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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

From: Greg Sandow <gsandow@prodigy.net>
Date: Mon, 17 May 1999 13:07:36 -0400
Fwd Date: Mon, 17 May 1999 20:50:08 -0400
Subject: Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

>Date: Sun, 16 May 1999 09:18:03 -0500
>From: Alfred Lehmborg <Lehmborg@snowhill.com>
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

Jerry Clark had written:

>>As documented in
>>insightful studies of conspiracy theory by the likes of George
>>Johnson, Daniel Pipes, Richard Hofstadter, and others,
>>conspiracy theory and ethnic/racial bigotry historically are so
>>entwined as to be indistinguishable.

To which Alfred Lehmborg replied:

>Perhaps, but appeals to authority, or expecting a jump on a band
>wagon of bookburning in deference to 'experts' does not address
>the take I have on our shared interest. As an individual not
>overly impressed by title, or reputation, and able to "think and
>wait" in my own right -- I take issue with your haughty
>dismissal to defer to the traditions of others, and insist that
>I make up my own mind.

<snips>

>Like evolution, sir, conspiracy is a fact. The
>"theory" is how either of those things works themselves out. I
>suggest you reassess your own frail innocence.

In order to make up our minds with any credibility, we need to start with facts. That's the point of Jerry's citations. He's not appealing to authority. He's telling us where he gets his information, so we can assess it ourselves.

Lehmborg rejects Jerry's sources. Which leads me to ask the following questions:

1. Has Lehmborg read the books Jerry refers to? And if he hasn't, or doesn't otherwise know what they say, how can he be so sure they can't tell him anything he needs to know?
3. Where does he get his own information? He's certain there's a conspiracy (of what kind, he doesn't say). How does he know that? What specific sources can he give us, so we can make up our own minds whether -- given the same information he has -- we'd come to the same conclusion?

Not enough people make up their own minds, I agree. And yet, once we throw off whatever's stopping us from thinking for ourselves, making up our own minds isn't much of an achievement. A four year-old can do it. People who've done it call talk shows all day long, with no idea what they're talking about. What's genuinely rare, I fear, are people who make up their minds on the basis of solid information.

Which is why most of us, faced with someone who has an idea that's new, don't ask, "Did you come to that opinion by yourself?" Instead, we ask, "Why do you think that?"

Greg Sandow

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