

argument. As an example of the superior executive who should be attracted to government and given still greater power, Bundy cites Robert McNamara. Nothing could reveal more clearly the dangers inherent in the "new society" than the role that McNamara's Pentagon has played for the past half dozen years. No doubt McNamara succeeded in doing with utmost efficiency that which should not be done at all. No doubt he has shown an unparalleled mastery of the logistics of coercion and repression, combined with the most astonishing inability to comprehend political and human factors. The efficiency of the Pentagon is no less remarkable than its pratfalls.¹⁰⁴ When understanding fails, there is always more force in reserve. As the "experiments in material and human resources control" collapse and "revolutionary development" grinds to a halt, we simply resort more openly to the Gestapo tactics that are barely concealed behind the facade of "pacification."¹⁰⁵ When American cities explode, we can expect the same. The technique of "limited warfare" translates neatly into a system of domestic repression—far more humane, as will quickly be explained, than massacring those who are unwilling to wait for the inevitable victory of the war on poverty.

Why should a liberal intellectual be so persuaded of the virtues of a political system of four-year dictatorship? The answer seems all too plain.

The Chomsky Reader

The Manufacture of Consent

(1984)

DURING THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY A FEW WEEKS AGO, I took a walk with some friends and family in a national park. We came across a gravestone, which had on it the following inscription: "Here lies an Indian woman, a Wampanoag, whose family and tribe gave of themselves and their land that this great nation might be born and grow."

Of course, it is not quite accurate to say that the indigenous population gave of themselves and their land for that noble purpose. Rather, they were slaughtered, decimated, and dispersed in the course of one of the greatest exercises in genocide in human history. Current estimates suggest that there may have been about 80 million Native Americans in Latin America when Columbus "discovered" the continent—as we say—and

about 12 to 15 million more north of the Rio Grande. By 1650, about 95 percent of the population of Latin America had been wiped out, and by the time the continental borders of the United States had been established, some 200,000 were left of the indigenous population. In short, mass genocide, on a colossal scale, which we celebrate each October when we honor Columbus—a notable mass murderer himself—on Columbus Day.

Hundreds of American citizens, well-meaning and decent people, troop by that gravestone regularly and read it, apparently without reaction; except, perhaps, a feeling of satisfaction that at last we are giving some due recognition to the sacrifices of the native peoples, presumably the reason why it was placed there. They might react differently if they were to visit Auschwitz or Dachau and find a gravestone reading: "Here lies a woman, a Jew, whose family and people gave of themselves and their possessions that this great nation might grow and prosper."

The truth is not entirely suppressed. The distinguished Harvard historian and Columbus biographer Samuel Eliot Morrison does comment that "the cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors resulted in complete genocide." This statement is "buried halfway into the telling of a grand romance," Howard Zinn observes in his *People's History of the United States*, noting that in the book's last paragraph, Morrison sums up his view of Columbus as follows:

He had his faults and his defects, but they were largely the defects of the qualities that made him great—his indomitable will, his superb faith in God and in his own mission as the Christ-bearer to lands beyond the seas, his stubborn persistence despite neglect, poverty and discouragement. But there was no flaw, no dark side to the most outstanding and essential of all his qualities—his seamanship.

I omit the corresponding paragraph that some acolyte might compose about other practitioners of "complete genocide" or even lesser crimes, or the reaction that this would arouse among us if such examples existed.

The sentiment on the gravestone of the Wampanoag woman is not original. One hundred sixty years ago, John Quincy Adams explained in a Fourth of July address that our government is superior to all others because it was based upon consent, not conquest:

The first settlers . . . immediately after landing, purchased from the Indian natives the right of settlement upon the soil. Thus was a social compact formed upon the elementary principles of civil soci-

ety, in which conquest and servitude had no part. The slough of brutal force was entirely cast off: all was voluntary: all was unbiased consent: all was the agreement of soul with soul.

