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## AL GORE'S 30 YEARS OF CLIMATE ERRORS: AN ANNIVERSARY ANALYSIS

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# THE LEFT'S VOTING MACHINE



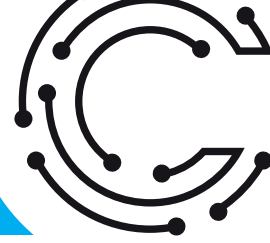
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AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

Left-wing activists understand the power of nonprofit advocacy groups as agents of social change. To empower the Left, its donors and activists have quietly built a vast network of allied PACs, voter registration nonprofits, litigation organizations, and Census “get out the count” groups to win battleground states. If successful, this will help the movement implement many of its socialist policies—from the Green New Deal to Medicare for All to the union-backed PRO Act.

This report examines the ways in which the Left, armed with torrents of mostly 501(c)(3) cash, has increased the Census count of traditionally left-leaning constituencies, attempted to win left-wing majorities in state legislatures, and tried to control the 2021 redistricting process to draw congressional maps favoring the Left.

Read *The Left's Voting Machine* at <https://capitalresearch.org/publication/the-lefts-voting-machine/>.





## CONSERVATIVES CAN ADDRESS THE ELECTION DISPARITY (AND MAYBE EVEN START WINNING)

By Parker Thayer

In the aftermath of an underwhelming performance by Republicans in the 2022 election, demands have echoed across the internet for conservative leaders to develop a ballot-harvesting and voter-mobilization infrastructure comparable to the Left's. Fed up and increasingly cynical, many conservatives, including heavyweights such as Blake Masters, Lee Zeldin, and Newt Gingrich, have decided that in our brave new world of mail-in elections and early voting, conservatives need to improvise, adapt, and overhaul their electioneering strategies or face certain doom.

The cynics are correct, but even the most cynical among them don't realize just how correct they are.

Fixing disadvantages in voting by mail is only part of the equation. Conservatives have been hopelessly outclassed by the Left's vote-getting infrastructure for over a decade. For those who take the time to look, it's not hard to see why. In a word: nonprofits.

Nonprofit organizations are a huge part of the political landscape for both sides. They can develop policies, shape agendas, and mobilize and engage citizens on the issues that affect them. While conservative nonprofit organizations excel at these first parts (quibbling over tax reform bills and researching wonky policies), virtually *none* engage in the "community organizing" and "civic engagement" work favored by liberal counterparts.

To understand the scale of the advantage this gives the Left during election season, consider the jaw-dropping numbers generated during the 2020 cycle by the four most notable get-out-the-vote nonprofit organizations of the Left: State Voices, the Voter Participation Center, the Center for Voter Information, and America Votes.

In 2020, the State Voices' national network, spanning 25 states, contacted 124 million voters, added 100 million phone numbers to Democratic-affiliated databases, and registered 2.1 million people.

The dynamic duo of the Voter Participation Center and the Center for Voter Information registered another 935,000 voters and generated 4.6 million mail-in ballot applications,

*The dynamic duo of the Voter Participation Center and the Center for Voter Information registered another 935,000 voters and generated 4.6 million mail-in ballot applications, which they estimate produced an additional 385,000 actual votes.*

which they estimate produced an additional 385,000 actual votes. In Arizona and Georgia specifically, their estimated vote impact was over 200 percent of the total presidential margin of victory.

Then there was America Votes, with its 80 national partners and 400 state partners, which reported attempting 350 million voter contacts, knocking on 7 million doors, making 175 million phone calls, and sending 100 million texts.

If just these four organizations were combined during 2019–20, the resulting group would have raised \$332 million, registered 3 million voters, and attempted 450 million voter contacts. That's roughly two contacts per eligible voter in America. More accurately, it comes to five for every Biden

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*If just these four organizations were combined during 2019–20, the resulting group would have raised \$332 million, registered 3 million voters, and attempted 450 million voter contacts.*

voter because these “nonpartisan” groups use every tactic at their disposal to make sure they target only likely Democrats with their work.

They’re so effective at targeting Democrats, in fact, that a leaked memo from Democratic super PAC Mind the Gap (lately of Sam Bankman-Fried fame—his mother was a co-founder) advised its donors to send their money to the nonprofit organizations instead of PACs because they were “4 to 10 times” more cost-effective at “netting additional Democratic votes” because of the same tax-exempt status that supposedly bars them from partisan activities. How’s that for working the system?

Meanwhile, there has been no real conservative equivalent since the Tea Party, and what infrastructure exist today is usually run by taxable PACs and campaigns more interested in spamming “urgent” donation requests than they are in organizing or registering voters.

Scott Pressler, known as “#ThePersistence” on Twitter, is probably the closest thing conservatives have to the Left’s

nonprofit get-out-the-vote empire, and Scott is just one guy, working on his own, with an old car and no significant funding. Now, Scott deserves all the credit he receives and more, but the enormous left-wing groups mentioned above probably register more Republicans by accident than Scott registers on purpose. That’s not even to mention the work those nonprofit organizations do on the census, redistricting processes, and general policy advocacy.

It’s well past time for Scott, and activist conservative organizers like him, to be armed with the tools they need to succeed at scale. Conservatives need to stop approaching 21st century elections with 20th century tactics, and whether that means embracing vote by mail or not, it’s obviously time to update the playbook. ■

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*Read previous articles from the Commentary series online at <https://capitalresearch.org/category/commentary/>.*



## THE GREAT RESET AND ITS CRITICS

By Michael Watson

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**Summary:** *In mid-2020, after COVID-19 and lockdown policies to (unsuccessfully) stop it had spread across the world, the World Economic Forum (WEF) leader Klaus Schwab, along with the man now known as King Charles III of the United Kingdom, announced the Forum's "Great Reset Initiative" to guide a state-managed, environmentalist, and corporate-aligned reconstruction of the world economy. Schwab built on the initiative with a book co-authored with French economist Thierry Malleret titled COVID-19: The Great Reset. In their book, they made predictions about how the pandemic and ruling regime it ushered in would "reset" society to the benefit of environmentalism and management of the economy by a concert of state and "stakeholder." The sequel, The Great Narrative, proposed an approach to selling the WEF's reset agenda based on Schwab and Malleret's discussions with 50 mostly left-wing, mostly academic thinkfluencers: It calls for more global governance. The radicalism of the "reset"—it's right there in the name—and the influence of Schwab and the WEF, have elicited firm opposition.*

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Few quotes stick in the conservative or libertarian crowd quite like the infamous musing of Rahm Emanuel, the incoming White House Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that, it's an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before." For Emanuel, the Obama administration, and Democrats' generational-scale majorities in both houses of Congress, that meant enacting the fiscal stimulus, a then-outrageous \$787 billion boondoggle of building projects; regulatory legislation like the Dodd-Frank banking act; and Obamacare, the statist restructuring of health care finance.

But the quote sticks because the impulse is far from Emanuel's alone. Nothing in the COVID-19 pandemic period so vividly demonstrated the impulse "to do things that you think you could not do before" as the name given to a project launched at a 2020 virtual conference of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the think tank and business league based in Europe best known for hosting the



Credit: White Cat Photo. License: Shutterstock.

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annual Davos meetings at which international politicians and corporate bigwigs lay out their visions for the world.

That name was "The Great Reset." Demonstrating the WEF's influence over a European metropolitan left-leaning sort, the project was launched not only by Klaus Schwab, the German academic who has led the WEF and been a leading opponent of shareholder primacy in corporate governance since 1971, but also by the then-Prince of Wales, now King Charles III of the United Kingdom. The project, in the words of International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva, aspires to frame the emergence from

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*Michael Watson is Capital Research Center's research director and managing editor for InfluenceWatch.*



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*The Great Reset was a project launched by Klaus Schwab, the German academic who has led the World Economic Forum and been a leading opponent of shareholder primacy in corporate governance since 1971, but also by the then-Prince of Wales, now King Charles III of the United Kingdom.*

the COVID-19 pandemic in the creation of “a greener, smarter, fairer world.”

Later in 2020, Schwab and French economist Thierry Malleret published *COVID-19: The Great Reset*, a book-length examination of the changes in society the authors presumed were likely to happen and perhaps desirable as a result of the pandemic. Increased power of the state and left-wing activism were presumed certain; rapid adoption of environmentalist-aligned, “stakeholder”-influenced corporate practices was presumed to be a necessity.

Schwab has opposed “shareholder primacy,” the view that corporate management owes shareholders the greatest profits that can be obtained in obedience to law and custom, since the 1970s. Like the financial crisis of 2008 did for Emanuel’s American Democrats, the crisis created by the COVID pandemic and the unprecedented-in-modern-times attempts to suppress it offers Schwab and the WEF the opportunity to press home their environmentalist and statist goals.

But can central planners remake a world that they cannot accurately predict? From the perspective at the turn of 2023, many of Schwab and Malleret’s predictions of the world that COVID would bring into being have not come to

pass, perhaps none more crucially than one on page 70: “At this current juncture [mid-2020], it is hard to imagine how inflation could pick up anytime soon.”

Schwab and Malleret’s sequel to *COVID-19: The Great Reset*, titled *The Great Narrative*, does little to diminish such suspicions. The “narrative” is essentially a repackaging of the same warmed-over environmentalist tropes all have heard before with little connection to the actual production of things, which makes sense given that the book is based on discussions with 50 global thinkfluencers or government officials, not with industrialists or even manufacturing-trades labor unionists. The result is a mix of technocratic gibberish and Greenpeace-in-a-suit environmentalism with the solutions for “a better future” having little to offer the Western middle and working classes beyond handwaving about a “just transition” and promises that weather-dependent energy technologies are much more stable and productive than traditional fuels. (Just ask Europeans trying to heat their homes amid an energy crisis how well that claim has aged.)

The authors’ barely veiled desire to exploit the COVID crisis to pursue left-wing ends has provoked alarm and responses, at least two of book length. ClimateDepot.com publisher and longtime critic of environmentalism Marc Marano released *The Great Reset: Global Elites and the Permanent Lockdown* while Michael Walsh released a compilation of essays titled *Against the Great Reset: Eighteen Theses Contra the New World Order*. Both focus less on Schwab’s “reset” itself than the broader agenda of ski-chalet environmentalism and chardonnay socialism popular with the professional-managerial technocratic class that is overrepresented at World Economic Forum gatherings and among the speakers at TED Talks. The right-leaning opponents’ fears are summarized in a line from a pre-COVID-era WEF video on predictions for the world in 2030: “You’ll own nothing, and you’ll be happy.”

The WEF is adamant that it does not advocate this; the line is derived from an op-ed by a Danish Social Democratic politician published by the WEF that is headlined, “I Own Nothing, Have No Privacy And Life Has Never Been Better.” Many would still respectfully dissent from such a vision.

The problem for the reset—and, to a lesser extent, its critics—is that reality always asserts itself. While the first “generation” of populist leaders epitomized by former U.S. President Donald Trump may not have been able to effect change or win election, a new generation is rising. How long





Credit: Thierry Malleret. License: <https://bit.ly/3Q0u0gM>.

Later in 2020, Schwab and French economist Thierry Malleret (pictured) published *COVID-19: The Great Reset*, a book-length examination of the changes in society the authors presumed were likely to happen and perhaps desirable as a result of the pandemic.

can the technocratic elite’s predictions fail to match reality while people’s lives get worse before the people go looking for a new elite?

## **COVID-19: The Great Reset: A Litany of Bad Predictions**

In July 2020, Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret published *COVID-19: The Great Reset*, which the authors wrote would “help understand what’s coming in a multitude of domains.” But at a little more than two years removed from the book’s publication, much has not proceeded as Schwab and Malleret expected. This has important implications for the state and “stakeholder”—left-wing interest group and left-wing NGO-industrial complex—directed future they seek.

At least in the United States, their expectations for employment and inflation were completely wrong. They argue that (from their vantage point in July 2020) the unemployment situation was “bound to deteriorate further” because a “sustainable economic recovery” would not start until a COVID-19 vaccination was developed. In fact, the combination of the end of the initial, harshest lockdowns and government assistance meant that the economy had already begun to rebound at the time of publication. Both unem-

ployment and broader dis-employment (the “U-6” measure) had peaked during the maximum extent of lockdown in April 2020 and were trending rapidly downward (from an historically astronomical level) in July 2020. The economic recovery in the U.S. began rapidly after the end of the lockdowns, with the formal recessionary period (defined as the beginning of contraction to the beginning of recovery) lasting only two months.

