Wikipedia Erases Scientist from History

By Alex Berezow, PhD — February 2, 2018

If a respected scientist endorses a controversial view, should he or she be erased from history? The editors at Wikipedia think so, but only if the controversial opinion is one they personally dislike.

That's precisely what happened to a respected German paleontologist, Günter Bechly. His biography on Wikipedia has been deleted [2]. Poof. Gone. It's like he never existed.

According to German Wikipedia [3], where a version of Dr. Bechly's page (which appears to have been created in 2012 [4]) still exists, he was once an atheist and supporter of Richard Dawkins. Now, he is a devoted Catholic and, as of 2016 [5], an outspoken proponent of Intelligent Design. For that crime, the English version of Wikipedia erased him from history.

To be sure, Intelligent Design is flawed. Science works on the assumption that natural phenomena have natural explanations. However, that assumption is not inconsistent with belief in God; indeed, many scientists are deeply religious or spiritual. What the assumption does demand, though, is for science to engage in methodological atheism, even if its practitioners are not philosophically atheists. There are many scientists who attend mosque on Friday, synagogue on Saturday, or church on Sunday.

Dr. Bechly, therefore, is guilty of committing a thought-crime, and his sentence is to be purged from the Internet. This is deeply troubling, and any true free speech and free thought advocates should be alarmed.

A List of Other Scientists that Could Be Deleted

If Wikipedia is going to be in the business of punishing thought-crimes, there have been many
ideas endorsed by scientists over the years that are far, far worse than Intelligent Design. Here is a list of scientists who could be deleted from history:

**Werner Heisenberg.** A giant of quantum mechanics, Werner Heisenberg tried to build an atomic bomb [8] for the Nazis but failed.

**Alexander Graham Bell.** The inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell was a eugenicist [7] who feared the evolution of a race of deaf people, so he advocated banning sign language.

**Lynn Margulis.** The co-creator of the widely accepted endosymbiotic theory (which explains the origin of mitochondria and chloroplasts) was also a 9/11 truther and AIDS denier [8].

**Linus Pauling.** A true genius who won two Nobel Prizes, Linus Pauling spent the last years of his career promoting the pseudoscientific notion that vitamin C could help treat cancer.

RealClearScience [9] describes many others, such as Nobel Prize laureate Alexis Carrel, who wanted to become a South American dictator, and molecular biology genius Kary Mullis, who is also an astrologer.

In other words, Wikipedia has biographies dedicated to scientists who collaborated with Nazis, were unrepentant eugenicists, were conspiracy theorists, or who peddled pseudoscience. But Intelligent Design? That's a step too far.

It seems that in 2018, we have less to fear from the government than we do from companies like Amazon, Google, and Facebook. Websites like Wikipedia, which portray themselves as objective arbiters of the truth, may be the most dangerous of all. Literally, with a push of a button, they can make a person disappear.

Notes

(1) The left-leaning Israeli publication Haaretz [5] has more details.

(2) BioLogos [10], a foundation and website created by Francis Collins (the current NIH director), is operated by Christians who accept evolution and explain it in laymen's terms to other Christians.

(3) This concept was elaborated nicely by Dinesh D'Souza in What's So Great About Christianity? [11]

(4) A commenter has brought it to my attention that Wikipedia has a page [12] that lists taxa that have been named by various scientists. The page [13] for species named by Günter Bechly has also been deleted.

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Links

[1] https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Günter_Bechly#/media/File:Dr._G%C3%BCnter_Bechly,_geboren_1963,_deutscher_Pal%