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A Dialogue About Leo Strauss, and the Effect of His Nihilist Philosophy Today

The following is a slightly edited transcript of The LaRouche Show on April 12. While more up-to-date information is available on LaRouche's websites, the editors thought the development and discussion here would be of use to our readers, just as the furor around the late Leo Strauss is reaching fever pitch.

Michele Steinberg: We have with us today, leaders of the LaRouche International Youth Movement—Adam Sturman from Philadelphia and Danny Bayer from California—and Tony Papert, one of the editorial board members of *EIR*. The three of them are going to talk to you, organizers of the LaRouche movement, and other listeners—who I hope become organizers for the LaRouche movement—about the Nietzschean fascists' ideology; and a cult that is running the think-tanks, certain areas of the government, and certainly the Defense Department. These nihilists, these believers in power, or force, politics—the idea that force is the only determinant of what is right—are running a genocidal war in Iraq.

To get rid of these nihilists takes more than stopping a war in Iraq. And that's what we are going to discuss today. I'd like to now ask Danny Bayer to start the briefing on what we are up against and what we're doing about it.

Danny Bayer: All right. Well, I've been part of this youth movement for quite a while, since it really started to take off about three years ago. When we first went onto the campuses to discuss some of LaRouche's ideas about economics with young people, we found that a lot of people were carrying books of Plato around, and we assumed that they would immediately become allies, because the exact same method which Socrates and Plato were using, was exactly what Lyndon LaRouche was talking about in terms of economics.

Most of our listeners probably know who Socrates is, but he's an old guy who went around and questioned people about what they were thinking; about what was the nature of their ideas—what was the underlying axiom that actually generated everything that they thought was possible? If they thought that it was impossible to sail around the Earth, it was probably because there was an underlying axiom that the geometric shape of the Earth was flat. And he would ask them questions to get them to question what those axioms were, so that they could come up with a breakthrough, and get to a higher axiom, so that they could have a different way of looking at things. And he would look at the nature of how people went from one axiom to the next.

And likewise with LaRouche's economics—looking at economics without any of the free-trade axioms and some of the things that we have come to believe in in order to go along with this stuff, in terms of human nature and other things. Lyndon LaRouche has thrown that out the window and said, "Well, we're looking at how human beings' ideas interact with the universe, and so, let's start from that standpoint."

But what we found, going onto the campuses, was that some of the people carrying these Plato books—actually, quite a few of them—had a completely different notion of what Plato and Socrates were talking about. And some of these people were the biggest foot-stampers, and barkers, for free trade, and some of the other things that seem to go completely against Plato. And so we came to the conclusion very quickly, that a lot of Platonists on these campuses, or a lot of the professors espousing to be Platonists, were actually Aristoteleans teaching Platonism. And so, with this Leo Strauss business that we're talking about today, I think we are going to get somewhat of a sense of how our global strategic situation is being shaped by this; but also, how these academic circles, and how these academicians, have actually affected very deeply the whole environment which people are being educated under.

I would just like to say a couple of things about the Socrates in Plato's *Republic* versus the Socrates that Leo Strauss takes a look at in his *The City and Man.* For those who aren't familiar with the *Republic,* it's a book on, essentially, the question of justice. Plato's brothers get into a discussion with Socrates about what justice is. And it all starts out—because Glaucon, one of Plato's brothers, and Socrates, are down by the Piraeus, and this character, Polemarchus, accosts them and gets them to go to see his old father, and to stay at their mansion.

And so Socrates asks the father what it's like to be old. And after some discussion, what Cephalus basically goes through is how it's actually kind of nice, how he's freed from sexual passions and other things like that. And the question comes up, well, maybe it's just because you're rich that it's easy to be old. And he says, Well, maybe so, but one thing I do know, is that if I wasn't just, there's no way that I would be happy being old, because it does take justice. So the question Socrates jumps at—that opportunity to really get at: Well, what is justice?

So immediately in the so-called first book of the *Republic,* they're starting to discuss what justice is. And he starts out

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with the idea that maybe it's just giving people what they're owed. If you owe someone something, that's justice; therefore, having money would definitely help you with that. Socrates asks, Well, if I owe my friend a weapon and now he has lost his mind, should I give him the axe back? Is that justice? And so [Cephalus] turns the argument over to his heir, his son [Polemarchus]. And they get into a discussion about Polemarchus' interpretation of what Simonides thought justice was.

And what they come to, through a long question and answer period, is: Is there any way that something that's good could produce anything that's not good? Could justice itself produce in something else, something that's not just? Just as, he says, there's no way that if we harmed something, it would be less good in its nature; that if we harmed a horse, it would be less good in horse quality; if we harmed a dog, it would be less good in dog quality. So, if we were to harm humans, it would be less good in terms of justice. And so it couldn't be the case that something good—that justice—could actually bring about injustice in something else.

The LaRouche Youth Movement, in campus and political events nationwide (here, in Sacramento), have encountered and confronted the numerous "Straussians" in university faculties and think-tanks, especially over the meaning of Plato's dialogues for human society today. Commentator Danny Bayer is a leader of the LaRouche Youth in California.

Strauss's Interpretation of Thrasymachus

So when they finally realize that, it's at that point that this character Thrasymachus jumps in, which is who I really want to introduce. Because this Thrasymachus character is who Leo Strauss has an interpretation of, different than what any sane human being would gather from reading this. But this is just a little bit of what Socrates says about Thrasymachus jumping into the argument, after they've just decided that justice could do no harm to anyone.

"Now Thrasymachus, even while we were conversing, had been trying several times to break in and lay hold of the discussion but he was restrained by those who sat by him who wished to hear the argument out. But when we came to a pause after I had said this, he couldn't any longer hold his peace. But gathering himself up like a wild beast he hurled himself upon us as if he would tear us to pieces. And Polemarchus and I were frightened and fluttered apart.

"He bawled out in our midst, What balderdash is this that you have been talking, and why do you Simple Simons truckle and give way to one another? But if you really wish, Socrates, to know what the just is, don't merely ask questions or plume yourself upon controverting any answer that anyone gives—since your acumen has perceived that it is easier to ask questions than answer them—but do you yourself answer and tell what you say the just is?"

