

THE DIOGENES REPORT

The Wit, Wisdom & Wituperation of Emanuel L. Strunin

March, 2001, volume 1, number 4

THE GOLDEN AGE

A friend advised me that I could elevate this newsletter to a higher level, as they say on the sports pages, if I would write something complimentary about the Arabs. So I had ole Diogenes swing his lantern around and it lit up a time in an era long past when the Arabs held high the torch of learning, as well as the sword, of course.

From the 8th to 13th century, known as the Dark Ages in Europe, and from which the continent has yet to recover, Greek philosophical and scientific works were preserved in Arabic. Else they would have been lost forever. And the most important of the new scientific discoveries in astronomy which led to the Age of Discovery were carried out by Jews and Arabs, and also described in Arabic. The monumental religious and philosophical works of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides) who lived in Spain, North Africa and Egypt from 1135-1204 were written in Arabic, as was the Kuzari, a classic work of Jewish thought by Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi of Spain.

The Jewish religious and philosophical works, written in Arabic and translated into Latin, formed the basis of Christian theology as expounded by Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and other theologians. Although the sword was never very far from the hands of some of the Arab tribes that swept across North Africa and Spain in the West and across western Asia in the east, there were many leaders who encouraged learning in a wide range of the arts and sciences. As a result, Arabs and often Jews were able to make outstanding contributions to literature, philosophy, science and medicine. Unfortunately, the window of this fruitful multicultural age was closed almost a thousand years ago in the Arab world. Except for occasional flashes of light, this window remains tightly shut.

A COMPANY THAT MISSES MAJOR TRENDS BUT CONTINUES TO PROSPER

There is a company in the U, S. that spends --or should I say wastes-- enough money each year to ensure the financial stability of the Social Security and the Medicare systems. Despite an annual budget of upwards of \$30 billion--the exact amount is shrouded in mystery-- it hardly ever comes up with the right answers when its shareholders need them. The name of the "Company" as it is called by its employees, is known to its shareholders who are America's tax-paying citizens as the Central Intelligence Agency-- or more familiarly as the CIA.

Recently declassified documents confirmed what we knew all along --that the Company was oblivious to the disintegration of the Soviet Union as it was happening. This despite the hundreds of billions of dollars that American taxpayers poured into the Company's coffers for spy hardware and people over the years.. This is not a first for the Company. It also missed the demise of the Shah's regime and the rise of the Islamic terrorist state in Iran, almost until the day our embassy was besieged.

Just like Japan returned in the form of bombs and artillery shells, the steel we sold them from the dismantling of the Second Avenue El, the Islamic terrorists of Afghanistan, with the assistance of Osama bin Ladin are returning the missiles to us that the Company gifted to them.

The Company does carry out some assignments successfully when it comes to the small fry. It eliminated Allende in Chile. But this probably could have been accomplished more economically by a Mafia hit team. Even with the help of the Mafia, the Company has been very ineffectual in getting rid of Castro

Since the Company is even a more of a sacred cow to the American Congress than the golden calf was to the Israelites coming out of Egypt, it is certain that not very much will be done to decrease its funding despite the downfall of the Evil Empire. It would be a nice gesture on the part of its operatives who are reputedly active in drug smuggling from Asia and Latin America to reduce their government salaries by the amount of their illegal earnings. I'm just looking for taxpayer relief from any source.

From The Jerusalem Post Internet Edition
Tuesday, March 20 2001 07:41 25 Adar 5761

IS IT TIME TO TOPPLE AGAIN?

Emanuel L. Strunin Stamford CT USA (20 Mar 2001)
elscomm@earthlink.com

The Israeli elections were much ado about nothing. The only thing that changed as a result of the voting is the name of the man who occupies the Prime Ministers office. The policies of surrender and turn the other cheek are still in force. Why bother the Israeli public with costly, emotion-packed drama when the will of the people counts for nothing. Supposedly, the voters swept the previous scoundrels out of office because they wanted a complete change in policies. Instead they not only got an equally inept enforcer of defeatist policies but one who dragged most of the officials rejected by the voters into the new government. In my opinion, the Israeli people should cut Mr. Sharon no slack unless he shows an immediate turn-around and applies all-out and continuing pressure on the Arabs. If this humiliates the Arabs and destroys their economy, so be it. They brought it on themselves. If the Prime Minister doesn't carry out such a policy, it's time to topple again.

CCNY: FROM BASKETBALL POWERHOUSE TO HOUSE OF ILLITERACY

Just a half century ago, the vaunted basketball program at the City College of New York came to an ignominious end. Most of the members of the team that won both the NCAA and NIT tournaments the previous season were guilty of shaving points --guilty of purposely being less than they could be. The news was a tremendous psychological blow to many Jewish kids in New York who believed that the perennial Lavender powerhouse was the last "amateur" top-tier, college basketball team in the country. New York Jews felt a special affinity for the CCNY five, as the flag-bearer of "New York Jewish basketball", even though many of its players were not Jewish.

