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Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State

Rodolfo Stavenhagen



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Semitic. All of the Lobby's publications espouse conspiracy theories in which 'International Zionism', through Israel, American Jewish organizations and large financial institutions, dominate the government and threaten to take over the world. The LL's electoral arm is the Populist Party, founded in 1984, which runs candidates on an anti-immigration, isolationist, anti-Israel, anti-tax and anti-Federal Reserve platform. The party fielded a presidential candidate in 1984 and again in 1988, and ran candidates for lower offices in 16 states that year.

The Holocaust denial

One of the most insidious forms of contemporary anti-Semitism, which the Liberty Lobby and other similar organizations around the world are promoting, is so-called 'Holocaust revisionism' or 'Holocaust denial'. Under the guise of historical scholarship, Holocaust denial argues that the Holocaust never took place, and that the extermination of the European Jews was not the policy objective of Nazi Germany. These arguments are disseminated through the California-based Institute for Historical Review (IHR) and the Noontide Press, both affiliated with the Liberty Lobby. The IHR, founded in 1979, is composed of a small circle of Americans and Europeans, some of whom hold university positions, whose declared objective is to further 'scholarly research' on the history of the Second World War, and particularly on the genocide of the Jews. In fact, however, while protesting that they are only doing what respectable historians should do, the Holocaust deniers consistently espouse anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist and pro-Nazi views.

The IHR publishes the quarterly *Journal of Historical Review*, which is dedicated almost entirely to Holocaust denial and the rehabilitation of Nazi Germany. Despite its claims to be a 'historical journal', few JHR contributors are professional historians, and nearly all of them are known to be longtime anti-Semites. The Organization of American Historians criticized the JHR contributors for making 'highly selective use of their data', dismissing 'massive evidence of extermination', building arguments on 'the flimsiest of evidence' and using 'obsolete materials or rumours, often in line with Nazi ideology and propaganda'. For more than ten years, the IHR and Noontide Press have published materials, sponsored annual conventions and organized debates and speaking tours in a relentless propagation of its single anti-Semitic message. The Institute for Historical Review also places advertisements in respectable college journals, defending its positions on the basis of the 'freedom of inquiry' and the 'freedom of expression', which are dear to academics the world over. Holocaust deniers are quick to argue that opposition to

their views is orchestrated by powerful pro-Israel interests who benefit from exacting compensation for the Holocaust from an innocent and vilified Germany. They have founded a Committee on Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODEH), which calls for 'free enquiry' and 'open debate' on the issue. But their arguments do not resist serious scholarly criticism, and their views are not generally accepted as representing *bona fide* academic research, but rather the biased ramblings of politically motivated ideologues.²⁷

Other pro-Nazi groups

Another influential political movement with anti-Semitic tendencies is that of millionaire Lyndon LaRouche, a former Trotskyite, who embraced fascism in the 1970s. His National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) raised millions of dollars across the country and boasted affiliates abroad. His publications and lengthy nationwide television commercials reached a wide audience. His movement came close to electing several members to office in Illinois and other states, and LaRouche himself ran for president in 1988.

LaRouche's ideology is a complex web of conspiracy theories which links the British royalty, international bankers and drug cartels to a Zionist plot to take over the world.²⁸ The LaRouche movement, which has ties to the Liberty Lobby, seeks to unite various ethnic groups in an anti-Jewish front which LaRouche describes as 'the sort of large organization which US fascism must become to be taken seriously'.²⁹ Like other anti-Semitic groups, LaRouche tried to recruit farmers during the agricultural depression of the mid-1980s, but the movement weakened considerably following LaRouche's conviction and imprisonment on charges of fraud and conspiracy.

Since the US entry into the Second World War, support for pro-Nazi organizations in the US has been extremely low. Nevertheless, Klanwatch reported the existence of at least 30 neo-Nazi organizations in 1991. Most of them openly celebrate Hitler and the Holocaust and publicly display Nazi regalia in an effort to attract media attention. Estimates of the total membership of these groups range from 400 to 2000.

A descendant of the original American Nazi Party, one of the factions is a Milwaukee-based group, the New Order, which calls itself 'the movement of Adolf Hitler' and describes itself as 'the vehicle for the fulfillment of Adolf Hitler's great mission on this earth'. The National Socialist White Workers Party (NSWWP), located in the San Francisco Bay area, calls for an 'all-out war against non-whites'. Another group, based in southern California, distributes fliers reading 'White Power - Death to Race