And so, he immediately disrupts this discussion, and he demands that Socrates tell him what the answer is. But he rules out—he says what Socrates is not allowed to say: "And don't you be telling me that it is that which ought to be, or the beneficial or the profitable or the gainful or the advantageous, but express clearly and precisely whatever you say. For I won't take from you any such drivel as that!"

And so Socrates asks him, Well, how can I tell you? You're ruling these things out. If you were to ask me what 12 is, would you not let me say three times four, or one times 12, or two times six? So Socrates says, I think that since you are ruling certain things out, you already know what the answer is.

And after much prodding, finally Thrasymachus says, Okay, I will tell you what justice is. "Harken and hear then, I affirm that the just is nothing else than the advantage of the stronger. Well, why don't you applaud? Nay, you'll do anything but that." And so Socrates then starts to inquire of him about this concept of justice, because, I mean, it's not much of a concept of justice. He's saying, all it is, is the advantage of the stronger.

So he begins by getting at, what if the advantage of the stronger—what if they rule people to do something that isn't in their best interest? So, eventually he comes to say, No, I guess if they make a mistake, then it's ruling in the ruler's best interest, that's what justice is. And so Socrates, through this whole exchange, really turns Thrasymachus on his head at every corner, and he gets him to basically just give up. Thrasymachus realizes that he doesn't have much of a leg to stand on in the argument, because he is trying to say that it's ruling in the ruler's interest. But yet, Socrates is able to show that every time you have some kind of art, that the art of medicine doesn't rule for the interest of medicine, but it pro-

vides for the body. And, that horsemanship isn't for horsemanship, but it rules for horses. And so, in this, then, finally, Thrasymachus just decides to basically be quiet.

Now, every time that I've talked to somebody who has actually read this, without maybe some severe interaction from some professors, people really get and understand the idea in reading through it. I mean, I had to summarize it very shortly, but it really comes across that Socrates is this reasonable character, and Thrasymachus is this raving fascist, who really gets much more nasty than what I just said. By the end of it, he gets really nasty.

And so, through what Strauss writes in *The City and Man*—it's really designed not to be read—to not get through it. I mean, there's a whole lot of things where the writing, and the way it's put together, is in such a way, that you are intended to put it down. But, if you actually do make it to the part where he starts talking about Thrasymachus, he begins to go through pages of promotion of Socrates—it seems. He starts out saying, "When Thrasymachus begins to speak"—this is Leo Strauss now—"When Thrasymachus begins to speak, he behaves according to Socrates' lively description: like a raving beast. By the end of the first book he has become completely tame."

That's true, I guess. "He has been tamed by Socrates. The action of the first book consists in a marvelous victory of Socrates." And so, Leo Strauss talks for pages about this marvelous victory of Socrates over Thrasymachus; it seems as though he's siding with Socrates.

But there are a few things in it that are very odd. And they might slip by, but if you are paying attention you wonder why he says them in such a way. When he describes, "Glaucon is thoroughly displeased with Socrates' sham refutation of Thrasymachus' assertion," it's strange. He doesn't call it Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus any more. After a couple of pages now, he calls it a sham refutation. And he hasn't said anything about why it would be a sham, but yet, he's calling it a sham refutation.

And going on, finally he gets to a point where he really starts to say more of why he describes it as a sham refutation. His idea of the nature of justice—and for anyone who has read some Heidegger, some of the language may sound very familiar. I was recently reading through some, because Strauss is a student of Heidegger. Heidegger talked a lot about Plato, and very much from a secret kind of an approach. He was sort of a movie star of the professorship, dressed all in black, wowing and dazzling students with any kind of esoteric knowledge that he could throw out at them.

This is what Strauss says about this. It's a couple of sentences but—try and follow because this really gets at what he thinks of Thrasymachus: Strauss says: "The nature of justice is identical with its coming into being. Yet the origin of justice proves to be the goodness of doing injustice and the badness of suffering injustice. One can overcome this difficulty by saying that, by nature everyone is concerned only with his own good and wholly unconcerned with anyone else's good, to the point that he has no hesitation whatever to harm his fellows in any way conducive to his own good."

So now it sounds like he is saying something different than what Socrates is saying. Now he is saying, that it is actually better to be unjust. He says, "Since all men act according to nature," and their nature is that they would try to do what's best for themselves and not care about others, "they all bring about a situation that is unbearable for most of them. The majority, that is, the weaklings, figure out that every one of them would be better off, if they agreed among themselves not to harm one another. Thus they begin to lay down laws. Thus, justice arose. Yet what is true of the majority of men is not true of him who is 'truly a man,' who can take care of himself and is better off if he does not submit to law or convention. But, even the others do violence to their nature by submitting to law and justice. They submit only from fear of the evil consequences of injustice, of consequences which presuppose the detection of injustice. Hence, the perfectly unjust man whose injustice remains completely concealed, who's therefore reputed to be perfectly just, leads the happiest life. Whereas the perfectly just man, whose justice remains completely unknown, who has the reputation of being completely unjust, leads the most miserable life. This implies that Thrasymachus is not a completely unjust man." So says Strauss.

And so, what he gets at then, is he goes through a whole complicated thing of how, basically, Socrates knows all this stuff. He already knows. Yes, he did do a marvelous victory over Thrasymachus, but he knows that what Thrasymachus is saying is true and what Strauss is saying here about justice is true, that justice is just what Thrasymachus says it is. But what he is basically saying to Thrasymachus in this, is: Don't let the cat out of the bag. The masses of people need this stuff. And so we give it to the masses, even though we know the truth. And so, that's for just a brief introduction to what we are dealing with.

Tony Papert: Yeah, that is marvelous. It's very true.

Michele Steinberg: Okay, Tony Papert is here with us, and I think he is going to follow up on some of these things and go through some other areas of Strauss. I just want to add one thing, because in our research in putting this pamphlet, *The Children of Satan,* together at *EIR,* what did we find? Some of the leading people who came up with the lies—and they were total lies—about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, about Saddam Hussein's connections to al-Qaeda, the people who came up with this doctored, completely false, intelligence information, are leading Straussians, who engage constantly in studies of how they can better perfect this kind of Darwinian survival of the fittest, the strongest. And that's what's running the policy of this country. So, Tony, why don't you take it from there.