Citing these remarks by a president known as a legalist who respected Indian treaties, T. D. Allman observes that "the American national experience of genocidal slaughter of the Indian" is "nearly nonexistent." "They were not human beings; they were only obstacles to the inexorable triumph of American virtue, who must be swept away to make room for a new reality of American freedom." The consensus has been that "our own solemnly proclaimed rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness totally superseded the rights of the peoples whose lives, liberties and happiness we were expunging from the face of the earth." The Indians were the first "aggressors" who had to be faced in our celebration of freedom, the definition of "aggressor" being "that we have attacked them," to be followed by Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Nicaraguans and many others. It may be added that U.S. history is hardly unique in this respect, down to the present day.

The sense in which the native population had given "unbiased consent" in this "agreement of soul with soul" was explained further by one of the early American sociologists, Franklin Henry Giddings, at the time when we were obtaining the consent of the Filipinos at the turn of the century. He coined the phrase "consent without consent" to deal with the achievement of the British in extending the "English sacredness of life" and the "requirement of social order" to "racially inferior types." "If in later years," he wrote, the colonized "see and admit that the disputed relation was for the highest interest, it may be reasonably held that authority has been imposed with the consent of the governed"—just as we may say that a young child gives "consent without consent" when its parents prevent it from running into the street.

During a visit to a fine and much-respected college some months ago, I was taken on a tour of the college cathedral and shown the series of stained-glass windows recording the history of the college from the days when it was attacked by Union soldiers to the present. One panel was devoted to the founding of the air force ROTC chapter shortly after the Second World War. It showed a man sitting at a desk signing some document, with an air force officer standing nearby. An American bomber was shown in the background and on a blackboard we read: $E = mc^2$. Though it is difficult to believe at first, the stained-glass window in this cathedral is celebrating the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, what Truman described at the time as "the greatest thing in history."

Not everyone, incidentally, felt quite that way. The distinguished In-

dian jurist Radhabinod Pal, in his dissenting opinion at the Tokyo Tribunal that assessed Japanese war guilt, wrote that "if any indiscriminate destruction of civilian life and property is still illegitimate in warfare, then in the Pacific war, this decision to use the atom bomb is the only near approach to the directives . . . of the Nazi leaders during the Second World War. Nothing like this could be traced to the credit of the present accused." He did not expand on what it implies with regard to war-crimes trials. But such perceptions are remote from the consciousness of the victors, and perhaps we should not be surprised that "the greatest thing in history" merits a stained-glass window in the cathedral of a college dedicated to humane values and religious devotion.

The process of creating and entrenching highly selective, reshaped or completely fabricated memories of the past is what we call "indoctrination" or "propaganda" when it is conducted by official enemies, and "education," "moral instruction" or "character building," when we do it ourselves. It is a valuable mechanism of control, since it effectively blocks any understanding of what is happening in the world. One crucial goal of successful education is to deflect attention elsewhere—say, to Vietnam, or Central America, or the Middle East, where our problems allegedly lie—and away from our own institutions and their systematic functioning and behavior, the real source of a great deal of the violence and suffering in the world. It is crucially important to prevent understanding and to divert attention from the sources of our own conduct, so that elite groups can act without popular constraints to achieve their goals—which are called "the national interest" in academic theology.

The importance of blocking understanding, and the great successes that have been achieved, are very well illustrated in current affairs. A few days ago, the World Court rejected the American contention that it had no jurisdiction with regard to the Nicaraguan complaint concerning U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. The issue arose last April, when Nicaragua brought to the Court its charge that the United States was mining its harbors and attacking its territory. With exquisite timing, President Reagan chose that very day to issue a Presidential Proclamation designating May 1 as "Law Day 1984." He hailed our "200-year-old partnership between law and liberty," adding that without law, there can be only "chaos and disorder." The day before, as part of his tribute to the rule of law, he had announced that the United States would not recognize any decision of the World Court.

These events aroused much anger. In the *New York Times*, Anthony Lewis decried Reagan's "failure to understand what the rule of law has meant to this country." He observed that Senator Moynihan had "made the point with great power" in a law school address in which he criticized the Reagan administration for "forsaking our centuries-old commitment

to the idea of law in the conduct of nations" and for its "mysterious collective amnesia," its "losing the memory that there once was such a commitment." Our U.N. delegation, Moynihan said, "does not know the history of our country."

