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Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.

August 2008

Train of Thought

Sam Aurelius Milam III

In May of 2008, I was watching an old video recording of *Trains Unlimited*, a documentary series presented several years earlier by The History Channel. I was just watching train documentaries and wasn't looking for anything with political significance. However, things don't always go as planned. While I was watching the documentary, I encountered this interesting statement in the segment about the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe.

The Santa Fe found a group of farmers who were eager to immigrate. They were Mennonites, a Christian sect who were being persecuted by the Czar in the Ukraine, which was formerly the Soviet Union.

Not only was the grammar sloppy, the Ukraine wasn't the Soviet Union. It was one of several member states of the Soviet Union. Worse yet, the narrator wasn't speaking of the Ukraine of today. He was speaking of the Ukraine of 1869. In 1869, there hadn't ever been a Soviet Union. I was surprised at such a statement from a station that bills itself as "The History Channel".

Later, in the segment titled *The American Streamliner*, I encountered yet another incorrect statement. That segment included a discussion of the circumstances of the railroads during the years leading up to World War II and shortly thereafter.

When America went off to war, it went via the rails. Weapons, ammunition, parts, and supplies were all moved by train. Some 34 million men and women were drafted and whether they were headed for combat or returning on furlough, nearly every one of them went by train.

Women weren't drafted during World War II and they didn't go into combat. After observing that error and recalling the earlier one, I began

to consider the implications. Both errors were false statements about the past. They both had political overtones. One such error might be irrelevant. Two of them could be significant.

No matter how paranoid you are, you're not paranoid enough.
—Suzanne Modeski
The X-Files

I recalled the Ministry of Truth in Orwell's *1984*. It's job had been to "rectify" history, bringing it into conformity with the current political orthodoxy. One facet of today's political orthodoxy is that women participate in the U.S. military in various combat capacities. Any other situation would be politically incorrect.

Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. "Reality control," they called it; In Newspeak, "doublethink."
—from *1984*
by George Orwell

If the government was reluctant to admit that it had ever been incorrect about anything, then it would be convenient to arrange that women had always participated in the U.S. military in combat capacities. If everyone eventually came to believe the lie and if all of the reports told the same lie, then who could prove otherwise? The lie would have passed into history and become the truth.

The success of such an unlikely scheme can sometimes seem more plausible.

The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.
—William Ross Wallace

Early in July of this year, I noticed the inscription on a T-shirt that was being worn by an 11-year-old boy. The inscription was, "If I Don't Remember It Then It Didn't Happen". I mentioned to the boy that the idea was right out of *1984*, by George Orwell. He looked blank. I asked him if he'd ever read *1984*. He mumbled, "No". All that's needed is an unending series of victories over one's own memory.

Little errors such as the ones in *Trains Unlimited* don't prove the existence in this →

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country of an actual Ministry of Truth. However, the slow accumulation of such lies, carefully orchestrated for the sake of political expediency, is a plausible notion. It would attract little attention and lead to the same result, even without a central agency controlling the process. Remember that The History Channel, as well as all libraries, universities, book publishers, newspapers, magazines, and broadcast entities operate under the authority of licenses granted by the government. Licenses can be revoked. The power to license is the power to control.

The pervasiveness of licensing in this country points to yet another fact that has been lost along the way, and replaced by lies.

fascism ... any system of government in which property is privately owned, but all industry and business is regulated by a strong national government —*Thorndike Century Senior Dictionary*, 1941

That simple fact was the truth during the era of World War II. Nobody remembers it today and the dictionary is getting old. The lies that have slipped into its place are that fascism was defeated at the end of the war and that the world was made safe for liberty.

Letter to the Editor

In regard to your comments about “Victory at Sea”— You know that I have had a long-time fascination with Eva Peron. I own three video documentaries purporting to tell her life story. None of them are uncontestably accurate but all of them are quite careless about matching visuals with spoken commentary. I know from my research what kind of hairstyle she was wearing at what year, and what some of photo-ops were when she was filmed. Anyone who saw only ONE of these documentaries might think that they were getting a historically accurate view of certain events described in the commentary, when in fact, they are not. (Or at least, not always) In relation to Eva Peron, there’s an incident that very much relates to your topic of an oft-repeated lie being accepted as truth. In October of 1945, Juan Peron was arrested and thrown in prison. The established labor leaders of Argentina organized a massive strike, which brought thousands of workers to Buenos Aires. The government, fearing civil war, released

If Americans can be made to believe that women were drafted and sent into combat in World War II, if they can be made to believe that the Soviet Union existed prior to 1869, then Reality Control is plausible. It will then be possible for Americans to believe that terrorism has always been our greatest threat, that we have more liberty in this country than exists anywhere else in the world, that we must sacrifice that liberty to protect it, that our standard of living is continuously rising, that our government is always good and protects us from evil, that our economy can grow forever, that we have an obligation to pay taxes, that the judges are honest, that the regulations are fair, and that the doctors know what’s good for us.

Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past. When no written record and no spoken word ever acknowledge a different past than what is recognized by the authorities, when no living human being remembers any other past than that, then the lies will have slipped into history and will have become the truth. ¶

Peron, and allowed him to run for the Presidency. Eva was Juan’s mistress at the time, and exactly what she did during the period in which he was in jail is almost anybody’s guess. She may have spoken at some union meetings, but she certainly did not organize the strike, or play any major role. A few years later, after Peron was elected President, he had a falling out with the union leaders who helped him into office. To cover up this change, the Peronist propaganda machine exaggerated the role played by Eva Peron, making her out to be this fantastic rabble rouser who almost single handedly brought out “the people” to save her man. This wonderfully romantic, melodramatic story was picked up by most textbooks and encyclopedias. It is repeated in the Madonna film “Evita”. The problem is that it really never happened. Only now is the real story being very slowly disseminated. After all, who wants to think that their favorite source of information is wrong?

—Sir Donald the Elusive

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Actual Dialog of a Former WordPerfect

Customer Support Employee

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by SantaClara Bob

“Ridge Hall computer assistance, may I help you?”

“Yes, well, I’m having trouble with WordPerfect.”

“What sort of trouble?”

“Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away.”

“Went away?”

“They disappeared.”

“Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing?”

“It’s blank. It won’t accept anything when I type.”

“Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?”

“How do I tell?”

“Can you see the C:\ prompt on the screen?”

“What’s a sea-prompt?”

“Never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?”

“There isn’t any cursor. I told you, it won’t accept anything.”

“Does your monitor have a power indicator?”

“What’s a monitor?”

“It’s the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it’s on?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?”

.....“Yes, I think so.”

“Great! Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it’s plugged into the wall.”

.....“Yes, it is.”

“When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?”

“No.”

“Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.”

.....“Okay, here it is.”

“Follow it for me, and tell me if it’s plugged securely into the back of your computer.”

“I can’t reach.”

“Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?”

“No.”

“Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?”

“Oh, it’s not because I don’t have the right angle. It’s because it’s dark.”

“Dark?”

“Yes, the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window.”

“Well, turn on the office light then.”

“I can’t.”

“No? Why not?”

“Because there’s a power outage.”

“A power... A power outage? Aha! Okay, we’ve got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?”

“Well, yes, I keep them in the closet.”

“Good! Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from.”

“Really? Is it that bad?”

“Yes, I’m afraid it is.”

“Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?”

“Tell them you’re too stupid to own a computer.” ∞

Old Timer’s Lore

Overheard by Sam Aurelius Milam III

Friends — When people owe you money, they tend to stay away from you. When you owe people money, they tend to stay close to you.

Piece Negotiation — A man in a bar asked a woman if she’d sleep with him for a million dollars.

“Sure!” she replied with an enthusiastic smile.

“Well,” asked the man, “would you sleep with me for \$5?”

“What!?!” exclaimed the woman, insulted. “What kind of a woman do you think I am!?!”

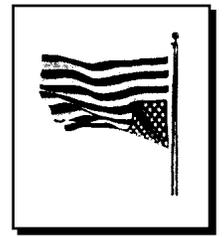
“We’ve already established that,” commented the man. “Now, we’re just talking price.” 🦋

Stray Thoughts

Sam Aurelius Milam III

Opportunity — If you catch me talking to myself, then just listen. I might be saying something important. 🦋

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Nation in Distress

Government is a good example of man's inhumanity to man. Religion is another.

—January 6, 1979
Milam's Notes



Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: SantaClara Bob; Lady Jan the Voluptuous; my mother; and Dewey and Betty. —editor

Children's Books Not Recommended by the National Library Association

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Don G.

- The Boy Who Died from Eating All of His Vegetables
- Things Rich Kids Have But You Never Will
- Let's Draw Betty and Veronica Naked
- The Care Bears Maul Some Campers and are Shot Dead ∞

Classes for Men

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Don G.

- Asking for Directions When Lost — Real Life Testimonials
- Losing the Remote to Your Significant Other — Helpline Support and Support Groups
- Learning How to Find Things, Starting With Looking in the Right Place Instead of Turning the House Upside Down While Screaming — Open Forum
- Bringing Her Flowers Is Not Harmful to Your Health — Graphics and Audio Tape
- It is Possible to Sit Quietly as She Parallel Parks — Driving Simulation ∞

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