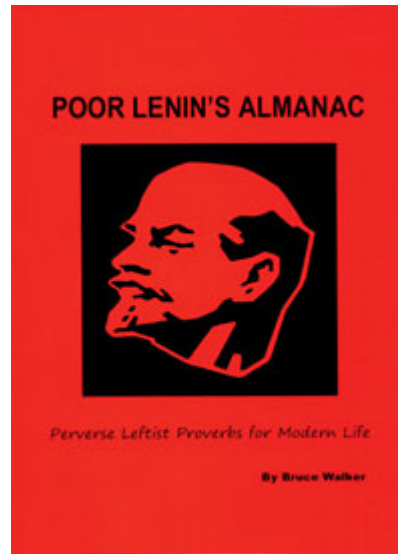




Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on January 4, 2011

## Ben Franklin Inverted

Poor Lenin's Almanac: Perverse Leftist Proverbs for Modern Life, by Bruce Walker, Outskirts Press: Denver, Colorado, 2010, 197 pages, paperback, \$20.95. Available at Amazon.com. Bruce Walker has almost turned Ben Franklin and his aphorisms in Poor Richard's Almanack on their head. Almost. He has taken many of the favorite sayings of our parents and grandparents and — in the voice of today's amoral socialists — inverted them into what amounts to the operating principles of the modern state and its salaried myrmidons.



The problem is that most of the Anglo-Saxon proverbs he inverts never appeared in Franklin's original *Poor Richard's Almanack*. But the aphorisms he inverts should be familiar to most readers:

To err is human, to forgive divine.

Children should be seen and not heard.

The bigger they are, the harder they fall.

Each of these, according to "Poor Lenin" socialists in today's world, becomes, respectively:

To err is human, to forgive ideological.

Parents should be seen and not heard.

The bigger they are, the better they are.

Walker appropriates and reverses the sayings of even political celebrities far more modern than Benjamin Franklin, such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, as well as actual phrases lifted directly from the Bible. The purpose of the book is to illustrate how perverse modern leftist culture has become in recent decades, and how it has warred against all traditional morality that originally produced American freedom.

In a religious vein, Walker's *Poor Lenin* proclaims, "Thou shall not commit monogamy." The book explains why this is virtually a leftist law: "Many social problems are 'solved' by a Jewish or Christian married couple who have been happily married for 30 years.... What is the welfare rate for this demographic group?... The traditional, stable, permanent family is the worst nightmare of anyone who would like to run your life."

One particularly poignant inverted aphorism is the dubious FDR slogan: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

While the original quote was used to allay Americans' fears of socialist economic policies that were supposed to rescue America from the Great Depression but actually deepened and extended the depression, the perverse version concocted by Walker is a perfect explanation of modern Americans' misunderstanding of freedom: "The only thing we have to fear is freedom itself."



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Roosevelt spoke of “freedom from” a variety of ills: hunger, poverty, homelessness, healthcare needs, etc. But real freedoms don’t promise delivery of material goods to people who haven’t earned them, since that also means that it imposes a form of slavery upon others who must produce and provide the goods for delivery. “Real Freedom — ‘freedom of’ — includes the chance of personal failure as well as personal success,” Walker writes. “Give more and more power over our lives to Poor Lenin, and he will be able to deliver us through more ‘freedoms from.’”

Walker also lashes out at the lack of integrity of judges on the Supreme Court in recent decades:

Judges, supposedly protecting us from the excesses of government, magically find that the very limited powers of the federal government are, in fact, infinite.... Judges have determined that a black man in America can never be a real person (in *Dred Scott*), and that public accommodations which are “separate but equal” do not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (*Plessy v. Ferguson*), and then later can routinely uphold invidiously unequal treatment of white people or men as a “remedy” for past wrongs. “The Judge Giveth. The Judge Taketh Away. Blessed is the Name of the Judge.” ... Because judges can take plain text and, through legalistic alchemy, transform black into white and white into black, law — always a preserve of rights against abuse — can be turned, instead, into a weapon against the people.

This book is a visit through the sensible mind of Bruce Walker. However, just about everyone will find something to disagree with in this book, and this reviewer is no exception. One such Walker comment is: “Poor Lenin thinks nothing, in time of war, of calling one of our greatest generals, ‘General Betray-us’ or revealing the secrets of how we are winning the war on the front pages of the *New York Times* or accusing our soldiers (without proof) of razing villages and raping virgins.” There’s a lot to pick apart in that statement. One of our “greatest generals”? Winning the war? Are we even at war at all if Congress refuses to declare it (as the U.S. Constitution requires)? Was there no proof of Abu Ghraib? Of Haditha? Of the WikiLeaks video of American helicopter pilots who knowingly gunned down a wounded man and a good Samaritan who was taking the wounded to a hospital?

“To err is human, to forgive is ideological,” Walker writes of Poor Lenin. Conservatives can’t be forgiven by liberals, Walker notes, but it’s also worth noting that conservatives can certainly forgive each other for their shortcomings.

Ultimately, the personage deemed “Poor Lenin” represents Satan himself. Poor Lenin’s rejection of morality as an objective reality is the proof. And Walker demonstrates that he’s on the side of angels with this book, even if the reader can detect a momentary misstep.



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