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American Jewish History, Volume 105, Numbers 1/2, January/April
2021, pp. 25-48 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

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The Pre-History of American Holocaust Denial

John P. Jackson, Jr.

Most histories of American Holocaust denial begin with the founding of the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) and its journal, *Journal of Historical Review* (JHR) in 1980. According to its first director, David McCalden, the IHR would be an “anti-Holocaust organization” designed “to combat Holocaust propaganda by means of publishing books, a regular magazine and pamphlets, and by means of academic conferences.” Instead, I take the IHR’s founding as the endpoint of my history of American Holocaust denial and sketch the network of early Holocaust deniers that led to the formation of the Institute. Both the Institute and the *Journal* owed their existence to the most important organizer of the antisemitic right, Willis Carto (1926-2014). By examining Carto and his collaborative circle, Holocaust denial, far from being the sole province of the extreme antisemitic right was often embraced by the mainstream right wing of American politics, for its own purposes, especially those who identified themselves as libertarians. Carto was tangential to the origins of American Holocaust denial, but he appears as sort of a bellwether: always at the margins of the story, approving of the work done by much more respectable figures in the American right in putting forward the Holocaust-denial narrative.¹

ON HOLOCAUST DENIAL, ANTISEMITISM, AND THE AMERICAN RIGHT

Recent historiography on the American right calls into question the accuracy and usefulness of distinctions between the “fringe” and “mainstream” during the decades between the end of World War II and the founding of the IHR in 1980. In these years, the American right wing was inchoate, characterized by many interlocking networks of activists, writers, politicians, and broadcasters; my focus is on those networks rather than any specific taxonomy of conservative thought. The figures

1. McCalden to Austin J. App, February 26, 1979, box 22, Austin J. App Papers, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. For background on Carto, see, George Michael, *Willis Carto and the American Far Right* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008); Frank P. Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right* (Westport: Greenwood, 1985); Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009).

central to my study formed a *collaborative circle*. Lacking formal institutional support, they were bound together by ties of friendship or at least professional respect. They believed their work rebelled against the “court historians” who kept tight controls on the official narrative of World War II. Harry Elmer Barnes (1889–1968) served as the more-or-less official gatekeeper for the group: a generation older and far more established and connected than the younger men, he tried to keep a close watch on what they had and had not published. Members of this informal group—though they might be seen as “fringe”—all had ties of one sort or another to “respectable” conservative writers, organizations, publications, and funding agencies.²

The concept of a collaborative circle clarifies how someone who viewed the world in exclusively racial terms could collaborate with a libertarian committed to ideological individualism which, on the surface, would reject racism and state-centered authoritarianism. A major figure within this circle, libertarian ideologue Murray N. Rothbard (1926–1995), always bristled at the notion that libertarian World War II revisionism revealed authoritarian sympathies: “Libertarian Revisionists, have been continually accused of being tools or sympathizers of the Kaiser, of the Nazis, or of the Communists,” he wrote, a ridiculous charge, he claimed, given the “imbecility of thinking for one moment that a libertarian can really be a Nazi or a Communist.” Yet, the history of Holocaust denial in the United States shows that self-proclaimed libertarians like Rothbard worked closely with antisemitic writers in developing an isolationist account of World War II. For example, Rothbard was on a first-name basis with Willis Carto as early as 1956, telling Carto that his antisemitic newsletter, *Right* was “doing a fine job!” and how impressed Rothbard was that Carto was publishing the work of Charles Smith, editor of *Truth Seeker: A Journal for Reasoners and Racists*.³

2. For work that blurs any distinction between the “respectable” and “fringe” right, see, Lawrence B. Glickman, *Free Enterprise. An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019); Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); and David Austin Walsh, “The Right-Wing Popular Front: The Far Right and American Conservatism in the 1950s,” *Journal of American History* 107, no. 2 (2020): 411–32. The view of “entangled” history was explicated in a different context by Jürgen Kocka, “Comparison and Beyond,” *History and Theory* 42, no. 1 (2003): 39–44. On the concept of collaborative circles, see Michael P. Farrell, *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics & Creative Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), and Evelyn L. Forget and Craufurd D. Goodwin, “Intellectual Communities in the History of Economics,” *History of Political Economy* 43, no. 1 (2011): 1–23.

3. Murray N. Rothbard, “Revisionism and Libertarianism,” *Libertarian Forum* 9, no. 2 (1976): 6; Rothbard to Carto, February 21, 1957, <https://williscarto.org/correspondence/rothbard-correspondence>. On Smith’s background see John P. Jackson, Jr., *Science for Segregation: Race, Law, and the Case against Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 55–65.

American Holocaust denial grew from political circumstances unique to the United States, specifically the American right's rejection of both Roosevelt's New Deal and America's entry into World War II. In the postwar United States, advocates of this view called themselves "World War II revisionists." The leading revisionist of this school, Harry Elmer Barnes argued that the rejection of the New Deal is "the very cornerstone of Revisionism in its American aspects. It is the basis of all leading Revisionist books." Libertarian historian Brian Doherty noted "World War II revisionism fit snugly with the anti-New Deal, anti-regimentation attitudes that defined the old right and shaded over into postwar libertarianism. Roosevelt sneaking us into war was all of a piece with his creation of unconstitutional agencies to institute his plan for overall regimentation of the U.S. economy and his court-packing scheme to make sure no other branch of government would stop it." The argument of the World War II revisionists followed this trajectory: The country was firmly against getting involved in World War II. Roosevelt desperately wanted to save his faltering New Deal. Roosevelt either allowed or planned the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to involve the country in the European war. Nazi atrocities, revisionists claimed, were equaled by Allied atrocities. From this false equivalency, it was but a short step to the denial of the Nazi genocide.⁴

Holocaust denial grew out of a rejection of the New Deal political order and concomitant commitment to isolationism in foreign policy, but it also grew from a commitment to a mode of argumentation: conspiracy rhetoric. In 1964, Richard Hofstadter famously noted that the right was typified by a "paranoid style" of argumentation. Since then, historians, social theorists, and philosophers have noted the prevalence of conspiracy rhetoric throughout American history. "A conspiracy belief," writes Michael Barkun, "is the belief that an organization made up of individuals or groups was or is acting covertly to achieve some malevolent end." A worldwide Jewish conspiracy that controls all significant historical events, what Ruth Wodak calls the "closed antisemitic worldview," was central to the thought of someone like Willis Carto.⁵

4. Barnes to Henry Regnery, February 12, 1957, box 5, Regnery Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, California; Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 64–5. For the conspiratorial nature of the Pearl Harbor revisionism and the undercurrent of antisemitism therein, see, Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 45–81.

5. Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *Harper's Magazine*, November 1, 1964, <https://harpers.org/archive/1964/11/the-paranoid-style-in-american-politics/>; Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*, 2nd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 3. On this definition of conspiracy belief, see also David Coady, "An Introduction to the

But conspiracy rhetoric was not the sole province of those who believed in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy; it was also central to those who feared an overreach of state power. Conspiracy rhetoric is well-suited to those looking to defend the agency of the individual against what they imagine to be the systemic power that denies such agency. Rothbard, about whom we will learn more below, developed his defense of individual agency in a conspiratorial mode throughout his career. Rothbard argued that history, like his own specialty, economics, was a branch of “praxeology”: “The proper theoretical methodology in human affairs...is the axiomatic-deductive method,” he wrote. “The laws deduced by this method are more, not less, firmly grounded than the laws of physics; for since the ultimate causes are known directly as true, their consequents are also true.” Thus, Rothbard set out to write and promote histories consistent with the demands of praxeology. Like Barnes, he opposed the “Court Historians” who denied the nature of man with their histories designed to “integrate everyone into a gray, treacly mass of complacent, middle-of-the-road socialism.” Rothbard grounded his histories in what he took as the axiom of human purposive action, which needed a conspiratorial view of history. “Far from being a paranoid or a determinist,” he wrote, “the conspiracy analyst is a *praxeologist*; that is, he believes that people act purposively, that they make conscious choices to employ means in order to arrive at goals.” In his private correspondence, Rothbard made clear that he believed “the hypothesis that FDR and his Cabinet conspired to drag us into war and conspired to provoke the Japanese into attacking and kept it secret--is one which is as clearly established as almost any historical generalization.” Moreover, in keeping with the fundamental axiom that people always act with a purpose, Rothbard asked, “If Franklin Roosevelt took us into war, why is it so crazy to frame the hypothesis that this very astute manipulator of events did this *purposefully*?” Indeed, conspiracy argument was central to all authors who argued that FDR planned or

Philosophical Debate about Conspiracy Theories,” in *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate*, ed. David Coady (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 1–12. On the prevalence of conspiracy rhetoric in American history, see Michael Butter and Peter Knight, eds. *Routledge Handbook of Conspiracy Theories* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Mark Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Peter Knight, *Conspiracy Nation: The Politics of Paranoia in Postwar America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002); Ruth Wodak, “The Radical Right and Antisemitism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, ed. Jens Rydgren (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 102–37.

allowed the Pearl Harbor attack. The critics of the New Deal and those who held the closed antisemitic worldview were united in this belief.⁶

My history begins by sketching part of what Joseph Fronczak called a “transnational intellectual traffic” of ideas between the rightwing political activists of the United States and Europe. After the war, European fascists, like American isolationists, needed to rehabilitate their cause by minimizing fascists’ responsibility for the war’s outbreak as well as minimizing Nazi atrocities. Conservative publishers were anxious to keep the isolationist cause alive after the war.⁷

THE NAZI TRANSMISSION BELT

One of the best ways of tracing the collaborative circle that brought together antisemites, libertarians, and World War II revisionists is through the mainstream conservative presses, like Devin-Adair, Regnery, and Caxton. These publishers issued the works of both European fascists and American revisionists with the help of leading figures in American revisionist circles. Harry Elmer Barnes, for example, was an immensely influential and well-connected historian. In the 1920s, he was a key figure in revising understandings of World War I by arguing that Germany was not solely to blame for the war. In the 1950s, he was determined to do the same for World War II. His most devoted disciple was James J. Martin (1916–2004), who lacked his mentor’s prestige and reputation but had important contacts in the libertarian right. Both men were also willing to work with fascists.⁸

6. On how conspiracy rhetoric is linked to conceptions of individual agency, see, Timothy Melley, “Agency Panic and the Culture of Conspiracy,” in Knight, *Conspiracy Nation*, 57–80. Murray N. Rothbard, “The Mantle of Science” in *Scientism and Values*, ed. Helmut Schoeck and James W. Wiggins (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1960), 172; Rothbard, “Present Day Court Historians,” *National Review*, September 13, 1958, 186; Rothbard, “The Conspiracy Theory of History Revisited,” *Reason*, April 1977, 39–40. Rothbard developed and taught these views much earlier than this, see Rothbard, “Selected Bibliographical Essay,” box 20, Roy Childs Papers, Hoover Institution; Rothbard to Harry Elmer Barnes, November 14, 1959, James J. Martin Papers, American Heritage Center. On the conspiratorial nature of Pearl Harbor revisionism and the undercurrent of antisemitism therein see Olmsted, *Real Enemies*, 45–81.

7. Joseph Fronczak, “The Fascist Game: Transnational Political Transmission and the Genesis of the U.S. Modern Right,” *Journal of American History* 105, no. 3 (2018): 564. On the relationship between the British and American far right generally, see Paul Jackson and Anton Shekhovtsov, eds., *The Post-War Anglo-American Far Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Much of this view of fascism follows Robert Paxton’s groundbreaking *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

8. An example of his World War I revisionism was Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926). On the continuity of Barnes’s arguments about both wars, see, Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 32–4.

In 1963 Martin wrote to Barnes that “[Devin] Garrity [owner of the Devin-Adair Press] has published or helped distribute via his catalog 2 Villaris, 2 Huddlestons, 2 Veales, and the Bewley. OK. If those seven books haven’t pegged Garrity as a Nazi transmission belt...then nothing short of publishing a new edition of Hess’s letters or a book by George Lincoln Rockwell will.” Martin’s assessment was correct. Fascist Luigi Villari’s books were apologies for Mussolini. Sisley Huddleston collaborated with the Vichy regime during the Nazi occupation. Fascist F.J.P. Veale was associated with Oswald Mosley. Charles Bewley was an Irish ex-diplomat who wrote Nazi propaganda for Goebbels.⁹

Martin missed Devin-Adair’s publication of fascist Russell Grenfell’s *Unconditional Hatred* and Douglas Reed’s antisemitic *Somewhere South of Suez*. Had Martin looked beyond Devin-Adair he would have found more evidence of the “Nazi transmission belt” among American conservative publishers. Henry Regnery published *Politics, Trials, and Errors* by British fascist Maurice Hankey. And libertarian press Caxton Printers published British fascist Percy Huxley-Blythe’s *The East Came West*. Many of these books were subsequently translated by neo-Nazi publishers in Germany. Barnes recommended many of these publications to Regnery or Garrity, arranged subventions through his funder, lumber magnate John Blodgett, or arranged favorable reviews of them.¹⁰

9. Martin to Barnes, July 31, 1963, Martin Papers, American Heritage Center. The books were Luigi Villari, *Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), and Luigi Villari, *The Liberation of Italy, 1943-1947* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1960). On his fascism, see Stephan Corrado Azzi, “The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy,” *Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1993): 187–203. Sisley Huddleston, *France: The Tragic Years, 1939-1947* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1955). On Huddleston, see David Thomson, “Unrepentant Pétainist,” *The Spectator*, December 7, 1951, 796. F.J.P. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism* (Appleton: Nelson, 1953); F.J.P. Veale, *War Crimes Discreetly Veiled*. (New York: Devin-Adair, 1959). Charles Bewley, *Hermann Göring and the Third Reich* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962). On Bewley, see Andreas Roth, *Mr. Bewley in Berlin* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000).

10. Russell Grenfell, *Unconditional Hatred; German War Guilt and the Future of Europe* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1953). On Grenfell, see, Graham Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 132. Reed, *Somewhere South of Suez* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1951). On Reed, see, Richard C. Thurlow, “Anti-Nazi Antisemite: The Case of Douglas Reed,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 18, no. 1 (1984): 23–34. Maurice Hankey, *Politics, Trials, and Errors* (Chicago: Regnery, 1950). On Hankey, see, Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black*, 127–130. Peter Huxley-Blythe, *The East Came West* (Caldwell: The Caxton Printers, 1964). On Huxley-Blythe, see, Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1999), 175–6, 470–1. On German translations, see, Kurt P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 616–23. Regnery, Devin-Adair, and Caxton Printers were the mainstays of conservative publishing in the nineteen-fifties. See, George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1996), 15–6. All three published European fascist writers.