Schwab and Malleret were also wrong about the other side of the Phillips Curve: inflation, which has been high and persistent in both the United States and Europe since 2021. They wrote, “At this juncture, it is hard to imagine how inflation could pick up anytime soon.” But it did, and with increased inflation will come increased interest rates and government debt-servicing costs. A situation of near-zero inflation and near-zero aggregate growth over a long period as has occurred in Japan, which Schwab and Malleret suggest is a “salutary lesson that there is hope in the face of economic hardship,” is not currently in the cards for America and Europe.

As for public health and the spread of the virus, Schwab and Malleret in large part blame failures in global governance. But global governance is not a thing that meaningfully exists. The multilateral institutions, like the World Health Organization that the authors claim to be a global governance body, are more meaningfully sites of great-power rivalry. The potential consequences of WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus having been backed for his post by the People’s Republic of China, site of the first outbreaks of COVID-19, go unremarked. Schwab and Malleret predict rising tensions between the United States and Communist China, but the implications of that rivalry for their desired “global governance” appear to evade them.

Schwab and Malleret praise the effects of the “environmental reset” that lockdowns placed on the general population. Schwab, for one, has sought for decades to supplant shareholder primacy with corporate social policy modeled on

“*Schwab and Malleret were also wrong about the other side of the Phillips Curve: inflation, which has been high and persistent in both the United States and Europe since 2021.*”

environmental and social governance (ESG). Naturally, he predicts COVID-19 will lead ESG into ascendancy.

Not all the “environmental reset” predictions have come true. Andrew Cuomo, hounded from the governor’s office in New York for allegedly sexually harassing 11 women, would not today find himself considered an example of “enlightened leadership,” as Schwab and Malleret did given his commitments to an environmentalist rebuilding from the pandemic crisis. Air travel has recovered (airport security passenger throughput totals are nearly back to pre-pandemic levels) and the lockdowns revealed that many digital substitutes for in-person experiences are woefully insufficient, “virtual learning” for K–12 students being the most obvious.

Schwab and Malleret praise the possibility of digital contract tracing to control viral outbreaks, but across the Western world such schemes largely failed due to public resistance and indifferent non-adoption. Technocrats have largely blamed this outcome on concerns over data security, but the cause was likely more visceral. Free people resisted giving out tracking information on their movements to Big Tech and Big Government that might be used to confine them. Even Schwab and Malleret acknowledge the “risk of dystopia” such tracking creates.

That free peoples might consider that risk unacceptable, even in the face of disease and death, appears to evade them. Likewise do the implications of a mental health crisis caused in part by lockdowns, or the just fury of those who lost “great markers of time”—weddings, funerals, even day-to-day interactions—to unreasonably extended confinement.



Credit: WEF Pascal Bitz. License: <https://bit.ly/3tkdMzX>.

In 2021, Klaus Schwab (pictured) and Thierry Malleret wrote *The Great Narrative for a Better Future*, a follow-up volume to *The Great Reset*.

The resilience of the “old normal” against the new is perhaps best illustrated by one bad guess the authors made. In 2020, car-rental giant Hertz declared bankruptcy. Schwab and Malleret called this “the last straw” for a firm reliant on air travelers. But in October 2021, Hertz emerged from restructuring having cleared billions in debt, sold off used vehicles amid high used-car prices, and profited from a post-pandemic return to travel. The “last straw” looked more like a classical business cycle, if on an accelerated timeframe.

## ***The Great Narrative: A Bet on the Highly Unlikely***

The ambition of *COVID-19: The Great Reset* and the WEF’s broader Great Reset projects ensured that the 2020 volume would not be the last word on the question. So, in 2021 (the book was copyrighted in 2022, but the introduction is dated December 2021) Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret wrote *The Great Narrative for a Better Future*, a follow-up volume to *The Great Reset*.

If the first volume was supposed to be a description of where COVID-19 was sending the world, *The Great Narrative* was to be what Schwab and Malleret called “a framework for future action.” To that end, the authors conducted “50 conversations with foremost global thinkers and opinion-makers” to help sharpen their argument for what WEF critic and Hoover Institution senior fellow Victor Davis Hanson called:

a kitchen-sink mishmash of agendas that incorporate the U.N.’s long stale “Sustainable Development” plan (“Agenda 21”), the Green New Deal, tidbits of Black Lives Matter sloganeering, critical race theory, ‘stakeholder’ capitalism that often champions ESG, or forced corporate embrace of “environmental and social governance” over shareholder profitability, open-borders rhetoric, and boutique redistributionism dumbed down from Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*.

Given the people who made up the book’s list of global thinkfluencers, that laundry-list of warmed-over leftism is exactly what one would expect from Schwab and Malleret’s narrative. The authors’ conversationalists included several American and British academics (not a group known for their ideological diversity, unless left and radical-left count), environmentalist scholars and activists, think tankers, and two former leaders of international institutions with

ties to the Chinese Communist Party's Chinese People's Consultative Conference.

Interestingly, missing from the list are any industrialists (even environmentalist ones) or even trade union officials. This is surprising given Schwab and Malleret's praise for organized labor. No Abrahamic religious leaders were listed as discussants; one environmentalist Hindu guru was. The authors did speak with at least two identifiably center-right people from Britain and America—Dambisa Moyo, an economist and author who now sits as a Tory in the House of Lords, and historian and Hanson's Hoover Institution colleague Niall Ferguson.

Hanson's quote, taken from his essay in the critical compilation *Against the Great Reset*, accurately summarizes Schwab and Malleret's *Great Narrative*. It is worth examining the fulcrum of reality on which the Great Reset—Great Narrative hinges. The technocratic vision has a critical flaw: It admits no decision point at which policymakers or the mass public must decide whether to bear a cost for a benefit.

Therefore, in *The Great Reset* the decision to lock down or open the economy had to be presented as a false choice, with the true answer being to lock down because the economy would not recover anyway until the virus was suppressed. This claim can be evaluated against the economic performances of Florida, spiritual home of the American anti-lockdown movement, and California, dedicated to “following the science.” Florida's labor force and total employment have not only fully recovered from the pandemic, but also increased in aggregate. California's have both fallen.

In *The Great Narrative*, the solution to the difficulty that an aggressive environmentalist agenda would place on the Western middle classes who might not be ready for the “you'll own nothing, and be happy” ideal is Moore's Law for everything. Moore's Law is the claim, made by and named for longtime Intel (and Gordon E. and Betty I. Moore Foundation) head Gordon Moore, that the number of transistors on a microchip would double every two years. Less precisely, it is a statement of rapid technological progress.

Schwab and Malleret predict that because of rapid technological progress, decarbonizing the economy can occur beginning immediately, though there may be “bumps along the way” in the form of higher energy prices. This progress, combined with developments in human-machine interfaces and the “internet of things,” will effect the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” that Schwab has proclaimed.



*The reaction to lockdown showed that people will live with less for a period. And then they won't.*

Maybe it will, though as Michael Brendan Dougherty noted in his reflection on the 2022 World Economic Forum conference at Davos, whether the Davoisie would take such blessings as cause to offer the public “anything other than a future of privation and control” is unclear from their rhetoric. But what if, like their prediction of inflation rates from 2020, Schwab and Malleret are *wrong*?

If governments and corporate ESG activists decide to follow *The Great Narrative* agenda and the promised rapid technological progress does *not* emerge, the average citizen—at least in the industrialized world—will find himself substantially worse off in life-experience terms. Europeans, who have been living the decarbonization agenda for a few years now, are experiencing an energy crisis after Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, making his role as Europe's supplier of natural gas untenable. (An American president had in 2018 warned about Europe's reliance on Russian energy, to much ridicule from the great and good at the time.) Now, Europeans are figuring out how to live without central heating in case further energy rationing is needed.

The reaction to lockdown showed that people will live with less *for a period*. And then they won't. At the time of writing, even the People's Republic of China, a totalitarian dictatorship, has been forced in part by public pressure to abandon its Zero-COVID lockdown regime. The mere perception that the middle classes in the industrialized West were falling behind gave rise to the first generation of 21st century populisms of Right and Left: Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn, and so forth. They were not entirely successful; all lost to establishment figures either within their own faction or in general elections, some multiple times.

But where would a Davos agenda that fails to keep the heat on, declines into the surveillance dystopia that Schwab and Malleret themselves acknowledge as a possibility, or leads to mass unemployment as factories shutter and small businesses close lead? A second generation of Western populists is already emerging, and nothing would power it more forcefully than making people's lived experiences worse in the medium term.

## The Critics

The ambition of the Great Reset agenda was sure to provoke a response from critics. Given recent political developments in the United States that have placed conservatives in opposition both to the panopticon state and to the Big Tech industry (formerly the positions of the Left), that opposition has overwhelmingly come from the Right. Two of the most prominent books published presenting right-of-center opposition to the agenda are *Against the Great Reset: Eighteen Theses Contra the New World Order*, a collection of essays from right-leaning intellectual figures edited by writer Michael Walsh, and *The Great Reset: Global Elites and the Permanent Lockdown* by Marc Morano, a prominent critic of the environmentalist movement.

Morano's book consists mostly of direct objections to COVID-19 response policies, colloquially lumped together as "lockdowns." Most of those objections are justified. There is precious little evidence that lockdowns, mask mandates, school closures, and similar intrusions did much of anything to reduce the death and disease toll from COVID-19, and the consequences of having tried to shut down human life have only begun to be realized.

But not all are. To pick just one example, Morano's praise for longtime vaccination skeptic and environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s activism against COVID-19 regulations may be a case of "any ally in a crisis," but it risks discrediting the justified opposition to lockdowns and biomedical surveillance dystopia by attaching it to other unjustified claims. Morano is on stronger ground giving credit to those governors—he names Brian Kemp of Georgia, Kristi Noem of South Dakota, and most prominently Ron DeSantis of Florida—who opposed and either expeditiously lifted or never enacted lockdown policies while rejecting further restrictions like vaccination passports.

The more intellectual book of criticism is the Walsh-edited *Against the Great Reset*. Its "eighteen theses" are 18 essays by 17 writers (Walsh contributes two) criticizing various elements of the World Economic Forum's proposed technocracy. They vary in content and rhetorical success.

Victor Davis Hanson eviscerates the underlying ideology of the Reset in a mere 26 pages. James Poulos of the Claremont Institute fails to convince this technologically unsophisticated reader that bitcoin "can be used as the girders of a new online architecture" that can reorient man to God. Alberto Mingardi's examination of "stakeholderism," the ideology of business control underlying ESG activism, is manda-

tory reading for anyone concerned with the subject, while Conrad Black and Michael Anton seem to miss the mark on the anti-capitalism of the Reset by being too optimistic and too pessimistic, respectively.

Underlying the criticism is the not-unreasonable fear that the lockdown regime writ large—movement restrictions, restrictions on personal consumption, subjection of the individual's rights to the determination of the "common good" by a bureaucrat—will feature in the Davos World that Schwab, Malleret, and the World Economic Forum would build. The group's messaging—most infamously the "8 Predictions for the World in 2030" video that birthed "you'll own nothing and be happy" and predates COVID-19 and the Great Reset—does not breed confidence.

Michael Brendan Dougherty wrote for *National Review* that "Schwab's obsessions with global political cooperation, environmentalism, and 'the fourth industrial revolution'—his idea that the next great leap in capitalist productivity will come from integrating technology with the human person itself—guarantees that the presentations [at WEF Davos conferences] will be a mix of utopian globalism that somehow combine visions of global austerity (to reduce carbon) with nightmares about a handful of corporate and political leaders having direct access to your amygdala." It is difficult to say that he is wrong.

## Conclusion

The technocratic mentality that pervades the World Economic Forum's messaging, including *The Great Reset* and *The Great Narrative*, holds that planners—the "stakeholders" of ESG prospectuses, or the politicians and corporate officials who convene at WEF's Davos conferences—can master the world economy, the global climate, and global governance. But ancient and timeless forces continue to assert themselves.

Global governance? If it ever exists, it dies at the outbreak of major interstate war. Thus, when one-time Davos participant Vladimir Putin attempted to sack Kyiv and decapitate the Ukrainian government, global governance perished as surely as the League of Nations. The Great Powers once again divided into camps as China tepidly backed Russia and the American-European alliance aligned firmly behind Ukraine.

Whatever the World Economic Forum and the Biden administration or its climate envoy John Kerry might wish, geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the People's Republic of China is inevitable. Americans will not

consent to de facto rule by the Chinese Communist Party once they become aware of it. The Chinese Communist Party will continue to “revise” the international order created by the post–World War II United States (and its allies) in its own interests. International deal-making will take a back seat to power geopolitics.

