

When They Point the Cannon at You

*Some folks are born
Made to wave the flag.
Ooh, they're red, white and blue.
But when the band plays "Hail to the Chief,"
Lord, they point the cannon right at you.
—Fortunate Son by John Fogerty*

It was probably two years ago, when, while getting dressed for work, I passed by the television set and saw another talking head on the *Today Show*. However, this talking head belonged to none other than Alan Dershowitz—that acerbic, yapping, ankle-biting, lefty lawyer—who, to my astonishment, was extolling the virtue of torture.

I couldn't believe it.

Mr. Liberal Lawyer had found a way in his thinking to sanction torture of human beings.

Well, after Dershowitz's imprimatur of said treatment, we soon learned of revelations about what was being done to prisoners in Abu Grahیب and Gitmo.

Now the use of torture is being further legitimized as a viable tool.

Are we Americans okay with this and, if so, is it because we don't mind what happens to the supposed bad guys as long as this somehow guarantees our safety and security?

Now the government is pushing for tribunals and the circumvention of jury trials, a fundamental process in our republic.

But that's okay—right?—as long as it facilitates prosecution of the supposed bad guys.

Yeah, why should we object to torture and tribunals because, after all, it's targeting only lawful and unlawful enemy combatants? It's got nothing to do with us—right?—so we don't have a thing to be concerned about.

Or do we?

What makes us think we couldn't be classified as an unlawful enemy combatant?

Under Sec. 948a of the Military Commission Act of 2006, these are the definitions of an unlawful combatant:

“A person who has engaged in hostilities or who has purposefully and materially supported hostilities against the United States or its co-belligerents who is not a lawful enemy combatant (including a person who is part of the Taliban, al Qaeda, or associated forces);

“Or a person who, before, on, or after the date of the enactment of the Military Commissions Act of 2006, has been determined to be an unlawful enemy combatant by a Combatant Status Review Tribunal or another competent tribunal established under the authority of the President or the Secretary of Defense.”

In the first definition, what is exactly meant by *hostilities*?

A protest march? A sit-in?

Don't you see the wiggle room through which the government could expand its scope of who might be considered an *unlawful combatant*?

Would dissent against the government qualify?

What about the clause: *determined to be an unlawful enemy combatant*.

Who's doing the determining? The tribunal? If it is, then we would have no right to an appeal.

So, then, if the tribunal decides that an American citizen is an unlawful enemy combatant, could torture then be inflicted upon that individual in the pursuit of obtaining further information?

Please don't think that it can't happen here, especially in light of the rapidity with which we are losing our rights.

What happens if dissent becomes a crime against The State?

And allegiance to The State is where we've been heading for some time.

A warning about rising statism was sounded as far back as 1982 with the release of Dr. Leonard Peikoff's book *The Ominous Parallels: The End of Freedom in America*.

What brought him to the conclusion that the U.S. was headed down the fascist road?

What did he suspect? What did he know? What did he foresee?

What motivated him to write the following words nearly a quarter century ago?

"Our crisis is real. The crisis is the fact that our country, the United States of America—the freest, the most productive, and the most moral country in the world—is now moving in Hitler's direction.

"America is moving toward a Nazi form of totalitarianism. It has been doing this for decades. It has been doing so gradually, by default, and for the most part unknowingly, but it is doing so systematically and without significant opposition. In every cultural area—from science and education to art and religion to politics and economics—the trend is now unmistakable.

"There are differences between America and the Weimar Republic. Our future, as far as one can judge, is still indeterminate. But the current trend will not be checked unless we grasp, in terms of essentials, the ominous parallels between the two countries—and, above all, the basic cause behind those parallels. If we are to avoid a fate like that of Germany, we must find out what, at root, is required to turn a country, Germany or any other, into a Nazi dictatorship; and then we must uproot that root."

Peikoff, however, did leave us with a glimmer of hope.

That hope is resident in the passage I've chosen to close out this article.

First, though, I would submit we've run out of time. I hope not. But I see nothing that would indicate that this nation is about to extricate itself from the fascist maelstrom it has been sucked into.

Peikoff stated:

"Twice in our century, Germany fought to rule and impose its culture on the rest of the world. It lost both wars. But on a deeper level it is achieving its goal nevertheless. It is on the verge of winning the philosophical war against the West, with everything this implies.

"The ideas of German philosophy have long since jumped national borders and become the trend of the West. Half the countries of Europe are already enslaved by such ideas. The rest of the continent, under similar guidance, is on the point of collapse.

"There is only one country which, though paralyzed at present, is still able to resist the German takeover. In all history, it is the least likely candidate for such a takeover, if it can regain its own ideas and its self-esteem in time.

"The last battle of the war of the century is now taking place—in the last of the great, unconquered nations left on earth."