

Public Radio's Anti-Semites

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

As we contemplate the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis, and the 400,000 Polish Jews who over a two-and-a-half-year period were shipped from Warsaw to hideous deaths in the Treblinka concentration camp, let us pause to note that our government funds anti-Semitism right here in America. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting gamely subsidizes such orifices of hate as KPFK-FM in Los Angeles. According to the Corporation's chairman Sheila Tate, there is nothing that can be done about it. The First Amendment protects hate. Yes, but does the First Amendment call for government funding of hate? I think not.

As Los Angeles simmers with racial tension, the programmers at KPFK have been doing their bit for tolerance and harmony by broadcasting tapes of distinguished bigots claiming that the genetic makeup of whites makes them incurably psychopathic and in need of incarceration, psychosurgery, or—in extreme conditions!—death. The thesis that Jewish doctors have been injecting black infants with AIDS has been aired by a Mr. Steve Cokely, as have Dr. Leonard Jeffries's irregular hypotheses, for instance, that Jews, not Arabs, ran the African slave trade. Other speakers have defamed Asians, Hispanics, and homosexuals.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.

Most of this stuff has been aired on a show called "Afrikan Mental Liberation Weekend," whose producer/host Dr. Kwaku Person-Lynn indulges callers lauding Adolf Hitler and abominating American democracy.

Now, of course, Dr. Person-Lynn is most likely just another of the hundreds—perhaps thousands—of charlatans who regularly prey on the ignorance of the poor illiterates of our inner cities. And the charlatans' dupes are not defined solely by the color of their skin. Doubtless there are multitudes of whites and Asians who tune in to KPFK daily to ruminate upon the arcane knowledge of the various "doctors" and "professors" howling there. There was a day when such dopefetchers

simply worked the neighborhoods on foot or from a soapbox in the park. But now with the spread of "higher education" and the appalling lowering of university standards many of these charlatans have advanced degrees. Some teach at heretofore respectable universities Dr. Jeffries menaces intellect at City College of New York. And all bring to their spiels a patina of science and learning.

The important point is that our government is subsidizing these dispensers of hate and stupidity. Only one member of the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Victor Gold, the writer, is alive to the problem. He draws a distinction between "censorship," which expurgates or changes programming and obviously runs afoul of the First Amendment; and "sponsorship" of programming, which is beyond the purview of the First Amendment. He has submitted a proposal to the Board that reaffirms broadcasters' right to free expression but denies them federal funding for "repeated programming" that "defames any race, religion or minority." The Board has rejected that proposal, though Gold continues to champion it.

Nat Hentoff, one of the Republic's most tireless defenders of free expression and of tolerance, would approach KPFK's hate programming differently. He believes that it is the duty of intelligent minds to criticize stupidity and hate. He urges that local broadcasters and commen-



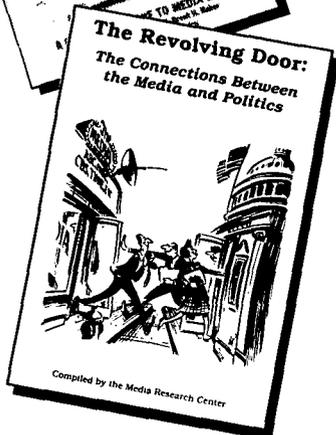
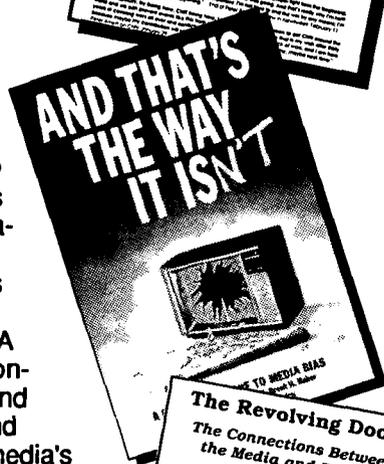
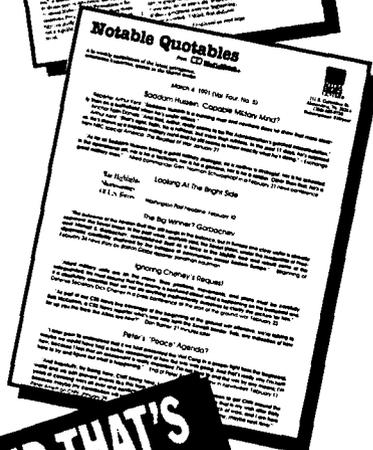
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tators deride such claptrap as Afrikan Mental Awareness Week, rebroadcast tapes of these malign outbursts, and point out their errors.

Hentoff opposes any attempt by government to affect program content. I share his libertarian instinct. Let us make of the Dr. Kwakus of this world not martyrs but the butts of ridicule.