Unfortunately it is Ronald Reagan and Jeane Kirkpatrick who understand what the rule of law has meant to this country, and it is Anthony Lewis and Senator Moynihan who are suffering from a mysterious collective amnesia. The case they are discussing is a good example. It happened before, in almost exactly the same way. The story is told by Walter LaFeber, in his valuable book *Inevitable Revolutions*. In 1907, a Central American Court of Justice was established at the initiative of Washington to adjudicate conflicts among the states of the region. "Within nine years," LaFeber observes, "the institution was hollow because twice—in 1912 and 1916—the United States refused to recognize Court decisions that went against its interests in Nicaragua." In 1912, the court condemned U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua; Washington simply ignored the ruling. In 1916, the Court upheld a Costa Rican claim that U.S. actions in Nicaragua infringed its rights, and again the United States simply disregarded the decision, effectively destroying the Court. "In establishing its control over Central America," LaFeber comments, "the United States killed the institution it had helped create to bring Central America together." A final blow was administered in 1922 when Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes convened a conference of Central American states in Washington. LaFeber comments:

The occasion was not to be a replay of the 1907 conference, when the Central Americans had come to their own conclusions. Now the United States, with the help of faithful (and marine occupied) Nicaragua, set the agenda, which included the admonition that no one mention the late, unlamented Central American Court.

There are, to be sure, differences between the earlier case and today's, though not those that our current historical amnesia would suggest. Now Nicaragua is not under marine occupation—merely under military attack by a U.S. mercenary army called "freedom fighters"; and the United States is not powerful enough simply to disband the World Court.

It is, incidentally, a little difficult to believe that Senator Moynihan was serious in his reference to our commitment to the rule of law; more likely these remarks were produced with tongue in cheek, or intended as an example of his Irish wit. In his memoir of his tenure as U.N. ambassador, Moynihan gives graphic examples of this commitment to the rule of law, particularly to the United Nations charter, which forbids the use of force in international affairs. Thus when Indonesia invaded East Timor in

1975, illegally using U.S. arms and obviously with the blessing of the United States, Moynihan dedicated his efforts to blocking any moves by the United Nations to deter the crime of aggression—for which people were hanged at Nuremberg—and takes great pride in his success in this endeavor, which, as he observes, led to a huge massacre. It is of some interest that his pride in his complicity in war crimes does not affect his reputation as a leading advocate of the sanctity of the rule of law among American liberals.

The World Court incident provides some lessons concerning the system of indoctrination. It is easy enough to make fun of Ronald Reagan, but that is itself a diversion from the main point. Violence, deceit, and lawlessness are natural functions of the state, any state. What is important in the present context is the contribution of the harshest critics (within the mainstream) to reinforcing the system of indoctrination, of which they themselves are victims—as is the norm for the educated classes, who are typically the most profoundly indoctrinated and in a deep sense the most ignorant group, the victims as well as the purveyors of the doctrines of the faith. The great achievement of the critics is to prevent the realization that what is happening today is not some departure from our historical ideals and practice, to be attributed to the personal failings of this or that individual. Rather, it is the systematic expression of the way our institutions function and will continue to function unless impeded by an aroused public that comes to understand their nature and their true history—exactly what our educational institutions must prevent if they are to fulfill *their* function, namely, to serve power and privilege.

A useful rule of thumb is this: If you want to learn something about the propaganda system, have a close look at the critics and their tacit assumptions. These typically constitute the doctrines of the state religion.

Let's take another current case. The justification for our attack against Nicaragua is that Nicaragua is a Soviet proxy, threatening Mexico, ultimately the United States itself. It is worth emphasizing that the basic assumptions of this doctrinal system extend across the political spectrum. Consider the tale of the Russian MIGs allegedly sent to Nicaragua, a fable nicely timed to divert attention from the Nicaraguan elections that we had sought to undermine and from the fact that we are sending advanced aircraft to El Salvador to facilitate the massacre of peasants; this is now conducted with improved efficiency thanks to the direct participation of U.S. military forces based in our Honduran and Panamanian sanctuaries, who coordinate bombing strikes on villages and fleeing peasants while we debate the profound question whether Nicaragua is obtaining aircraft that might enable it to defend itself against an attack by our mercenary army, not "guerrillas," but rather a well-equipped military force that in some respects outmatches the army of Nicaragua in the level and quality of its armaments.