Tony Papert: Yes, well, there's going to be loose ends

At one California political event in April, former Education Secretary and conservative Republican "chief moralist" William Bennett denied thrice that he had ever heard of Leo Strauss—when the event's moderator "cracked" and admitted himself a confirmed Straussian.

in what we say, because we don't know really, absolutely, the whole picture. And also, it's rather complicated, and can't all be said in a short radio show. But hopefully you'll get the main idea, and some of the loose ends will begin to fill themselves in.

A Corner on the Truth

Start this way. It's clear that the guys who launched this war—Rumsfeld, Cheney, so on—they have a problem. That, what everybody else is saying to them—in the United States and in other countries, whether France, Germany, or whatever—it just goes in one ear and out the other. They march to their own, different drummer. And, what you say about it, what I say about it, what all the retired generals say about it, what Colin Powell says about it, it just doesn't make any difference. They obviously think it just doesn't apply to them. That they are on a different level of some sort, and whatever we may say, from whatever background, or whatever reasons, it really makes no difference. They don't even have to respond to it—of course as Rumsfeld shows: or, as he just blows up in rage. But he never responds to these objections.

Now, in the center of the war party, organizing it now for decades, you find students of this late Chicago University professor Leo Strauss (who died in 1973) as the key people. Both his students, the students of his students, and even their students—that's the third generation—and even the fourth generation, is now in government.

People like Lewis Libby, the chief of staff of Vice President Cheney. Lewis Libby is a student of a student of Strauss. He is a student of Paul Wolfowitz, who is the Deputy Secretary of Defense under Rumsfeld, actually runs the Department of Defense day to day, who is himself a student of Allan Bloom, who was the top student of Leo Strauss. So these guys, whether they learned directly from Strauss or from one of these disciples, they are conscious Straussians. They know they are. As you'll see, they are members of a kind of secret cult.

Abram Shulsky is the guy, when Rumsfeld became dissatisfied with all the intelligence from the CIA, which contradicted the reasons for which he wanted to launch a war—Rumsfeld, as many of you know, set up his own intelligence unit inside the Pentagon to give contrarian analysis to the CIA. The guy who he put in charge of that was Abram Shulsky, a conscious Straussian, a student of Straussians. It's nothing that Shulsky doesn't know; he is very aware of this. His whole life, his whole internal life, is Strauss. Similarly, on the ideological side, the famous names of conservatives, neo-conservatives and so-called: William Kristol, of the *Weekly Standard;* John Podhoretz of the *New York Post.* These are conscious Straussians, students of, in this case, again, students of students of Leo Strauss.

So they are living on a whole other level. And what Michele says, what I say, what LaRouche says, what anybody says who's really knowledgeable in the area—in which they are going in and creating, as James Woolsey says, "World War IV": They just shut it out, they don't have to listen to it. They're hearing something else. They don't hear us, they don't have to hear us.

What they think—and this is what was implied, if you listen to the sort of undertones of what Danny was reporting—what they think is, that, they know the secret, real truth. They know it through an essentially secret process of transmission from Leo Strauss to Wolfowitz, Bloom, whoever, wherever they got it; through a secret transmission of knowledge, they know the real truth. The rest of us, of course, don't know it; and not only that, we're not capable of understanding it. And not only that, if we were to hear the real truth, we are actually inferior humans—you can believe this or not but, we're actually fundamentally inferior kinds of persons to them. We are incapable of dealing with the truth. So, not only is there no point in telling us the truth, because we wouldn't understand it; there's actually, it would be a very bad idea for us to learn the truth, because if we knew the truth we would just go mad and go crazy. So, only they can handle these deep truths. The rest of us are not able to do so.

Now, basically, I came at this thing, and in the pamphlet I go into it more, but, I myself came at this thing in the early 1990s, through a book which had been a best seller in the late 1980s, called *Closing of the American Mind,* by Allan Bloom, who's an American from Indiana who turns out to be the leading student of Leo Strauss in the United States. I, and

others in the LaRouche movement, read Bloom's book during the '90s and were attracted to things in there. He seemed to be in sincere and heartfelt opposition to the counterculture. He saw that nothing is being taught in universities, that the courses are being successively diluted until really they don't teach them anything at all. And, I opposed the counterculture, and I agreed with that about universities, and I saw Bloom as a potential ally in what, for me and for some others, was a pretty dark period.

There was a disturbing thing throughout that book—and it's just the kind of thing that Danny described in Strauss's book. He had throughout the book, very emphatic statements, which seemed not to jibe with the rest of what he was saying, and which never really went anywhere. And so they were sort of meaningful hints, which he was continually dropping. But I could never figure out what he was hinting at. And in my, really, mystification at this, I began to look around among other things. I tried to read Strauss's book but, just like Danny characterized, others, I couldn't make it through all this verbiage in his books, and I just gave up on that which Danny has persevered through, at least some of it.

But I found, in our LaRouche association, various imprints of Leo Strauss, which were equally as mysterious as these dark hints. As I said in that pamphlet, we had a member who taught a Plato seminar, which had some good things in it, but it had these similar kinds of dark hints that were never explained. One which stuck in people's minds, was how he would always talk about how Socrates "seduced" the young men. Obviously; you know, eh; what does that mean? But he would never explain what it meant.