Yet here we have a problem. Most broadcasters and commentators do not have the boldness of mind and the liveliness of conscience that stimulate Nat Hentoff. Genuine liberalism is pretty

much dead in the Republic. Thirty years ago in Los Angeles a chorus would have sounded against hate on the radio. Today that city's commentators go on about their comfortable business of sharing platitudes. They do not recognize hate language when it issues from those who hitherto were the victims of hate. And so, while we wait for them to catch on, let us take up Gold's solution. After all, he is right. The First Amendment is against censorship. Government sponsorship is quite another thing. □

King's, by name), at a joint called New York Pizza, and at two bars: Joe's and the American Gay Bar.

According to *Respekt*, many of the American expatriates are "missionaries" for "Green Terrorism," "Feminism," "politicizing AIDS," and other "strange religions." They are not making many converts, and, if that surprises them, I can sympathize. The dress and demeanor of many Czechs are almost hippie. When I visited the offices of *Respekt* the place looked like a veritable hippie haven, circa 1968. There was a plenitude of beards and scruffy jeans. There were granny glasses and long hair. But *Respekt* did not grow out of a 1960s youth culture seeking hallucinogenic drugs and free sex. It was born of the anti-Communist struggles of the 1980s.

Many of its still-quite-young writers first wrote in the anti-Communist underground, where they braved incarceration and beatings. Jan Machacek, *Respekt's* economics correspondent, is versed in the writings of free-market economists such as Hayek and Friedman. His politics sound almost Reaganesque. When I left his office I noticed a bumper sticker on *Respekt's* front door that read "Free Elections for Viet Nam." This is about the furthest thing from the minds of Prague's 15,000 American expatriates who believe freedom triumphed in Vietnam when America's Vietnamese allies were vanquished.

"Anti-Americanism is very popular among these Americans," says Michael Semin over coffee at Prague's Civic Institute, another post-Communist institution with its roots in the struggle against Communism. The Civic Institute holds public forums on democratic values and free-market economics. Its reading room contains volumes that on American campuses would be considered most incorrect. Like many politically active Czechs these days including the Czech Republic's decisive Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, the Civic Institute espouses the ideas of America's founding fathers.

"America, Love It or Leave It," was the battle cry of the American mainstream in the 1970s. Americans who leave it today and flee to Prague might learn to love it again, if they listen to the Czech Freedom Fighters of 1989 who have replaced the totalitarians of yesterday. □

La Bohème

Prague

This is my third trip to Prague since the 1989 evaporation of Communism. In fact, it is my second consecutive Prague Spring. Slowly, but perceptibly, things are improving materially. In terms of freedom, life is better than it has been since March 15, 1939, when Hitler marched in and, to the astonishment of Britain and France's appeasers, murdered 250,000 Czechs—over half of them Jews.

There remain Communists, some in government, about 12 percent in parliament; but most are decidedly elderly and bereft of the old fire to bludgeon and to oppress. Mostly these dinosaurs go about their septembral business of intoning Marxism to ghosts; and—assuming they have any international standing whatsoever as either intellectuals or technical experts—they occasionally turn up at an American university. The other day Professor Vojtech Cepl of Prague's Charles University, who has just put the finishing touches on the Czech Republic's new constitution, lamented to me that when he travels to America the Czechs whom he meets on college campuses are generally former Communists. Naturally their perceptions of Prague's present democratic and procapitalist government are grim. Naturally, too, the politically correct American profs gullibly accept every grim perception.

There are 15,000 Americans living in Prague at present, and they are a rather sad lot. At least that is the way *Respekt*, one of Prague's most influential week-

lies, depicted them recently. They live fantasy lives modeled after the expatriate lives once led by Hemingway and Orwell in Paris, but that was long ago. Hemingway's peers were justifiably distressed by World War I and all the broken lives it left. The recent Cold War ended on an altogether happier note. What is it that has these contemporary expatriates down in the dumps?

The answer is lack of imagination and lack of talent. There are no Hemingways or Orwells here. Paris's expatriates were called the "lost generation." Prague's call themselves "Generation X." There is no poetry in that absurd concoction, only juvenile angst. Paris's expatriates hung out at a cosmopolitan bookstore and one or two select cafes. Prague's pathetics hang out at a laundromat (Laundry



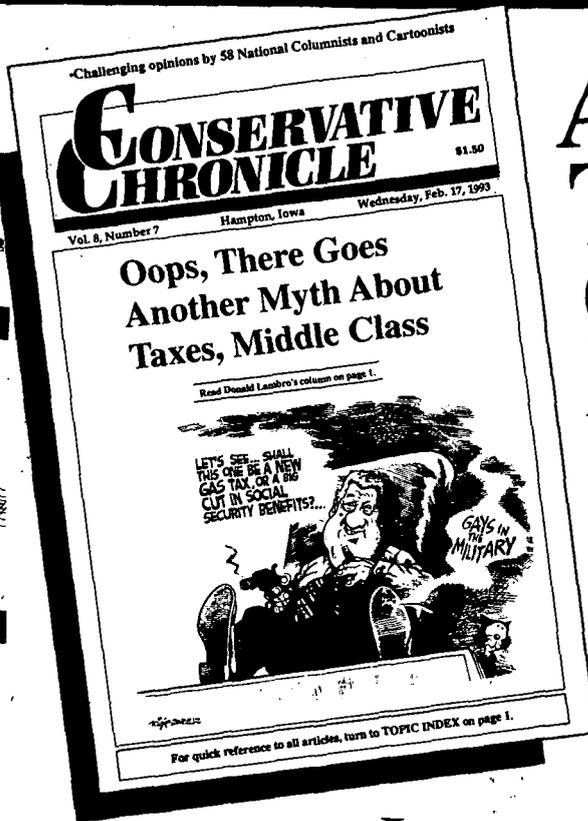
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Rethinking HIV