When the neatly timed MIG story was leaked by the administration, thus setting the framework for further discussion of the issues within the ideological system, senatorial doves made it clear that if MIGs were indeed sent, then we have a right to bomb Nicaragua because of the threat they pose to us. Senator Dodd stated that the United States would "have to go in and take (them) out—you'd have to bomb the crates." Senator Tsongas added:

You just could not allow them to put those MIGs together, because the MIGs are not only capable vis-à-vis El Salvador and Honduras, they're also capable against the United States and Nicaraguans knew for a long time that they could not do this without violating a clear sense of the sort of U.S. sphere of influence. [*Boston Globe*, November 9, 1984]

Let us put aside the quaint idea that the Nicaraguans would be "escalating" illegitimately by obtaining aircraft to defend themselves against our military attacks or that they might attack Honduras and El Salvador—while the United States stands by, a pitiful helpless giant, as Nixon once whined. Consider the threat that Nicaragua poses to us. By these standards, the USSR has a right to bomb Denmark, which is no less a threat to them than Nicaragua is to us—a far greater threat, in fact, because it is part of a hostile military alliance of great power—and it surely has the right to bomb Turkey, on its border, with its major NATO bases threatening the security of the Soviet Union. Fifty years ago, Hitler warned that Czechoslovakia was a dagger pointed at the heart of Germany, an intolerable threat to its security. By our standards, Hitler appears to have been rather sane. Again, it is the contribution of the critics that is noteworthy.

But let us return to the claim that Nicaragua is a Soviet proxy, threatening Mexico. In 1926, the marines were sent back to Nicaragua, which they had occupied through much of the century, to combat a Bolshevik threat. Then Mexico was a Soviet proxy, threatening Nicaragua, ultimately the United States itself. "Mexico was on trial before the world," President Coolidge proclaimed as he sent the marines to Nicaragua once again, an intervention that led to the establishment of the Somoza dictatorship with its terrorist U.S.-trained National Guard and the killing of the authentic Nicaraguan nationalist Sandino. Note that though the cast of characters has changed, the bottom line remains the same: kill Nicaraguans.

What did we do before we could appeal to the Bolshevik threat? Woodrow Wilson, the great apostle of self-determination, celebrated this doctrine by sending his warriors to invade Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where they reestablished slavery, burned and destroyed villages, tortured and murdered, leaving in Haiti a legacy that remains today in one of the most miserable corners of one of the most miserable parts of the world,

and in the Dominican Republic setting the stage for the Trujillo dictatorship, established after a brutal war of counterinsurgency that has virtually disappeared from American history; the first book dealing with it has just appeared, after sixty years. There were no Bolsheviks then to justify these actions, so we were defending ourselves from the Huns. Marine Commander Thorpe described how he told new marine arrivals "that they were serving their country just as valuably as were their fortunate comrades across the seas, and the war would last long enough to give every man a chance against the Hun in Europe as against the Hun in Santo Domingo." The hand of the Huns was particularly evident in Haiti. Thorpe explained: "Whoever is running this revolution is a wise man; he certainly is getting a lot out of the niggers. . . . It shows the handwork of the German." "If I do a good job of clearing these . . . provinces of insurgents and kill a lot," he added, "it ought to demonstrate I'd be a good German-killer."

In earlier years, we were defending ourselves against other aggressors. When Polk stole a third of Mexico, we were defending ourselves against Mexican "aggression" (initiated well inside Mexican territory); we had to take California to protect ourselves from a possible British threat to do so. The Indian wars were also defensive; the Indians were attacking us from their British and Spanish sanctuaries, so we were compelled to take Florida and the West, with consequences for the native population that are, or should be, well-known. Before that, the doctrine of moralist Cotton Mather sufficed: he expressed his pleasure that "the woods were almost cleared of those pernicious creatures, to make room for a better growth." These, incidentally, were the pernicious creatures who "gave of themselves and their land that this great nation might be born and grow." The job was done so well that we no longer slaughter Indians here, though in areas where the task has not yet been successfully consummated, as in Guatemala, we continue to support massacres that the conservative Church hierarchy calls "genocide," within the "sphere of influence" that we must "defend," according to senatorial doves, just as we have "defended" it—from its own population—so effectively in past years.