Whither ESG? It is interesting to read Schwab and Malleret’s paeans to environmental, social, and governance practices after the collapse of the cryptocurrency giant FTX into an eight-count indictment against its trendy ex-CEO Sam Bankman-Fried for wire fraud among other offenses. Bankman-Fried was a major liberal political donor and practitioner of utilitarian “effective altruism,” derived from the utilitarianism of philosopher and *Great Narrative* discussion participant Peter Singer. Critics of ESG have made much of the fact that at least one ESG ratings agency rated FTX above ExxonMobil for “leadership and governance,” suspecting that Bankman-Fried’s trendy liberal affectations had something to do with it.

As for allowing the general public to influence policy including corporate behavior, democratic representative government already exists throughout the West. Deferring to NGOs is simply a case of gerrymandering the deciding class from one roughly evenly divided on ideological lines to one overwhelmingly of the professional-managerial Left.

What would more international migration bring? Apparently uncontrolled international migration fueled the first generation of populist figures such as Italy’s Matteo Salvini and of course former President Donald Trump, as well as the British vote to leave the European Union.

While the Biden administration in the U.S. and elements in Europe might wish to ignore border controls, there is no reason to believe that political forces will allow them to do so indefinitely.

Decarbonization and net-zero emissions? Both are bets on rapid technological progress that may or may not be realized. Forcing them into effect before the technology is scalable, reliable, and available will reduce the Western middle class’s quality of life, providing yet more fuel to the establishment’s populist and conservative rivals.

Control of the narrative against “misinformation” is already contested, as the dissident environmentalist industrialist—whom under different circumstances the WEF might praise as one of the visionaries of the Fourth Industrial Revolution—Elon Musk has taken over Twitter and launched a campaign to expose the company’s prior bad actions in information control.

And what about the permanent lockdown that the WEF’s staunchest critics fear? Such is contrary to human nature and blessedly impossible: Humanity demands togetherness, even over something as trivial as sports. The vision of a permanently locked-down world may have been best refuted by the estimated 5 million revelers in Buenos Aires, Argentina, whose assemblies forced the cancellation of the national soccer team’s World Cup trophy parade because the team bus could not safely part the seas of people. What cannot be, will not be. ■

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*A project of Capital Research Center*



# CLIMATE DOLLARS

HOW ONE FLAWED STUDY FOOLED THE MEDIA AND  
POISONED THE DEBATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In a widely cited 2014 study, sociologist Robert Brulle purportedly exposed a “climate change counter-movement” of center-right groups “distort[ing] the public’s understanding of climate change.” He calculated that from 2003 to 2010, these nonprofits recorded revenues averaging “just over \$900 million” annually—a number that led to media claims that “Conservative groups spend \$1bn a year to fight action on climate change.”

A Capital Research Center study cuts Mr. Brulle’s calculations down to size: Not only is Brulle’s assessment off by 93 percent, the resources of environmentalist groups and government agencies overwhelmingly dwarf those of skeptics. To learn more about the climate debate, visit [www.ClimateDollars.org](http://www.ClimateDollars.org).



## AL GORE'S 30 YEARS OF CLIMATE ERRORS: AN ANNIVERSARY ANALYSIS

By Ken Braun

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**Summary:** *It has been 30 years since Al Gore was transformed from forgettable U.S. senator and presidential also-ran into an influential and enduring climate alarmist cultural icon. He has won an Oscar and even the Nobel Peace Prize for being reliably wrong on energy policy, hurricanes, and most anything else of consequence. The corporate media cannot get enough of his bad advice, but U.S. policy has mostly been steered to a smarter course. Germany's dangerously clumsy reliance on Russian gas today is a look into a dark future of energy poverty that a President Gore could have inflicted on America.*

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In the summer of 1992, an otherwise formulaic U.S. senator of average impact and influence published *Earth in the Balance*, a climate policy book that landed on the best seller list. The book helped land its author, U.S. Sen. Al Gore Jr. (D-TN), the veep spot on Bill Clinton's successful 1992 presidential ticket.

Just try to name another vice president who didn't become president, yet kept his name on the front page? After his inauguration as vice president in January 1993, Gore began what is now a 30-year run as an influential cultural lighting rod. Prior to that, the son of former U.S. Sen. Al Gore Sr. (D-TN) had done little more than literally inherit the name of the family business.

In 1976, Al Jr. won a seat from Tennessee in the U.S. House. In 1984, during an open race with no incumbent for one of Tennessee's U.S. Senate seats, no other Democrat even bothered to challenge the "Al Gore" name for the nomination. Gore went on to win easily in the general election.

By Christmas 1986, Gore the Elder was whispering into the ear of Al the Younger, telling him he would win the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination. The son listened and got in the race.

Up through 1988, Gore had already spent most of his dozen years in DC trying to make climate policy a big issue for the nation and a political winner for himself. It didn't catch on. During his 1988 presidential campaign, Gore was better



Credit: Iowa Public Television. License: <https://bit.ly/3GzieCl>.

*After his inauguration as vice president in January 1993, Al Gore Jr. began what is now a 30-year run as an influential cultural lighting rod. Prior to that, the son of former U.S. Sen. Al Gore Sr. (D-TN) had done little more than literally inherit the name of the family business.*

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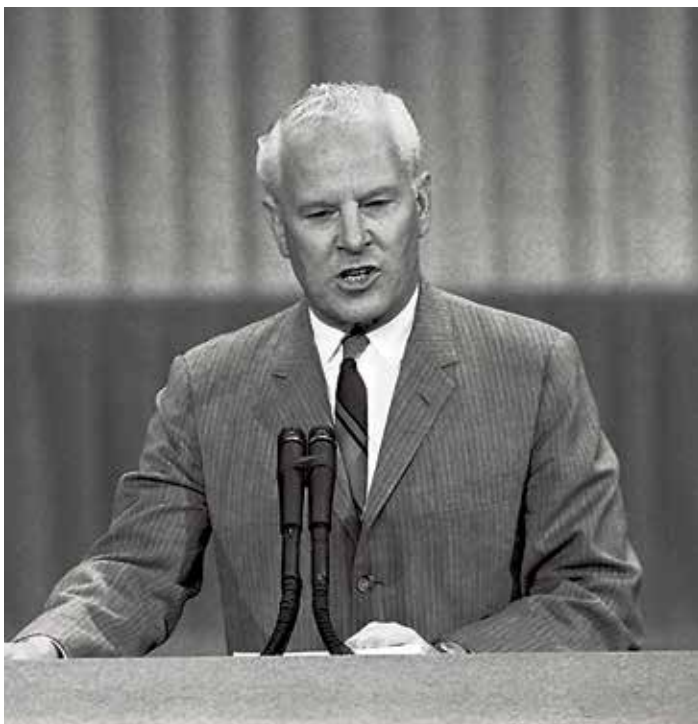
known for holding hearings in support of his then-wife Tipper's prudish and politically awkward crusade against dirty words in rock music lyrics.

Gore was still sufficiently unremarkable prior to his presidential run that authors of a January 1988 profile in the *New York Times* still felt the need to physically describe him to readers: "Mr. Gore is solidly built, dark and indisputably handsome."

His presidential campaign was not so durably constructed and imploded three months later in late April 1988. Trailing badly, Gore lasted just 14 days longer than the otherwise

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Credit: LOC. License: <https://bit.ly/3jWjCWe>.

## Glacial Recount

“I’m Al Gore and I used to be the next president of the United States,” said Gore, early in *An Inconvenient Truth*, to adoring laughter and applause.

This was a reference to the 2000 presidential election when Democratic nominee Gore lost the state of Florida—and thus the White House—by 537 votes to Republican George W. Bush. As the votes were being counted on Election Night, Gore initially conceded the presidency to Bush.

But as Bush’s reported margin of victory in Florida narrowed, Gore called back to announce he had changed his mind. An incredulous Bush reportedly asked: “You mean to tell me, Mr. Vice President, you’re retracting your concession?”

During the ensuing weeks of recounts, it was revealed that Floridians using paper punch ballots didn’t always do a nifty job of fully punching through the paper to indicate their vote preference. This allegedly fouled up the ballot-reading scanners.

In their theory of the case, Gore partisans seemed to argue that Florida Democrats were disproportionately incompetent at punching holes in paper and that jurisdictions disproportionately run by Democratic voters were particularly incapable of counting votes correctly.

Gore’s joke at the start of *An Inconvenient Truth* demonstrates the degree to which he had not moved past this theory and the belief he would have won if we had just kept recounting Florida.

Today, it is common for the corporate media to refer to these delusions as “election denial,” but they leave out references to Gore.

Back in late 2000, Bush’s lead still held up after 36 days. The U.S. Supreme Court ordered Florida to cease its investigation into whether the state’s Democrats were less competent voters, and Gore criticized the High Court’s decision, but grudgingly accepted defeat a second time.

The same general joke about the vote count in the 2000 election is repeated a second time by Gore in *An Inconvenient Truth*, this time regarding the counting of glaciers at Glacier National Park.

“Within 15 years this will be the park formerly known as Glacier,” Gore tells the audience.

*By Christmas 1986, Gore the Elder was whispering into the ear of Al the Younger, telling him he would win the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination. The son listened and got in the race.*

forgettable U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL). A distant fourth place finisher, Simon was nobody’s idea of “dark and indisputably handsome.”

Nonetheless, by the end of 1988 Simon and Gore were looking equally unpresidential and forgettable. But just four years later Gore was rescued from history and on his way to being “just one heartbeat away” from the highest office.

The iconic account of Gore’s climate creed, *Earth in the Balance* was eclipsed by the 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth*. The documentary narrated by Gore turbo-charged his post political career. It won an Academy Award for best documentary and an Emmy for best original song, and it helped Gore score a share of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

A lot of what we know of Gore’s climate beliefs over the past three decades comes from this excessively prized film.

Early in the performance, Gore quoted a warning from Mark Twain: “It ain’t what you know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so.”

By that standard, Gore has been well-equipped to get into a lot of trouble.





Credit: Mark Wagner. License: <https://bit.ly/3ZoukCa>.

The same general joke about the vote count in the 2000 election is repeated a second time by Gore in *An Inconvenient Truth*, this time regarding the counting of glaciers at Glacier National Park.

The keepers of the park even agreed at some point or other. They affixed signs telling tourists to say “Goodbye to Glaciers” and that “Computer models indicate the glaciers will all be gone by the year 2020.”

But Gore’s 15-year prophesy about the glaciers expired quietly in 2021. The 2021 visits to Glacier National Park exceeded each of the previous five years. The glaciers were still there.

“At the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850, there were about 80 glaciers in what would eventually become Glacier National Park,” proclaims the official park website today. “Based on aerial imagery from 2015 there were 26 named glaciers that met the size criteria of 0.1 km<sup>2</sup>, nine fewer than in 1966.”

By January 2020 Glacier National Park’s “say goodbye to the glaciers” signs had been sheepishly replaced with carefully vague warnings that the glaciers are indeed shrinking and will one day vanish. The park website blames human impact for some of the loss, but of course not all. The name of the park is still the same and the



“Within 15 years this will be the park formerly known as Glacier,” Al Gore told an audience at Glacier National Park.

official website warns prospective visitors to expect “about three million people visiting during each summer season.”

Glacier National Park’s website also says the “onset of a warming trend” at the end of that Little Ice Age caused the glaciers to begin their retreat and that their continued pace of decline is “due to both natural and human-caused climate change.”

The end of an ice age, little or otherwise, is an unpleasant development for glaciers. Somewhere between 7,000 and 32,000 years ago the bodies of water currently known as the Great Lakes were created from what were formerly known as glaciers.

The man who thinks he used to be the next president was wrong about the park that would be formerly known as Glacier. The decline of the glaciers at the eponymously named national park is inevitable, someday. But the alarmist catastrophe portrayed in *An Inconvenient Truth* was a convenient and alarmist deception.

## Snow Job

Gore’s prophecy regarding Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania was more precise, and just as wrong.

“Within the decade there will be no more snows of Kilimanjaro,” he said to the audience in *An Inconvenient Truth*. This occurred moments before he makes his prediction for Glacier National Park.

Alluding poorly to the title of the Ernest Hemmingway short story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, Gore was trying to claim that Africa’s tallest mountain, with a peak that stands higher than 19,000 feet, would no longer have measurable snow cover on or before 2016.

As of November 2022, Snow-forecast.com, a webpage for skiers, reported that an average of 93 combined inches of snowfall (almost 8 feet) hits just the middle altitudes of Kilimanjaro during November and December. And 9 inches of combined snowfall is the average expected for the middle elevations for July and August, the lightest two-month period for snowfall on the middle part of the mountain.

The upper altitudes of Kilimanjaro supposedly get pummeled with an average of 171 inches (*more than 14 feet*) of snow during November and December. Another 127 inches (10 more feet) is expected during April and May. The expectation for September and October is 59 inches. According to Snow-forecast.com, every two-month period on Kilimanjaro's higher elevations is expected to feature well over a foot of snowfall.