by Tom Bethell

Knowledge is never more askew than when it has been silently politicized. This is true of a good deal of government-funded science, which can serve political interests in ways that the public, and even scientists themselves, do not suspect. They put on their white coats and peer into their test tubes, scarcely recognizing the extent to which they may be following political guidelines or prudently considering the continued funding of their labs.

Openly politicized subjects, such as economics, involve a contest for the truth that is at least acknowledged to be unresolved. Nobel prizes are impartially awarded to the proponents of incompatible theories. The field is broadly divided between collectivists and individualists, and the judges seemingly recognize that there is no agreement about truth. This may be untidy, but it is surely healthier than the bogus certitude and the appeals to consensus that stifle so much of modern science.

We look at Soviet science and smugly feel superior: Lysenko was a "charlatan," but of course we have no such problem here. He took orders from Stalin; we are a democracy (mention "checks and balances"). But peer-review imposes its own conformity, and the raised eyebrows of senior colleagues can whip a youthful free-thinker into shape. Grant applications must be submitted, the National Institutes of Health must be kept happy.

The most striking instance of politicized science in recent years has been the phenomenon called AIDS, which is thought of as a disease but which more nearly resembles a federal program. It now seems likely that the 12-year government research and publicity effort has been based on the wrong hypothesis—

that the various diseases called AIDS are caused by a single infectious agent, the human immunodeficiency virus. It is possible that AIDS is not infectious at all, but is the result of damage to the immune system caused by behavior. The many reasons for thinking that a great and shocking mistake has been made are set forth by Robert Root-Bernstein in a new book called *Rethinking AIDS: The Tragic Cost of Premature Consensus*.¹ Root-Bernstein is a professor of physiology at Michigan State University. Here are just a few points that are worth pondering:

The discovery of the cause of AIDS was announced at a press conference in April 1984, by Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler, at a time when the Reagan administration was under attack for not doing enough. Promising a vaccine within two years, she added: "Those who have said we weren't doing enough have not understood how sound, solid, significant medical research proceeds." Then she introduced the man who was thought to have discovered the virus, NIH virologist Robert Gallo. It turns out that Gallo's virus had been isolated at the Pasteur Institute in Paris by Luc Montagnier, who now says that HIV alone is insufficient to destroy the immune system.

Three years later, in 1987, the Food and Drug Administration, responding to political pressure from homosexual activists, approved the drug AZT for use against AIDS. Synthesized as chemotherapy in 1964, AZT had not hitherto been approved because of its toxic effects. But when the gays started protesting outside FDA's doors—well, something had to be done, because lives were at stake, and so the drug was hurriedly approved.

Two symbiotic interest groups illumi-

nate the politics of AIDS: homosexual activists and the NIH-funded medical-scientific complex. Ten years before AIDS, in 1971, the federal government launched an expensive "war on cancer." A virus was the scientifically fashionable hypothesis because the triumph over polio was still uppermost in many researchers' minds. The polio virus had been isolated, a vaccine developed, and Salk and Sabin were heroes of science. Hordes of new virologists were being turned out by the graduate departments. Interestingly, a retrovirus—just like HIV—was the prime cancer suspect, because cancer is a growing mass of cells and retroviruses usually don't kill the cells they infect. They parasitically use the cell's DNA to crank out new copies of themselves. Viral-cancer theorists thought that, in doing so, retroviruses may mess up the DNA in some way, transforming ordinary cells into cancer cells.

But by 1981 the cancer virus was proving elusive. Frustrated researchers were therefore happy to turn to this intriguing new syndrome, at first called GRID, gay-related immune deficiency. Here was promise. Now they would apprehend the guilty virus and bring it into custody. And the new generation of virologists would become heroes of medicine, just like Salk and Sabin.

Virus, did someone say? That suited the gay activists just fine. Anyone can pick up a virus. It's just a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. A virus is exculpatory (nothing to do with behavior) and egalitarian (we are all at risk). The virus "cloaks AIDS activists in nobility," said ACT-UP specialist Robert Rafsky, who "confronted" Bill Clinton in the New York primary last year. So listen up, straights. That little critter will be replicating away inside you before you know

Tom Bethell is *The American Spectator's* Washington correspondent.

¹ The Free Press, 512 pages, \$27.50.