As an example of the sort of work released through this process, British writer Montgomery Belgion in *Victor's Justice*, published by Regnery in 1949, offered what would become staples of Holocaust denial. First, he maintained that any war crimes committed by the Nazis were matched by the Allies since “‘denazification’...is the equivalent of ‘persecution of Jews’ by the German National Socialists in the twelve years before.” Second, Belgion argued that the Nazi goal was Jewish emigration, not extermination, arguing that “under Hitler most if not all Jews who could afford it were, up to the outbreak of war, allowed to emigrate.” Finally, Belgion echoed the Nazi line that also suggested that the Jews deserved their persecution since “from 1918 to 1933 certain Jews—many of them immigrants from the East...waxed rich at the expense of the people in general and obtained in the economic life of the nation a preponderance excessive in respect of their number.”¹¹

And while most American reviewers hated Belgion's book and identified its antisemitism, writers who participated in the revisionist collaborative circle agreed with the book's premises. One mainstream reviewer, for example, noted that “the publication of this book shows a strong lack of good taste, to say the least, perhaps equal to that of the publication of the French book...by Maurice Bardèche,” an antisemitic French writer who was one of the first European Holocaust deniers. Conversely, in Frank Chodorov's journal, *analysis*, which kept the libertarian/isolationist flame alive, James Green agreed with Belgion that it was indisputable “that identical crimes had been perpetuated many times over by the Allies themselves.”¹²

Another illustration of the ways that conservative presses worked with powerful revisionists was evident in the publication of British fascist F.J.P. Veale's *Advance to Barbarism*. Barnes urged Regnery to publish Veale's text because “it is even better than Belgion's admirable book.” Regnery thought the book was “a tour de force of integrity” but turned it down

11. Belgion minimized Nazi persecution of Jews even before the war. See, “Review of *The Yellow Spot*,” *The Criterion*, July 1936, 759–60. On Barnes's involvement with the book, see, Barnes to Regnery, November 4, 1948, box 5, Regnery Papers, Hoover Institution. For the quotations, see, Montgomery Belgion, *Victor's Justice* (Hinsdale: Regnery, 1949): 125–7. On Belgion's antisemitism, see, Jason Harding, *The Criterion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 143–58, and Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black*, 132.

12. Maximilian Koessler, “Review of *Victor's Justice*,” *American Bar Association Journal* 36, no. 1 (1950): 38; James S. Green, “Crimes of the Allies,” *analysis* 5, no. 8 (1949): 3. On Bardèche's antisemitism and Holocaust denial, see Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black*, 109, and Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, 50–2. On the centrality of *analysis* to libertarianism, see, Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 199–202.

because it would compete with Belgion's text. Barnes then arranged a seven-thousand-dollar subvention for a different publisher. Veale minimized Nazi antisemitic violence, arguing it had been discussed "to the point of gross exaggeration" and "the brutality, inhumanity and illegality were about equally distributed between the Nazis and their opponents." Veale pointed to the Morgenthau plan for "pastoralization" of postwar Germany, arguing that it "envisaged and involved decimation and suffering far more prolonged and extensive than that produced by the Nazi campaign of exterminating racial minorities." He did not tell his readers that the Morgenthau plan was never enacted. Veale introduced another staple of Holocaust denial: that the postwar forced relocation of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe "was in some ways even more horrible and cruel than...Hitler's extermination of Jews." Veale's book received glowing reviews from both the libertarian/Christian journal *Faith and Freedom* and the brand-new *National Review*.¹³

American revisionist writers offered identical accounts of the war in books championed by Barnes and published by conservative presses. For example, Barnes helped journalist Freda Uteley write *The High Cost of Vengeance*, which concluded that the "'crimes against humanity' committed by the victors of the second World War...will appear as equal to those committed by the Nazis...[T]he expropriations and expulsion from their homes of millions of people for the sole crime of belonging to the German 'race' was an atrocity comparable with the extermination of the Jews." Uteley's book, published by Regnery, received great, but private, praise from her "good and admired friend" Austin J. App (1902-1984), whom liberal anti-fascists had identified as an "American Naziphile" for his support of the Nazi regime both during and after the war.¹⁴

13. On Veale's fascism, see, Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black*, 201-7; Barnes to Regnery, January 19, 1949, Regnery to Blodgett, December 22, 1950, both letters in Box 5, Regnery Papers. On the subvention, see Barnes to Martin, undated, Martin Papers. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism*, xiv, xv, xvi, 247; Hoffman Nickerson, "Review of Advance to Barbarism," *Faith and Freedom* 5, no. 3 (1954): 23. William T. Couch, "Review of Advance to Barbarism," *National Review*, December 2, 1955, 29.

14. On Barnes's assistance to Uteley, see, Barnes to Regnery, November 4, 1948, box 5, Regnery Papers; Freda Uteley, *High Cost of Vengeance* (Chicago: Regnery, 1949): 13-4; App to Carto, June 29, 1974, box 26, App Papers, American Heritage Center; App to Uteley, September 21, 1950, box 5, Uteley Papers, Hoover Institution. App's account was *History's Most Terrifying Peace* (Tacoma Park: Boniface Press, 1946). "An American Naziphile," *Prevent World War III*, September 1946, 10-11. For accurate historical treatments of the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe, see, Ian Connor, *Refugees and Expellees in Post-War Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Andrew Demshuck, *The Lost German East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

The most notable American to embrace the postwar isolationist cause was Charles Tansill (1890-1964), whose *Back Door to War* was published by Regnery in 1952. Tansill deeply admired the Nazi regime. In a speech broadcast from Germany in 1936, he assured Americans that Hitler was not warlike and simply wanted “an opportunity to work out unhampered a far-reaching domestic program.” He did not mention Nazi antisemitic persecution. Back home, Tansill continued praising Hitler and the Nazis. “Germany Now Strongest Bulwark in Europe against Communism and War, Tansill Says” read a 1936 *Washington Post* headline. Tansill’s reputation as an “outspoken defender of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Regime” eventually led to his dismissal from American University, though he landed on his feet at Georgetown University. After the war, he was involved with the fascist underground through George Sylvester Viereck, who had been imprisoned by the US government during the war as an unregistered agent of the Nazi government, and H. Keith Thompson, a registered agent of West Germany’s neo-Nazi “Socialist Reich Party,” who described Tansill as “my close friend.”¹⁵

In *Back Door*, Tansill reaffirmed his prewar belief that Hitler was a peace-loving leader who had been fooled into invading Poland by the demoniacally clever Roosevelt, who was working with the British to preserve their empire. Tansill touched on Hitler’s antisemitism only fleetingly, portraying it as a mere political tactic rather than the centerpiece of Nazi ideology. Historians scorched the book, but it was deeply admired by the libertarian right. The Reverend Edmond Opitz, a mainstay of the libertarian Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), wrote that Tansill did a “magnificent job.” Young libertarian Gary North wrote to Tansill of the praise heaped on his work at a meeting of the libertarian Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI), telling Tansill that *Back Door* was the final authority on the war. Budding libertarian historian Leonard Liggio chose to attend Georgetown so he could work with Tansill as an undergraduate.¹⁶ Libertarians and revisionists thus found common

15. Charles Tansill, *Back Door to War* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952); Tansill, “To My American Audience,” October 20, 1936, box 3, Tansill Papers, Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa; “Germany Now Strongest Bulwark in Europe Against Communism and War, Tansill Says,” *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1936; “American University Dismisses Professor with Nazi Leanings,” *Washington Post*, March 9, 1937. On Viereck, see, Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler’s American Friends* (New York: Saint Martin’s, 2018), 96–115. On H. Keith Thompson, see, Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day*, 471–2.

16. On Tansill’s treatment of Nazi antisemitism, see, *Back Door to War*, 284; Ruhl Bartlett, “Review of *Back Door to War*,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 9, no. 3 (1952): 580–81; Edmund A. Opitz, “Review of *Backdoor to War*,” *Faith and Freedom* 4, no. 2 (1952): 16; North to Tansill, 22 November 1962, box 2, Tansill Papers; “Leonard Liggio: A Snapshot, Part 1 | Liggio Legacy Project,” accessed June 26, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160416215333/https://leonardliggio.org/?p=94>. On Opitz’s importance for FEE, see, <https://fee.org/people/edmund-a-opitz/>.

cause as early as the 1950s, aided by intellectual and friendship circles and a conservative press that published both European and American support for revisionist claims with antisemitic overtones.

