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## Book Review

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# Is history a rat's maze or the embodiment of universal progress?

by Ron Fredman

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### **How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story, Volume I, 1630-1754**

by H. Graham Lowry  
Executive Intelligence Review, Washington, 1987  
497 pages, paperbound, \$14.95

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### **The First Salute**

by Barbara W. Tuchman  
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1988  
326 pages, hardbound, \$22.95

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If a colony of rats were to convene a discussion of their respective family trees, then the wizened, elder rat would regale his audience with the great moments of rodent history, as passed down in unbroken, oral tradition since the dawn of time. With incised wit, this grey-whiskered fellow would accentuate the high points and gloss over the low points. One such high point must be when his species nearly broke mankind's control over Nature, the Black Death of the fourteenth century (see Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*). For any egocentric rat, all this history would merely serve to underscore in subtle ways that "the times in which we live represent the greatest achievements of rodenthood, etc." While listening to the old rat, in the back row of the auditorium, some younger up-and-coming radical chic sewer hole dwellers, living in the gentrified slums of Urbania, would interrupt the old professor to focus the rat rage upon Mankind's, albeit waning, eradication efforts: "Now is the time for Mankind to get his just deserts . . . let our right feet be the instrument of Man's undoing!" It would never dawn upon the tiny brains of these furry vermin that if it were not for human development, then the potential relative population-density of rodents would never amount to today's magnitude.

Some rats, the self-defined priests of their mnemonic tradition, living high off the hog—with fine, thick slices of imported Swiss cheese and/or British Stilton's Blue cheese—would weave a tale so as to insure the continuation of rattiness or ratness. Amongst such as these, the truly divine propor-

tions of human history would never be told.

In the United States of America today, this reviewer is pleased to discover that there has emerged a truly human school of American history. H. Graham Lowry in his first volume leaves the reader with an inspired insight into the bedrock upon which our nation's principles were established years 357 ago. This book is filled with appropriate quotes to awaken anyone who has turned inward to despair, such as appear on pages 49-50 from the pen of Cotton Mather:

worthy to have their Lives written, as copies for future Ages to write after; *But these are Ancient Things! A Public Spirit* in all that sustained any *Public Office*, and a fervent *Inclination* to Do Good, joined with Incomparable *Ability* to do it, once ran through *New England*; *But These are Ancient Things!* . . .

There seems to be a shameful *Shrink*, in all sorts of men among us, from that *Greatness*, and *Goodness*, which adorned our ancestors: We grow *Little* every way; *Little* in our Civil Matters, *Little* in our Military Matters, *Little* in our Ecclesiastical Matters; we dwindle away, to *Nothing*.

The inspiration to do the good, which is essential in the Judeo-Christian culture of America, is amply documented in Lowry's book. On page 113, Cotton Mather beseeches his readers today as poignantly as 300 years ago:

It is an invaluable *honor*, to do *good*; it is an incomparable *pleasure*. A man must look upon himself as *dignified* and *gratified* by God, when an *opportunity* to do *good* is put into his hands. He must embrace it with *rapture*, as enabling him to answer the great End of his being. . . .

*Government* is called, the *ordinance* of God . . . it should vigorously pursue those noble and blessed *ends* for which it is *ordained*: *the good of mankind*. . . .

*Rulers* who make no other use of their higher station, than to swagger over their neighbors, and command their obsequious flatteries, and enrich themselves with the spoils of which they are able to pillage them, and then wallow in sensual and brutal pleasures;

these are, *the basest of men*. (From Cotton Mather's *Bonifacius, An Essay upon the Good*.)

This essay was "cited by Benjamin Franklin as the foremost influence on his life," the reader is informed. With such citations, Lowry recreates for the reader the generative principle of the transatlantic, Judeo-Christian conspiracy which created the American republic over one and one-half centuries *before 1776*, as he traces the roots of Benjamin Franklin back to the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the republican project of the Winthrops, and by telling the stories of such undeservedly forgotten heroes as Virginia colonial governor Alexander Spotswood, shows the direct influence of the English circles of the great Leibniz upon the opening of the American West and the fight for industrial development instead of slave-tilled tobacco plantations. Here we discover, for instance, that Dean Jonathan Swift, known to most only as the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, and often misunderstood as a cynic, was a key agent of Leibniz's scientific optimism at the court of Queen Anne and an American "Founding Father" in the best sense.

