



Book Review of *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, William Blum, Common Courage Press, Monroe, Maine, 2000, 308 pp.

By Wayne Northey

[NOTE: The review is of the first edition. It is now in its third. More about it and the author are here: [Rogue State – William Blum.](#)]

A former Canadian missionary colleague, Lloyd Billingsley, has published numerous books since his new-found faith in *Americana*, and adoption of the United States as his actual and spiritual homeland. His books have catchy subtitles such as: “recovering freedom in our time”, “a critique of Marxism and the religious Left”, “how communism seduced the American film industry in the 1930s and 1940s”, and “fanaticism in our time”. In every instance, the United States of America emerges as Supreme Saviour and Ultimate Messiah. If only we had faith and blind trust in “her”. Almost all books chastise the “International Communist Conspiracy”, and uphold America as eminently “the Beautiful”, of immaculate historical conception, an unblemished paragon of virtue that shines as the sole beacon of hope in an otherwise morally bankrupt world of nations. It is, as sometimes happens with religious converts, faith in America’s civil religion of *Manifest Destiny* off the charts, a boundless fanaticism of utter blind trust in all things American.

In light of such unfathomable devotion, the final chapter of the book under review asks: “How do they get away with it? How does the United States orchestrate economies, subvert democracy, overthrow sovereign nations, torture them, chemicalize them, biologize them, radiate them... all the less-than-nice things detailed in this book, often in the full glare of the international media, with the most stunning contradictions between word and deed... without being mercilessly condemned by the world’s masses, by anyone with a social conscience, without being shunned like a leper? Without American leaders being brought before international tribunals, charged with crimes against humanity? (p. 243)” Sheer romantic mystique, and a gargantuan propaganda machine are Blum’s explanation.

Canadians have recently been entertained by comedian Rick Mercer’s hilarious “Talking to Americans”. From the current President, to state Governors and other politicians, to all kinds of Ivy League professors and students, to the normal Jane and Joe on the street, Americans have paraded on film their enormous, unconscionable ignorance of most things Canadian. It is not surprising therefore that this book should detail a similar abject ignorance of America’s true place in the world.

As numerous other publications carefully demonstrate, such as *The “Terrorism” Industry* by Edward Herman and Gerry O’Sullivan (Pantheon Books, 1989), and as meticulously documented in this publication, *the most pervasively brutal terrorist organization known to humanity is the United States of America*. If Billingsley and the vast majority of similarly duped Americans only had eyes to see, instead of spewing billingsgate against

endless lines of new “America’s/Free-world’s enemies”, the shock would be incalculable that in fact, writ large across America’s domestic and foreign policy for decades is not just *America the Ugly*, but AMERICA THE MONSTROUS, and that the only “god” trusted in by Americans blithely supportive of their “Evil Empire” is Violence.

*Rogue State* includes an Introduction, and three sections under which twenty-seven chapters are fitted. The sections are entitled: “Ours and Theirs: Washington’s Love/Hate Relationship with Terrorists and Human-Rights Violators”; “United States Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction”; “A Rogue State versus the World”.

The thesis of the book is laid out clearly from the outset in three quotes. The first is from a 1996 *Amnesty International* publication: “*Throughout the world, on any given day, a man, woman, or child is likely to be displaced, tortured, killed or ‘disappeared’, at the hands of governments or armed political groups. More often than not, the United States shares the blame* (no page number).” And: “From 1945 to the end of the century, the United States attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments, and to crush more than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes. In the process, the US caused the end of life for several million people, and condemned many millions more to a life of agony and despair. (p. 2)” Finally: “There’s a word for such a continuum of policy. Empire. The American Empire. An appellation that does not roll easily off an American tongue... The American Empire? An oxymoron [?] A compelling lust for political, economic and military hegemony over the rest of the world, divorced from moral considerations? Suggesting that to Americans is akin to telling them of one’s UFO abduction, except that they’re more likely to believe the abduction story (pp. 24 & 25).”

Several years ago, a Canadian film producer described to Peter Gzowsky, host of CBC’s defunct *Morningside*, that he had managed to capture on celluloid representatives of all players in the 1980’s Guatemalan tragedy that saw at least 200,000 Mayans and other “subversives” liquidated. “What became brutally clear”, he said, “was that a Holocaust of similar kind, though to a different degree from that in Nazi Germany, had been perpetrated against these peoples. *And the buck for responsibility stopped with the President of the United States of America.*” He then described that he had gone into deep depression in the post-production stage of the film, for he knew that his documentary, despite the undeniable evidence, would not be believed in North America – if anywhere.

When I lived for two years in West Berlin, I asked on occasion older people whom I trusted, “Did you not *know*?” They always said the word, “*Nein*”, but their eyes invariably said “Yes!!!”. During the Nuremberg Trials, one Nazi official said: “You have defeated us Nazis. But the spirit of Nazism rises like a Phoenix amongst you.”

That the vast majority of Americans and “Free-world” inhabitants could have supported Harry Truman’s decision to detonate two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in calculated acts of cold blood, instantly incinerating 120,000 Japanese civilians: men, women, and children, innocent as any other humans on earth at that time, *is beyond imagining*. No doubt the Nazi War Trials official had at least those bombs in mind when

speaking of the rising Nazi-like Phoenix. When another terrorist, Timothy McVeigh, destroyed 168 American civilians in an act of cold blood in Oklahoma City, the government of America, supported by the vast majority of its citizenry, judged that act worthy of the ultimate human penalty. Even though it was the same government that had taught McVeigh to kill in the first place. Yet Lloyd Billingsley writes, and most Americans believe, that “fanaticism in our time” is almost everything *un-American!*

Blum states: “... it can be argued – based on the objective facts of what Washington has inflicted upon the world, as described in this book – that for more than half a century American foreign policy has *in actuality*, been clinically mad (p. 26).” That of course is a line of defence in a criminal trial. Unless America can be demonstrated to be fit to stand trial. But who would do that? And at what court, even of world opinion, would America be indicted?

The premier contemporary cultural theorist on violence, René Girard, argues that scapegoating violence is most effective when most hidden. Jesus constantly challenged us to have “eyes to see”. One Hebrew prophet announced: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it (Jer 17:9)?” A Christian prophet declared: “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’... (Rom. 3:10)”.

Most chilling for me, as a Protestant Evangelical Christian, is the awareness that virtually all accepted Evangelical leaders to the South, from the foremost Evangelical icon, Billy Graham, to lesser lights such as Charles Colson and Francis Schaeffer, to international voices such as C. S. Lewis and J. I. Packer, *all* endorse/endorsed the *clinical madness* of the ultimate “Rogue State”, the world’s only Superpower. Blum dubs it “clinical madness”. There is a longer-standing old-fashioned word that applies: *sin*.

The book is well written, carefully researched, and concludes with a litany of domestic crimes committed by America that goes on for pages. It is terrible reading, but not due to the author’s skill, which is admirable. Highly recommended.

The most disturbing question for me as a committed Christian remains: Just what are American Evangelicals and their international supporters evangelizing for anyway? I fear, à la Lloyd Billingsley, in the end, *it is to make the world safe for America....* As Jesus would say, it thereby renders such converts “twice the sons of hell”. To which I say, in the word of Saint Paul: *Anathema!*