Still, it might be anachronistic to speak of Holocaust denial in the 1940s and 50s. The term, “the Holocaust,” and even the argument that the Jews were special victims of Nazi atrocities was not fully in view; indeed, the very idea was resisted by both the United States and British governments during the war and immediately after. Even as information about the horrors of the Nazi genocide appeared, both scholars and witnesses struggled to find words to describe it. In this context, those wishing to minimize or dismiss the deaths of European Jews at Nazi hands sowed confusion and doubt. None of these books made a straightforward claim that the Holocaust never happened, but they laid an important foundation for such a claim. Deborah Lipstadt uses the term “softcore” denial to distinguish such claims from the “hardcore” denial that followed. Denial in the United States started with claims that any atrocities committed by the Nazis were equaled, or exceeded, by those of the Allies. These claims opened the door to hardcore denial: that it was a lie that six million Jews perished at Nazi hands.¹⁷

By the mid-1950s, however, mainstream conservatives began losing interest in World War II revisionism as they began rejecting isolationism and championing a muscular foreign policy to combat what they saw as the threat of international communism. Regnery thought *Backdoor* would be “the final conclusion to our ‘revisionist’ books.” By the end of the decade, Regnery told Barnes that revisionism was dying. “There hasn’t been too much doing along the lines that interest you...nor has much come in.” Nonetheless, a handful of writers continued advocating World War II revisionism as it inched closer to hardcore Holocaust denial.¹⁸

17. On the anachronistic use of the term “Holocaust denial” in this period, see, Mark Hobbs, “Alexander Ratcliffe: British Holocaust Denial in Embryo,” in *Holocaust and Genocide Denial*, eds. Paul Behrens, Nicholas Terry, and Olaf Jensen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 9–20. On the Allies deemphasizing Nazi atrocities toward the Jews, see, Henry Feingold, “The Surprising Historic Roots of Holocaust Denial,” in *From the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to Holocaust Denial Trials*, ed. Debra R. Hoffman (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 67–79. On the struggle to describe the Nazi genocide, see Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Holocaust: An American Understanding* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016): 6–40; David Katz, “On Three Definitions: Genocide; Holocaust Denial; Holocaust Obfuscation,” in *A Litmus Test Case of Modernity*, ed. Leonidas Donskis (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 259; Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (New York: Schocken, 2019), 147. Even in the dedicated hardcore denialist journal, *JHR*, hardcore denial is swaddled in layers of softcore denial. See, Stephen E. Atkins, *Holocaust Denial as an International Movement* (Westport: Praeger, 2009), 168.

18. Regnery to Tansill, June 6, 1951, box 2, Tansill Papers; Regnery to Barnes, October 25, 1960, box 5, Regnery Papers. On the right’s abandoning isolationism, see, Kevin Mattson, *Rebels All!* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 26–33.

THE LIBERTARIAN RIGHT

In the 1950s, as mainstream conservatives lost interest in revisionist ideas, the nascent libertarian movement came to take on a more important role in the growth of revisionism. In that decade, Barnes could not get his own World War II revisionism published. Regnery rejected Barnes's writings because he was "careless" in documenting his claims. Barnes self-published a string of pamphlets railing against the "court historians" who were responsible for the "historical blackout" of the truth about World War II. However, Barnes had better luck with Caxton Printers, which was more oriented toward libertarianism than either Regnery or Devin-Adair. Caxton's owner, James Gipson, worked with the libertarian Foundation for Economic Education but was also a board member of Willis Carto's organization, Liberty and Property, which proclaimed Gipson "at the forefront of the Battle for Truth."¹⁹

Caxton published Barnes's edited volume, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* in 1953. Among the book's essays were two by Tansill rehashing material from *Backdoor*, and a long essay by Percy Greaves arguing that Roosevelt was responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbor. Greaves was a follower of libertarian economist Ludwig von Mises and regular columnist for the free market newspaper, *Christian Economics*. No libertarian himself, Barnes adopted that ideological voice in the book, declaring that before the twentieth century, "Ours was a libertarian country." But that libertarian paradise had been shattered by America's foolish entry into Europe's two wars. America lost "freedom, absence of high taxation, minimum indebtedness, low armament expenditures, and pacific outlook of pre-1914 times," in the wars, he claimed; without America's interventionism, "the people of the United States might, right now, be living in Utopian security and abundance."²⁰ Barnes appears to

19. Regnery to Barnes, May 15, 1947, box 5, Regnery Papers. Barnes pamphlets were eventually published as Harry Elmer Barnes, *Selected Revisionist Pamphlets* (New York: Arno Press, 1972). On Caxton Printers and Gipson, see, E.V. Stanley, "Caxton Printers—A Unique Venture in Publishing," *Human Events*, October 12, 1957, 1–4, and Lawrence Henry Gipson, "James Herrick Gipson, R.I.P.," *National Review*, June 15, 1965, 508. On Gipson's involvement with FEE, see, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190628190159/https://history.fee.org/publications/fee-and-caxton-printers-correspondence/>; on his involvement with Liberty and Property, see, Bruce Holman, "Liberty and Property, Progress Report #4," August 4, 1955, Earnest Sevier Cox Papers, box B28, Rubenstein Library, Duke University. On Liberty and Property, see Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, 53–5.

20. On Barnes's relationship with Greaves, see, Martin V. Melosi, "The Triumph of Revisionism: The Pearl Harbor Controversy, 1941–1982," *Public Historian* 5, no. 2 (1983): 87–103. Harry Elmer Barnes, "Revisionism and the Historical Blackout," in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* (1953), 3, 6.

have recognized that libertarianism was a more welcome home for his revisionism in the 1950s, and so he couched his arguments within that libertarian framework.

If the Caxton volume presaged an increasing role for the nascent libertarian movement in revisionism, the activities of the William Volker Fund, the most important funder of libertarian causes in the 1950's, offer some indication of this growing role. In one instance, the Fund commissioned a study tracking political books available in 218 college libraries, including twenty World War II "revisionist" books; *Backdoor* was by far the most popular of these books, offering some indication of the political sympathies of its study participants. Then, perhaps on the strength of these survey results, the Volker Fund awarded Tansill a grant in 1958 to produce a book on American foreign policy. The Naziphile Austin App was quick with his congratulations: "It is a wonderful thing for all right-thinking Americans when a revisionist scholar gets any honor—it strengthens all our positions." Tansill never produced his promised book for Volker. However, Tansill, with Volker's funding, produced articles for the conspiratorial right in the John Birch Society's magazine, *American Opinion*, the antisemitic *American Mercury*, or Willis Carto's even more antisemitic *Western Destiny*. None of these publications were libertarian in outlook, but the libertarian Volker Fund had clearly identified itself as a potential supporter of revisionist and pro-Nazi claims.²¹

That same year, 1958, the Volker Fund agreed to fund a young historian with a history of pro-Nazi sentiment, David Leslie Hoggan. Hoggan, a 1948 history PhD from Harvard, was a conscientious objector during the war because he would "neither commit murder nor attempt to commit murder under the command of F.D.R. I... regarded him as the greatest war criminal of all time." In 1955, Hoggan showed Harry Elmer Barnes a massive manuscript arguing, like Tansill, that the British, not the Germans, were responsible for the outbreak of World War II. Hoggan told Barnes, "I don't see why a reputable American historian could not point out that for the Germans, the Nazi regime in

21. On the importance of the Volker Fund for libertarians, see, Doherty, *Radicals*, 181–7. "A Study of College Libraries," box 1, RL.01391, William Volker Fund Records, Rubenstein Library, Duke University. On the grant, see, Harold Luhnnow to Tansill, November 19, 1958, box 2, Tansill Papers; App to Tansill, November 1, 1958, box 1, Tansill Papers; Tansill, "The President: Up With Which We Will Not Put," *American Mercury*, November 1963, 31–8; Tansill, "A Foreign Policy for Today," *American Mercury*, July 1960, 21–38; Tansill, "The Monroe Doctrine and the Right of Self-Defense," *American Mercury*, December 1960, 134–6; Tansill, Time for Decision: An End to Betrayal in '64," *Western Destiny*, June 1964, 6–7. On the *American Mercury*, see, David Austin Walsh, "The Right-Wing Popular Front"; on *Western Destiny* see Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day*: 515.