For perspective, Syracuse, New York, sometimes crowned America's snowiest city, records average snowfall of 127.8 inches *for the entire year*.

More than 20,000 people annually climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro. Pull up a Google image search for "summit of Kilimanjaro," and the results will show a majority of the climbers celebrating with snow under their feet or piled nearby. And it stands to reason most don't try the five-plus day trek to the top during the months when well over a foot of snow is expected each week.

Going on seven years past the day when Gore said there would be no more snow on Kilimanjaro, the mountain still catches more annual snow than the people who live in the snowiest American cities will see over several years.

## Hurricane Hyperbole

These failed prognostications about the future disasters of climate change were bad enough. But the hyperbole over hurricanes in *An Inconvenient Truth* was far worse.

"We have seen in the last couple of years, a lot of big hurricanes," said Gore, in the 2006 film. "The summer of 2005 has been one for the books."

In his history lecture on the hurricanes of 2005, Gore claimed the lesson to learn was that we had been ignoring "warnings that hurricanes would get stronger" because of human-inflicted climate change.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) hosts a regularly updated webpage titled "Global Warming and Hurricanes: An Overview of Current Research Results." The update as of October 2022 has this to say:

We conclude that the historical Atlantic hurricane data at this stage do not provide compelling evidence for a substantial greenhouse warming-induced century-scale increase in: frequency of tropical storms, hurricanes, or major hurricanes, or in the proportion of hurricanes that become major hurricanes.



*The deadly Hurricane Katrina obviously wasn't funny at all. The real story needed no exaggeration, but that's what it got from An Inconvenient Truth.*

The NOAA lists six named hurricanes making landfall on the continental United States in 2005, including four major ones.

What Gore knew (or should have known) *but did not mention* when he claimed there had been "a lot of big hurricanes" was that the four "major" storms of 2005 were all measured at Category 3 intensity when they made landfall. This includes the star of Gore's presentation, the obviously devastating Hurricane Katrina that ravaged New Orleans in August 2005.

Category 3 is the lowest category that still qualifies as a "major" hurricane by the NOAA's definition.

What neither Gore nor anyone else knew was the hurricane silence that would follow.

In 2006 not a single hurricane of *any kind* made landfall in the continental United States. And then, over the next 10 years through 2016, not a single major hurricane hit the USA. During seven of those years (2009–2015) just four total hurricanes of any kind made landfall, three of them Category 1 and one a Category 2.

No comparable era of docile hurricanes appears in the NOAA records going back more than a century. This period of unprecedented calm following immediately on the heels of Gore's hurricane hyperbole really was—to borrow his analysis—"one for the books."

If Gore proved anything at all, it was that Mother Nature might be real, with a wicked sense of humor, and she decided to spend 11 years making a mockery of his movie.

The deadly Hurricane Katrina obviously wasn't funny at all. The real story needed no exaggeration, but that's what it got from *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Gore's description of the tragedy is heavy on hyperbole and emotional images:

Before it hit New Orleans, it went over warmer waters. As the water temperature increases, the wind velocity increases, and the moisture content increases. And you'll see Hurricane Katrina form over Florida. And then as it comes into the Gulf over warm water it picks up energy and gets stronger and stronger and stronger. Look at that hurricane's eye. And of course, the consequences were so horrendous; there are no words to describe it.

Katrina did indeed pick up speed as it left Florida, briefly ramping all the way up to a Category 5 while still over open water.

But as noted, it had declined back to no worse than a Category 3 when it hit New Orleans and may have been weaker than that. A National Hurricane Center history of the storm observed: "The sustained winds over all of metropolitan New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain likely remained weaker than Category 3 strength."

Just from very recent history, the far less deadly and less notorious Hurricane Ian of late September 2022 made landfall in Southwest Florida with winds on the high end of Category 4 strength. The NOAA reported this produced an "unprecedented" storm surge of "12 to 18 feet above ground level" and that the city of Fort Myers received a "record high" storm surge of 7.26 feet.

New Orleans didn't suffer horribly from a mid-level hurricane, or because of uniquely warm water in the Gulf of Mexico, or from Al Gore's scary satellite photo of the hurricane's eye. The Hurricane Katrina tragedy occurred because the city was a uniquely vulnerable target for a storm.

Originally built on a precarious spot just above sea level, the New Orleans has been sinking for more than a century. It continues to do so in some spots by a couple of inches per year. More than half of it is already below sea level, some parts of it eight feet below.

Even on the calmest of days, New Orleans needs an extensive levee and flood abatement system to hold back the ocean. The deadly failure of that system during Katrina had little to do with carbon emissions or climate and everything to do with poor planning and engineering.

*An Inconvenient Truth* accomplished a peculiar example of cinematic perfection in the discussion of hurricanes, Katrina, and climate change. It took a truly Oscar-winning performance to get so much so wrong.

## The Scary Seas

What isn't so cinematic is the real story of sea level increases.

NASA has an online tracker of ocean levels that shows monthly changes back to January 1993. (Perhaps not coincidentally, this was Gore's first month as vice president). NASA shows the sea rose about 6 millimeters during 1993. A visual representation of this depth would be four pennies stacked on top of each other.

While net sea change has been upward and is "a result of human-caused global warming" (according to NASA), the tracker also shows a few sharp declines. During one 10-month period from June 2010 through April 2011 the ocean dropped 9.1 millimeters. That equates to the thickness of a stack of six pennies.

NASA's full 30 years of measurements since January 1993 adds up to a total net gain in sea level of 103 millimeters. That's about the height of a coffee mug.

Averaged on a yearly basis, the annual upward trend works out to 3.43 millimeters, a depth less than the thickness of two quarters stacked atop each other. At that rate, total sea level increases over the next *100 years* will equal 13 inches.

To put that in perspective, NASA reports the ocean rose about 8 inches over the previous 122 years, while nearly all of the world confronted much bigger problems.

If Gore had wished to honestly portray the relative degree of peril we face, he might have held up a ruler and warned us (accurately) that those living near sea level will need to continue developing coastal defenses sufficient to hold back just a little bit more seawater over the next century.

He could have reminded us that adaptation is feasible, has been going on for a long time, and is not very frightening. About one-third of the Netherlands sits below sea level, some of it 22 feet below. Sand dunes, dikes and pumps keep the ocean right where the Dutch want it. They'll likely find and deploy even better solutions in the future.

However honest it may have been for Gore to portray this global challenge with tiny stacks of coins and nods to the brilliance of the Netherlands, that wasn't going to win Oscars and other prizes.

So instead, he showed the consequences of a wildly hypothetical *20-foot increase in sea level*. This was done with an alarmist video showing Manhattan, most of Florida, Beijing, Shanghai, and many other regions being submerged under the waves.

At the current rate of sea level increase, it will take 1,800 years for the ocean to go up another 20 feet.

Let's say the annual average pace of sea rise quadruples, from the thickness of two quarters stacked atop each other to the thickness of eight quarters. That still puts the 20-foot total increase at 450 years away.

What would happen in 450 years: Obviously, a lot has been invented since 1573, when even the fiercest warships were still relying on weather-dependent wind power. (But hey, it was renewable!)

If human ingenuity was sufficient to accidentally cause the ocean to rise somewhat more over the past mere century or so, then we have a lot of time left to develop better and cheaper ways to abate, adapt to, or even reverse the process.

In 2007 a British judge ruled there were nine important factual errors presented in *An Inconvenient Truth* that made



Credit: Oldies.com. License: <https://bit.ly/3GtlUGb>.

*In 2007 a British judge ruled there were nine important factual errors presented in An Inconvenient Truth that made it unsuitable for the nation's schoolchildren unless accompanied by materials to correct the mistakes. The court ruled that the bit about sea level increases was "distinctly alarmist."*

it unsuitable for the nation's schoolchildren unless accompanied by materials to correct the mistakes. The court ruled that the bit about sea level increases was "distinctly alarmist."

How does Gore justify spinning such a hysterical hypothetical into one supposedly imminent catastrophe?

The 20-foot sea level increase was introduced with this preamble: "If Greenland broke up and melted, or if half of Greenland and half of West Antarctica broke up and melted, this is what would happen . . ."

A recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that under even their worst-case warming scenario it will take until the end of the current century for ice melt in Greenland and Antarctica combined to add half a meter of sea level increase.

Compared to 20 feet, this worst-case scenario is a little more than 20 inches over the next 77 years. And under the least alarming estimate provided, the IPCC pegs the contribution to be just 1.6 inches through the end of the century.

It wouldn't be box office gold to show Manhattan finding a way to carefully adapt to a few inches of sea level increase over the length of an average human lifetime.

So instead, Gore decided to explain what happens when 20 feet of extra water washes the world away:

After the horrible events of 9/11 we said, "Never again." But this is what would happen to Manhattan. They can measure this precisely, just as the scientists could predict precisely how much water would breach the levees in New Orleans. The area where the World Trade Center Memorial is to be located would be under water. Is it possible that we should prepare against other threats besides terrorists? Maybe we should be concerned about other problems as well.

This was an unpleasantly revealing moment because of what it implied about the man's priorities.

If Gore had collected another 600 votes in Florida during the 2000 election, he would have been president during the 9/11 attacks. And here he was, five years later, selling a mad Doomsday fantasy as a threat co-equal with a mass murder fresh in the minds of an audience who had lived through it.

In a wide field with many options, this may have been the most deplorable moment in *An Inconvenient Truth*.

## The Bridge Fuel to Nowhere

The end of the film features the former vice president in solutions mode, previewing the policy recommendations that have become his agenda ever since.

“Are we going to be left behind as the rest of the world moves forward?” Gore asked. “All of these nations have ratified Kyoto. There are only two advanced nations in the world that have not ratified Kyoto, and we are one of them. The other is Australia.”

He was speaking of the Kyoto Protocol climate pact that committed the signatories to cutting their greenhouse gas emissions.

But, once again, much as with the hurricanes, a very convenient thing happened in the years after *An Inconvenient Truth*.

From 2006, when Gore spoke those words, through 2021 total U.S. carbon emissions fell by 17.3 percent, back to roughly the American carbon emissions of 1988. On a per capita basis, the decline was 26.5 percent, a bigger drop than what Germany accomplished and close to the European Union’s 28 percent per capita decline.

Instead of “left behind,” we leaped ahead. But it wasn’t because we adopted “renewable energy,” “carbon capture sequestration,” or the other policy options Gore preached about in the film and continues to promote today.

It was the fossil fuel industry that got us there. Compared to coal, natural gas emits half the carbon per unit of energy produced. That added up to a big opportunity after 2006, when the United States became a natural gas superpower due to the hydraulic fracturing shale gas revolution. In the electricity sector, a massive switch from coal to natural gas ensued in the United States, and that slashed our carbon dioxide output.

CC —————  
*From 2006 through 2021 total U.S. carbon emissions fell by 17.3 percent, back to roughly the American carbon emissions of 1988.*

By 2021, that trade of fuels alone had led to a net reduction in annual American carbon emissions of 680 million tons. For perspective, that is slightly more than the total 2021 carbon emissions of Germany.

So, since the release of *An Inconvenient Truth*, the growth of the American natural gas industry has reduced annual American carbon emissions by an amount that now exceeds the annual carbon output of the planet’s fourth largest economy.

Of course, Gore should have celebrated and encouraged this striking progress. Instead—to borrow his words—he was “left behind as the rest of the world moves forward.”

And it required truly ponderous political dancing for him to wind up on the wrong side.

Thirty years ago, in late November 1992, as the previously banal senator was about to become vice president, a *New York Times* report said this of the agenda the incoming Clinton-Gore administration was promoting:

The blueprint being put together by industry executives as well as staff members close to Mr. Clinton and Vice President-elect Al Gore conforms with the promises Mr. Clinton made during the campaign. He said he wanted to wean the nation from its reliance on coal and oil by converting to cleaner, less costly alternatives like natural gas . . .

With the benefit of hindsight, we know this part of the 1992 Clinton-Gore agenda was on the right track. In 1992 coal was the source fuel for 52.6 percent of U.S. electricity production, and natural gas was just 13.1 percent of the total. By 2021, the cleaner burning natural gas was up to 38.2 percent of the total, and coal had fallen to 21.8 percent.

Gore was still on the correct side of history when he ran for president in 2000. His campaign plan for the environment aimed to “promote expanded exploration for cleaner burning natural gas.”

Even as late as February 2009, just as the shale gas revolution was about to transform American energy, the U.S. economy, and dramatically slash carbon emissions, Gore was still willing to say this: “We should use natural gas for the 18-wheelers as a bridge fuel.”

But those statements ended as soon as the natural gas policy succeeded.

