

CLARIFYING THE SO-CALLED "HITLER CONNECTION"

by Gary North

The recent republication of two of the late David L. Hoggan's books by the anti-Zionist Institute for Historical Review persuaded me to go public about a skeleton in Christian Reconstruction's closet. Some energetic critic is eventually going to come across this skeleton and then misinterpret its significance.

Hoggan [pronounced HOEgun] was the oddest scholar I have ever known, and I have known my share. I met him in 1963 when Rushdoony hired me as a summer intern at the Center for American Studies in Burlingame, California.

The Center for American Studies

In 1962, Rushdoony resigned his Santa Cruz, California, pastorate in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in order to join the staff of the William Volker Fund, a previously libertarian educational foundation. H. W. Luhnnow, the Fund's chairman and nephew of the late William Volker, had recently fired the anarcho-capitalist economist F. A. Harper. Harper in 1962 then set up the Institute for Humane Studies in nearby Menlo Park. Luhnnow proceeded to re-staff the Volker Fund – now re-named the Center for American Studies – with people who professed faith in Christianity: economist Ivan Bierly, the director; Rushdoony; Rev. C. John Miller (later to become a faculty member of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia); former *Colliers Encyclopedia* editor W. T. Couch; and the maverick historian, Hoggan.

When I arrived, Rushdoony and Hoggan were very close. They were the two research scholars on the staff. (Miller wrote a large manuscript on public education that was never published.) Hoggan wrote the bibliography for Rushdoony's *Messianic Character of American Education*, which was being typeset that summer. The book appeared in November, 1963. Hoggan later dedicated his own book, *The Myth of the 'New History'* (1965) to Rushdoony, who had persuaded his publishing house, Craig Press, to publish it. This is a matter of public record. This is why I need to discuss "the Hoggan connection": it leads straight to Hitler.

Hoggan and Hitler

Hoggan told me that summer that he had served time in prison during World War II for having refused to fight against Germany and "for the English." He had not claimed conscientious objector status; he claimed instead his right not to fight in Britain's war against Hitler. The individual's right to select which wars he will fight in does not exist in U.S. law. He preferred jail to fighting Germany.

Hoggan was both an Anglophobe and a Germanophile – undoubtedly the only Harvard University-trained, Ph.D.-holding historian to hold such views in public after

World War II. He read numerous European languages, had a photographic memory, and had an astounding bibliographical knowledge in history. He could also be very moody. Years later, he was arrested for throwing a television set at his wife.

Hoggan was a defender of Adolph Hitler's foreign policies, making him unique, then and now. In public, he always said he was not a supporter of Hitler's domestic policies. He insisted in the 1963 introduction to *The Enforced War: When Peaceful Revision Failed* (Institute for Historical Review, 1989) that his published defense of Hitler's foreign policies "does not, however, imply in any sense that I have sought to produce an apology for Hitler and National Socialism in the domestic realm" (p. 7). This was semantically correct: he did not seek to produce such an apology, that is, not in public. In private, especially when drunk, he was a warm sympathizer of Hitler, as his publisher, Hays Craig, discovered in 1969. In 1972, Craig told me that Hoggan, apparently drunk, had called him in 1969 on the eightieth anniversary of Hitler's birth. Hoggan had bewailed the premature demise of "the Führer." Craig decided not to reprint *The Myth of the 'New History'*. The book is now published by the Institute for Historical Review.

A rare example of a criticism by Hoggan of the Nazis' domestic policies relates to economics: these policies were not sufficiently Keynesian, he insisted (*Myth*, p. 6). (They were, in fact, entirely Keynesian, as wartime spending always is: huge deficits, monetary inflation, high employment, and "fiscal stimulus.") He wrote: "The German National Socialist government made many cardinal errors during World War II, but undoubtedly the most important one was in the field of conservative economics" (*Ibid.*, p. 2). Germany's slave labor camps were, in Hoggan's view, a far less important error.

He was in 1963 the author of an unpublished manuscript on *The Myth of the Six Million*, an early attack on the story of the Jewish holocaust, which he showed to me and Rushdoony. Like everything else I ever saw of his, it needed a lot more footnotes to prove his case, and a lot less rambling on peripheral issues. It was published anonymously without his permission in 1969 by something called The New Christian Crusade Church, located in Hollywood.

In *The Enforced War*, Hoggan defended Hitler as a peace-seeker. He wrote of Hitler's land-grabs of Czechoslovakia and Austria in 1938: "Hitler proved something which the League of Nations claimed that it would prove but never did. Peaceful territorial revision in Europe was possible. No one could have said this with any assurance before 1938, because empirical evidence was lacking. The threat of force was used by Hitler to achieve these results, but the shedding of blood in senseless wars was avoided" (p. 86).

Then who was to blame for World War II? Lord Halifax:

"... the responsibility was primarily, indeed almost exclusively, that of Lord Halifax and Great Britain" (*Ibid.*, p. 6). Hoggan cited – without a footnote, as is typical of him in the really controversial statements in his books – Neville Chamberlain's supposed statement to Joseph P. Kennedy after the war broke out that "America and the world Jews had forced England into the war" (*Ibid.*, p. 520). This statement Hoggan explained as a "defensive rationalization" for Chamberlain's unwillingness to oppose Halifax, the true war-bringer (*Ibid.*, p. 521). In short, had it not been for Halifax, Chamberlain would have been correct: "Peace in our time." As Hoggan wrote in *Myth of the 'New History'*: "British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax had secretly seized control of British foreign policy from peace-loving Neville Chamberlain in October, 1938" (p. 4).