Looking at the real history, we see the current attack on Nicaragua in a perspective different from the conventional one and we can come to understand its causes in the normal and essentially invariant functioning of our own institutions. And we can also come to understand the brainwashing techniques employed to conceal what is happening before our eyes. It is a relatively simple exercise to refute the administration case, though one that must be constantly undertaken in a highly indoctrinated society where elementary truths are easily buried. What is more to the point is to recognize that this case is just another contribution to familiar

historical fraud, while the events themselves are just another chapter in a shameful and sordid history, concealed from us by a contrived history framed in terms of such ideals as the rule of law, Wilsonian principles of self-determination, democracy and human rights, and others like them, which bear to American history the relation of irrelevance, under an interpretation that is rather too charitable.*

In their important study *Demonstration Elections*, Edward Herman and Frank Brodhead include a photograph of Notre Dame President Theodore Hesburgh contemplating a ballot box while he was serving as an observer during the 1982 election in El Salvador, much heralded as a step toward something that we call "democracy." The caption reads: "The Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, 'observing' the Salvadoran election, but not 'seeing' the transparent voting box," plainly shown in the photograph. One of the central tasks of a successful educational system is to endow its victims with the capacity to observe, but not to see, a capacity that is the hallmark of the "responsible intellectual."

There did, of course, develop a kind of opposition to the Vietnam War in the mainstream, but it was overwhelmingly "pragmatic," as the critics characterized it with considerable self-adulation, distinguishing themselves from the "emotional" or "irresponsible" opponents who objected to the war on principled grounds. The "pragmatic" opponents argued that the war could not be won at an acceptable cost, or that there was unclarity about goals, or duplicity, or errors in execution. On similar grounds, the German general staff was no doubt critical of Hitler after Stalingrad. Public attitudes, incidentally, were rather different. As recently as 1982, over 70 percent of the population held that the war was "fundamentally wrong and immoral," not merely a "mistake," a position held by far fewer "opinion leaders" and by virtually none of the articulate intelligentsia, even at the height of opposition to the war in 1970.

How has this remarkable subservience to the doctrinal system been achieved? It is not that the facts were unavailable, as is sometimes the case. The devastating bombing of northern Laos and the 1969 bombing and other attacks against Cambodia were suppressed by the media, a fact that is suppressed within the mainstream until today (these are called "secret wars," meaning that the government kept the attack secret—as it did, with the complicity of the media). But in the case of the American attack against South Vietnam, sufficient facts were always available. They were observed, but not seen.

*Following this paragraph, material has been deleted from the original text.

American scholarship is particularly remarkable. The official historian of the Kennedy administration, Arthur Schlesinger, regarded as a leading dove, does indeed refer to aggression in 1962: "1962 had not been a bad year," he writes in his history *A Thousand Days*; "aggression [was] checked in Vietnam." That is, the year in which the United States undertook direct aggression against South Vietnam was the year in which aggression was *checked* in Vietnam. Orwell would have been impressed. Another respected figure in the liberal pantheon, Adlai Stevenson, intoned at the United Nations that in Vietnam we were combating "internal aggression," another phrase that Orwell would have admired; that is, we were combating aggression by the Vietnamese against us in Vietnam, just as we had combated aggression by the Mexicans against us in Mexico a century earlier. We had done the same in Greece in the late 1940s, Stevenson went on to explain, intervening to protect Greece from "the aggressors" who had "gained control of most of the country," these "aggressors" being the Greeks who had led the anti-Nazi resistance and who we succeeded in removing with an impressive display of massacre, torture, expulsion, and general violence, in favor of the Nazi collaborators of our choice. The analogy was, in fact, more apt than Stevenson—apparently a very ignorant man—was likely to have known. As always, the American posture is defensive, even as we invade a country halfway around the world after having failed to destroy the political opposition by large-scale violence and terror.