Strauss Is Teaching People To Lie

I was similarly put on to St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, where a St. John's student, or former student, told me what they had done in a Plato dialogue class, in which the teacher had counted every word in the dialogue—up to, whatever, a hundred thousand words—to show the class the central word in the dialog, like word number 50,000 out of 100,000; with the idea that the central word somehow was linked to the central concept in the dialog, which is like mystical cabalism, but which I saw Strauss had done. So, basically, I was struggling with these different elements, and then at some time during that period of the '90s I got to read Shadia Drury. I've never met her, but Shadia Drury's first book about Strauss came out in 1988. It's called *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss.* And what she explained, is what was obvious, really, as soon as she did, that Strauss was communicating, regardless of the content of what he was teaching—which Danny got into some of the content, actually I can go into more—but regardless of the content of what he was teaching, on the first level he was actually, by his example, teaching people to lie. Because, all his books, his 16 books, are nothing but a bunch of deliberate lies; namely, that they're set up to delude the great majority of people who, as I said, in Strauss'ss view, are incapable of appreciating the truth. The attempt is to make sure that they put down the book, and before they put it down, they see in the book familiar exhortations—be good, follow the Ten Commandments, be patriotic, be loyal, believe in God. And then, with that, they put the book down. The very few who are, in Strauss's view, qualified to understand the truth, read on and they see hints of precisely the opposite. Precisely the opposite, that virtue, morality, and, in general, "the good," are nothing but an illusion created for the great mass of mankind who are incapable of dealing with the truth and need fictions, like religion and morality, to keep them in line and to keep them behaved. What Nietzsche called—and Strauss is purely a Nietzschean—"the herd." What Nietzsche also called "the slaves."

One of the most illuminating things that Shadia Drury dug up, was a public debate, in print, between two leading Straussians of decades, people who had studied with Strauss for literally 30, 40 years. This debate started in the *Claremont College Review,* I think, in '84, and continued a little while in the *National Review* in '84 or '85—the exact dates are in the pamphlet. What you had, was that a leading Strauss student, still around, Thomas Pangle, had written an introduction to an anthology of a book by Strauss students. And in his introduction—and this will be familiar to you from what Danny just said—Pangle said, in somewhat sealed, Delphic language, that Socrates believed that moral virtue was something distinct from intellectual virtue, the virtue of the philosopher. Therefore the implication is that the philosopher can be a good philosopher or a great philosopher without moral virtue—which is certainly an odd idea to anybody who's read Plato, except for these guys.

Michele Steinberg: They turn it completely upside down.

Tony Papert: Right. Pangle also said, as the debate continued, that Strauss had maintained—again, he said it in a somewhat concealed way—that philosophy and science had disproven the existence of God.

So, that was Thomas Pangle.

'Philosophers' and 'Gentlemen'

Another leading Straussian, a prolific author, still around, very old now, Harry Jaffa, wrote to *Claremont College Review*—that's where he came from, Claremont College—and said, this is completely wrong, this violates everything I learned from Strauss during my more than 30 years of studies with him. And you, Pangle, are portraying Strauss as a Nietzschean.

So the two of them debated back and forth on this, and also on the question of the United States of America, because Pangle said, that for Strauss the United States of America was an aberration, and he said it in a more Delphic way. Jaffa, on the other side, said that he knew Strauss for 30 years, and Strauss had prized and valued the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution.

German-born fascist philosopher Leo Strauss, in his long career at the University of Chicago, St. John's College and Claremont College, "sent all his best students to Paris to study under Alexandre Kojève," the syndicalist fascist and enthusiast of "purgative violence." These students included Allan Bloom, the Straussian who helped fill university philosophy departments with Straussians.

So, how is it possible that these two guys who were studying with Strauss—actually they were studying at the same time—could have heard such opposite things? Well, the answer is, that he taught different things to different people. And actually, if you take a book which I use in that pamphlet, *Children of Satan,* but not this aspect of it—take Allan Bloom's translation of the *Republic,* which he published first in '68 and republished in '91. In the preface to the translation he says, in his own words, that reading Plato in a group is great, it's fine, but you're not really going to get very far that way. What you have to do is read it in a group and then those "few smart young men"—and it's always young men or boys, not women or girls or people—those "few smart young men" who really are in a position to understand it, who you identify from this public discussion, you bring aside and teach them individually, one on one.

Of course, this is what he thinks Socrates did too. But this is what Strauss did; this is what Bloom did. And one of the reasons they taught them individually, one on one, is because they taught different things to different people. They believed—and this, again, if you know what you're looking for, you'll find this very much in Bloom and in Strauss—they believed that what Nietzsche called the "superman," and Nietzsche also called it the "next man," Strauss and Bloom, who are Nietzscheans, they change the terminology, they call it the "philosopher." It's the "superman," or the "philosopher," who is the only one who's qualified to understand the truth, and all other human beings are basically sheep. But the "philosophers" cannot rule alone. They need various other kinds of people to serve them. And one of the kinds of people they need to serve them is what Strauss calls "gentlemen."

One thing, by the way, is the Straussians always recognize each other by this strange terminology of Strauss. It's like a masonic handshake.

So, the "philosophers" need "gentlemen." "Gentlemen" are part of the crowd of mass of stupid human beings who sincerely believe in public service—morality, benevolence, doing good, and the like. Think, for instance, of—William Bennet, is one of them. Think of William Bennet's *Book of Virtue,* which he wrote in order to convince children to be virtuous. These guys believe in public service. Many of them enter government. In government they try to carry out these nice things, but also, maintain a loyalty to the "philosophers"—Leo Strauss, Allan Bloom, Paul Wolfowitz—who taught them all these good things that they know. They become people in government who will take the advice of the "philosophers."

Michele Steinberg: Okay, we are going to move to questions. Both of you have given people a lot to think about. I'm going to go first to the e-mail, and then to Adam, who has some questions and also some anecdotes about this 2,500-year-old battle between truth and the manipulation of people. This is what's going on today. This is what we need to free the American population from, the tyranny that we are under.

So, the first question. Danny, I'm going to ask you to take this on, and if Tony wants to add anything. It's from Michael in Philadelphia. "Hello, my name is Michael and my question is, how can someone be a student of Leo Strauss and not be able to foresee what kind of fraud Leo Strauss's philosophy consists of?"

