

H.G. Wells and the roots of British social engineering

by Mark Burdman

The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939

by John Carey

Faber and Faber, London, 1992
246 pages, paperbound, \$10.95

The Invisible Man: The Life and Liberties of H.G. Wells

by Michael Coren

Bloomsbury, London, 1993
240 pages, hardbound, £20

Will the advocates of “deconstructionism” and “political correctness” in the United States evolve into a movement openly espousing the mass extermination of “undesirable” categories of populations? That question is posed by a reading of John Carey’s *The Intellectual and the Masses*, a book which must rank among the more interesting and important books published in recent years.

In his concluding section, Carey prints this quote: “The day will certainly come when the whole of mankind will be forced to check the augmentation of the human species. . . . Nobody can doubt that this world will one day be the scene of dreadful struggles for existence on the part of mankind.”

This was not written by one of the popular proponents of the “population explosion” hysteria, such as Stanford University’s Paul Ehrlich, or by a spokesman for the malthusian Club of Rome or the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. It is a passage from Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

Some paragraphs later, Carey warns of a new “anti-popular cultural mode that can reprocess all existing culture and take it out of the reach of the majority. This mode, variously called ‘post-structuralism’ or ‘deconstruction’ or just ‘theory,’ began in the 1960s with the work of Jacques Derrida, which attracted a large body of imitators among academics and literary students eager to identify themselves as the intellectual avant-garde.”

How one gets from Adolf Hitler to Derrida and the deconstructionists is, in a sense, the substance of Carey’s argument. Carey asserts that Derrida and followers are the modern-day movement rallied behind the philosophy of the 19th-century German irrationalist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, a linkage mediated in part, as Carey indicates, through the influence of the so-called Frankfurt School of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. (For further elaboration on Derrida, the Frankfurt School, etc. see *EIR’s Feature* “Gulliver Travels to Stanford University,” March 12, 1993.). According to Carey, the real problem is rooted in the fact that a significant cluster of Great Britain’s most publicized and best-known intellectuals, writers, artists, and critics of the period from 1880 to 1939 adapted the theories of Nietzsche, to come up with proposals and ideas for the elimination of the unwanted “masses” of people. These Britons were captivated by such affirmations of Nietzsche as: “The great

majority of men have no right to existence, but are a misfortune to higher men"; the breeding of a future master race will entail "the annihilation of millions of failures"; and a "declaration of war on the masses by higher men is needed. . . . Everywhere the mediocre are combining in order to make themselves master."

Such pro-genocide Nietzscheans included, with varying degrees of intensity and commitment, H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, D.H. Lawrence, William Butler Yeats, the openly pro-Hitler Wyndham Lewis, and novelist George Gissing, as well as the founders of the Eugenics Education Society (later Eugenics Society) in 1907. Carey's documentation of the Eugenics Society link to Nietzsche confirms the report of researcher Pauline Mazumdar, in her recently published history of the British eugenics movement (see *EIR*, Dec. 11, 1992, p. 52).

Carey's book caused considerable controversy and consternation in Britain in 1992. He has produced such a density of astonishing quotes, that the case he presents is, in its essence and leaving aside some unfortunate and egregious misevaluations on his part, irrefutable. *The Intellectuals and the Masses* makes for compelling and shocking reading.

Placed alongside Coren's critical biography of H.G. Wells, it represents a significant contribution to exposing the nefarious role that British "social engineering," motivated by a belief in the superiority of the intellectual elite over the masses, has played in this century. As Coren aptly puts it, Wells "encouraged . . . the belief of the social engineers" that "exterminating or incarcerating perhaps one-half of the world's population" would bring "unparalleled benefits" to "the remaining half."

The polemic of Carey and Coren is all the more germane, at a time when British social engineers linked to London's Tavistock Institute are calculating that the slaughter in ex-Yugoslavia, which goes on day after day with no action taken by the "international community," will so acclimate western populations to human slaughter that, as a reaction formation, these populations will come to see the slaughter as a beneficial contribution to "reducing the world's population." In 1992-93, Carey and Coren are providing extensive verification for what LaRouche collaborator Carol White showed in her 1980 book, *The New Dark Ages Conspiracy*, about the role of Wells and friends in Britain, in putting forward policies that would lead the world to hell.