Hoggan and Rushdoony

Rushdoony agreed with Hoggan's thesis on Hitler's foreign policy, citing as authoritative evidence on Halifax Hoggan's 1961 German edition of *The Enforced War*.¹ Rushdoony does not read German, but he had read the English-language original manuscript, *When Peaceful Revision Failed*, which he also cited.² There was no question about Hoggan's beliefs on the coming of war in 1939, or Rushdoony's: it was not Hitler's fault. Hoggan was equally clear about war guilt in *Myth of the 'New History'*: Halifax caused the war. "The decisions of Lord Halifax in London, and the British diplomatic pressure at Warsaw, Paris and Rome led to the war" (p. 183). Again: "The preservation of the peace in 1939 would have been comparatively easy had Halifax and his small group of collaborators in London favored it" (p. 184). Rushdoony persuaded Craig to publish *Myth of the 'New History'*, which Hoggan then dedicated to Rushdoony.

This cooperation was doomed. The problem was, Hoggan was not a Christian. He had divorced one wife and had married another. She soon divorced him, so he remarried the first one, with a live-in girl friend in between. (He falsely claimed the girl friend as his wife on the dust jacket of *Myth of the 'New History'*.) He clearly could not be trusted. But for several years Rushdoony trusted him.

In *This Independent Republic* (1964), Rushdoony strongly recommended Hoggan's forthcoming book, *Conflict in 1937*, a study of the U.S. Supreme Court and President Roosevelt. Bierly had me read the manuscript that summer. I told him it was so poorly written that it needed major editing. The book never appeared.

Rushdoony's revisionism regarding the entry of the U.S. into World War I and World War II – that the U.S. was twice tricked into war by its Presidents – made him an easy mark for Hoggan. I was also affected, but the more I read what he had written, the less I trusted him. You had to verify everything he said, and rarely did he offer footnotes at crucial points.

The Center had a bookcase of books that visitors would sometimes be invited to select from free of charge. Someone

had placed a few copies of Olivia Maria O'Grady's unfootnoted book on "the international Jewish conspiracy," *The Beasts of the Apocalypse* (1959, self-published). When Bierly discovered them, he removed them. I never knew which staff member had ordered these copies for free distribution, but this was one more nail in the Center's coffin. By September when I departed, the staff was totally divided: Couch and Bierly vs. Rushdoony and Hoggan, with Miller hoping to avoid getting fired. Rushdoony was dismissed with a two-year retainer a few months later. The Center dissolved three years later.

The Big Lie

Time and again, Hoggan lied about the past. The biggest lie of all concerned his 1948 Harvard Ph.D. dissertation on Polish-German foreign relations, 1933-39. He insisted to me and to many others that the dissertation contained the same thesis as what he had written subsequently. While working on my Ph.D. dissertation in 1971 I visited Harvard and read his dissertation. Here was his conclusion: "Nothing that the British did in 1939 can give them a primary responsibility for the war that broke out between Germany and Poland. British responsibility here enters only indirectly with the Versailles settlement, and in this instance the British were the least to blame of all the great powers for the Versailles solution of the German-Polish question" (p. 398). He blamed . . . Poland!

His dissertation advisor, William Langer, always insisted that Hoggan had switched his conclusion after he received his Ph.D. Hoggan steadfastly denied this. Hoggan lied. He had in fact written the thesis so that Langer would approve it. After that, he reverted to form: perfidious Halifax, peace-seeking Hitler. Harvard refuses to release any Ph.D. dissertation to the public without the author's permission, allowing only visitors access to it, beginning five years after the degree is granted. Langer could not easily prove his point. Hoggan took advantage of this. (I went public with this story in *Reason* [Feb. 1976]. Hoggan never responded in public or in a letter to me. He knew he had finally been nailed.)

A Near Disaster

Rushdoony and Hoggan planned to write a world history together, with Rushdoony covering everything through the Protestant Reformation and Hoggan covering modern history. But they had a falling out over something (I never learned what) sometime after 1965. This is why Rushdoony's spiral-bound *World History Notes* (Thoburn Press, 1974) ends with the Protestant Reformation. Hoggan had promised to write the second half, but their split ended this prospect. This saved Rushdoony from horrendous embarrassment later on. This connection might have become far more important and surely more damning had Hoggan turned in his half of the book in 1965 or 1966. Rushdoony in his "he's truly one of us" phase can see no wrong in the latest presumed disciple. A total break (always without public fanfare) comes a few years later: the memory hole.

Hoggan's early connection remains peripheral to Rushdoony's work. No reference to Hoggan appears in Rushdoony's writings after 1965. By the time Christian Reconstruction became a reality as a developed system in 1973, Hoggan had no connection with Rushdoony or me.

1. Rushdoony, *The Nature of the American System* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1965), pp. 146n, 149n. The English-language version of Hoggan's book had been scheduled for publication by Devin-Adair books in late 1963, but it was repeatedly delayed, then scrapped. It first appeared in English in 1989.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 170. I saw but did not read the manuscript and galley proofs in the summer of 1963.