

**Richard Grossman Letter on
"Antigloblism's Jewish Problem" by Mark Strauss
co-founder, Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy (POCLAD)**

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Dear X,

Thanks for sending the *Foreign Policy* rag. I read "Antiglobalism's Jewish Problem" by Mark Strauss [Nov-Dec 2003] (identified as senior editor of this magazine). My reaction? Well, maybe there is a problem, but *this* article -- based upon argument by assertion, guilt by association, and illogic building upon illogic -- doesn't make the case. I'm returning the magazine so you can take another look if you want.

Strauss writes trash. Junk. His linking of "Brownshirt and Bierkenstock crowds" is manufactured sensationalism. A crass but facile manipulator, Strauss reports incidents of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish talk around the world, then by implication, suggestion and leaping association, convicts the "antiglobalization movement."

Desecration of synagogues and Jewish schools in Europe is one thing -- and a despicable thing. But for Strauss, and this magazine published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to link these anti-Semitic deeds to the millions and millions of people in many countries resisting the tyrannies of corporations and governments (while they are no doubt also resisting all sorts of anti-democratic evils in their own communities and working to bridge religious, nationality and "single-issue" divides) is contrived and forced.

Strauss, of course, never defines what he means by "globalization." And he does not allow opponents of "globalization" to speak for themselves. But all through the article it is clear that he assumes that whatever globalization is, it is good. He then makes sure to protect himself by conceding that most people opposing whatever globalization is may not be not anti-Semitic. But, he goes on to say, they are nonetheless quite guilty:

The antiglobalization movement is, however, somewhat culpable. [1] It isn't inherently anti-Semitic, yet it helps enable anti-Semitism by peddling conspiracy theories. (p. 63)

So silly.

In its eyes, globalization is less a process than a plot hatched behind closed doors by a handful of unaccountable bureaucracies and corporations. Underlying the movement's humanistic goals of universal social justice is a current of fear mongering -- the IMF, the WTO, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) are portrayed not just as exploiters of the developing world, but as supranational instruments to undermine **our**

sovereignty. (p. 63)

Strauss doesn't define this globalization "process." But he does declare that opposition to the **institutions** forcing whatever globalization is upon peoples and nations is irrational . . . and given their bedfellowship with anti-Semites, obviously and dastardly anti-Jewish. He does not acknowledge, much less respond to, articulate critiques of these institutions -- or to critiques of "globalization" -- which diverse people from many parts of the globe have been putting forward now for quite some time.

As for his "fear mongering:" -- well, he does not mention the greatest fear-monger of them all, G. W. Bush.

But he is eager to attack Tony Clarke's and Maude Barlow's book on the MAI [*MAI and the Threat to American Freedom*, 1998]. He quotes:

"Over the past twenty-five years, corporations and the state seem to have forged a new political alliance that allows corporations to gain more and more control over governance. This new 'corporate rule' poses a fundamental threat to the rights and democratic freedoms of all people."
(p. 63)

Wow! That's far-out stuff. Unbelievable! Incredulous! Preposterous! Unthinkable! Unimaginable! Obviously, Clarke and Barlow are screaming anti-Semites!

Would it be asking too much of Strauss to address the ideas which Tony and Maude put forth here (ideas which they develop in detail in this and other books) . . . and to refute this cabal of Canadians with facts and logic, if he can?

Here is another example of alleging links without substantiation:

"The browns and greens are not simply plagiarizing one another's ideas. They're frequently reading from the same page . . . anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist David Icke was advertised in lefty magazines . . . The British Fascist Party includes among its list of recommended readings the works of left-wing antiglobalists George Monbiot and Noam Chomsky . . ." (p. 64)

What will Strauss do when HIS articles are found in the Burmese generals' bunker?

Then Strauss slouches on to Israel. Building on his penchant for sweeping generalizations and manipulating causality without evidence, he tosses all critics of this Israeli government's policies into one anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic, anti-Israel turgid vat:

"The greens and the browns" [Who? From where? **All** greens and **all** browns everywhere?] "share another common cause: opposition to Israel." (p. 65) . . . "Israel enjoys a unique pariah status among the antiglobalization movement because it is viewed as the world's sole remaining colonialist state -- an exploitative, capitalist enclave created by Western powers in the heart of the developing world." (p. 65)

What planet is Strauss on -- Israel as the *only* colonialist state in the world? It would have been nice if Strauss had addressed just a few of the issues which Israel's diverse critics have been exploring -- including dyed-in-the-wool Jewish Israeli critics **within Israel**. But he chose not to do so.