'Majority have no business to be alive'

Carey has obvious contempt for the self-professed higher beings who thought they were so important, and above the average man, that they could brazenly propose the re-imposition of slavery and the promulgation of social-engineering programs that would aim at elimination of whole categories of persons. He claims that these individuals were driven into a panic when laws began to be passed in the last quarter of the 19th century which expanded literacy in the U.K., and

thereby allowed for the development of such "mass" institutions as the daily mass-circulation newspaper, which was abhorred by the Nietzschean snobs. They endorsed Nietzsche's diatribe, that the rabble "vomit their bile, and call it a newspaper." D.H. Lawrence, Nietzsche's major English disciple, blurted: "Let all schools be closed at once. The great mass of humanity should never learn to read and write." According to Aldous Huxley, "Universal education has created an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid." These intellectuals abhorred all "symbols" of the masses, like canned food and cameras.

Among the hundreds of quotes Carey presents from this species, perhaps the most representative comes from the pen of George Moore, writing in his 1888 *Confessions of a Young Man*:

"Pity, that most vile of all virtues, has never been known to me. The great pagan world I love knew it not. Now the world proposes to interrupt the terrible austere laws of nature which ordain that the weak shall be trampled upon, shall be ground into death and dust. . . . Injustice we worship; all that lifts us out of the misery of life is the sublime fruit of injustice. Every immortal deed was an act of fearful injustice. . . . What care I that some millions of wretched Israelites died under Pharaoh's lash or Egypt's sun? It was well that they died that I might have the pyramids to look on. . . . The knowledge that a wrong was done—that millions of Israelites died in torments . . . is an added pleasure which I could not afford to spare. Oh, for the silence of marble courts, for the shadow of great pillars, for gold, for reticulated canopies of lilies; to see the great gladiators pass, to hear them cry the famous 'Ave Caesar,' to hold the thumb down, to see the blood flow, to fill the languid hours with the agonies of poisoned slaves! Oh, for excess, for crime! . . . Again I say that all we deem sublime in the world's history are acts of injustice; and it is certain that if man does not relinquish at once, and for ever, his vain, mad and fatal dream of justice, the world will lapse into barbarism. . . . But the old world of heroes is over now. The skies above us are dark with sentimentalism."

Many of the other quotes in the book are not so flowery. There is George Bernard Shaw, for example, in his preface to *On the Rocks*, exclaiming against the sacredness of human life: "Extermination must be put on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely and apologetically as well as thoroughly . . . if we desire a certain type of civilization and culture, we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit into it." Shaw heaped scorn on "the promiscuously bred masses," and asserted that "the majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive." There is D.H. Lawrence, writing in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: "Three cheers for the inventors of poison gas." Elsewhere, through characters in his fictional writings, Lawrence attacked as "putrid" and "stinking" such ideals as the brotherhood of man and the sanctity of human life, and called for the reintroduction of a

“proper and healthy and energetic slavery,” as well as a program of extermination, so that the lower orders could be persuaded to hand over power to the higher. There is William Butler Yeats, who wrote, “Sooner or later we must limit the families of the unintelligent classes.” He argued against improvements in agriculture and industry, since these threaten to supply everyone with the necessities of life, and so remove “the last check upon the multiplication of the inedible masses.”

‘Great useless masses of people’

And above all others, there was H.G. Wells. In his 1901 *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought*, Wells based himself on the theories of Malthus and Darwin, to rail against the “great useless masses of people,” whom he called the “People of the Abyss,” adding the forecast that the “nation that most resolutely picks over, educates, sterilizes, exports or poisons its People of the Abyss” will be in the ascendant.

Wells wrote: “It has become apparent that whole masses of human population are, as a whole, inferior in their claim upon the future, to other masses, that they cannot be given opportunities or trusted with power as the superior peoples are trusted, that their characteristic weaknesses are contagious and detrimental to the civilizing fabric, and that their range of incapacity tempts and demoralizes the strong. To give them equality is to sink to their level, to protect and cherish them is to be swamped in their fecundity.”