Germany was at least an improvement over the Weimar Republic, and better than Adenauer's regime today." Barnes saw Hoggan as the hero the revisionist cause had been waiting for and successfully encouraged Volker to fund Hoggan for a year to support revision of his manuscript. Barnes assured Volker that Hoggan was "the ablest man in diplomatic history in the United States and his ideas on both diplomatic history and public affairs in general are in general harmony with those of the directors of the William Volker Fund." And although Volker's support did not result in a revised manuscript, Hoggan impressed Fund director Harold Luhnow, who hired Hoggan as an occasional researcher for the Fund in 1961.²² The Volker Fund signaled to revisionists like Barnes that it was sympathetic to their heroes.

And even though Luhnow dissolved the Volker Fund in 1962 because he believed his staff were not committed Christians, he joined together with other pro-Nazi voices who sought to join libertarian and religious ideology in the publishing world. Luhnow allied himself with R.J. Rushdoony, a strict Calvinist who wanted to remake the country along Christian/libertarian lines. Luhnow hired Rushdoony; his disciple, Gary North; editor William T. Couch from University of North Carolina Press, and Hoggan to be the core of a new "Center for American Studies" (CAS), dedicated to producing an encyclopedia of the libertarian and religious foundations of the United States. The CAS never produced the promised encyclopedia, however. Among its many problems was adverse publicity when Hoggan's Nazi sympathies were made public. Rather than revise his manuscript, Hoggan published his book with a neo-Nazi publisher in West Germany in 1961. Both German and American historians found it to be based in Nazi ideology and on very dubious evidence. The controversy was covered by *Newsweek* and *Der Spiegel*. The CAS hurriedly tried to distance itself from Hoggan describing him as "part-time researcher," although Rushdoony publicly supported Hoggan.²³

22. Hoggan to Barnes, July 16, 1956, box 199, Barnes Papers, American Heritage Center; Hoggan to Barnes, August 7, 1956, box 199, Barnes Papers.

23. David L. Hoggan, *Der erzwungene Krieg* (Tübingen: Verlag der Deutschen Hochschullehrer-Zeitung, 1961). On the German reception of the book, see, Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika*, 619. Anglophone reviews included: Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Review of *Der Erzwungene Krieg*," *American Historical Review* 68, no. 1 (1962): 104-5; Joseph Bauke, "Whitewashing the Third Reich," *New Leader*, June 24, 1963, 28-30. On CAS distancing itself from Hoggan, see "In Defense of Hitler," *Newsweek*, May 18, 1964, 57. On Rushdoony's defense of Hoggan, see his letter to the editor: *New Leader*, August 19, 1963, 26. Gary North later published a short apologia of Rushdoony and his association with Hoggan: Gary North, "Clarifying the So-Called 'Hitler Connection,'" *Notes on the History of Christian Reconstruction* no. 1, November 1992.

Since the beginning of the CAS, Couch had been warning his colleagues that “Rushdoony is anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, anti-Negro, anti- just about everybody,” and that Rushdoony was “backing Hoggan in every way he could and Hoggan was backing him.” After the publicity, Couch anguished about “the support the William Volker Fund and the Center for American Studies have given to David L. Hoggan and R. J. Rushdoony, both now by their own statements in public self-convicted Nazi sympathizers.” Couch believed the CAS had committed an unforgivable moral failure by only distancing itself from Hoggan and Rushdoony once their views were made public, and the CAS soon collapsed. Hoggan never produced an English edition of his big book despite this support from the libertarians. As we will see, however, he did produce a much shorter and more sinister book while they paid him: the first book of hardcore Holocaust denial by an American writer.²⁴

THE ORIGIN OF “SIX MILLION REVISIONISM” IN THE UNITED STATES

By the late 1950s and 1960s, revisionists had begun to call for a more radical denial of the Holocaust, one that rejected entirely the historical fact of six million murdered Jews. Once again, libertarians proved to be a fertile source for both income and audience. In 1955 James Martin asked Barnes: “When is someone going to debunk this story of the 6,000,000 Jews murdered in the concentration camps? How do they get credit for all the people killed there? Jewish population after the war was larger than in 1938, the world over.” Barnes delighted in the idea of “6mm revisionism” telling Martin, “We will screw them on those Jewish population statistics. The ace card will be the Jewish faking: Jews have notoriously large families.” Martin may have picked up the idea that there were more European Jews alive after the war than before from the hardcore antisemitic right, what the Friends of Democracy referred to as “the vermin press.”²⁵

24. Couch to Nikki, 24 March 1964, Couch to Morris Cox, 26 May 1964, both letters in folder 139, Couch Papers Series 5, Southern Heritage Collection, University of North Carolina.

25. Martin to Barnes, July 13, 1955, box 1; Barnes to Martin, July 26, 1955, box 2, both letters in Martin Papers. On the “vermin press,” see, “The Strange Ways of the ‘Anti’ Propagandists” *Propaganda Battlefront*, October 1944, 1–2. On the idea that more Jews were alive after World War II than before, see, “New York Times Debunks Nazi Slaughter of 6,000,000 Jews: Leading Spokesman for World Jewry Reveals Important Information,” *Common Sense*, December 1, 1949, 7, published as a separate mailer, <https://archive.org/details/1950CEAHolocaustDenial>. *Common Sense* repeated the argument in “Yiddish Marxists Plot USA Defeat by USSR,” *Common Sense*, October 15, 1950.

In 1959, when Barnes asked him about disproving the Nazi slaughter of the Jews, Hoggan was enthusiastic:

The bombing of Dresden is *far worse* than anything I have been able to verify about Belsen, Buchenwald, or Dachau. About Dachau, I have definite information which indicated that conditions were far worse there under Am. administration of the camp after May 1945 than they had been under the Nazi regime...After all, over 200,000 Germans died of starvation and exposure in our concentration camps in Germany in just a few months. Can you say with certainty that there were that many liquidated during the entire NS regime? I have discovered that I cannot.²⁶

By the summer of 1960, Barnes had outlined a manuscript with Martin supplying him with statistics that he claimed had been covered up by the “International Zionist Movement.” Using those materials, by April 1961, Hoggan had produced a 125-page “Long Memorandum” that Barnes was convinced disproved the Nazi genocide: “6mm revisionism.” The text went beyond anything that Barnes had previously midwived and he worried about how to get it into print given that he believed Jews controlled the American publishing industry. He warned Hoggan’s German publisher, the neo-Nazi Herbert Grabert, that the Anti-Defamation League was an “unofficial secret police in this country which maintains illicit operations which make the Gestapo under Himmler... seem a rather naive and simple organization. They have agents in Post Offices and mail trains and the like which may open letters of anybody suspected of being interested in the truth about matters which deeply concern them.” In a letter to Martin, Barnes despaired that “the 6mm will never be debamboozled in my lifetime, and probably not in yours. The Khazars have licked Revisionism for a long time...I fear that only a totalitarian world can ‘contain’ the Khazars.” Barnes’s concerns were unfounded, however; libertarians would provide him with new venues for World War II revisionism including “6mm revisionism.”²⁷