A closer look at the debate that did develop over the Vietnam War provides some lessons about the mechanisms of indoctrination. The debate pitted the hawks against the doves. The hawks were those, like journalist Joseph Alsop, who felt that with a sufficient exercise of violence we could succeed in our aims. The doves felt that this was unlikely, although, as Arthur Schlesinger explained, "We all pray that Mr. Alsop will be right," and "we may all be saluting the wisdom and statesmanship of the American government" if the U.S. succeeds (contrary to his expectations) in a war policy that was turning Vietnam into "a land of ruin and wreck." It was this book that established Schlesinger as a leading war opponent, in the words of Leslie Gelb.

It is, of course, immediately evident that there is a possible position omitted from the fierce debate between the hawks and the doves, which allegedly tore the country apart during these trying years: namely, the position of the peace movement, a position in fact shared by the large majority of citizens as recently as 1982: the war was not merely a "mistake," as the official doves allege, but was "fundamentally wrong and immoral." To put it plainly: war crimes, including the crime of launching aggressive war, are wrong, even if they succeed in their "noble" aims. This position does not enter the debate, even to be refuted; it is unthinkable, within the ideological mainstream.

It should be emphasized that departures from orthodoxy were very rare among the articulate intelligentsia. Few journalists were more critical of the war than Anthony Lewis, who summed up his attitude in 1975 by explaining that the war began with "blundering efforts to do good," though by 1969 (1969!) it was clear that it was a "disastrous mistake." In mainstream academic circles, it would have been difficult to find a more committed critic of the war than John King Fairbank of Harvard, the dean of American Asian scholars, who was considered so extreme as to be a "Comsymp" or worse in McCarthyite terminology. Fairbank gave the presidential address to the American Historical Association in December 1968, a year after the Tet offensive had converted most of the corporate elite and other top planning circles to dovedom. He was predictably critical of the Vietnam War, in these terms: this is "an age when we get our power politics overextended into foreign disasters like Vietnam mainly through an excess of righteousness and disinterested benevolence"; "Our role in defending the South after 1965" was based on analytic errors, so that "we had great trouble in convincing ourselves that it had a purpose worthy of the effort." The doves felt that the war was "a hopeless cause," we learn from Anthony Lake, a leading dove who resigned from the government in protest against the Cambodia invasion. All agree that it was a "failed crusade," "noble" but "illusory," and undertaken with the "loftiest intentions," as Stanley Karnow puts it in his best-selling companion volume to the Public Broadcasting System television series, highly regarded for its critical candor. Those who do not appreciate these self-evident truths, or who maintain the curious view that they should be supported by some evidence, simply demonstrate thereby that they are emotional and irresponsible ideologues, or perhaps outright Communists. Or more accurately, their odd views cannot be heard; they are outside the spectrum of thinkable thought. Few dictators can boast of such utter conformity to Higher Truths.

All of this illustrates very well the genius of democratic systems of thought control, which differ markedly from totalitarian practice. Those who rule by violence tend to be "behaviorist" in their outlook. What people may think is not terribly important; what counts is what they do. They must obey, and this obedience is secured by force. The penalties for disobedience vary depending on the characteristics of the state. In the USSR today, the penalties may be psychiatric torture, or exile, or prison, under harsh and grim conditions. In a typical U.S. dependency such as El Salvador, the dissident is likely to be found in a ditch, decapitated after hideous torture; and when a sufficient number are dispatched, we can even have elections in which people march toward democracy by rejecting the Nazi-like D'Aubuisson in favor of Duarte, who presided over one of the great mass murders of the modern period (the necessary prerequisite to democratic elections, which obviously cannot proceed while popu-

lar organizations still function), and his minister of defense, Vides Casanova, who explained in 1980 that the country had survived the massacre of 30,000 peasants in the 1932 *Matanza*, and "today, the armed forces are prepared to kill 200,000-300,000, if that's what it takes to stop a Communist takeover."

