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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1999](#) -> [May](#) -> **Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies**

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

From: Alfred Lehmborg <Lehmborg@snowhill.com>
Date: Tue, 18 May 1999 10:09:20 -0500
Fwd Date: Thu, 20 May 1999 00:18:31 -0400
Subject: Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

>From: Greg Sandow <gsandow@prodigy.net>
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies
>Date: Mon, 17 May 1999 19:01:57 -0400

>>Date: Sun, 16 May 1999 10:10:27 -0500
>>From: Alfred Lehmborg <Lehmborg@snowhill.com>
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>>Subject: Re: Book Burnings & Conspiracies

>>Couched in the manner of your presentation, sir, the rational
>>person would be reluctant to continue down the slippery slope
>>that you depict. But, it would appear to seem that it may be
>>as you suggest (up your debating sleeve), that knee jerk
>>dismissal of conspiracy is irrational.

>Knee-jerk thinking is not terribly rational, no matter what it's
>about. But who, exactly, is dismissing conspiracy with a jerk of
>the knee?

With my most sincere apology, Mr. Sandow. I thought you were.
In fact -- I thought I noticed an abrupt change in the complete
direction of what I thought was an obvious, and in my opinion,
healthy cant . . . Another of us tired of having our legs peed
on.

>>Not just government, Mr. S. -- big business (including their
>>doctors, lawyers, and policemen), the spawner of the government
>>you allude to.

>Now we have a distinction to make -- between conspiracies and
>simple dominance of government by the powerful, which is not
>exactly news.

News institutionally not copped to, now.

>Well over 100 years ago, Marx said that the
>government, in capitalist societies, was "the executive
>committee of the ruling class."

The philosophy of Marx was created in reaction to the robber
barons you've alluded to. So are militant homosexuals, foaming
feminazis, (always) rebellious students, daughters and sons,
drug dealers, prostitutes, and conspiracy theorists. <g>.

>But even he -- and let me state, so as not to be criticized for
>anything I'm not, that my politics are quite left;

Ever wonder why liberal talk shows don't work?

>I'm quite
>sympathetic to Marx -- never said this executive committee had
>any sort of formal organization.

It has at least the organization of government -- we're not that far from an era where the business of government was business -- if we ever left it. There are rotaries -- confederations, shadowy social clubs. There is MORE than formal organization, sir. I heard it once said that the real history of our race is a private affair, or why is "Kennedy" sealed until I'm dead and gone.

>He was speaking metaphorically.
>I used to make jokes (around 20 years ago) about what a real
>conspiracy would be like. The "executive committee" would have
>formal sessions. "Ladies and gentlemen, we've now settled the
>course of the stock market for the next year,

You say this blithely disregarding a very shadowy, and suspect FED.

>and determined
>which team will win the World Series.

How about those black socks. <g>.

>Now may I ask Mr. Leonard
>Bernstein to outline his plans for classical music?" That -- or
>something like that (jokes about the world series aside) -- is
>what I've thought conspiracy theories allege. Which is a very
>different thing from mere haphazard domination by the rich and
>powerful.

I think it unlikely that there is anything haphazard about the domination by the rich and powerful. They write the rules, populate the congress, screen the admissions to schools and colleges, publish the textbooks, make their arbitrary rejections, and finally -- write the histories. I think it's a contrived cultural consequence of an institutional imperative cooperating, together and apart, to keep things the way just a few would have them. I guess I stand a little to the left of you, Mr Sandow. I've studied Arblasters's "The rise and decline of western liberalism," so I do possess an adequate framework for its appreciation.

>>>It's not exactly news that (a) governments
>>>have perfectly normal reasons for hiding what they do, ranging
>>>from genuine issues of security to disreputable attempts to
>>>cover their asses, and

>>A priveledge very likely abused horrifically, and without
>>oversite of any kind.

>Really? No oversight at all? Then how do we know about
>government scandals?

The tip of a very dirty 'berg, Mr. Sandow.

>>>(b) that governments sometimes resort to
>>>illegal means to keep themselves in power, or to enrich their
>>>supporters.

>>Why has that ever been instituted and once instituted, tolerated
>>-- Why didn't Ike just admit that the russians were scaring
>>the hell out of us, and deserved every bit of over flight they
>>got. Was our own behavior something less than pristine? Why
>>tolerate a violent right wing government over a more peaceful
>>and only slightly more left one?

>Good points, all of them, but hardly proof of any conspiracy.

I have to agree -- I was blinded by correlation. Many of the snails seem gone -- but Geez! Their slime trails are everywhere!

>The mere fact that governments lie and cover up doesn't prove
>that there's a conspiracy.

