, just wrote: "It's no longer possible to overlook the culture of intolerance, hatred and xenophobia that permeates the Islamic world."

As it happens, I have sympathy with the notion that newspapers and others need to be sensitive to religious, including Muslim, sensibilities. However, when Muslim governments and religious spokesmen attack the West for its insensitivity to Muslims and its anti-Muslim prejudice, one has entered the Twilight Zone. Because nowhere in the world is there anywhere near the religious bigotry and sheer hatred of other religions that exists in the Muslim world.

* Christians nearly everywhere in the Arab and Muslim worlds are usually second-class citizens at best and terribly treated at worst.

* The Taliban Islamic regime in Afghanistan blew up the unique Buddhist sculptures in their country because they didn't want

even a trace of a non-monotheistic faith to survive in an Islamic country.

* About a million non-Arab and non-Muslim men, women and children have been slaughtered by the Islamic regime in Sudan.

* Nigerian Christians are periodically murdered by Islamic mobs.

* And regarding Jews, Andrew Sullivan writes in this week's Time: "The Arab media run cartoons depicting Jews and the symbols of the Jewish faith with imagery indistinguishable from that used in the Third Reich."

As for the riots and Islamic government protests, one question needs to be posed to these people: Which casts Islam in a worse light - political cartoons depicting Muhammad, or Muslims who murder innocents around the world in the name Allah and Islam?

Did any Jews riot when the Los Angeles Times published a cartoon of the holiest site in Judaism, the Western Wall, with its stones reconfigured to spell "hate"?

Did any Christians riot when museums displayed "Piss Christ," a crucifix submerged in artist Andres Serrano's urine?

What we have is a culture largely based on saving face and honor juxtaposed with a Judeo-Christian Western culture largely based on saving liberty and innocent life.

All of us, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, should pray that the better one wins. Ω