Danny Bayer: I think a lot of that is this idea of the different things to different people. That there might be some people that think they are learning things, like this guy Harry Jaffa, they are learning goodness and virtue, and these sorts of things. So some of the people who are maybe being groomed for positions of, not being the "philosophers," not being the Paul Wolfowitz crowd that is actually making the decisions, but maybe for a public post—like William Bennett, education tsar or something like this—these people, then, can talk about these good things in a kind of simplified version. Whereas, they are really being groomed to basically go to these people to find out what they should do with their decisions, but where they have some nice things that they can say, and so they think they got this from Strauss. And in reality, they are being trained to come ask the real people for the kinds of decisions they should make. Maybe Tony has something to add to that, but that's kind of my view of why you would have some of the people duped in such a way.

Tony Papert: I agree, and it's also because the educational standards in all our schools are so dismal, that you have some guys who are in this respect deliberately teaching people to lie. But the general level is so low, frankly, that they don't really stand out like a sore thumb as they would in a more healthy situation.

The academic process of going for a PhD, even if it's not under Strauss, is a kind of brainwashing, where you have to regurgitate the accepted opinions about everything. Right? So that's how you get a PhD.

"What did so-and-so think?"

Well, it's all nonsense. Who cares what he thought?

"No, you can't say that. You have to memorize what he said."

Once you get your PhD, then you're allowed to say maybe a little of it is nonsense, but not now. So, it's in this general brainwashing environment, they flourish, and they have taken over department after department in university after university, which was deliberately manipulated by Strauss during his lifetime; by Bloom during his lifetime, as described in Saul Bellows' book *Ravelstein;* and is being deliberately manipulated now.

Michele Steinberg: Thank you. I'm going to go to Adam in Philadelphia.

Adam Sturman: Well, here in Philadelphia, we did an intervention on one of these Straussians at Temple University. The story goes, about two weeks ago one of our part-time organizers here, Heather—I believe she's been on the show before, she goes to Temple University—found a flyer hanging up in the Political Sciences Department. The leaflet had a picture of Raphael's *School of Athens,* and it had a closeup of Plato pointing up to the heavens and right under it the name of the presentation was, "The Prologue of Theaetetus and the Problems of Knowledge"—I believe that was close to the name. It was being given by this professor named Paul Stern. We thought that this was a little bit funny. It sounded like this Paul Stern guy was a Straussian. So we went to a Straussian.net website and, sure enough, Paul Stern is a practicing Straussian at Orsinus College. He teaches political science, and he was invited to come to Temple University and give this presentation.

So, last Wednesday, we gathered about five of our youth organizers here, and we decided to intervene on him. Now, when we got to the room, it was a very small meeting, there was only about eight students there and four professors. There was five of us, so we actually constituted a large part of this meeting. But anyway, this guy Paul Stern gave a speech for about an hour—and it's really very true what Danny was saying, that you start listening to this guy speak and you just, you want to leave the room, because you can't follow anything that this guy is saying. Mr. Papert is right, you're listening to all this hogwash come out of his mouth, but then he'll say certain things that sort of stick out in your mind, that are just very odd. For instance, the way we did the intervention, was to just take up all the question and answer period. We started cornering Mr. Stern on this question of truthfulness, and does truth actually exist in the universe. One of the full-time organizers here named Ed, brought up the *Meno* dialogue. The *Meno* dialogue is where they are having a discussion about, where does knowledge come from. Socrates has an idea that all your knowledge is already contained in your soul, and when you make a discovery, you are recollecting that knowledge which you already knew.

As soon as Ed asked this question, Paul Stern says, Well, I think in that dialogue that Socrates is being a ventriloquist. Which I thought was quite odd, because I use the *Meno* dialogue constantly on the street, as a good pedagogical for young people. And I told Mr. Stern that I don't believe that, because I do this all the time and I'm no ventriloquist, everyone comes up with the same answer.

Some of the other interesting stuff he said was—you see, this guy was keeping his cards hidden. He wasn't putting them on the table. One of the first questions we confronted him on—oh, Stern, I forgot to mention, is the faculty advisor to Hillel at Orsinus College, which is the Jewish student group. So anyway, we said, you're the head of Hillel at Orsinus College, and you're a Straussian. Doesn't that conflict with your view, because Strauss was a student of Carl Schmitt [the legal apologist for the Nazis]? And he said, Well, I'm not as angry as you think I should be, because I don't agree with your analysis of the connection between Schmitt and Strauss.

Another thing that this guy said toward the end, he started bringing out—more and more of his views were coming into plain view. He said Socrates derived his love of philosophy from the emotion of Eros, which is erotic love. My girlfriend Michele jumped right in afterwards and said, No, Socrates derived his love of philosophy from agapē. And Paul Stern said, No, there is no concept of agapē in the Platonic dialogues. So that was something else odd that he said. And right afterwards, he said, Well, I only go by the words on the page. At first this guy said, Well, I don't know who Carl Schmitt is, I know very little about this guy. He was being very, very secretive, and his speech was completely dry, completely academic. After we did the intervention, I was walking back to the car and I was thinking to myself: What idea was this guy actually trying to convey to the class? And I couldn't figure it out. He didn't say a single thing that made sense.

So, my question is—I have been thinking about this for quite a while, and I've come to a pretty good understanding of this, but I think it's good for the people listening, for organizers. But you run into this question a lot, where people try to deny the connection between Leo Strauss and Carl Schmitt. For instance, one of the professors who was in the room during this presentation, he jumped in at a certain point and said, Well, if you read Leo Strauss's essay, introduction to Carl Schmitt's book called *The Concept of the Political,* there's a certain part of that book where Strauss actually says that Carl Schmitt is wrong. So, this is the type of thing, where they say, Well, Carl Schmitt and Strauss, they were students—I mean, one was a teacher the other was a student—but, Leo Strauss really didn't completely agree with Carl Schmitt. I'd like you

to comment, and to make that connection really clear in people's minds.

Tony Papert: The pamphlet that we just put out that Michele referred to, *The Children of Satan,* has a very good rundown on Carl Schmitt and who he was—by Barbara Boyd. In brief, he was the John Ashcroft [U.S. Attorney General] of the Weimar Republic and of the Nazi government. He was the man who wrote the emergency law under which Hitler became a dictator, after the Reichstag Fire. And then, in part as a result of that, he was taken into the Nazi administration as a high official; he was a member of the Prussian State Council. But, in addition to that, unofficially, he was the chief legal authority of Nazi Germany until the very final period, when he lost his positions.