Pardon me?! People cooperating to commit illegal acts is the exact definition of 'conspiracy'. Let me check my Webster's

<and he really did too>Confirmed!

>>>All this is obvious enough without conspiracies. It's much worse
>>>in the third world.

>>This is supposed to be America! Is it something other than
>>what it depicts itself to be?

>Of course it is! This is news?

More evidence of that educational conspiracy? A tiny, tiny
fraction of the population internalizes that. Don't you wonder
why that is?

>>>And, interestingly, it used to be much worse
>>>in the United States, generations ago.

>>Few know that, though. Evidence of some kind of educational
>>conspiracy?
>>Perhaps.

>Hardly. Few people know much, in any detail, about history of
>any kind.

In a textbook called "Lies my teacher told me" James W. Loewen
lays out a very interesting framework for the the mechanics of
that inexplicable lack of a desire to *know*. All part of the
plan, Mr. S. <g>

>The information, in any case, is hidden in plain
>sight. You don't have to read deep in scholarly historical
>studies to learn, for instance, that published budgets for
>cities and states in the US are relatively new (allowing all
>kinds of possibilities for corrupt spending), that police
>corruption in New York City used to be more the norm than the
>exception (I'm talking about the 1920s, not the more recent
>pre-Serpico era), or that the press used to support government
>in America far more uncritically than it does now.

You speak of advances made, Mr. Sandow. Many of them I must
certainly concede. I speak of advances we could have made.
Copping to Galileo five hundred ago would have put us in the
asteroid belt today. Pardon the hyperbole.

>The mere fact that something isn't known doesn't prove or even
>suggest a conspiracy.

The more concerned of us must content ourselves that where there
is smoke there MAY be fire.

>>>Does anyone remember
>>>political bosses in big American cities?

>>How about the one in Suffolk county New York right now!

>Suffolk County's Republican party bosses have been widely
>written about. One of their main MO's (as reported widely in the
>New York press in the '80s) was to require all employees of
>county government to make donations to the Republican party.

The tip of their own dirty iceberg? Remembering John Ford. And
don't dismiss him as a nut. If TRUE it is not germane.

>One reason this got reported, however, was that it's relatively
>rare these days.

Uh - huh! So you would have me believe.

>Two generations ago, most big cities were
>controlled by political bosses affiliated with the Democratic
>party. Mayor Daley of Chicago was the most notorious, though
>it's worth noting that often these bosses didn't hold office.
>They'd get jobs for working-class citizens, and perform other
>public services -- the understanding being that the citizens
>helped would vote the straight democratic ticket. The election
>results were partly fabricated, in any case, with many stories
>circulating about people voting more than once, or dead people
>being retained on the election rolls.

>These bosses exercised fairly iron control over the political
>apparatus in their cities. They could dictate who'd be the

>Democratic candidate for mayor, and sometimes even for governor
>of their states. Once elected, these politicians did what the
>bosses wanted.

>But those days are long gone.

Only the DAYS are long gone, Mr. Sandow. The motivations,
imperitives, and desires of that kind of profitable sociopathy
exist in an only more refined and sophisticated state.

>I remember vividly when Ed Koch,
>later to be mayor of New York, overthrew the last remaining New
>York political boss, Carmine di Sapio.

OK! What filled the power vacume?

>I wouldn't claim there's
>much more small-d democracy in New York than there used to be
>(in the sense of direct control by the citizens), but government
>is conducted much, much more openly than it used to be.

Same song -- Mr. Sandow, just a better arrangement.

>To
>cite just one vivid change: You won't be beaten by thugs, or, in
>extreme cases, even killed if you speak up strongly against the
>party in power.

No health code violations, or other **lawful** stricture? There
are the thousand slings and arrows that flesh is heir to. Even
with crime down slightly, I cannot let slide by your
celebration of fractional, and GRUDGING advancement.

>>>"Smoke-filled rooms" in
>>>which political parties here decided on presidential candidates?

>>You suggest that that has disappeared? No, just changed its
>>form. The common woman still has very little input into the
>>process than to vote for who the the business community provides
>>for her to vote for.

>There are many business communities, and many of them don't
>think they've got the ideal candidates, either. Where, for
>instance, is the candidate calling for an end to the trade
>embargo with Cuba, something that many US corporations dearly
>>want to see (so they can join European and Asian companies in
>doing Cuban business)?

>Business control of politics and candidates is fairly haphazard.

Any control is intolerable -- derated as **haphazard** or no.

>And one decisive change has been the role of presidential
>nominating conventions. A generation ago, nominations were
>actually decided there. Not any more -- the extensive primary
>system more or less guarantees that by the time a convention
>starts, one candidate will have locked up enough votes to win.
>That, anyway, has been what's happened for several elections
>now.