By the 2018 mid-term election Gore recommended a “Yes” vote on Colorado Proposition 112, which would have prohibited natural gas drilling wells from operating within 2,500 feet (nearly a half mile) of an occupied building.

Gore said a “yes” vote would “make climate justice history!” Wisely, 55 percent voted “no.”

By 2019, he had denounced natural gas as a “losing game” and “just as bad as coal.”

And in November 2022, with the Ukraine War scrambling the worldwide natural gas market and causing nations reliant on the fuel to consider developing alternative delivery infrastructure, Gore went to the COP27 annual climate policy talks in Egypt and told the Associated Press that natural gas was no longer a bridge fuel, but rather a “classic bridge to nowhere.”

## Favoring failure

Finding a way to favor failure has been a consistent theme.

In the years since *An Inconvenient Truth* Gore has consistently and specifically championed weather-dependent wind and solar energy as the options that should replace carbon-emitting fuels. He makes a specific pitch for both near the end of the film.



Credit: Casanary Colorizations. License: <https://bit.ly/3II1t65>.

*George Orwell analyzed this school of thought in his novel 1984: DOUBLETHINK, means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.*

But as noted, the first hour the movie is filled with gory warnings that the notoriously unpredictable weather will become even wilder still. And today he still preaches the weather is out to kill us all.

“I think these extreme events that are getting steadily worse and more severe are really beginning to change minds,” he said to NBC News in July 2022. He made the same point to ABC News, adding that “the survival of our civilization is at stake.”

So, according to the Nobel laureate, the planet’s weather is becoming dangerously crazy, **and** we must rely on this murderously unstable weather to provide our life-sustaining electricity.

George Orwell analyzed this school of thought in his novel *1984*:

DOUBLETHINK, means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of DOUBLETHINK he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated.” [Emphasis in original]

Understanding Al Gore’s energy agenda requires harnessing the power of doublethink.

But even James Hansen can’t do it.

The former NASA scientist is far from a critic of Gore’s overheated apocalyptic warnings about the fate of the planet. In the summer of 1988, following the implosion of his presidential campaign, Gore went back to work in the Senate and invited Hansen to testify in a now famous public hearing about global warming.

The hearing elevated the public profile of both men and the issue. After years of trying, Gore had finally put climate policy at the center of American political debates. Two decades later, Hansen remained an ally, warmly praising *An Inconvenient Truth* as “a coherent account of a complex topic that Americans desperately need to understand.”

But in a 2011 analysis the much-celebrated climate alarmist wrote. “Suggesting that renewables will let us phase rapidly off fossil fuels in the United States, China, India, or the world as a whole is almost the equivalent of believing in the Easter Bunny and Tooth Fairy.” Hansen concluded that renewables were “grossly inadequate for our energy needs now and in the foreseeable future.”

In 2015, *The Guardian* published an essay from Hansen and three other climate scientists titled “Nuclear power paves the only viable path forward on climate change.” Noting that France and Sweden were both able to “ramp up nuclear power to high levels in just 15–20 years,” Hansen and the others argued that a worldwide build rate of 115 new reactors annually was “technically achievable” and by 2050 would “entirely decarbonise the global electricity system.”

For Gore, failure was the option. In a 2020 TED Talk he dismissed nuclear energy as a “crushing disappointment.” This was not a new position for him. In a November 2000 statement released just days before his loss in the presidential election, Gore pandered to and thrilled anti-nuclear extremists with this statement: “I do not support any increased reliance on nuclear energy. Moreover, I have disagreed with those who would classify nuclear energy as clean or renewable.”

When Gore gave that TED Talk in 2020, nuclear energy was—by a healthy amount—the largest source of carbon-free energy consumed in the United States. As of 2021, nuclear kicked in 2,057 terawatt-hours of power, nearly equal to the *combined output* from wind, solar, and hydro-electric dams.

Nuclear energy’s dominance as America’s greatest source of carbon-free power was even more pronounced in November 2000, when Gore gave up on it, and has held true since at least the mid-1980s.

In March 2021, the U.S. Department of Energy declared nuclear the nation’s “largest source of clean power” and estimated that using nuclear rather than coal had removed the equivalent of 100 million carbon-emitting cars from the road. The Department of Energy also calculated that a “typical 1,000-megawatt nuclear facility” needed “a little more than 1 square mile to operate” yet did the work of 430 wind turbines or 3 million solar panels.

And with some ... ahem ... political leadership, the United States could have done far more with nuclear power and still could. In 2000, nuclear was—without even the “carbon free” qualifier—the largest source of power consumed in France, edging out even oil. By 2020, nuclear accounted for 36.6 percent of total energy consumed by the French, oil was a distant second at 30.5 percent, and nothing else was remotely close.

If these realities of nuclear power represent a “crushing disappointment” for carbon reduction and conservation of the natural environment, then it’s difficult to figure what could possibly ever make Gore happy.



Credit: The Mariner 4291. License: Shutterstock

*When Gore announces that a nuclear-powered submarine took him on a trip underneath the North Pole, he doesn’t try to explain how this voyage could have been accomplished with a wind- or solar-powered boat.*

The amazing technical marvel that is nuclear energy receives only a tangential mention in *An Inconvenient Truth*, when Gore announces that a nuclear-powered submarine took him on a trip underneath the North Pole. He doesn’t try to explain how this voyage could have been accomplished with a wind- or solar-powered boat. The effort might have won him another Oscar, though they would have needed a new category for “Best Comedy.”

## Blood & Gore

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett knows which way that wind blows. In 2014 he explained to *Fortune* magazine that he would “do anything that is basically covered by the law” to lower the taxes paid by his investment firm.

“For example, on wind energy, we get a tax credit if we build a lot of wind farms,” continued Buffett. “That’s the only reason to build them. They don’t make sense without the tax credit.”

Buffett is a self-aware investor in weather-dependent energy who is willing to admit to the perverse incentives that he is profiting from.

Not everyone is like that, according to a different quote used in *An Inconvenient Truth*.

“Upton Sinclair wrote this: ‘You can’t make somebody understand something if their salary depends upon them not understanding it,’” said Gore, near the end of the film.

He was addressing those who don't buy into his exaggerations and climate alarmism. But he could have been speaking of himself.

In 2004, Gore and a Goldman Sachs investment manager named David Blood teamed up to form Generation Investment Management. The Blood & Gore investment firm now promotes itself as a “pure-play sustainable investment manager” that has “played a pioneering role in the development of sustainable and environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing.”

ESG is the process whereby Big Money pushes big corporations into prioritizing lefty social and environmental policies. With that mission statement, the Blood & Gore firm could be renamed “WeWoke” to better explain what they're up to.

Gore is the chairman, and Blood is the senior partner. As of June 2022, Generation Investment claimed \$30 billion in customer assets under management.

Central to the Blood & Gore investment strategy is the notion that carbon-based fuels represent stranded assets—assets that will become worthless to their owners well before the currently presumed value has been depleted. In October 2013 the pair penned a *Wall Street Journal* opinion warning that the collapse of carbon fuel value would occur because of a combination of three pressure points: stricter government regulation, displacement by weather-dependent energy systems, and political campaigns that cause investors to flee from fossil fuels.

Although dressed up as wise investment predictions, these were really descriptions (some might say threats) of the policy agenda that Gore promotes and that his firm aims to profit from.

Gore is a reliable supporter of regulatory assaults on energy development. In July 2022, with the average retail price for a gallon of gasoline hovering near \$5, he said President Joe Biden should refuse to open any additional federal land for oil and gas exploration.

Generation Investment is also a prominent investor in the weather-dependent energy firms. As noted in the Warren Buffett quote, this industry is implicitly funded by the taxpayers with billions of dollars in government tax credits and subsidies.

In November 2021, for example, Octopus Energy announced that it had inked a \$600 million partnership with Generation Investment Management. Octopus claimed to be “Europe's largest investor in solar energy, managing

\$4.5bn of renewable energy assets across the continent.” In a news release, the Octopus CEO praised Gore's movies as the inspiration for the Octopus growth strategy. In return, Gore said Octopus was a “living example of the kind of company that Generation was founded to invest in.”

And if you have enough loot to call Gore in for a speech, then he's likely to promote disinvestment from the carbon-based energy firms, an outcome favorable to the Blood & Gore investment strategy. In a 2019 commencement address to his alma mater, Harvard University (which definitely has the loot), Gore asked: “Why would Harvard University continue to support with its finances an industry like this that is in the process of threatening the future of humanity?” In a December 2021 visit to Vanderbilt University, he said he endorsed “in no uncertain terms” a proposal that the school dump its investment holdings in fossil fuel energy firms.

To paraphrase Upton Sinclair: When your bottom line depends upon portraying someone else as a grave threat to humanity, then it's hard not to share that message with the next generation.

Perhaps that is the meaning behind the “Generation Investment Management” name? At the least, that's more marketable than “Blood & Gore” might have been.

## It Could Have Happened Here

The entirety of three current generations were either not yet born or too young to vote in the 1992 presidential election: Millennials, Generation Z, and (apparently what we're being told to refer to as) Generation Alpha.

Similarly, the oldest of GenX (born 1965–1981) were just 27 that year, and the youngest weren't yet in middle school.

So, most of today's America has either come of age or lived their entire lives since 1993. They have experienced Al Gore mostly in the roles preferred by today's corporate media: vice president, “man who used to be the next President of the United States,” venerated Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Oscar-awarded filmmaker, best-selling author, and environmentalist hero.

As argued to this point, overwhelming evidence indicates that he remains the mediocre, yet personally ambitious federal politician who was forced into a quick and quiet exist from the 1988 presidential race. In the words of former hockey coach Don Cherry, finding evidence of that man today “ain't rocket surgery.”





*Three billion people worldwide still live in what energy analysts refer to as “energy poverty” and will remain so because of the media’s sins of omission regarding what Al Gore and those like him are selling.*

But outside of his days as understudy in the scandal-seeking Clinton administration, the conventional media hasn’t broken a sweat to talk about *that* Al Gore. Their collective credulity has helped transform him from easily forgettable to a very wealthy and influential figure.

That influence matters. Gore and others of his stature are major drivers of bad energy policy decisions in America and across the world. Three billion people worldwide still live in what energy analysts refer to as “energy poverty”—defined as little to no access to modern electricity and fuel for heating and cooking meals. More of them will remain in the cold, in the dark, and poor because of the media’s sins of omission regarding what Gore and those like him are selling.

Even the wealthy could get left in the cold following Gore’s advice. To find an example of where it may lead America, look to Germany, the world’s fourth largest economy and third-largest wealthy industrial economy behind Japan. (China, though the planet’s second largest economy, still had a GDP per capita in 2021 that lagged behind nations such as Romania and Iran).



Credit: Jiri Sedláček. License: <https://bit.ly/3Xmo0yu>.

*In 2015, The Guardian published an essay from Hansen and three other climate scientists titled “Nuclear power paves the only viable path forward on climate change.” Noting that France and Sweden were both able to “ramp up nuclear power to high levels in just 15–20 years,”*

In 2000, Germany launched *Energiewende*—or “energy transition”—a radical plot to kick the major industrial giant off fossil fuels and onto “renewable” energy. Over the next 20 years, they provided massive subsidies to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars to juice the buildout of wind turbines, solar panels, and biogas from fermenting crops. It was everything Al Gore could have asked for, with the added extra-Gore-y decision in 2011 to go at it by phasing out Germany’s zero-carbon nuclear power stations.

A hint of how smart this all was: Thunder Bay, Ontario, way up on the north shore of Lake Superior, has more average annual hours of sunlight than every major city in Germany.

In September 2013, the German newsweekly *Der Spiegel* ran a progress report titled “How Electricity Became a Luxury Good.” The phrase “energy poverty” was already being used to describe the plight of some of Germany’s citizens. “If the government sticks to its plans,” said the magazine, “the price of electricity will literally explode in the coming years.”

They did, and it did. By 2019 German households were paying 55 percent more for electricity than the French (who were also emitting far less carbon, due to their extensive use of nuclear energy) and 162 percent more than Americans.

A 2019 *Der Spiegel* report on the situation was titled “German Failure on the Road to a Renewable Future” and characterized *Energiewende* as a “massive failure.” Driving the bad policy dagger in deeper, it said “German CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have only slightly decreased this decade,” while in the United States, because of the switch from coal to natural gas for electricity generation, “the country’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are trending in the right direction.”

By August 2022 the Russian attack on Ukraine was forcing an energy-desperate Germany to scramble for new natural gas supplies. The German chancellor begged Canada for access to its rich bounty ... and got turned down. In November, Germany landed a natural gas deal with Qatar, during the same month that Germany’s World Cup soccer team was in Qatar trying to shame that same nation over its odious human rights record.