He was roughly 11 years older than Strauss, and as Adam said, Schmitt wrote a very small book, or a long article, called *The Concept of the Political,* around 1930—I don't know the exact year. And what he said there was very simple, and familiar to you from neo-cons today and Ashcroft and so forth. He said that the concept of the political is the concept that there is an enemy. You must have an enemy. There must be an enemy. Actually, in Bloom's so-called interpretation of Plato, he says the same thing. You can't have government and society without an enemy. So, there's got to be an enemy, always. That's what Schmitt said.

Now, Strauss wrote a review of the book, which was not much shorter than the book, which, typical Strauss, it was quite devious. He didn't say, I agree. He didn't say, I disagree. He said there's an ambiguity in the formulation of Schmitt, and he went on about the ambiguity. But, regardless of what you or I might think about it, Schmitt was so happy with the review by Strauss, that he got it published in the same journal that had published his book, and he became friends with Strauss, even though Schmitt was a big anti-Semite and Strauss's parents were Jewish—although Strauss himself was an atheist.

So, they became friends. Schmitt encouraged Strauss in the study of Thomas Hobbes. They collaborated around that. And then, when Strauss's institute in Berlin, that he was working for at the time, began to run out of money—it was called the Institute of Jewish Science at Berlin; he wanted to get a Rockefeller fellowship so he could continue to stay alive and support himself—Schmitt recommended him for a Rockefeller fellowship. He got the fellowship. And then Strauss continued to write letters to Schmitt right up through the period that Schmitt had already joined the Nazi Party and was being brought into the government of Prussia by Göring. Strauss's last letter to Schmitt was July 10, 1933, where Schmitt was already a Nazi Party member and being brought into the Prussian government. And Strauss said to him, I have more things to say about your book *Concept of the Political,* I want to thank you again for the Rockefeller Fellowship, and I'd like you to help me get another job, which is as editor of the collected works of Hobbes. So, as we say in the pamphlet, it was Schmitt who was Strauss's most important sponsor in his career.

The "most notorious" of the Straussians, Paul Wolfowitz, because he is Deputy Secretary of Defense and chief of the neo-conservative cabal in the Defense Department and National Security Council. There are many others, as Tony Papert and the LaRouche Youth organizers explain.

Michele Steinberg: Thank you, Tony. Now I am going to go to questions from France. There's a LaRouche Youth Movement meeting going on right now in Rennes. They are listening in. They have three questions, from Kevin, David, and Julienne. Let's go to Kevin's first: "When we use the term 'Satanic,' does that mean the negation of the Christian idea of man born in the image of God?"

Tony Papert: Absolutely. Nietzsche was a total anti-Christian. He wrote a book called *The Anti-Christ.* He was referring to himself as either the anti-Christ or the anti-Christian. And Strauss agreed with this I'm quite sure, although he didn't completely spell it out in anything I've seen. But, they both agreed that religion is nonsense, but it is needed to control the masses, even though it is nonsense. They both thought that Christianity was a particularly ridiculous religion and should be gotten rid of, because the idea of agapē, which was cited earlier by Adam, is, in Nietzsche's view, and Strauss's, it's nonsense, there's no such thing. Also, the idea of the unlimited worth of the individual is nonsense. Some people are worth a lot—Strauss says it clearly—some people are worth a lot, some worth a little, and some in between. There's no intrinsic worth of a human individual, per se, and so on. So, for all these reasons, they think Christianity is ludicrous and should be replaced. I mean, for the elite, the "supermen," like themselves, don't need any religion. They know the truth: that there is no God, there is no right and wrong. But, for the masses of sheep who need these illusions, they should have more of a fire and brimstone type of religion than Christianity—what Strauss called "gods of shattering awe." They should have fierce, angry gods, who will keep them in line, like the gods of Pat Robertson.

Michele Steinberg: I have a question exactly on that point

from B. Abercrombie, questioning Strauss's philosophy and the fundamentalists'. "Is there a cross-over between the Strauss networks and those who promote the teachings of John Nelson Darby?"—I'd add, among others. Abercrombie says, "Many middle-aged boomers who have been attracted to Christian fundamentalism are hoping this [Iraq] war spreads, as they believe it is prophesized in the Bible. They are not concerned with the war. This is a dangerous mentality under the present conditions. This fundie mentality is spreading fast among boomers here in the South." Tony, you want to continue? And then Danny, if you've got something to add.

Tony Papert: This is one of the areas, to be frank, where I don't have the total answer, by any means. The closest I can get, besides what I have already said, is in this pamphlet, "The Children of Satan." On page 13, Jeff Steinberg quotes Bill Kristol, who is one of the leading neo-conservative gurus of Washington, who is a Straussian. And what he said, is, one of the main teachings of Strauss is that all politics are limited and none of them is really based on the truth. So, there is a certain philosophic disposition where you have some distance from these political fights. You don't take yourself or your cause as seriously as you would if you thought it was 100% truth. Political movements are always full of partisans fighting for their opinion. But that's very different from the truth.

So what that means, is that these guys are willing to use the lunacy of a fundamentalist for their own purposes—more than willing. To them, since none of these beliefs that most people share have any truth to them at all, it's up to you which one you use and which you don't.

It reminds me of this scene from Schiller's *Don Carlos* where the Confessor says, Well, I'm using the King's love for a whore, basically, to control him, because we are allowed to use these passions to control people in our interests. In the interests, so-called, of the Church, but it's not really the Church.

That much I can say, but certainly, Strauss didn't believe in fundamentalism, or anything of this sort. His inner core of students don't either. They think it's laughable. Obviously, they are perfectly willing to use it in their interests.

Michele Steinberg: I want to stay on this another minute and go back to Adam, because I think that also gets to the fight that you described at Temple University, when Stern was saying there is only eros in Socrates and *The Republic,* and Michele, your girlfriend, said, No, there's agapē. Do you want to elaborate on that concept of agapē that Lyn talks about all the time?