Lowry started from a strong hypothesis about the prehistory of the United States, and then assembled the painstaking documentation that devastates any contrary opinion regarding the alleged motives of the U.S. founders.

### Theological subversion

Lowry may not have all the pieces of the puzzle; he does not claim that. One aspect of his book upon which he might wish to expand in a future work is his subtopic, *Theological Subversion* (pages 51-54). The reference on page 31 to Increase Mather's *The Mystery of Christ Opened and Applied* leaves the reader with too faint a trace of our forefathers' notion of human perfectability through Christ.

The majority within America's religious institutions, which believes in reason, progress, and science, needs to draw upon a 350-year heritage to energize the resistance to the witchhunt now under way, signaled by the recent IRS-announced targeting of 23 television ministries. This comes on top of Rev. Pat Robertson's aborted presidential campaign, which compounded the confusion of the "religious right's" role in the Reagan years, to suggest that a thorough church-cleaning is in order.

It seems best in such circumstances to build upon the shared good rather than merely to defenestrate the babe with the bath water; and in these circumstances, history could provide an invaluable lesson about the real origins of the moral impulse encountered among certain (although not all) "religious right" layers. America's story has been untold for so long because of the darkness spread by the heirs of the so-called Enlightenment, joined by their opposite numbers, who walk in the mystical tradition of the Mathers' enemy, proto "televangelist" Jonathan Edwards.

In the very last pages of Lowry's book, in the years 1747-54, the die is cast for America's bloody baptism. The year is

1747, and Benjamin Franklin establishes an independent, voluntary, and armed militia in Pennsylvania. Thus, the reader is reminded of the price for so "celestial an object as Freedom." Let their payment not be forfeit! Franklin's enemies, America's enemies take note.

### The world turned upside down

Charles Beard and Frederick Jackson Turner were instrumental in burglarizing American history from Americans. With a brush and some tar they "enlightened" America: Genius and initiative became greed and luck, love and sacrifice became geographical opportunity and ambition. Is it any wonder that under the guidance of such Judas goats, the American people have lost their genius for imagining the impossible and then accomplishing it?

Now, let the reader turn to the Hollywood-soap-opera-author-cum-historian, the late Barbara Tuchman and her latest creation, *The First Salute*. In the West Indies, on Nov. 16, 1776:

. . . the guns of Ft. Orange on St. Eustatius were returning the ritual salute on entering a foreign port of an America vessel, the *Andrew Doria*, as she came up the roadstead, flying at her mast the red and white striped flag of the Continental Congress. In its responding salute the small voice of St. Eustatius was the first officially to greet the largest event of the century—the entry into society of nations of a new Atlantic state destined to change the direction of history. (page 5)

With this as her starting point, Tuchman races backwards through 150 years of history to cover the same period as does Lowry, but from a divergent and antithetical philosophical belief about human nature. Tuchman emphasizes the maritime considerations that went into the making of the Dutch, French, and American roles in the American Revolution. She contrasts that to the British and their Admiralty. Throughout, interesting bits of detail emerge: the role of the Dutch merchants in their own battle for independence in the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the Dutch role as gun runners for the American cause, John Paul Jones's heroic sea battle and its immediate political consequences, Admiral de Grasse's critically timed aid at Yorktown, and the belated British naval help for Cornwallis. Never in all this does Tuchman reach into the soul of the American Revolution. Always there is lurking as an explanation for motive the purgatory of greed and ambition: one power being replaced by another power, the geopolitics of the 17th and 18th century.

The cynicism which is critical to such a method of interpretation is captured with the following from page 34:

It is a peculiar habit of Christianity to conceive the most compassionate and forgiving divinities and use them to sponsor atrocity.