Democratic systems are quite different. It is necessary to control not only what people do, but also what they think. Since the state lacks the capacity to ensure obedience by force, thought can lead to action and therefore the threat to order must be excised at the source. It is necessary to establish a framework for possible thought that is constrained within the principles of the state religion. These need not be asserted; it is better that they be presupposed, as the unstated framework for thinkable thought. The critics reinforce this system by tacitly accepting these doctrines, and confining their critique to tactical questions that arise within them. To achieve respectability, to be admitted to the debate, they must accept without question or inquiry the fundamental doctrine that the state is benevolent, governed by the loftiest intentions, adopting a defensive stance, not an actor in world affairs but only reacting to the crimes of others, sometimes unwisely because of personal failures, naiveté, the complexity of history or an inability to comprehend the evil nature of our enemies. If even the harshest critics tacitly adopt these premises, then, the ordinary person may ask, who am I to disagree? The more intensely the debate rages between hawks and doves, the more firmly and effectively the doctrines of the state religion are established. It is because of their notable contribution to thought control that the critics are tolerated, indeed honored—that is, those who play by the rules.

This is a system of thought control that was not perceived by Orwell, and is never understood by dictators who fail to comprehend the utility for indoctrination of permitting a class of critics who denounce the errors and failings of the leadership while tacitly adopting the crucial premises of the state religion.

These distinctions between totalitarian and democratic systems of thought control are only rough first approximations. In fact, even a totalitarian state must be concerned about popular attitudes and understanding, and in a democracy, it is the politically active segments of the population, the more educated and privileged, who are of prime concern. This is obvious in the United States, where the poor tend not even to vote, and more significant forms of political participation—the design and formulation of political programs, candidate selection, the requisite material support, educational efforts or propaganda—are the domain of relatively narrow privileged elites. Three-quarters of the population may support a nuclear freeze, and some of them may even know that this is official Soviet policy as well, but that has no impact on the policy of massive government intervention to subsidize high-technology industry

through a state-guaranteed market for armaments, since no serious alternative is available in the system of political economy. Mass popular resistance to military aggression does serve as an impediment to the planners, as has been evident in the last few years with regard to Central America. Just this morning, the press reported a memorandum written by Secretary of Defense McNamara in May 1967, warning that escalation of the Vietnam War might "polarize opinion to the extent that 'doves' in the U.S. will get out of hand—massive refusals to serve, or to fight, or to cooperate, or worse?" The "doves" that concerned him here are not the official "doves" of the doctrinal system, few of whom were doves of any stripe at the time, but rather the general population. But such resistance, while sometimes effective in raising the costs of state violence, is of limited efficacy as long as it is not based on understanding of the forces at work and the reasons for their systematic behavior, and it tends to dissipate as quickly as it arises. At the same time, a frightened and insecure populace, trained to believe that Russian demons and Third World hordes are poised to take everything they have, is susceptible to jingoist fanaticism. This was shown dramatically by the popular response to the Grenada invasion. The United States is again "standing tall," Reagan proclaimed, after 6,000 elite troops managed to overcome the resistance of a handful of Cuban military men and a few Grenadan militiamen, winning 8,700 medals for their valor, and eliciting a reaction here that cannot fail to awaken memories of other great powers that won cheap victories not too many years ago.

The more subtle methods of indoctrination just illustrated, are considerably more significant than outright lying or suppression of unwanted fact, though the latter are also common enough. Examples are legion.

Consider, for example, the current debate as to whether there is a "symmetry" between El Salvador and Nicaragua in that in each case rebels supported from abroad are attempting to overthrow the government. The administration claims that in one case the rebels are "freedom fighters" and the government is an illegitimate tyranny, while in the other case the rebels are terrorists and the government is a still somewhat flawed democracy. The critics question whether Nicaragua is really supporting the guerrillas in El Salvador or whether Nicaragua has already succumbed to totalitarianism.

Lost in the debate is a more striking symmetry. In each country, there is a terrorist military force that is massacring civilians, and in each country we support that force: the government of El Salvador, and the *contras*. That this has been true in El Salvador, particularly since the Carter administration undertook to destroy the popular organizations that had developed during the 1970s, is not in doubt. That the same is true in Nicaragua is also evident, though here we must turn to the foreign press, where we can read of "the *contras*' litany of destruction" as they murder,

rape, mutilate, torture and brutalize the civilian population that falls within their clutches, primary targets being health and education workers and peasants in cooperatives (Jonathan Steele and Tony Jenkins, in the London *Guardian*; Marian Wilkinson, in the *National Times*, Australia; and many other sources where ample details are provided). The top commander of the "Democratic Force," Adolfo Calero, is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that "there is no line at all, not even a fine line, between a civilian farm owned by the Government and a Sandinista military outpost," and an occasional report indicates the consequences of these assumptions, but press coverage here is muted and sporadic, devoted to more significant matters, such as opposition to the draft (in Nicaragua).