Adam Sturman: Well, the Greeks had three different words for the idea of love, and, I guess, three different ideas. The first one was eros, which is erotic love. The second one, I forget the Greek word, but, the love you feel toward your child or family. And the third one is the love of humanity, which is agapē—which is really the idea that the LaRouche Youth Movement really runs on. This idea that if you want to make a profound change in history and in culture and in society as a whole, you need to actually love everyone. If you're organizing on the street, even if somebody walks up and screams and yells at you, you still have to approach it from the standpoint that this person is a human being; and even though they are acting a little bit crazy right now, they are doing so against their will. So you want to try and find that goodness that's within everyone, and I think that is one of the things that the Straussians just—there's many things that they just don't understand, but that's really one of the things that they try to destroy, this idea that love doesn't always have to do with physical pleasure. That love can actually be a love of ideas and a love of actually doing something for future humanity.

Strauss's well-known epigone at the University of Chicago and Yale, Allan Bloom, who taught Straussian notions to Paul Wolfowitz. Papert explains, "The Alan Bloom whom I and others had through we had seen through his The Closing of the American Mind, *was not the real Alan Bloom at all."*

It was really funny that Stern actually said that. That was one of the last questions we asked him and, like I said, he really wasn't talking about any of this throughout the speech. He only started bringing out some of his ideas toward the very end. So, these Straussians—I mean, they are incredibly sneaky. Even if they say that they are not Straussians, or even if they pretend like they don't know who Carl Schmitt is, they actually do. I think, as a whole, our youth movement actually should be looking for more of these interventions to do, because I have a feeling that these Straussians are all over the place.

Actually I have a question. I wanted to know if there's more connections between Strauss, Schmitt, and the Frankfurt School.

Tony Papert: Yes, there are. It's interesting. What Strauss and the Frankfurt School have in common—it's something I should have said earlier, and it's well stated in our pamphlet. Naive people tend to think that because a guy is Jewish—Strauss'ss parents were observant Jews; he was an atheist—he couldn't possibly be a Nazi. But, it just happens to be untrue.

There were some Jews who, as Lyndon LaRouche wrote in the pamphlet, who would have gotten party cards, and in fact, been high-level Nazi officials, if they had not been Jews. Because they were Jews, they couldn't get a party card, they couldn't be officials, they couldn't stay in Nazi Germany. Many of them came to the United States, imported by, actually, pro-Nazi people here, to spread Nazism or Nazi philosophy under various Delphic names in the United States. And the Frankfurt School came over and did that from a supposed leftist point of view. And Strauss came over and did it from a supposed rightist point of view.

So, they're always "fighting" each other. In fact, Jacob Klein, who was Strauss's best friend, and the Dean of St. John's College at Annapolis for many years in the '50s, when Hannah Arendt, who's a leader of the Frankfurt School, came to St. John's College, Klein walked out on her. He never explained why, but all his admirers said, Oh, that's because she was a Nazi, he walked out. But he was a buddy with Strauss who was a Nazi. So, the reason he walked out—I mean he may have had his own reasons—but the fact is, they were bringing in pretty much the same thing, one under a left-wing label and one under a right-wing label. And the result is that, as you say in the nursery rhyme, between the two they licked the platter clean. You had to hire a bunch of Straussians, because they had all these academic references. But then, to be impartial, since they are right wingers, you have to hire a bunch of left wingers from the Frankfurt School, and that fills the whole faculty, and so there's no room for anyone else—to exaggerate slightly.

Danny Bayer: Isn't it two sides of the same coin?

Tony Papert: Yes.

Danny Bayer: Theodor Adorno and these guys are always taught that they are Heidegger's children. And much like Strauss, also studied Heidegger. So, if you can manipulate people from a global, political standpoint—. Geopolitics are much easier to run if you can convince people that they're just a bunch of slave animals, that are really nothing more than slave chattel. The Frankfurt School was manipulated a lot around the idea that their leftist socialist revolution couldn't take hold as long as there were these Classical, Western traditional values. So, they were manipulated to fight for an empire by trying to eliminate individualism. And then you just put, as the caretakers of the Classical tradition, the people that are the last people you would want to have it in their hands, and then you have both sides, and then they end up at the New School together. I think Theodore Adorno taught at the New School?

Tony Papert: Yes.

Michele Steinberg: Perfect control. I'm going to get back to the French e-mail because there's a very important question that's posed here from Julienne: "Do we know people outside the United States, for instance, in Europe, who have connections with Strauss, or close to the Straussians' ideology?"

Tony Papert: Yes, there's a very important connection. The Strauss school was not actually just a Strauss school. It was a kind of a bipolar arrangement, not in the psychological sense, although that, too. But it was kind of a two-sided arrangement here between Strauss at Chicago and a man named Kojève at Paris, Alexandre Kojève. His real name was Kojevnikov. He was an emigré Russian, who was a Bolshevik; emigrated in 1920 to study under Jaspers in Heidelberg; met Strauss. They became lifelong friends.

Strauss sent all his best students to Paris to study under Kojève. If you look at Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein*, really a bio of Bloom, one thing which Bellow does not explain is why it was that Bloom—who was in the book, is called Ravelstein, who was a Jewish guy from Indiana, who was a professor under Strauss—why Bloom was equally at home in Paris as in Chicago, and actually had more friends in Paris than in Chicago. The reason, it turns out, was that Strauss sent Bloom to Paris in '53, to study under Kojève. And he stayed there until '68, when Kojève died.[1]

Michele Steinberg: I have a question. I'm going to answer part of it, and then there'll be other comments I'm sure. This is from Tim Hollingsworth in California, who asks, "How well is Strauss known in political and philosophical circles? Is it just a secret kept within a few clandestine groups?"

For a list of Straussians, I'm going to refer people especially to Jeff Steinberg's article in *The Children of Satan* pamphlet which has been put out by Lyndon LaRouche's LaRouche in 2004 campaign. In Steinberg's piece, called "The Ignoble Liars Behind Bush's Deadly Iraq War," he names who they are. Among the Straussians are William Kristol, the editor of the *Weekly Standard.* He's the man, for example, when George W. Bush decided to go the United Nations, who wrote an essay and said, "Okay, we lost this one, we wanted a unilateral war, without going to the United Nations, but, he decided to go to that wimpy United Nations and ask these weak countries for their opinion, so, we're going to give them 105 days, after which, we're going to war."