Before the Qatari deal, *Energiewende* reached peak stupid in October 2022 when one of the once-celebrated wind turbine facilities was partly dismantled so Germany could make expanded use of a century-old coal mine.

It's far from unfair to draw a direct line from these fiascos to Al Gore. In a very plausible alternative universe, 300 Floridians might have changed their mind on Election Day 2000 and switched their vote to Gore. By April 2008, he may have been in the second of two terms in the White House.

Back in the world as it was, Gore founded and was chairman of the Climate Reality Project, a worldwide advocacy non-profit promoting the feckless energy and climate policies he may have implemented as president. In April 2018, promoting a seminar scheduled for Germany, Gore heaped effusive praise on *Energiewende*: "As a global leader on climate action, Germany has demonstrated that investment in renewable energy and technology can help usher in a successful transition toward a clean energy economy without compromising economic strength." He added, "I look forward to meeting and hearing from the inspiring climate activists in Germany who are helping drive climate action that will continue to accelerate the global shift away from fossil fuels."

Following the quote from Gore, the Climate Reality Project news release added this:

Germany has taken initiative to implement a far-reaching energy transition strategy to help move the country away from coal ... climate action policies like these have influenced other countries in Central and Eastern Europe to reexamine their own.

According to Our World in Data calculations, German CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita declined by 7.1 percent from 2010 (the year *Energiewende* was enacted) through 2017 (just before Gore's praise for Germany in early 2018).

The decline in the United States over the same period was 13.5 percent.

Stepping back from that snapshot, consider the bigger picture from 2000, the year Gore became "the man who used to be the next President of the United States," through 2021, the most recent year measured by Our World in Data.

Over that span, American CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita fell 30.2 percent. In Germany, the nation Gore has praised as the shining policy example for how to save the planet, the cumulative decline over the same period was 28.4 percent.

The United States achieved better results, with far lower electricity prices and a booming natural gas revolution. We did it without energy poverty, without embarrassingly begging Canada to ship us some natural gas, and without the lifeblood of our economy being held hostage by Vladimir Putin.

We did it all without following Al Gore and his highly influential, awful ideas. It was a near miss, and it's still a mistaken path he's trying to send us down. ■

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*Read previous articles from the Green Watch series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/green-watch/](https://CapitalResearch.org/category/green-watch/).*

**JULY 2021**

**EDITED BY  
HAYDEN LUDWIG**



# **RISE OF THE ECO-RIGHT**

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A few dozen lobbying, litigation, and activist nonprofits that identify themselves as free market or broadly right-of-center are attempting to rebrand environmentalism and global warming ideology as conservative values. The Capital Research Center broke the news that these “eco-Right” groups also are secretly bankrolled by liberal mega-donors.



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# BIG MONEY IN DARK SHADOWS

Arabella Advisors' Half-billion-dollar  
"Dark Money" Network

Hayden R. Ludwig

According to media personalities and politicians, nameless, faceless donors wield outsized influence over the American political process due to the so-called "dark money" they use to fund think tanks and advocacy groups. But that's far from the whole story. "Dark money" exists on both sides of the aisle. In fact, the Left seems to have deeper and darker pockets of cash than anyone suspected.

Learn more about liberal "dark money" in CRC's original report.



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# DECEPTION & MISDIRECTION



## THE ORIGINS OF “ZUCK BUCKS”

By Hayden Ludwig

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**Summary:** *The New Organizing Institute (NOI) is the predecessor of the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), the organization behind “Zuck bucks.” From 2005 to 2015, NOI had one purpose: elect Democrats. NOI dissolved amid allegations of financial mismanagement in late 2015. Its activist training arm was absorbed by RePower, which churns out campaign organizers, while three top staffers—Whitney May, Tiana Epps-Johnson, and Donny Bridges—left to found CTCL in Chicago to advocate for election “reforms.” The rest is history.*

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*The first step to civic engagement beyond registration is turning out to vote ... Once people are registered, they are highly likely to vote ...*

—New Organizing Institute, 2011

When did professional activists first scheme to hijack America’s elections with \$350 million from Mark Zuckerberg? Concerned citizens have sought the answer to that question since November 2020. Newly discovered documents suggest the plan may go back a decade or more.

This is the New Organizing Institute (NOI), the brains behind the “progressive” turnout machine that went defunct in 2015—yet still haunts our elections today.



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*The New Organizing Institute had one purpose: elect Democrats, earning it the Washington Post’s praise as “the Democratic Party’s Hogwarts for digital wizardry.”*



Credit: CTCL. License: <https://bit.ly/3ZabKbz>.

*The New Organizing Institute dissolved in late 2015 while three top staffers—Whitney May, Tiana Epps-Johnson, and Donny Bridges—left to found the Center for Tech and Civic Life in Chicago to advocate for election “reforms.”*

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## Getting Out the (Democratic) Vote

NOI is the predecessor of the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), the organization behind “Zuck bucks.” From 2005 to 2015, NOI had one purpose: elect Democrats, earning it the *Washington Post*’s praise as “the Democratic Party’s Hogwarts for digital wizardry” and “the Left’s think tank for campaign know-how.” CNN even quoted a supposedly fearful Republican staffer calling NOI “the Left’s new Death Star.”

Notably, NOI was part of the Funders Committee for Civic Participation, a convening of major funders and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) operatives that take advantage

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*Hayden Ludwig is a senior research analyst at CRC.*

of IRS 501(c)(3) voter registration rules to “organize and mobilize communities,” “hold elected officials accountable,” and “achieve policy impact.” The committee boasts that this in-house model helped turn Colorado into a Democratic bastion.

A 2010 NOI report on using new technologies to enhance registration rates thanks the Funders Committee for funding the group’s research.

NOI dissolved amid allegations of financial mismanagement in late 2015. Its activist training arm was absorbed by RePower (formerly Wellstone Action), which churns out campaign organizers, while three top staffers—Whitney May, Tiana Epps-Johnson, and Donny Bridges—left to found CTCL in Chicago to advocate for election “reforms.”

NOI, it turns out, didn’t so much die as evolve.

## Too Many Whites in the Electorate

But a secret memo entitled “Using Voter Registration to Reshape the U.S. Electorate” places NOI—and, by extension, CTCL—squarely in the Left’s plans to radically “reshape” America’s electorate wholesale using a targeted, ruthless voter registration campaign. Its end goal: the 2020 election.

The memo is dated February 27, 2015, and was developed by Corridor Partners, a DC environmental activist consultancy led by Bill J. Roberts, former board chair for the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund and a former official for the Bermuda mega-funder Atlantic Philanthropies (which spent itself out of existence in 2020).

From Roberts the memo went to Molly McUsic, president of the Swiss billionaire Hansjörg Wyss’s Wyss Foundation (a major environmental donor), then on to the infamous Democratic operative and Clinton crony John Podesta, co-founder of the Center for American Progress. The memo was nabbed in 2016 as part of Podesta’s leaked emails and posted by WikiLeaks.

Amazingly, the 26-page Corridor Partners memo boasts that its proposed “large-scale, multi-year voter registration programs” could “fundamentally reshape the electorate in as many as 13 states” by 2020. How? By exclusively register-

ing “non-white” citizens (a phrase featured 18 times in the document), whom leftists believe will uniformly vote for Democrats far into the future.

“The goal is to generate an adequate number of voters to exceed the vote margin in years when key elections are happening,” the memo observes, adding:

But, sometimes it is necessary to get a head start and begin the [registration] program two or four years before in order to have time to **produce the necessary voter registration applications** [emphasis added].

The price-tag: \$105–\$210 million in eight to 13 states, notably Arizona, Georgia, Texas, and other battlegrounds.

In Florida alone Corridor Partners estimated that its programs could produce an additional 108,748 new non-white voters, enough to “influence the policy positions in upcoming elections.” The memo argued that voter registration *alone* could achieve this leverage in nine states and nearly achieve it in another five.

## NOI and the “Emerging Majority”

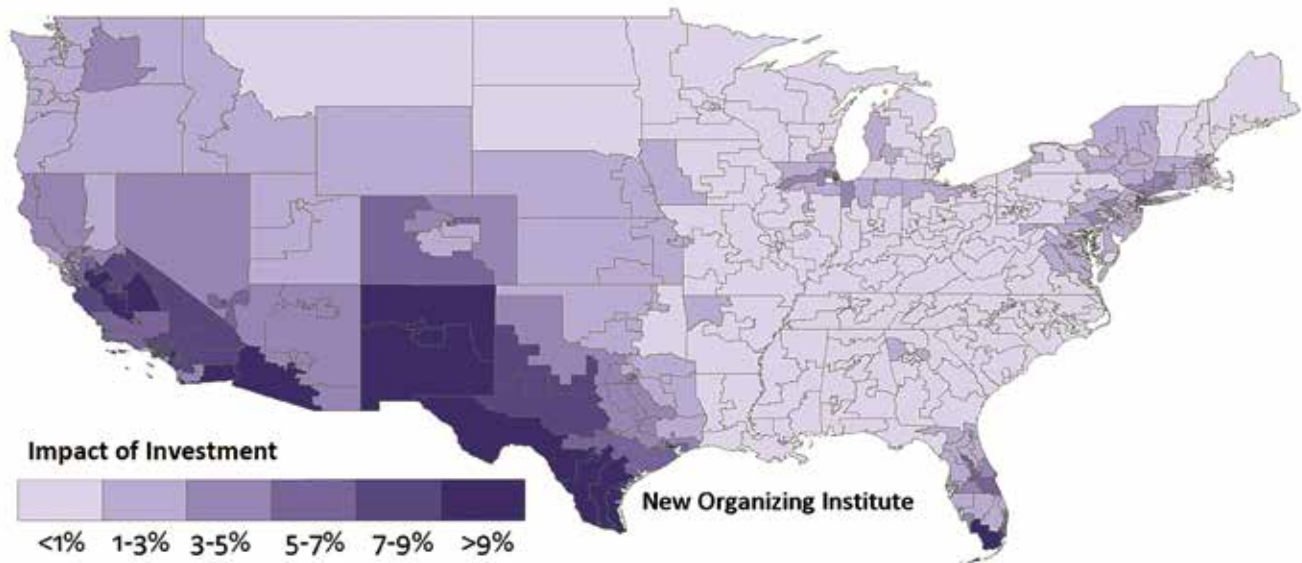
Much of Corridor Partners’ data originated with NOI’s voter registration research, which advised allies on how to “narrow the [turnout] gap” by targeting the “emerging majority”: African Americans, Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and unmarried women. (Other leftist groups call this demographic the “New American Majority” or “Rising Majority.”)

In 2010, NOI executive director Ethan Roeder co-authored a report advising Democrats on how “to capitalize on the growing political influence of Hispanics” to build “future majorities” in Arizona, Virginia, Texas, Florida, and other key states. Revealingly, Roeder now works for Forward Majority (confusingly, not the same as the leftist turnout group Majority Forward), which “has an aggressive strategy to secure critical footholds of power for Democrats” by registering new voters in Republican districts it hopes to flip.

“Though Texas will likely not vote Democratic in a presidential election for a generation, Latino investment would swing the state’s vote totals by a full 7 percentage points in

**POPULATION • REGISTRATION RATE • TURNOUT RATE • DEMOCRATIC VOTING RATE**

**Improved Dem Performance Due to Investment in Hispanic Voters in 2024 by CD**



Impact of investment by Congressional district (as boundaries are drawn in 2010) in 2024 in terms of improved Democratic performance. Percentages are the point difference between best case and worst case scenarios in each state. Source: New Organizing Institute analysis of historical election exit polls, Catalist partisanship and turnout models, and US Census American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Credit: Ehan Roeder. License: <https://bit.ly/3W20Av8>.

2024,” NOI writes. “Such a swing could make the election of a Democratic governor or Senator a much more attainable goal.”

NOI added:

Our projections predict that eleven Congressional districts (as currently drawn) will, in a generic scenario, change hands to Democrats because of Hispanic voter growth, though in many more districts Hispanic voter growth will put formerly safe Republican seats within striking distance for Democrats.

While the report focused on GOTV efforts, it also emphasized registration—even drawing up a formula for determining the number of Democratic votes that registration drives could achieve:

In 2011, NOI published “Engaging the Emerging Majority: The Case for Voter Registration in 2012 and Beyond,” authored by Heather Booth, a socialist specializing in training new organizers through Midwest Academy; NOI

organizing director Joy Cushman, now campaign director for the liberal Christian turnout group Faith In Action; and NOI civic engagement director Pilar Weiss, who now runs the National Bail Fund Network, a Tides Foundation front that offers bail to those accused of (often violent) crimes.