Barnes’s best ally in the libertarian world was Murray N. Rothbard (1926-1995), “the most gifted libertarian writer of his generation,” a giant among libertarians in the 1960s and 1970s. A prolific scholar, Rothbard

26. Hoggan to Barnes, February 13, 1959, box 199, Barnes Papers.

27. Martin to Barnes, July 19, 1960; Barnes to Martin, April 1, 1961, Barnes to Martin, April 1961, Barnes to Martin, April 29, 1961, all letters in box 2, Martin Papers; Barnes to Grabert, June 11, 1961, box 3, Martin Papers. The “Khazars” were an ethnic group from what is now eastern Russia who converted to Judaism in the tenth century. Antisemitic writers argued that since modern Jews were descended from Khazars critics of Jews could not really be “anti-Semites.” Nor did Jews have an ancestral claim on Israel. The key text pushing the Khazar argument in the 1950s was John O. Beaty, *The Iron Curtain over America* (Dallas: Wilkinson, 1951).

was committed to the isolationist cause and World War II revisionism. Rothbard introduced himself to Barnes in 1959 as “an old friend of Kenneth Templeton, Jr. of the William Volker Fund, whom I believe you know.” Rothbard wrote to Barnes: “my problem is one of increasing isolation from the war-fever of my colleagues” on the right, who were abandoning the isolationism central to Rothbard’s libertarian vision.²⁸

Rothbard’s background as a secular Jew from New York did not prevent him from espousing antisemitism. According to one of his former students, Rothbard privately preached “rational anti-Semitism,” which meant Rothbard hated “*Jews as a class of people*. I can’t tell you how many times, in early correspondence, there were references to ‘those fucking kikes.’” Following the common libertarian argument that the state was rooted in violence and coercion, Rothbard told Barnes that he “favored the absolute destruction of the state of Israel.” According to Rothbard, while “bellyaching about the 6 million *ad nauseum*, the Israelis have gloried in genocide, the cancerous continual series of conquests and sneak attack and *blitzkrieg* of which Hitler was constantly accused by these same Zionists.” Rothbard believed “the Zionist emphasis on the 6 million is particularly meretricious in view of the fact that the Zionist policy was that they would rather see Jewish refugees in Europe die there than have them leave Europe [during World War II].”²⁹

Rothbard was receptive to “6mm revisionism.” By 1961, Hoggan, chafing at Barnes’s control, began circulating the Long Memorandum himself. One place Hoggan shared his Long Memorandum was at the brand-new Institute for Humane Studies (IHS), where he had been working as a part-time researcher. The IHS had been the brainchild of F.A. “Baldy” Harper, who wanted to establish a libertarian academy of sort; Rothbard had been instrumental in helping plan the academy. George Resch, an IHS staffer, sent Rothbard a copy of Hoggan’s Long

28. Patrick Allitt, *The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities Throughout American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 251. Rothbard’s biographical details can be found in Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism*, 243–253; Rothbard to Barnes, August 24, 1959, box 1, Martin Papers.

29. Roy Childs to Sheldon, September 17, 1982, box 20, Childs Papers. For one example where Rothbard referred to Jews as “kikes” and “cocksuckers,” see, Rothbard to Childs, June 18, 1969, box 17, Childs Papers. Rothbard to Barnes, June 19, 1967, box 1, Martin Papers. Rothbard published an only slightly softened version of these views in “War Guilt in the Middle East,” *Left and Right* 3, no. 3 (1967): 20–30. Rothbard’s views were a textbook case of what Lipstadt labeled “genocide inversion,” in which the role of perpetrator and victim are reversed. See Lipstadt, *Antisemitism*, 146–151.

Memorandum and Barnes was delighted to find that Rothbard “spoke highly of that long memorandum on the 6 MM.”³⁰

While the libertarian movement funded the Long Memorandum and circulated it, it was Willis Carto, the antisemitic ideologue, who finally published the Long Memorandum. Carto was the most important organizer of the antisemitic right in the postwar United States. He founded innumerable right-wing organizations and journals in the 1950s and 1960s, the most successful being the Liberty Lobby and its newspaper, *The Spotlight*, which had one foot in the conspiratorial far right and the other in the right-wing of the Republican party. Hoggan had been in contact with Carto as a possible book publisher as early as 1964 through Carto’s Noontide Press, which Barnes described as a “tony anti-Khazar outfit.” In 1969, Carto published the Long Memorandum as *The Myth of the Six Million*, listing the author as “Anonymous,” though he suspected the author was Barnes. Barnes feared the association of six million revisionism with someone as disreputable as Carto would guarantee the idea would never get any coverage in popular press or magazines. In the following decade, however, the libertarians would prove Barnes wrong.³¹

KEEPING ISOLATIONISM ALIVE: THE LIBERTARIANS CHAMPION DENIAL

As American conservatives took an assertive foreign-policy stance by the end of the 1950s, the reality of the Nazi genocide of European Jews became clear. The libertarian right, however, remained committed to isolationism, which entailed an increasing denial of the Holocaust. Throughout the 1960s, libertarians provided Barnes with new venues for his previously self-published ideas. For example, in the *New Individualist Review*, a small libertarian journal crucial to continuing isolationism’s legacy, Barnes argued for a relativistic treatment of the Holocaust, repeating the argument that had now become standard among revisionists:

30. Barnes to Martin, April 1, 1961, box 2, Martin Papers. On Hoggan working at the IHS, see, Couch to Julian Falk, May 22, 1964, Couch Papers. On Martin’s involvement, see, James Doenges to Martin, June 28, 1963, box 73, F.A. Harper Papers, Hoover Institute, Stanford, California. Harper to Liggio, June 9, 1964, box 72, Harper Papers; F.A. Harper, 1965. “Letter to the Editor,” *Western Destiny* 10 no. 5 (1965): 2. Barnes to Martin, June 5, 1961, box 2, Martin Papers. Rothbard affirmed his respect for “6mm revisionism” in Rothbard to Barnes, July 30, 1966, box 1, Martin Papers. On the IHS generally see Doherty, *Radicals*, 287–90.

31. Barnes to Martin, July 2, 1964, box 1, Martin Papers; Willis Carto, “A Brief History of Holocaust Revisionism,” in *Dissecting the Holocaust*, ed. Germer Rudolf (Chicago: Theses and Dissertations Press, 2003), 579–82.

because the postwar occupation of Germany was as brutal as the Nazi treatment of the Jews, "there is no unique or special case against Nazi barbarism and horrors unless one assumes that it is far more wicked to exterminate Jews than to massacre Gentiles."³²

Another venue for Barnes, Martin, and Rothbard was provided by Robert LeFevre, a conservative who became prominent in the libertarian movement through Rampart College, "a major institution of 1960s libertarianism." Never an accredited college, Rampart was famous as a libertarian institution, but it was also an institution staffed by revisionists and antisemites; LeFevre hired Martin as a Rampart faculty member as a result of Barnes's lobbying. Rampart was tainted by racism in other ways as well; African Americans were unwelcome at its events lest they make the segregationists in attendance uncomfortable. Despite his mainstream conservative credentials, LeFevre had always had connections to "fringe" revisionists. He first came to prominence in the conservative movement in 1955 as the director of the Congress of Freedom, an attempt to unite the American right wing, where his right-hand man was the organization's secretary: Willis Carto. LeFevre endorsed Carto's first journal, *Right*, and wrote for it.³³

By the early 1960s, LeFevre launched the *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought*. The spring 1966 issue was devoted to revisionist scholarship. In it, Rothbard argued that both world wars and the Cold War were started by western democracies. In his contribution, Barnes cited the abundance of fascist writers whose books had been reprinted by American publishers the decade before. Austin App's sole disciple, Michael Connors, followed his teacher's argument that the balance sheet

32. Harry Elmer Barnes, "A.J.P. Taylor and the Causes of World War II," *New Individualist Review* 2, no. 1 (1962): 190. On the importance of the journal for continuing the libertarians' isolationist tradition, see, Ronald Hamowy, "New Individualist Review, 1961-1968," in *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton (Westport: Greenwood, 1999), 337-47.