More refinement to the horns, a little more resin on the bows in
the string section, a repaired crack in the cymbals? According
to the textbook "Democracy for the few," by Michael Parenti, the
process does not have the hopeful effication that you would
appear to hold out for it.

>The old days were very different.

Less refined.

>Remember, we're talking here
>about evidence for conspiracy, not the more general notion that
>the people of the US don't have much control of their
>government. When political conventions still had power, a few
>political bosses could lock themselves up in that classic
>"smoke-filled room," and decide who should be nominated. They'd
>conspire, in other words.

>Before the 1952 elections, the moderate Northeast bankers and
>Wall Street executives who mostly controlled the Republican
>party were able to persuade Dwight Eisenhower to run as a

>Republican, and then were able to get him the nomination
>(despite strong opposite from conservatives who supported Robert
>Taft, the candidate of the midwest and the west, the areas which
>now, along with the south, have supplanted the Northeast
>moderates from their pre-eminent position in the party, proof
>right there that the thing isn't run as a steel-tight
>conspiracy).

>Nowadays, no group of bankers could do that. They'd have to
>bankroll their candidate through all the primaries, and if the
>voters didn't like him, they'd lose. Not fully democratic, I'll
>grant, but much more open than things used to be.

Not as it could be - if we ascribed to some of those liberal
ideals you assumed earlier. Not much better than now, when Bill
Gates could make a decent show of running for office as Ross and
Steve have. Likely you would be the better president! Where do
you get your money?

>>>"Robber barons" around the turn of the (last) century who
>>>controlled congressmen, senators, and entire state legislatures?

>>I think we can safely admit that they have not disappeared,
>>either. There are whole communities in the world suffering
>>miserably at the hands of a business ethic gone mad outside the
>>borders of the United States, and only slightly less mad inside
>>it's borders.

>But of course they've disappeared.

Tell that to the villagers in and around banana growers in South
America. They are dropping dead of mercury poisoning. The big
growers successfully defeated the class action suit. Really
patting themselves on the back for it, too!

>They've been replaced by far
>more impersonal corporations, which do their dirty work far less
>systematically. In the old days, you really could say that John
>D. Rockefeller conspired to put his competitors out of business.
>No longer.

Well -- I have difficulty getting that down. I'm having
trouble with you even suggesting it.

>>>My impression, after watching American politics for 40-odd years
>>>and after much reading, is that politics and government are in
>>>many ways -- in everything, I'd guess, that's not concerned with
>>>foreign policy and the military -- more open than they used to
>>>be.

That's not what reporters reported from desert storm. They
complained bitterly for being spoonfed what the military was
feeding them. The gulf war illness likely hides in that slim
reporting, Mr. S.

>>But certainly not as it could be, assuming an honesty, a
>>forthcoming attitude, or a respect now in such short supply.
>>Hell -- we should be living in the asteroid belt by now -- a
>>thriving collection of autonomous individuals combining into
>>teams of much more capability and efficacy!

>Sure. But that doesn't mean there's a conspiracy.

C'mon hoss! Have you NO imagination? <g>. Don't all the shiny
slime trails make you a little uncomfortable?

>To repeat the point I've been trying to make: If the world is
>really run by a small conspiratorial group, they've messed up
>badly by making things more open and less conspiratorial than
>they used to be. That, at least to me, suggests that the
>conspiracy probably doesn't exist.

Every grudging advance we make is in spite of the lot that you
maintain is not there.

>>>Does that mean the conspiracy has less power?

>>No -- just refined lo these many years! <g>. Even Lincoln said
>>that as a result of the civil war our corporations were
>>enthoned, and total power would fall to fewer and fewer hands
>>until the republic was destroyed.

>Sure, and around 1945 Theodor Adorno, the left-wing German
>philosopher, then living in the US, said that corporate control
>had spread to every nook and cranny of society, and couldn't be
>increased any further.

The DOW was about 200 then, wasn't it? <g>. Corporations have a
pervasive global impact that removes them from the estimations
you provide here, Mr. S.. That was then; this is now.

>But what does either quote prove?

>Besides, corporate power is not the same thing as a conspiracy.

It is when they cooperate against the law. My folks lost money
in the S&L debacle, hoss. Did yours? Government and business
happily cooperating to rape little old granny ladies. What do
you find defensible about that?

>To my mind, there's only a conspiracy if you can prove that
>corporations make detailed plans together and cooperate in
>carrying them out -- and that, I think, can pretty well be
>disproved simply by reading the business section of any good
>newspaper.

Mr. Sandow -- I'm amazed that you can even say that! If I didn't
know better I would think you were being contrary for contraries
sake!

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afar, I leave far behind me." - Giordano Bruno, burned at the
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