

THE BOOK-BANNING ACLU

Ask anyone in the ACLU what he thinks of book banning and out pours a stream of invective targeted at Hitlerians. Ironically, the ACLU is no stranger to book banning, having previously sought to ban the book *Sex Respect* from the schools in Wisconsin (the book teaches abstinence, ergo, the book must go—the ACLU thinks this represents a religious perspective). Now it's trying to ban another book, *Of Pandas and People*, on the grounds that it advances a creationist theory of mankind.

The ACLU's latest effort at book banning is occurring in Kanawha County, West Virginia; it comes on the heels of similar efforts in Burlington, Washington and Louisville, Ohio. What upsets the free speech militants is the free speech of those teachers who want to use the book in their classroom.

Of Pandas and People promotes the "intelligent design" theory of the origins of the universe. In essence, it says that the sheer complexity of life defies the science of chance. While it is not a religion book, it does support the creationist account found in the Bible and this is what angers the ACLU. Anything that might contravene the theory of evolution must automatically be censored, say the guardians of the First Amendment. Appeals to academic freedom are enough to sanction the most vile and obscene art work attacking Catholicism, but they carry no weight when it comes to gagging the speech of those with a religiously-informed perspective.

This is the same ACLU which defends as freedom of speech Nazis marching in Jewish neighborhoods, mud wrestling, dwarf tossing and child pornography. Teaching that the scientific paradigm cannot adequately account for the origins of life, however, is not something that a free society can risk. Guess we all have our hot buttons.