Again, Strauss pulls back to cover his ass: "Opposing the policies of the Israeli government does not make the new left anti-Semitic. But a movement campaigning for global social justice makes a mockery of itself by singling out just the Jewish state for condemnation." (p. 65) How about facts, Mr. Strauss? Alas, there is no shortage of Israeli government acts which diverse decent people -- including a Jew or two, including Jewish warriors in the IDF -- have deplored, criticized and lamented. And alas, alas, there is quite a long list of states which the same decent people are fingering for condemnation these days, starting with the USA, Russia, China and the various dictatorships which governments and corporations of these nations have been supporting and enabling over generations.

In *my* Jewish-ass opinion, the USA and Israel are now fascist states. So is Russia: what it has done to Chechnya is pure murder. Our country has long been the number one arms seller to and invader of the world. It's all pretty sick: if the USSR still existed, Bush would have declared that Chechans are "freedom fighters" and the CIA would have been giving Chechans billions of dollars and the latest weapons of moderate mass destruction to resist Soviet and Russian genocide.

Ah, perspective. Ah, assumptions. Ah, definitions (or lack of same).

On p. 66, Strauss deliberately links what he calls the "resurgence of anti-Semitic imagery" with the "backlash" (whatever *that* is) against globalization (we still have not been told what *that* is). And then, poor dear, he asserts that the "survival of Jewish civilization . . . undermines the claim that globalization creates a homogenized world that destroys local cultures." Like all his other points, this is riddled with fallacy, illogic and limp argument-by-assertion. First, as we recall, he has not defined "globalization." Then, he implies that one criticism of globalization is that it homogenizes the world. But, he writes, because Jews in the diaspora for 2000 years disprove this claim-from-nowhere, there can be no basis to this homogenization notion.[2]

There we have it! Strauss is Mr. Straw Earthling Extraordinaire!

I took a look at the other article you mentioned, the "memorandum" from Daniel Litvin to Kofi Annan. The topic: "Raising Human Rights Standards in the Private Sector," ["Memo: A Strategy for Business and Human Rights", *Foreign Policy*, Nov/Dec 2003; Litvin is described by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as a "corporate ethicist" --ratitor] that is, within corporations.

This memo is just basic, run-of-the-mill corporate pre-emption propaganda -- and tired old propaganda at that. Here are a few really cool lines:

"Many human rights controversies involving multinationals can be attributed to the lack of a clear dividing line between the responsibilities of a company and a host government." (p. 69)

Oh, there's nothing like passive voice, and substitution of "controversies" for corporate human rights "violations, usurpations and destructions."

"At the root of these problems is the failure of states to protect adequately the rights of citizens." (p. 69)

Mr. Litvin (and Mr. Strauss) should read Tony's and Maude's books to learn that analysts of corporate operations, of the WTO, IMF and World Bank, and of the world's superduper power, have methodically revealed how corporate managers and public officials at home and abroad enable and empower corporations to dictate to host governments and trample upon citizens' most fundamental rights.

If Mr. Litvin and Mr. Strauss would be interested in learning how this routinely takes place here at home in these United States, (and how the process was perfected by the East India Company centuries ago), they can, of course, also read the work of the Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy . They can start with *Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy* and Peter Kellman's *Building Unions*. I will be glad to send them copies.

"High-profile multinationals such as Shell and McDonald's have been vilified in recent years. [Don't we just love that passive voice! -- rg] Surely, it is a source of consternation to them that they are sometimes blamed for problems that are really the responsibilities of a host government and that they have been made symbols of corporate greed and callousness while less familiar firms often get away with worse sins." (p. 71)

You know, X, my mother always told me that our job was to set the standards of behavior for our family, and that while we should do what we could to raise *everyone's* standards, we must restrain others from dragging our standards into the gutter. But then, my mother did not believe in corporate usurpation and ruthless corporate global competition enforced by violence backed by the rule of law.

By the way, over the past decades, global corporations have been creeping deeper and deeper into the United Nations. They (along with our esteemed public servants in Washington DC) helped destroy the UN's dynamic center on multinational corporations. and they continue to inject their tyrannical perniciousness into every nook and cranny of that international gathering.

Thank you for sending the rag. I now know a little more about the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace corporation, and I am, I'm sorry to say, a little sadder.

Peace and Sanity for 2004.

In Solidarity,

PS: I'll send a copy of the articles, plus this letter, to Tony Clarke up in Ottawa. Also, maybe you can write to NPR and express your distress that it provides junk like FP as membership premiums. I'm sure you can suggest less trashy more worthy premiums to the good NPR folks.

1. my little dictionary says this means "deserving of blame"
2. There are plenty of Jews in these United States and in other lands who have over-identified with -- and been complicit with -- a steady flow of tyrannical, despotic, autocratic, oppressive, dominating, ironfisted, browbeating, bullying, cowardly, ignoble, ignominious, anti-democratic, totalitarian, devilish, thieving, tortuous and decidedly unfunny non-Jews. So Strauss' allegation that Jewish civilization has survived 2000 years of diaspora without being sullied is plainly false.

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