There is a plethora of other quotes from Wells’s writings, showing him “forecasting,” well before even World War I, such events as a future world war that would depopulate large parts of the globe, the spread of diseases into India and China that would counter the population “threat” coming from these lands, and much more. The chapter “H.G. Wells Getting Rid of People” is by itself worth the price of the book, although Carey somewhat weakens the effect with a follow-up chapter “H.G. Wells against H.G. Wells,” trying to demonstrate that Wells also had his bouts of sympathy for “the masses.” In line with this, he also wrote a review of Coren’s book for the London *Sunday Times Book Review*, criticizing Coren for being too hard on Wells.

The final final solution?

More unfortunate, is that Carey weakens the power of his arguments with certain preposterous assertions. In his preface, for example, he blames St. Augustine for having been the originator of the anti-masses world view, because “St. Augustine writes of a *massa damnata* or *massa perditionis* (condemned mass; mass of perdition), by which he means the whole human race, with the exception of those elect individuals whom God has inexplicably decided to save. . . . Those not saved will, Augustine trusts, burn in Hell. This well-established Christian precedent for disposing of the surplus ‘mass’ by combustion was . . . given practical

expression in our century in Hitler’s death camps.”

The reader should not be overly put off by such absurd nominalism. Thankfully, in the body of the book, Carey only repeats such a line of reasoning on one or two occasions. For example, he attempts to root Hitler’s attacks against the “Jewish virus” in the work of French biologist Louis Pasteur’s work on bacteria, which Carey for some reason contends was shaped by Pasteur’s “extreme right-wing politics.” The only “proof” he provides is a quote from Hitler: “The struggle in which we are now engaged is similar to the one waged by Pasteur and (discover of the tuberculosis bacillus Robert) Koch in the last century. How many diseases must owe their origins to the Jewish virus!”

Carey’s attack on Augustine ends up seeming to be gratuitous, almost a *non-sequitur*, in view of the fact that the author himself amply counters with numerous quotes from Nietzsche denouncing Christianity (“I abhor Christianity with a deadly hatred,” or “One does well to put gloves on when reading the New Testament. The proximity of so much uncleanness almost forces one to do so”), thereby establishing that Nietzsche’s enemy was the Judeo-Christian tradition.

More problematic than this kind of nominalism, is that Carey ultimately displays an ambivalent, if not schizophrenic, attitude on the question of malthusian genocide. While he clearly finds the anti-human views for which he provides extensive documentation to be repugnant, he ends up in his “Postscript,” paradoxically sympathizing with these views from the standpoint of the world in the 1990s, because of what he perceives to be the present problem of “overpopulation.”

In the “Postscript,” Carey writes that certain “things have changed” since Wells and others wrote, as “the increase in the world’s population that alarmed H.G. Wells and others has accelerated to an unexampled degree. When Wells wrote *The Shape of Things to Come* in 1933, he predicted optimistically that there might be a world war, followed by epidemic and famine, in the mid-1950s, in which half the world’s inhabitants would be wiped out, so that by 1960 the global population might have dropped to a little under 1 billion. In fact, almost exactly the opposite has happened.” Reporting the recent decades’ rise of global population to over 5 billion and the estimate that this will rise to 8.6 billion by 2025, Carey writes, “Such figures and rates of increase have never been experienced before. No one can tell how the planet will feed and accommodate such hordes, or whether the ecosystem can survive the levels of pollution they will generate.”

He then quotes from the 1978 Penguin *Atlas of World Population History*, the assessment of “academic experts” Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones:

“If population doesn’t slow down spontaneously it will have to be stopped by some sort of catastrophe, either man-made, microbial, or nutritive [sic]. Nuclear warfare is one obvious method of cutting back population but has the disadvantage that it could easily cause sufficient global contamina-

tion to extinguish the human race. Plague could be almost as devastating; it is unlikely that any bacterium could cause a numerically significant epidemic nowadays, but it is not hard to imagine a virus infection that could have a 95% mortality. Myxomatosis, a disease for which there is no treatment, caused this sort of drop in the rabbit population in many areas of the world in the 1950s. Famine is the ultimate sanction, but if it comes to that it will hardly be acting alone: in the apocalypse the four horsemen ride together.”