33. On antisemitism in the Congress of Freedom see Arnold Forster and Benjamin R Epstein. *Cross-Currents* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), 144-52. On Carto and LeFevre's friendly relationship through the Congress of Freedom, see, Carto to LeFevre, February 8, 1956 and LeFevre to Carto, February 13, 1956, both letters in box 49, Robert LeFevre papers, University of Oregon, Eugene Oregon. Right ran a favorable profile of LeFevre alongside that of fascist theoretician Lawrence Dennis: "Patriotic Profiles," *Right*, no. 9 (1956): 3-4; Robert LeFevre, "How Will the Rightwing Get Together?" *Right*, no. 24 (1957): 2. LeFevre's endorsement of Right can be found at: <https://archive.org/details/RightEndorsements>. On the Freedom School, later renamed Rampart College, and its influence on libertarianism see Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism*, 134. On the segregationists who attended, see, Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (New York: Anchor Books, 2016), 54-7. Barnes to Martin, April 28, 1963, box 2, Martin Papers.

of atrocities was even between the Nazis and the Allies, a view echoed by Martin in his contribution. Rothbard's and Connors's articles in the *Rampart Journal* were eventually reprinted by Carto in the *Journal for Historical Review*, illustrating again the intertwined nature between libertarianism and revisionism.³⁴

Libertarian venues and thinkers were crucial for burnishing the reputation of Harry Elmer Barnes, who died in 1968. While most historians thought his work after World War II had been misguided, among libertarians his reputation only grew. Barnes's last published piece was on Pearl Harbor in a journal edited by Rothbard. The historian's scattered self-published essays, which even Henry Regnery had found polemical and slipshod, were gathered and published by Rothbard and the libertarian Cato Institute. Rothbard worked with Martin to publish a *festschrift* for Barnes, although Martin had to create a new publishing venture, Ralph Myles Press, to get it into print.³⁵

Martin continued to be respected in libertarian circles, even as he continued to champion revisionist ideas. In 1971, Martin and Liggio planned an IHS-sponsored "revisionist" conference on "New Deal Foreign Policy," where Martin unsuccessfully pushed to include French Holocaust denier Paul Rassinier as a panelist. The proceedings from the conference were issued by Martin's Ralph Myles Press. The IHS also

34. Murray N. Rothbard, "On the Importance of Revisionism for Our Time," *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought* 2, no. 1 (1966): 3-7, reprinted here: https://web.archive.org/web/20190630041224/http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v15/v15n3p35_Rothbard.html; Michael F. Connors, "Rising Germanophobia: The Chief Obstacle to Current World War II Revisionism," *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought* 2, no. 1 (1966): 75-90, reprinted here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190707052800/http://ihr.org/books/connors/dealinginhate.shtml>, also published by a fascist publisher in the United Kingdom as Michael F. Connors, *Dealing in Hate the Development of Anti-German Propaganda* (London: Britons, 1966); Harry Elmer Barnes, "Revisionism: A Key to Peace," *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 8-74; James J. Martin, "Revisionism and the Cold War, 1946-1966: Some Comments on Its Origins and Consequences," *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 91-113.

35. Harry Elmer Barnes, "Pearl Harbor after a Quarter of a Century," *Left and Right* 4, no. 1 (1968): 9-132; Harry Elmer Barnes, *Selected Revisionist Pamphlets* (New York: Arno Press, 1972); Harry Elmer Barnes, *Revisionism, a Key to Peace and Other Essays* (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980); Arthur Goddard and Harry Elmer Barnes, *Harry Elmer Barnes, Learned Crusader* (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, 1968). Rothbard, who was instrumental in founding the Cato institute, lost a power struggle and was evicted in the early 1980s. See, Daniel Bessner, "Murray Rothbard, Political Strategy, and the Making of Modern Libertarianism," *Intellectual History Review* 24, no. 4 (2014): 441-56.

underwrote the printing of Martin's book *Revisionist Viewpoints* which gathered many of his revisionist essays of the nineteen-sixties.³⁶

Within the antisemitic right, hardcore Holocaust denial flowered following Carto's publication of *The Myth of the Six Million* in 1969. In 1973, Austin App threw off the shackles of softcore denials and began publishing full-throated defenses of the Nazi regime. His 1973 book, *The Six Million Swindle*, formulated the major axioms of Holocaust denial according to Deborah Lipstadt. Extreme rightwing denialists like Willis Carto had little respect for the libertarian cause, seeing them as a poor resource in the race war they imagined themselves fighting. "Damn few whites have the internal fortitude to face up to the awful truth—which is that the white world has had it and the future is one of filth and anarchy at best and terror, slavery and rapine at worst," he wrote to Martin, "Well, at least the libertarians will like it; they'll have the anarchy they say they want, and no Hitler to tyrannize the Jews and niggers." Martin told Carto that the libertarians only occasionally balked at anything he wrote and when he wrote "stuff too strong from them... they diplomatically leave it out." Despite what Martin saw as hesitancy in the libertarian press, about his more extreme views, libertarians were comfortable publishing hardcore denial.³⁷

Reason, the most widely distributed libertarian publication of the time, was perhaps the most important libertarian space to have championed revisionism. In one instance, the journal published an interview with Martin in 1976 in which he recommended Rassinier's work to the libertarian audience and claimed:

Rassinier's general case is sound at the moment and I haven't seen any strong evidence to upset his allegations or his assertions that there was no planned program for the extermination of European Jews. His other main case is that there were no gas chamber extermination programs. The fact that a great many people lost their lives is incontrovertible—that the German concentration camps weren't health centers is well known—but they appear to have been far smaller and much less lethal than the Russian ones.

36. On including Rassinier, see, Ken Templeton to Felix Morley, December 17, 1970, box 16, Felix Morley Papers, Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. On Rassinier, see Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, 51–75. The book was Leonard P. Liggio and James J. Martin, *Watershed of Empire* (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, 1976). James J. Martin, *Revisionist Viewpoints* (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, 1971); IHS sponsorship is noted on the copyright page of the 1977 second printing.

37. Paul Rassinier, *The Drama of the European Jews* (Silver Spring: Steppingstones, 1975); Rassinier, *Debunking the Genocide Myth* (Torrance: Noontide, 1978); Austin J App, *The Six Million Swindle* (Tacoma Park: Boniface Press, 1973); App, *A Straight Look at the Third Reich* (Tacoma Park: Boniface Press, 1974); Lipstadt, *Denying*, 86. Carto to Martin, February 28, 1977; Martin to Carto, April 27, 1977, both letters in box 6, Martin Papers.