Well, it wasn't 105 days; it was more like 135 days, or something around there, but you get the picture. Kristol is a Straussian. The most notorious Straussian—and I say notorious because he is actually in the highest level position in the Bush Administration—is Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense; crucial voice for war, crucial liar.

When I saw him last week in the midst of all of the bloodshed and agony that the people of Iraq are being put through, as bad as anything that they suffered under the recent years' dictatorship, Wolfowitz was saying, "We need a government of the Iraqi people, by the Iraqi people, for the Iraqi people";

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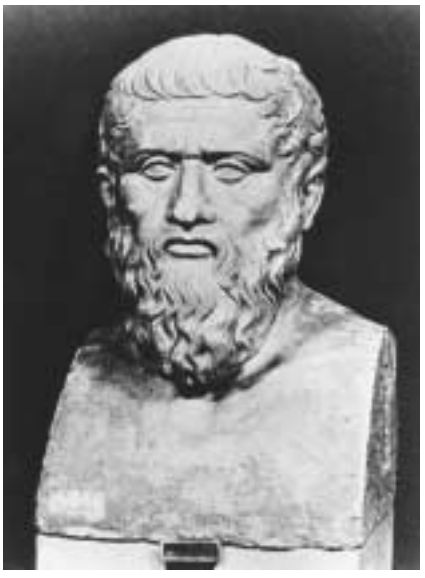
1. *EIR* has developed significantly more material on Alexandre Kojève since this interview. See *EIR*, May 30, 2003.

when, in fact, Paul Wolfowitz has designed a government which is made up of a general who is tied to the right wing of the Israeli Defense Forces butchers, and so forth—you get the picture. And Wolfowitz, in a way, exemplifies what Danny was talking about, what Strauss talks about in *The City and Man:* the thoroughly unjust man who is held up in a position of great power, in the U.S. government, and we're all supposed to venerate him.

And so, these Straussians are all over the place. Richard Perle is another one. Clarence Thomas, on the Supreme Court. Lewis Libby, the Chief of Staff for Cheney. Abram Shulsky, we mentioned before as the person who cooked the books on the intelligence. So, they're all over the place. I would say that the influence is huge, and Strauss is very well known. But, the secret is, no one has actually put out the information, that this gang of neo-conservatives, who have been together for about 30 years now, since Strauss's death, I would say, that they are a coherent group like this. Tony, you know that story about Bloom and Wolfowitz at the end of the [1991] Iraq war. Could you share that with the listeners?

Tony Papert: Sure. This is from Saul Bellow's book *Ravelstein.* There may be omissions, deliberate and not deliberate, but I'm convinced that what's there is absolutely true. He says that Bloom, in his apartment in Chicago, didn't have a telephone. He had a kind of, what Bellow describes, sort of round-aboutly, as a custom-made telephone switchboard, because his brood—remember, Bloom died in 1992, but during his life his enormous crowd of followers, students, etc., were continually calling him. He couldn't just use a regular telephone. He had to have a device where a bunch of them could call in at once. He could have some on hold, some on conference calls, so on and so forth. This he did all day. His teaching load was very light. What he was doing, was discussing people's love life, their careers, managing their careers, through graduate school—like Wolfowitz, who wound up very early in government. Also younger people, getting them even into high schools, universities, and so forth. Their love lives, matching them up, and politics. So, Bellow describes a call from Wolfowitz in '91, who told Bloom that, tomorrow, Bush, Sr. is going to announce that we're not going on to Baghdad, and Bloom basically cursed out everyone as being cowards, everyone who had made that decision. That's in the book. But, what's cumulative, you see that this is what Bloom was doing. He was also one of the first to have the equivalent of a cell phone, so that he could take his important telephone calls anywhere.

Back to the original question, just one thing. It's sort of a bizarre thing now. It's a secret society which is so enormous that it's hard to be secret. The intervention that Danny was involved in in California shows that. You now have four to five generations pumping out up to a hundred PhDs each, taking over academia, taking over the governments. So they're all over the place. And of course, it is very well known, at the same time as it is secret. And I was intrigued by a report from California, where Danny and others confronted this former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, on the question, who denied knowing what Strauss taught, which if it's true, it probably means he's senile or forgetful. Then, during that discussion, the chairman of the meeting chimed in and said, Well, I'm a Straussian. So, they're all over the place, given the way they have churned them out and given them job promotion through academia, think-tanks, and from the think-tanks you get into the government.



"[Nazi university authority Martin] Heidegger talked a lot about Plato, and very much from a secret kind of an approach. . . . We came to the conclusion very quickly, that a lot of the professors espousing to be Platonists [in the United States today], were actually Aristoteleans teaching Platonism."

Danny Bayer: It was very funny on this because, much like Adam was saying, they're sneaky. In this case, they had the crowd in the palm of their hand. William Bennett was saying, When I went to college, I thought that Strauss was the name of a pair of Levis. I have never read Strauss in my life. The crowd, they were laughing, and just thinking that we were completely insane. And then another question was asked by a member of the LaRouche Youth Movement, on justice, and it came back to Strauss again. And once again, the crowd was booing, you know, don't ask about Strauss, it has nothing to do with what we're doing. And then this, I guess, less trained moderator just burst in and had to defend Strauss head on, saying, "I'm a Straussian and there's no way what you are saying about Strauss is true, because he put the picture of the Declaration of Independence on the cover of his book, so he must like this stuff." It was completely absurd. This was to the astonishment of the audience, that then finds out that, Oh, wait a minute, they're not just making this stuff up.

Also, I looked on the Internet afterward, because this was on CSPAN a few times, and it was the case that some of these connections to William Bennett that I had seen articles and things of a few days before—or at least a few weeks before, where the links weren't there. Some of them might have been pulled intentionally. Some people may have been covering for their friend.