In the report, NOI predicts that this group of groups—united solely by a propensity to vote for Democrats—would become America’s “new majority” by 2018, implying they would create a permanent Democratic majority:

If the Emerging Majority are registered to vote and motivated to civic engagement they have the potential to **dramatically shift the American social, economic, and political landscape**—allowing us to begin rectifying our country’s historical inequalities. [emphasis added]

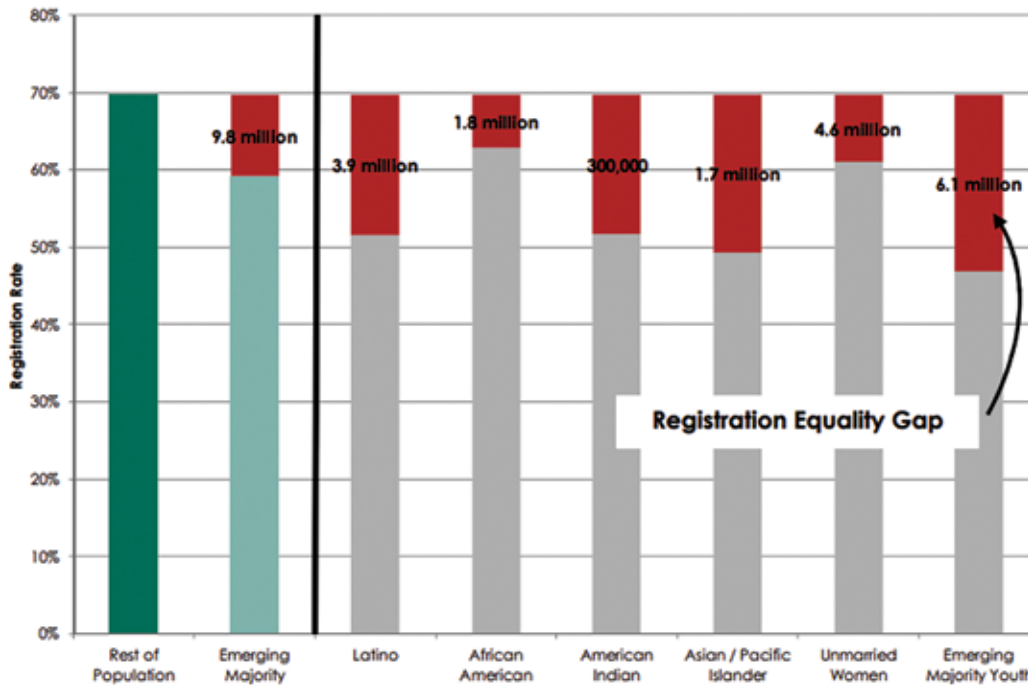
According to NOI, “donors invested more than \$50 million” registering 4.1 million new “emerging majority” voters in 2008, *yet it wasn’t enough*. Permanently closing that gap “will require successfully registering 9.8 million new Emerging Majority voters” and significant year-after-year financing:



Credit: Joy Cushman. License: <https://bit.ly/3ixaUQb>.

*In an August 2012 presentation, Joy Cushman calculated that trained activists could reach a target of 1,000 new voters by registering 125 people “per shift” across eight shifts.*

### 2010 Registration Rates Across Demographics and Cohorts with Registration Equality Gap



Credit: Joy Cushman. License: <https://bit.ly/3ixaUQb>.

*Much of Corridor Partners’ data originated with NOI’s voter registration research, which advised allies on how to “narrow the [turnout] gap” by targeting the “emerging majority”: African Americans, Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and unmarried women.*





*According to the New Organizing Institute, “donors invested more than \$50 million” registering 4.1 million new “emerging majority” voters in 2008, yet it wasn’t enough.*

Starting in 2012, both capacity and investment will need to expand consistently year to year if we are to keep up with the growth of the Emerging Majority, close the registration equality gap, and **move toward full registration**...

[A]cross constituencies, for every single Emerging Majority registered voter who did not vote in 2008, there were four more citizens just like them who could have voted if only they had been registered...

In 2012 it will be critical that independent registration efforts have the opportunity to return to and **improve on the advances made in 2008**. Erasing the registration equality gap is only the first benchmark for increasing representation of the Emerging Majority in our democracy. ... That will only be possible with **expanded organizational capacity to register voters** and greater investment in voter registration. [emphasis added]

Reaching this “emerging majority” required a sophisticated and well-funded operation. In an August 2012 presentation, Joy Cushman calculated that trained activists could reach a target of 1,000 new voters by registering 125 people “per shift” across eight shifts.

“How many voters do you want to register? By what date?” Cushman asks. “You can focus your registration efforts by demography and geography,” particularly with door-to-door canvassing, which reaches “lots of young people and/or renters.”

## Campaigning for Democrats

Accompanying its registration surveys was NOI’s 210-page behemoth “Campaigning to Engage and Win: A guide to Leading Electoral Campaigns,” the result of prodding by CNN commentator and ex-Hillary Clinton presidential campaign manager Robby Mook.

Besides Joy Cushman, the report’s authors include NOI co-founder Judith Freeman, a former Obama presidential campaign aide; Douglas Hattaway, a consultant to the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations as well as board member to Sixteen Thirty Fund, part of Arabella Advisors’ \$1.7 billion “dark money” empire; ex-Democratic National Committee field director Karen Hicks; and Democratic consultant Susan Markham.

The document is an all-in-one guide for setting up partisan political campaigns, from fundraising to mobilization strategy and sample campaign narratives. While the guide is rather straightforward, it often draws on NOI’s past research into the effects of same-day registration and voter ID laws in turning out voters. NOI was intended to be a one-stop shop for helping leftists elect Democrats, with nonpartisan language sprinkled in where necessary to avoid IRS scrutiny.

## Center for Tech and Civic Life

Few details remain about the involvement of CTCL’s co-founders in NOI’s registration and electioneering work. Yet we know they were present for both operations. Tiana Epps-Johnson was NOI’s deputy data manager in 2010 before becoming head of the group’s Voting Information Project (2010–2012) and later election administration director (2012–2015).

Whitney May worked with the Voting Information Project from 2012 to 2013, then was an election administration government liaison under Epps-Johnson from 2013 to 2015. Donny Bridges was research director for NOI’s Candidate Project (2011–2012), research director for the group’s Ballot Information Project (2012), and then finally election administration research director alongside May and Epps-Johnson from 2012 to 2015.

Few details remain about these projects, but they undoubtedly tied in to NOI’s registration research and campaign training programs—which were the organization’s selling

points to donors and allies, after all. It's unthinkable that relatively senior staffers May, Bridges, and Epps-Johnson *weren't* involved in them.

## The Origin of Zuck Bucks

The question remains: Who devised “Zuck bucks” in the 2020 election and when? There are a few theories.

First, COVID-19 provided the *cover* for a private grants program but probably didn't spur its inception. I've estimated that just 24 of the Left's top voter registration outfits spent a combined \$434 million in 2020, a little more than the roughly \$400 million Mark Zuckerberg donated to CTCL and the Center for Election Innovation and Research (CEIR) for COVID-19 “relief grants” that year. Given that Zuck bucks paid for numerous drop boxes—powerfully boosting the number of mail-in and absentee ballots collected and bypassing the inept U.S. Postal Service—this seems a natural extension of the Left's registration and turnout operations. (Both NOI and Corridor Partners' surveys detailed the benefits of expanding the base of absentee voters nationwide.)

The National Vote at Home Institute, a close CTCL ally, launched its first nationwide vote-by-mail proposal shortly after the COVID-19 lockdowns in March 2020. The group asked states to send mail-in ballots with pre-paid postage to every registered voter, advising them on returning the ballots via mail, polling place, or drop box.

Where this plan was adopted, it created a need for millions of dollars to pay for new drop boxes and mail-in ballot processing equipment. The first of these was Wisconsin, where the state's five biggest cities devised a joint “Safe Voting Plan” in June 2020 and pitched it to CTCL, asking for \$6.3 million to fund roughly 34 drop boxes (among other things). They ultimately got \$8.5 million, or 84 percent of all the “relief grants” CTCL paid out to Wisconsin elections offices statewide.

From ground zero in Wisconsin, Zuck bucks soon spread to nearly every other state. But that means that in June 2020 someone had to know that CTCL—whose revenues had never exceeded \$3.4 million—had \$6 million to spare.

One candidate is CEIR head David Becker, an election lawyer and “hardcore leftist” who did elections lobbying for People for the American Way and later spawned the Election

Registration Information Center (ERIC), which mandates member states register eligible voters as part of its voter roll maintenance services.

There's another possibility: the Arabella Advisors “dark money” network. The Arabella network, run by a shadowy DC consulting firm, specializes in shifting money from liberal donors to activist causes. In 2020 its largest nonprofit, New Venture Fund, granted close to \$25 million to CTCL.

We don't know the original donor behind that sum or when it was granted, but if it was prior to June 2020 that would make the Arabella network the source of Wisconsin's first Zuck bucks injection. After that program proved viable, the original donor—perhaps Zuckerberg—may have decided to funnel another \$350 million through the nearly unknown CTCL so as to avoid the scrutiny that Arabella now attracts from investigative journalists.

To put it another way, Arabella carries the taint of partisanship; CTCL did not.

Todd Shepherd, an investigative journalist writing for the Pennsylvania outlet *Broad + Liberty*, also suspects Arabella's involvement in Zuck bucks through the Center for Secure and Modern Elections (CSME), an election “reform” group run by New Venture Fund.

“Emails from Green Bay and Philadelphia clearly show the CSME was operating hand in hand with the CTCL at the earliest possible stages on these grants while calling it the Cities Project,” Shepherd told Capital Research Center.

Even months after the election, persons working for the CSME were still talking to election officials about the CTCL grants while using the name Cities Project. Because of this evidence, I think it's a very fair question to ask to what degree the CSME may have actually been the originator of the entire effort, and whether the CTCL was just a better front for the project because they had 501(c)(3) status.

Whatever the case may be, one thing's certain: Americans are getting closer to the truth behind Zuck bucks. ■

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*Read previous articles from the Deception and Misdirection series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/deception-and-misdirection/](https://CapitalResearch.org/category/deception-and-misdirection/).*

# ARCHITECTS OF WOKE:

## The 1619 Project's Fake History



## STOKELY CARMICHAEL



## & RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS

## SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK & THE ROMANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY TERROR



CRC's Architects of Woke series takes aim at far-left post-modernist and Marxist thinkers and activists responsible for the spread of identity politics on college campuses and in society at large.

The series is hosted and directed by award-winning filmmaker Rob Montz, whose online documentary work has attracted millions of views and coverage in major outlets, including *The Economist*, *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and The Adam Carolla Podcast.

Subjects of the Architects of Woke include the fake history of the 1619 Project, the wildly popular radical socialist podcast *Chapo Trap House*, far-left political activist Howard Zinn, University of California at Berkeley feminist gender theorist Judith Butler, highly influential Marxist-Leninist philosopher Slavoj Žižek.

**Watch the entire series at [DangerousDocumentaries.com](https://DangerousDocumentaries.com).**



Howard Zinn, Hollywood, & the Fairy Tale of American Evil



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# BLACK LIVES MATTER AFTERMATH



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In perhaps one of the greatest messaging coups of all time, the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (BLMGNF)—an international effort funded by some of the most powerful and wealthy leftists admittedly steeped in the Marxist playbook—took the true statement that black lives matter and used it to create chaos and destroy the livelihoods of the very people it was professing to help.

In a new video series, sponsored by Capital Research Center and filmed and produced by No Filters Media, we look at Minneapolis one year after the protests following the death of George Floyd.

FEATURED ON  
FOX NEWS

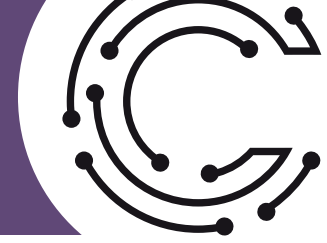


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## ***WAGING A GOOD WAR:*** **A MOSTLY UNHELPFUL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

By Ken Braun

“A search of the American Historical Association’s database of doctoral dissertations in recent decades found more than 250 that studied the American civil rights movement,” wrote journalist Thomas E. Ricks, in the preface to his book *Waging a Good War: A Military History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968*. The book exists, according to its author, because of his “surprise” that he couldn’t find just one aspiring historian who “looked at the Movement through the prism of its similarity to military operations.”

Rival militaries deploy murderous, organized mass violence against each other, and often civilians as well. Martin Luther King Jr., on the other hand, preached nonviolence and how to love your enemies. Ricks squinted hard at this contradiction and noticed that successful social movements and winning militaries share common qualities such as strategic thinking, discipline, careful organization, effective logistics, strong leadership, unit cohesion, calculated risk taking, and rigorous training.