These views of the Holocaust were echoed in the pages of *Reason* that same year in a special “revisionist issue.” Austin App, who just a few years earlier has established the axioms of hardcore Holocaust denial, peddled the same argument that earned him the title “Naziphile” in the 1940s: that Nazi Germany had a racial claim on all the territory Hitler claimed and thus “no territory could have been taken from Germany either in 1918 or in 1945.” Gary North, Tansill’s fan and Rushdoony’s disciple, told his readers that Hoggan’s *Myth of the Six Million* was a “solid case against the Establishment’s favorite horror story,” the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazi regime. The issue’s editor, Steven Springer, celebrated the entire enterprise noting, “there is much value in this heretical enterprise.”³⁸

The mutual influence between libertarians and revisionists can also be seen in the Institute for Historical Review, launched by Willis Carto in September 1979. Libertarians were a small but significant presence at the institute throughout the 1980s. Martin was listed prominently on the *JHR*’s masthead and he was joined by Samuel Edward Konkin III, editor of the *New Libertarian*, who had been converted to Holocaust denial by reading the revisionist issue of *Rampart Journal*. Also on the masthead was Percy Greaves, who had been a columnist for the libertarian *Christian Economics* in the 1950s and 1960s, an important player in the libertarian Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), and a founding member of Carto’s Liberty Lobby. When he accepted the invitation to join the editorial board, he made clear that “while I am very much opposed to the misleading Zionist propaganda with which this country has been flooded, I should not want to be associated with any organization which could rightly be described as antisemitic,” because “some of my best friends are Jews.” Rothbard himself never wrote for the *JHR*, but when he died in 1995, he received that rarest of things for a Jew: a fawning obituary from Mark Weber of the IHR, who noted that “Rothbard embraced historical revisionism in all its facets, includ-

38. Austin J. App, “The Sudeten-German Tragedy,” *Reason*, February 1976, 29; Gary North, “World War II Revisionism and Vietnam,” *Reason*, February 1976, 39; Steven Springer, “Editorial Introduction,” *Reason*, February 1976, 4. Martin’s own contribution was anodyne by contrast: James J. Martin, “The Framing of Tokyo Rose,” *Reason*, February 1976, 6–15. In 2014, journalist Mark Ames published an exposé of *Reason*’s revisionist issue. For Ames’s attack, and *Reason*’s defense, see, Mark Ames, “As Reason’s Editor Defends Its Racist History, Here’s a Copy of Its Holocaust Denial ‘Special Issue’,” Pando, July 24, 2014, <https://pando.com/2014/07/24/as-reasons-editor-defends-its-racist-history-heres-a-copy-of-its-holocaust-denial-special-issue/>; “Did Reason Really Publish a ‘Holocaust Denial ‘Special Issue’” in 1976? Of Course Not,” *Reason*, July 26, 2014, <https://reason.com/2014/07/26/did-reason-really-publish-a-holocaust-de/>.

ing taboo issues of the Second World War” and followed the obituary with a reprint of Rothbard’s 1966 essay from the *Rampart Journal*.³⁹

Like Carto, the IHR’s hardcore antisemites disliked libertarianism but valued the alliance. In 1986, Tansill’s old friend, neo-Nazi H. Keith Thompson, worried that the IHR “seems to be moving towards libertarianism” which was a problem for the devoted National Socialist because “libertarianism is born in weakness.” On the other hand, Thompson realized that the libertarian presence was useful because “Libertarianism is nice and respectable, and it serves some purpose in moving against the persecutions of the extreme right and the extreme left.” Indeed, the libertarians, especially Jewish ones, were often offered as a shield against accusations of antisemitism: “The attempts to link Revisionism and anti-Semitism are deplorable,” one *JHR* writer opined, “Obviously such historians and publicists as Harry Elmer Barnes, James J. Martin, Murray N. Rothbard, Frank Chodorov...to list just a few representative names are not anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi.”⁴⁰

CONCLUSION: DENYING DENIAL

Members of the revisionist collaborative circle held the same set of values but in a reversed hierarchy. The antisemites wanted to prove Jewish lies about genocide and were willing to tolerate the presence of the anti-interventionist right to do so, while the anti-interventionist right wanted to promote American isolationism and were willing to tolerate antisemitism to do so. In this way, the collaborative circle of writers who nurtured American Holocaust denial played contrapuntal themes. On the one hand, they tried to justify their prewar isolationism after World War II. On the other, they did so by ignoring, downplaying, or simply denying Nazi antisemitic atrocities. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, they willingly, indeed eagerly, reprinted the works of European fascists which downplayed the Nazi genocide of the Jews. Throughout the 1950s, two changes made these “revisionist” accounts less palatable to conser-

39. The names are listed on the masthead of nearly every issue of *JHR*. See, the vol. 2, no. 2, (1981), for example. On Konkin’s conversion see his letter to the editor: “Letters – Reason.Com.” Accessed August 30, 2019. <https://reason.com/1976/05/01/letters-168/>; On Greaves and FEE, see, “Percy L. Greaves Jr. | People,” August 7, 2015, <https://fee.org/people/percy-l-greaves-jr/>; on Greaves and the Liberty Lobby see Mintz, *Liberty Lobby*, 85; Greaves to Lewis Brandon, November 18, 1980, box 11, Percy Greaves Papers, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon; Mark Weber, “Murray Rothbard: A Tribute,” *Journal of Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (1995): 33; Murray Rothbard, “On the Importance of Revisionism,” *Journal of Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (1995): 34–6.

40. Thompson to Bradley Smith, January 18, 1986, box 8, Stimely Papers; Bezalel Chaim, Letter to the Editor, *Journal of Historical Review* 1, no. 4 (1980): 298.

vatives. First, the American right moved away from isolationism and increasingly favored an interventionist foreign policy. Promoting a strong military presence abroad lessened the political usefulness of maintaining the position that it was a mistake for the United States to enter World War II. Second, by dawn of the 1960s scholars began documenting the true horrors of the Holocaust; the publication of Raul Hilberg's massive *Destruction of European Jews* was a signal event, but certainly not the only one. In the face of overwhelming evidence, it simply was not tenable to argue that Allied atrocities could have equaled those of the Nazis. The collaborative circle made up of libertarians and members of antisemitic right were thus alone in promoting denialist themes for two decades until the founding of the IHR. In the 1970s, right on the eve of the founding of the Carto's IHR, the libertarian flagship magazine, *Reason*, provided a forum for several figures who appeared at the very first conference of the IHR.⁴¹

The revisionist collaborative circle allowed members to manage tensions between the conservative/libertarian individualist ideology and racist antisemitic ideology. Antisemites like Carto and Thompson tolerated libertarians because their presence provided some political cover for their attack on what they viewed as a massive Jewish conspiracy. The conservative publishers who made fascist writings available to American audiences in the 1940s and early 1950s, never showed any regrets for doing so. Devin Garrity, owner of Devin-Adair Press was a featured speaker at the first IHR conference and clearly embraced even hardcore Holocaust denial. Henry Regnery took great pride in his "revisionist" publications in the pages of the mainstream conservative journal, *Modern Age* in the 1970s.⁴²

Some mainstays of libertarian thought, such as Martin and Rothbard, willingly embraced, at least privately, some aspects of antisemitic thought while publicly proclaiming that their embrace of individualism inoculated them against any charge of racism. Libertarian funding agencies, such as the Volker Fund, and libertarian publications, such as the *Rampart Journal* or *Reason*, simply denied that there was anything antisemitic about what they funded or published; their only interest, they claimed,

41. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961). For the growth in Holocaust scholarship in the United States at this time, see, Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Holocaust*, 15–25.

42. An account of Garrity's speech at the first IHR conference can be found in Frank Tompkins, "\$50,000 Offered for Proof Nazi Gassed Jews," *The Spotlight*, September 24, 1979, 14–15. Henry Regnery, "Historical Revisionism and World War II," *Modern Age* 20, no. 3 (1976): 254–65; "Historical Revisionism and World War II (Part II)," *Modern Age* 20, no. 4 (1976): 402–11.

was to use historical facts against militarism.⁴³ The collaborative circle formed by revisionists, antisemites, libertarians, and even mainstream conservatives created a foundation for the explosion of Holocaust denial onto the popular stage in the United States in the late 1970s and 1980.

43. Israel W. Charny's words are instructive here: "These denials [of the Holocaust] by non-bigots are especially dangerous for civilization since they issue in many cases from seemingly well-intentioned people, and thereby are more capable of undermining societal foundations of historical truth and fair-mindedness." Charny, "A Classification of Denials of the Holocaust and Other Genocides," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 1 (2003): 16.