This is the real "symmetry" between Nicaragua and El Salvador. Its significance is lost as we debate the accuracy of the government case, meanwhile continuing to labor under the mysterious collective amnesia that prevents us from seeing that there is little here that is new, and from understanding why this should be so.

Or to turn to another part of the world, consider what is universally called the "peace process" in the Middle East, referring to the Camp David agreements. Israeli-run polls reveal that the population of the territories under Israeli military occupation overwhelmingly oppose the "peace process," regarding it as detrimental to their interests. Why should this be so? Surely of all the people in the region, they are among those who must be yearning the most for peace. But no journalist seems to have inquired into this strange paradox.

The problem is easily solved. The "peace process," as was evident at the time and should be transparent in retrospect, was designed in such a way as to remove the major Arab military force, Egypt, from the conflict, so that Israel would then be free, with a huge and rapidly-expanding U.S. subsidy, to intensify settlement and repression in the conquered territories and to attack its northern neighbor—exactly as it did, at once and unremittingly since. It is hardly a cause for wonder that the victims of the "peace process" overwhelmingly condemn and reject it, though it is perhaps a little surprising that such elementary truths, obvious enough at the outset, cannot be seen even today. Meanwhile, we must continue to support the "peace process." Who can be opposed to peace?

In this case, too, it would be salutary to overcome our mysterious collective amnesia about the facts of recent history. There is no time here to review the diplomatic record, but anyone who troubles to do so will quickly learn that there have been possibilities for peace with a modicum of justice for about fifteen years, blocked in every instance by U.S.-Israeli rejectionism. In the early 1970s, this rejectionist stance was so extreme as to block even Arab initiatives (by Egypt and Jordan) to attain a general peace settlement that entirely ignored Palestinian national rights. Since

the international consensus shifted to adherence to a two-state settlement a decade ago, any such possibility has consistently been barred by the United States and Israel, which persist in rejecting any claim by the indigenous population to the rights that are accorded without question to the Jewish settlers who largely displaced them, including the right to national self-determination somewhere within their former home. Articulate American opinion lauds this stance, urging the Palestinians to accept the Labor party program that denies them any national rights and regards them as having "no role to play" in any settlement (Labor dove Abba Eban). There is no protest here, or even mere reporting of the facts, when the U.S. government blocks a U.N. peace initiative, stating that it will accept only negotiations "among the parties directly concerned with the Arab-Israeli dispute," crucially excluding the Palestinians, who are not one of these parties (January 1984). Analogous rejectionist attitudes on the part of Libya and the minority PLO Rejection Front are condemned here as racist and extremist; the quite comparable U.S.-Israeli stance, obviously racist in essence, is considered the soul of moderation.

The actual record has been obscured, denied, even inverted here in one of the most successful exercises in agitprop in modern history. I reviewed the record up to mid-1983 in a recent book (*The Fateful Triangle*). It continues since, without change. To mention only one recent case, last April and May Yasser Arafat made a series of proposals in statements published in France and England in the mainstream press and in speeches in Greece and Asia. He called explicitly for direct negotiations with Israel under U.N. auspices and for "mutual recognition of two states," Israel and a Palestinian state; this has long been the basic form of the international consensus, though it is excluded by the rejectionist "peace process." Israel immediately rejected the offer, and the United States simply ignored it. Media coverage in the United States followed an interesting pattern. The national press—the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*—did not report the facts at all. The local "quality press" (the *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*) did report the basic facts, though they were obscured and quickly forgotten, to be replaced by familiar diatribes about Palestinian extremism. In the *San Francisco Examiner*, reputed to be one of the worst papers in any major city, a UPI story giving the basic facts appeared on the front page, under a full-page inch-high headline reading "Arafat to Israel: Let's Talk." A rational conclusion would be that the less sophisticated press simply does not understand what facts must be suppressed as inconsistent with the party line.*

*Following this paragraph, material has been deleted from the original essay.