As I read about the search for a new CCNY president, I also am sadly reminded of the cataclysmic decline in the quality of the college's students

and academic programs over the past 30 years. When once it was a mark of academic achievement to be allowed to enter CCNY as a student, now "many of its freshmen have failed one or more of its placement tests". The New York Times story continues: "Its students also showed one of the lowest passing rates of any college in the state on New York's teacher certification examinations"

To me, this approach to higher education reflects a willingness to let the college be less than it could be. And less than it was. And less than the City of New York, the State of New York and our nation needs. We need it to be again, the college that turns out Nobel laureates, outstanding teachers for the public schools, physicians, lawyers, public servants, social workers, engineers and scientists who help improve our communities. We do not need people who can wave a diploma with nothing substantive behind it.

"Once known for its exceptionally bright students, the college has struggled to handle a flood of educationally disadvantaged students since open admissions was introduced in 1970". writes the Times. Apparently, this misguided but "politically correct" policy is still in force. A common sense but politically incorrect policy would dictate an end to this nonsense. If students are not prepared for, or incapable of, handling a college program, they should not be in a four year college. The presence of so many non-learners in a classroom invariably detracts from those students who can benefit from the educational process, as well as damaging the instructor's ability to teach.

I heard a former president of Brooklyn College describe the start of the open admissions policy at that institution. In one year, enrollment rocketed from 9,000 to 15,000. The vast majority of the open admissions students did not last past their first year. As a college administrator in the City University of New York he, of course, refused to admit that the policy was a disaster for the qualified students, the drop-outs and the faculty. But he did seem please that the policy was discontinued in his school.

Let those students who cannot handle a regular college program attend the less rigorous community colleges and not automatically move them to a four year college unless their work in the community college attests to their being able to handle the more advanced programs. While this may seem sensible, I

feel certain that the 'politically correct' collusion among public officials, college administrators and faculty, and community activists will keep the college at the "less than it can be" level--at the same level that the point-shavers kept the CCNY basketball team.

If the powers that be in college level matters insist on being politically correct, I have some suggestions that can simplify the problem and save a ton of money. Do not force the incapable students to sit in college classes for four, five or six years in order to get a diploma. Don't humiliate or dis them either by not giving them the credentials they may need for a job. Just give the the diploma without requiring their attendance at an institution of higher learning This will improve the quality of education for both capable students and teachers, and the money savings will amount to hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Try it, you'll like it.

INTEREST RATES: HALF-POINT, HALF-ASS

The man who helped bring the nation to the brink of recession, with his interest-rate increases, is now determined to push the economy over the edge with his half-ass-paced interest-rate reductions. It is not surprising that this fumbler masquerading as an economic maven is at a loss in dealing with both down and up economies. His economic concepts seem to be built on two premises. The first is that it is a tragedy when too many people are employed. But he never offers to help solve this problem by quitting his job. The second is that it is dangerous when these same people want an increase in their salaries, even if they earn the minimum wage. If he knew what he was doing and if what he is doing works, the economy would not be in the predicament that its in. It's time for some Democratic Congressman to put a GOP Voodoo Economics T-shirt on Mr. Greenspan and send him off to revive the Japanese economy.

HILLARY SPEAKS OUT

"Those damn Arabs certainly live up to their reputation for being misers. After all Bill and I did for Yasser and his bitch of a wife. They don't cough up any bucks for Bill's library. I really went out on a limb for them and it

almost cost me the election. So how do they return my favors? They stiff us. I wonder if the Israelis really do use poison gas against the Palestinians. At least the Jews are not as tight with a buck as my dad says they are. Denise came up with over a million big ones--at least her ex did. If he hadn't, I might have had to send Chelsea to go on that TV show. She probably would have won the million bucks. She's a smart kid.

SWEEP IT UNDER THE PERSIAN RUG

Although he is trying to hide it, Mr. Putin is continuing to play footsie with Iran. He thinks that he found an easy way to make money and stir up trouble by selling weapons. What he refuses to see is that the ayatollahs are gonna jump up and bite the bear's ass before they attack anyone else. The Iranians have been working overtime to stir up unrest in the Moslem lands of the former Soviet Union. With just a little more stupidity, Putin will be forced to assume the position of the Tsar, the protector of the Orthodox against the Moslem hordes, and not only in Chechnya.

MONICA SPEAKS OUT

Interviewer: Miss Levinsky, why are you gulping all those Tic Tacs?

Monica: I'm trying to get rid of the taste of the Tyson chicken.

Interviewer: Was the hen too gamey?

Monica: No, it was the cock.

QUOTES I LIKE

It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

Mark Twain

If you see a snake, just kill it--don't appoint a committee on snakes.

H. Ross Perot

You can fool all of the people all of the time
if the advertising is right and the budget big enough.

Joseph E. Levine