Carey writes, with no intent of irony, that “these solutions to the problem bear a close similarity to those suggested by H.G. Wells in his various futurist fictions. For that matter, the academics’ conclusion agrees broadly with Hitler’s warning in *Mein Kampf*. . . . The population problem that concerned Hitler . . . was, of course, almost negligible compared to the fearsomely reduplicating megalife that threatens us today.” Reporting the “frightening figures” of global population growth, Carey says that such realities “should make us sympathize more with the intellectuals’ predicament, however repellent we may find the cultural attitudes they favored and the remedies they proposed. The remedies the 21st century will perfect can only be guessed, but it seems clear that they will entail the recognition that, given the state of the planet, humans, or some humans, must now be categorized as vermin.”

Given Carey’s strongly evidenced distaste for the cultural snobs and Nietzscheans of this century, it would be unwise, in this reviewer’s view, to conclude from the Postscript that the reader has, all along, been somehow hoodwinked, and that the book, as a whole, is somehow an example of British intellectual trickery, trying to lure the reader into support for Hitlerian genocide. This reviewer rather believes that Carey suffers from a case of confusion and disorientation, which expresses itself in a most unfortunate way. It is Carey’s ultimate flaw, as evidenced in the St. Augustine problem indicated above, that he really does not understand the cultural *alternative* to the Nietzsche-Wells-Lawrence et al. trend. Without a rigorous notion of man being made in the image of God, and a concept of the relation of that notion to the 15th-century Golden Renaissance which produced the basis for a *positive* process of global population growth over the ensuing centuries, one ends up with an impotent panic over hordes of black and brown faces taking over the globe, with a perverse sympathy for the very inhumanity that one otherwise purports to condemn, and with what amounts to an advocacy for a “final solution” far worse than anything that even Hitler might have contemplated.

However, if the Postscript has the paradoxical effect of showing the reader that he or she is in fact replicating the ideas of Hitler if he or she supports the mythology of world overpopulation, then Carey’s ending will have served a useful purpose, especially given the powerful material that precedes it. Even if he has come to such bizarre conclusions, Carey has done the service of exposing the essence of the

malthusian mind, in a way that the population tracts of U.N.-associated population control organizations could never do.

On balance, though, he would have been better to have written the book without Preface and Postscript.

‘Wells varnished murderous ideas’

Coren’s book is, in some ways, simpler and perhaps less conceptual than Carey’s, but is, in its own way, just as devastating, at least as far as the subject of H.G. Wells himself is concerned. Coren conveys an idea of having been betrayed by Wells, someone he had earlier admired. In his research, he discovered that Wells was a genocidalist, who adapted the master-race theories of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the English-born ideology of German/Teutonic “master-race superiority,” for Britain. Wells was also a bitter opponent of both Jews and Roman Catholics; his personal immorality, epitomized by the extramarital affairs that he flaunted publicly, including by discussing these affairs with his devoted wife, was consistent with his broader anti-human views.

Coren begins bluntly: “Conventional literary and political history depicts H.G. Wells as being unerringly on the side of the angels. I disagree with this finding. It is my belief that Wells’ influence on his own age, and his legacy to those ages to come, were, taken as a whole, pernicious and destructive. . . . I prefer a sympathy with the truth, and if in the pursuit of such I lose sympathy for my subject, it does not in any way tarnish or lessen my motives and sense of empathy. How may we write the lives of the Hitlers, Stalins and other evil-doers if we are only allowed to compose biographies of those with whom we sympathize? When I set out to write my life of H.G. Wells, I had nothing but affection and admiration for the self-made man of so many achievements. It was only during my three years of research for the book, when I came across a plethora of negative facts and events which had been omitted from previous biographies, that I realized two things: that Wells was possibly not the man I had thought; and that other biographers had been far too selective in their inclusions.”

By the conclusion, Coren charges that “through his political writings Wells helped create an intellectual climate in the 1920s and 1930s that—though not leading directly to the social-engineering horrors of Hitler and Stalin—certainly gave credibility to the atrocities of the dictators that were to take place in the coming years. He injected permissibility into political eugenics, varnished murderous ideas with respect and reputation. At its most simplistic level the belief of the social engineers was that by exterminating or incarcerating perhaps one-half the world’s population the remaining half would enjoy unparalleled benefits. Wells not only went along with this, he encouraged it. Thus there is a stain on his writing and on his character that is indelible.”

We couldn’t agree with Coren more. It is recommended that the reader obtain the book, and see how Coren develops the argument in between his preface and conclusion.