This reviewer believes there is something pernicious here, but not in her reciting of the facts; rather, the method which is woven through the recitation. Just as Wagner used the same notes as Beethoven, their end result was different.

On page 112, Tuchman writes the following:

It was America's good fortune at this moment in her history to produce all at once, as everyone knows, a group of exceptionally capable and politically gifted men, while it has been less remarked that it was Britain's ill fortune at the same time to have just the opposite.

"As everyone knows" these "gifted men" grew on trees like money and they happen to be harvested every blue moon of September. Though this reviewer is hard pressed to disagree with her commendation of America's Founding Fathers, reader, beware! She damns with such faint praise. Let the reader turn to page 213 to discover what Tuchman has to write concerning the great Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the chief conspirator of America's successful revolution:

Engrossed in the female charms and admiration of Paris, Franklin as envoy had acquired more celebrity than tangible aid. . . . Franklin, humiliated by the dispatch of special envoy to his post while he was present, was galvanized by Laurens' coming to make a more emphatic approach of his own.

Why does such an eminent historian retail the popular gossip concerning Dr. Franklin? Why does she lie about Dr. Franklin, who in fact was the chief fundraiser for America's liberation, as well as its chief architect? There is something Tuchman does not understand and it is not merely the case of the five blind men and the elephant. There are some more clues. On page 128, Tuchman lets something slip in describing an officer in the British navy who is a "possessor of that alert Scottish intelligence that so often caused uneasiness below the Border." Begging Scotland to forgive the reviewer, this reviewer has never found Scottish intelligence to be much different than human intelligence.

Before drawing the obvious inference about what courses through the minds of Tuchman's patrons who saw fit to turn this travesty into a Book of the Month Club main selection, let the reader turn to the last page of this racialist apology:

. . .the winning of the Revolution, which was considered the outstanding success in history of a popular military action, while the state it created was seen as having a mission assigned by God to build a model political nation of justice and equality and self-government. At the end of the 20th century we see in that proud design a more somber story, of injustice toward native Americans evicted from their lands, of inequality for those born of different colors and faiths, of government not by the best but by a collection of

shoddy and peccant men, inept and corrupt yet always laced with workers and dreamers of a change for the better. . . . But the state of "human felicity" that Washington believed "must result from the sovereignty of America" has not been the outcome. Two thousand years of human aggression, greed and the madness of power reveal a record that blots the rejoicing of that happy night in Philadelphia. . . .

If Crevecoeur came again to ask his famous question "What is this new man, this American?" what would he find? The free and equal new man in a new world that he envisaged would be realized only in spots, although conditions for the new man would come nearer to being realized in America than they would ever come in the other overturns of history. . . . Revolutions produce other men, not new men. Half-way "between truth and endless error" the mold of the species is permanent. That is earth's burden.

This apology for a cultural pessimism inimical to the the ideals that created the United States of America, is crafted, according to the Knopf publishers' promotional insert, by the two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Tuchman who is "drawing on her broad knowledge of history, her grasp both of human nature and of the workings of government, her eye for detail and her extraordinary narrative gift." Rubbish! Her pulp is meant to popularize the more professionally-oriented-to-historians cynicism of the school of the aforementioned Beard and Turncoat. With her "extraordinary narrative gift" ever so slightly more developed than the authors of *Dallas*, Tuchman manages to obscure the beautiful handicraft embedded in the nation's belabored birth.

At the ripe age of 28 years, Abraham Lincoln warned, in *The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions*:

At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? . . . I answer if it ever reaches us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

The question recurs "how shall we fortify against it?" The answer is simple. Let every American . . . swear by the blood of the Revolution. . . . Let it become the political religion of the nation. . . . Let [all] sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.

This reviewer knows the purpose of Tuchman's false sponsors. Their purpose is to obscure one of history's greatest lessons: the American Revolution, the concrete proof of the triumph of the Cup of Gethsemane over the cult of the anti-Christ. Lowry guides the reader through the still intact secret passageways so as to enable the reader to reclaim his proper birthright: Not just for the American, but for the world of future immigrants, who shall be migrating to Mars and beyond.