

## Recommended Reading in Introductory Revisionist History

Good overview on the counter-productive interventions of the U.S. empire for "freedom & democracy" around the globe (best-seller!):

*Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World* by Jonathan Kwitny (Penguin 1984).

### By James J. Martin

*Revisionist Viewpoints*

*The Saga of Hog Island*

*The Man Who Invented Genocide*

## World War II

*The Origins of the Second World War*

A.J.P. Taylor (European theatre)

*Blasting the Historical Blackout*

Harry Elmer Barnes

*President Roosevelt and the Coming of War, 1941*

by Charles Beard

## Cold War/Korea/Viet Nam

*Containment & Revolution*

David Horowitz

*Containment & Change*

Carl Oglesby

## Power Elite/Ruling Class/Conspiracy

*Who Rules America?*

*The Higher Circles*

*Bohemian Grove*

*Who Still Rules America?*

G. William Domhoff

*The Yankee & Cowboy War*

Carl Oglesby

## American Revolution

*Conceived In Liberty* (4 volumes)

Murray N. Rothbard

*Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*

Charles A. Beard

## Economic History Revisionism

*America's Great Depression*

Murray N. Rothbard

*Triumph of Conservatism* ("Robber Barons")

Gabriel Kolko

## Central American War

*Turning the Tide: U.S. Intervention in Central*

*America and the Struggle for Peace* (1986)

Noam Chomsky

*Salvador* by Joan Didion

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# Libertarian Revisionist History



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## Basics

History is an account of past events by a necessarily subjective recorder. Interpretation is inextricably bound up with the recording and presentation of events if only by the selection of which finite few moments to exalt by recording them and which infinite many others to neglect.

The world view of the historian further affects the history presented to the student or interested reader. Where one perceives meaning in human relations is where one will look for events worthy of historical note. Objective History is a myth, long recognized as such and now mainly discarded.

Thus, there are *schools* of history. Many of the differences of these schools are relatively minor in terms of fundamental ideological questions but some differences run deep, creating schools of *historiography* (the writing of history). One school, associated with Charles Beard, focused on economic reasons behind political decisions; another well-known school — or schools — is based on the world-view of Karl Marx and interprets history as grand economic-determinist cycles of class warfare. Still another, now out of vogue, saw history as the rise and fall of empires in overlapping cycles and was most strongly associated with Oswald Spengler.

## Revisionism

World War I had profound effects on many ideologies and the intellectuals who held them. Many libertarians revolted against the propaganda and censorship and challenged the official versions of the victorious states as to the causes and conduct of the war. The consensus was severely sundered for this time it was not merely the losers trying to overturn the imposed academic-establishment line of the winners, but a group of relatively respectable historians from the *winners* (as well as from the losing countries) who attempted to *revise* the historical record.

These were the Revisionists. Their opponents were the defenders of the Establishment

view, derisively labeled (in return) Court Historians.

Inspired by the revelations of the revisionist historians concerning the origins and conduct of the First World War, an entire new methodology of digging into accounts and seeking and reinterpreting first-hand evidence of critical events — that is, a Revisionist Historiography — sprang up. Soon official histories of all wars throughout history, and other events such as economic depressions, revolutions, colonial formation and administration, and even the prevalent view on the manners and customs of “lesser cultures” fell into Revision.

World War II found fewer Revisionists as more historians were co-opted into the Establishment, but a few brave souls withstood wartime repressions and post-war academic, social and economic pressures to challenge the Allied view of unrelieved Axis provocation and aggression with blameless Allies.

The Cold War brought Marxist historians (outside the Marxist states) back to the Revisionist camp and others followed with the Korean War and Viet Nam War at which time Western Revisionism reached new heights of popularity.

Today “instant Revisionists” challenge every move of the United States and its Empire in Central America, the Middle East and that of the Soviet Empire in Afghanistan and Poland and both elsewhere and others everywhere.

## Libertarian Revisionism

One historiographical school, begun by James J. Martin during World War II, remained consistently Revisionist. Martin was heavily influenced by Max Stirner philosophically and the World War I Revisionist historically, such as Charles Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes. Others followed, especially the pivotal libertarian economist Murray Rothbard, and with the explosive growth of the libertarian movement in the 1970s, a libertarian school of history developed — almost entirely Revisionist. Such names as Justus Doenecke, Arthur Ekirch, Leonard Liggio, Roy Childs, and Jeffrey Rogers Hummel became well-known at least to libertarians.

Libertarian Revisionists oppose the Court Historian view on nearly *all* issues. Where Marxists oppose “capitalist history” but may embrace the Court of Moscow or Court of Beijing, and liberal historians oppose conservative interpretations, and neo-fascists focus solely on rehabilitating the collapsed European Axis, Libertarian Revisionists challenge views by historians of all establishments and often embrace revisionist accounts by decidedly non-Libertarian — but Revisionist — historiographical outcasts.

One obvious reason for this is that Libertarians have no establishment State for whom to become Court Historians. But there is another, deeper reason: *pure* libertarians who oppose all possible states — that is, *the* (concept of the) State — must necessarily be Revisionist as long as there is a State which maintains an Establishment which controls scholarship and academic activities and hence creates an “official” Court history.

Considerably more can be said about this radical libertarian outlook applied to history and even more about the applications to historical events already made. The newsletter of Left (pure) Libertarians, *Tactics of the Movement of the Libertarian Left (TMLL)* contains “instant revisionism” on the issues of the day.

The Agorist Institute (currently on hiatus, back issues available from KoPubCo.com) issued a number of important works, which includes scholarly revisionist history articles in its journal, *The Agorist Quarterly*; the second issue, due in late 1988, for example, is devoted to advances in Cold War revisionism. AI specializes in Counter-Economics (see MLL issue pamphlet #9) and related interdisciplinary subjects and MLL considers AI our think tank.

**NEW LIBERTARIAN** magazine and newsletter, the longest-running, largest-circulation, movement magazine (since 1970) has run five special issues on Revisionist History; copies of the latest such theme issue may still be available from KoPubCo.com, official archivist for all things New Libertarian.

Coming soon: a paper on *Agorist* Historiography, integrating Counter-Economics with Revisionist History.