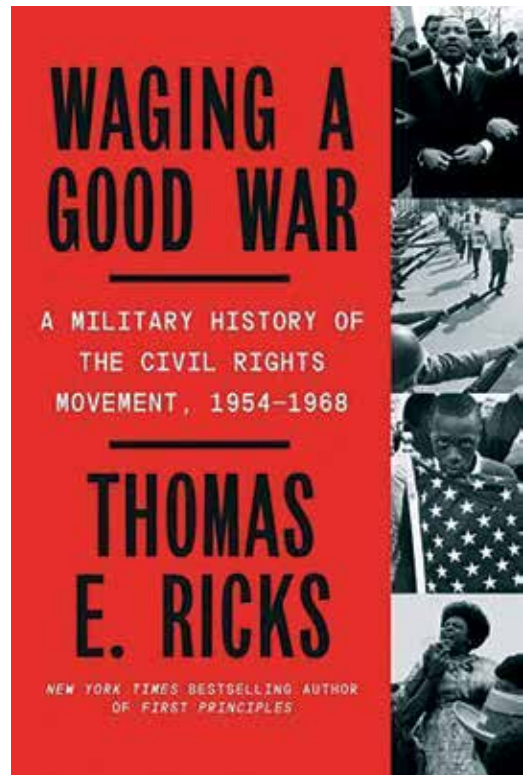
Of course, these advantages are also shared by NFL teams that win multiple Super Bowls, the best run car dealerships, and all other uniquely effective enterprises. Sustained success is never an accident, even if it happens outside the battlefield.

But an examination of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference through the prism of the New England Patriots would probably make for a poorly received doctoral thesis and unleash a blizzard of football clichés.

So, Ricks went with the military analogies instead. This didn’t get him around the problem.

In the opening paragraph of chapter four of *Waging a Good War*, there is a digression about the overconfidence of the American colonial rebels after their initial successes against the British in the early days of the Revolutionary War. Like nearly all the book’s military analogies, this added little to the reader’s understanding of the story.

What was needed to be said—and the important lesson to be learned—was concisely and nonmilitarily described at the end of that opening paragraph: “The civil rights movement



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*Waging a Good War: A Military History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968 exists, according to its author, because of his “surprise” that he couldn’t find just one aspiring historian who “looked at the Movement through the prism of its similarity to military operations.”*

overestimated itself going into the obscure southwestern Georgia town of Albany” and “the goals it set there were far too ambitious.”

But FOUR paragraphs afterward the would-be *Sun Tzu* of civil rights was still redundantly jargoning away: “The military term for setting goals that are too big is ‘overreach.’”

*Ken Braun is a senior investigative researcher at CRC and authors profiles for InfluenceWatch.org and Capital Research magazine.*



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*Waging a Good War is a sustained attack by analogy  
and bombardment by bromide.*

Yes, and that term means the same thing when a book editor says it to you.

*Waging a Good War* is a sustained attack by analogy and bombardment by bromide.

On page 115, Ricks shared this: “Persistence is a neglected virtue in many walks of life, but it is prized in the military world—and was in the civil rights movement as well.”

Earlier, page 55 carried this warning: “A military maxim holds that one should never reinforce failure. Part of being a leader is being able to recognize when something is not working and then take steps to cut losses and move in a different direction.”

Then at the end of the same long paragraph: “Another part of being a leader is bidding one’s time and waiting for the situation to develop.”

“But taking risks is almost essential to success in warfare,” according to page 186. “Avoiding them is a recipe for stalemate, at best.”

To summarize: *Persistence is a virtue! Cut your losses and move on! Take Risks! Don’t overreach!*

In any case, according to page 285: “War is cruel, exhausting and wasteful, even when one prevails.”

Does it improve the analysis if we retitler? *Waging the Wasteful and Cruel Good War?*

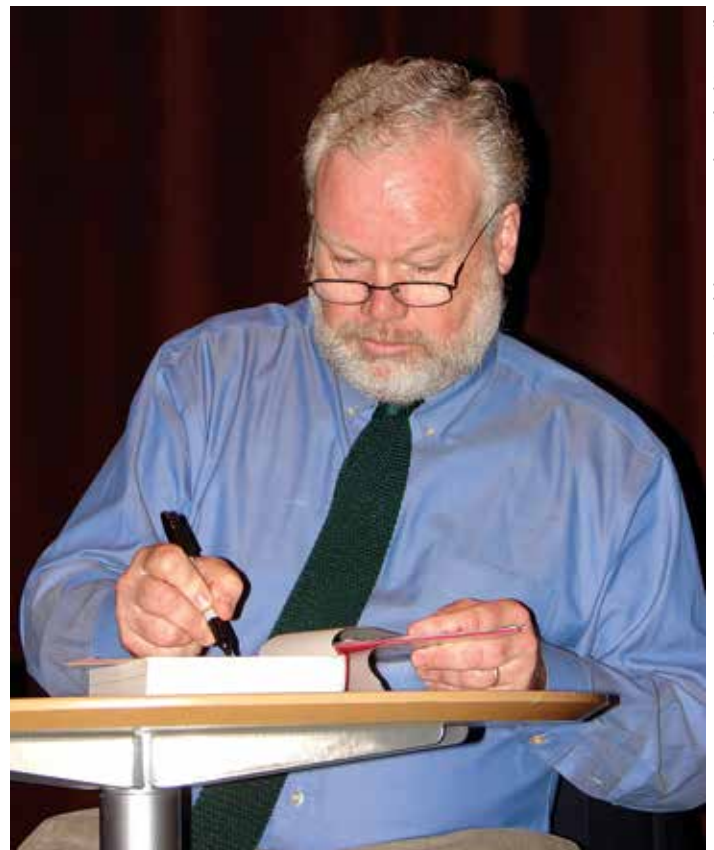
In confronting state-sanctioned racism on its home turf, the civil rights movement engaged a violent enemy far more formidable than any domestic opponent Americans face today. Of course, they succeeded because they provided a courageous moral example, but also and just as importantly because they had mostly done their homework and prepared carefully.

King obviously borrowed heavily from Mohandas Gandhi. Likewise, the strategy, tactics, and execution of the Montgomery bus boycott share much in common with the boycotts against stamps, sugar, and tea practiced by colonial rebels in Boston two centuries earlier. And those behind the annual “March for Life” against abortion in Washington, DC, have obviously gone to school on the civil rights movement, learned its best organizing lessons, and have of late met with their own victories.

Successful leaders of all mass movements have devoured the history of their predecessors, learned from them, and improved upon them. The civil rights movement is a gold standard example from our history that is essential reading for all of today’s aspiring righteous mischief makers.

Those with little or no background in that history can gain it from *Waging a Good War*. The writing isn’t awful when it sticks to the story, rather than the tortured thesis.

But a richer diet on the same subject can be consumed far more easily from other sources. Ricks would have been more helpful if he’d just written book reviews of his favorite sources.



Credit: Philip Weiss. License: <https://bit.ly/3H10746>.

*“A search of the American Historical Association’s database of doctoral dissertations in recent decades found more than 250 that studied the American civil rights movement,” wrote journalist Thomas E. Ricks, in the preface to his book *Waging a Good War: A Military History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968*.*

## He Is Writing This Because . . .

Retelling the history wasn't the point of the book, anyway. "I realize that, as a military historian, I am an outsider to the subject of American civil rights," Ricks wrote in the preface.

The military excuse comes off as just his ticket in the door. The author had some historical and contemporary points he wanted to score.

"The same antidemocratic faction of American life that opposed the Movement in the 1960s has been resurgent lately, not only seeking to restrict access to the vote but actually storming the Capitol building on January 6, 2021," wrote Ricks, explaining some of his motive for writing the book.

On the one hand, Ricks grossly overreaches with the claim that January 6 rally attendees had any aims in common with Jim Crow racists like the notorious Sheriff Bull Connor. On the other hand, a sore loser faction is indeed loose in America, denying and seeking to smear the results of legitimate elections. Both parties have been guilty of this. President Donald Trump joined that sorry cast after the 2020 contest, and the witless, disorganized mob that ransacked the Capitol on January 6 was an ugly example of it.

But what of the highly organized effort to deny and overturn the results of the 2016 election?

The FBI, acting on conspiracies cooked up by the Hillary Clinton campaign, embroiled the nation and the Congress in a three-year terror-fantasy claim that the then duly elected president was a tool of the Kremlin. Among the FBI's many misdeeds in this fiasco, it repeatedly misled (and that's the charitable interpretation) federal judges to obtain Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act warrants against one-time Trump advisor Carter Page.

Hillary Clinton herself was a major cheerleader, implying on multiple occasions after the election that Trump (and others) were puppets controlled by Vladimir Putin.

That too is all part of our national sore loser syndrome. Left unaddressed, it's arguably a far worse problem than a mob of nuts rioting in the Capitol for a few hours. Those inside the Capitol that day had reason to fear the friends of the loony invader wearing the bison horns; the rest of the nation did not.

But a politicized and runaway FBI is a potential and currently active threat to the civil liberties of every American.



*Intellectual consistency was not a strong point when Ricks tried to make his book seem relevant for today.*

In *Waging a Good War*, Ricks addressed the problem this way: "When stated clearly, this simple fact is stunning and scandalous: a federal agency secretly declared war on a peaceable domestic political figure and campaigned zealously against him for years."

Alas, that quote was not a reference to the FBI's horrid mistreatment of Page, Trump, and others who were merely practicing politics without the bureau's blessing a few years ago. That reference was to the FBI's also horrid mistreatment and similarly corrupt surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr.

The book is silent on the Trump-Russia collusion hoax.

Intellectual consistency was not a strong point when Ricks tried to make his book seem relevant for today.

"All the methods by which minority voters are disenfranchised nowadays bear a strong resemblance to the tools employed by the white supremacist South a lifetime ago," he wrote.

And this from the epilogue, after Ricks has accurately recounted severe violence and threats of the same repeatedly inflicted on those seeking the right to vote during the civil rights era:

According to the US Elections Project, using U.S. Census data, black voter turnout for the 2020 election was 65.6 percent—the third highest total in the database going back to 1986. The only two elections with higher percentages of black turnout were 2008 (69.1 percent) and 2012 (67.4 percent), respectively the election and re-election of President Barack Obama. In those elections, black voter turnout exceeded white turnout and was the highest among all demographics measured by the US Elections Project.

And black voter turnout in 2020 was higher than white voter turnout in every presidential election since at least 1986.

To write that violations of voting rights in 2020 bear any resemblance, let alone a "strong" one, to the violence that occurred in the American South prior to the civil rights era is just deeply unserious, offensive, incendiary hyperbole. It ranks right there with the worst things former President Trump has justifiably been criticized for saying.



Credit: Marion S. Trikoski/LOC. License: <https://bit.ly/2lrKTeu>

*(James Meredith walking to class accompanied by U.S. marshals.) In one example, the federally forced enrollment of James Meredith at Ole Miss in September 1962 is described by Ricks as “a sideshow in the history of the civil rights movement” that “degenerated into what is known in American military parlance as a shitshow.”*

It’s difficult to take a historian seriously who cannot grasp recent history or a journalist who so clearly doesn’t follow the news. In the effort to make his book relevant for today, Ricks instead turned it into an extended effort to rival the worst voices for and against Trump on Twitter.

## The Army of One

The clumsy military clichés and analogies in *Waging a Good War* also caused Ricks to veer into incongruous criticisms of the individuals who waged the good war.

In one example, the federally forced enrollment of James Meredith at Ole Miss in September 1962 is described by Ricks as “a sideshow in the history of the civil rights movement” that “degenerated into what is known in American military parlance as a shitshow.”

Meredith, a military veteran, set out to smash the color barrier at the University of Mississippi and won a U.S. Supreme Court case ordering the school to admit him. When Mississippi’s governor wouldn’t comply, President John F. Kennedy sent U.S. Marshals and ultimately other federal forces to enforce the law. A mob of segregationists showed and started a battle—and got a deadly one in return.

Meredith was admitted and endured a highly acrimonious enrollment under the protection of federal officers.

“The Kennedys, inadvertently, had seen their consciousness raised,” wrote Ricks of the outcome. “After Ole Miss, the president and his brother no longer would attempt to take a neutral stance aimed at finding a balancing point between the two sides.”

So, why did Ricks denigrate the impact of the incident?

Because it wasn’t planned with the military precision at the center of the argument that Ricks was straining to make about the success of the civil rights movement.

“What is most striking about the incident at Ole Miss is that none of that sort of careful preparation occurred,” wrote Ricks. “Instead, both sides improvised as they went along, with ugly consequences.”

Meredith was planning his moves but going at it alone. It is impossible to honestly ignore his impact, but he is a big problem for the thesis of the book.

“To a surprising degree, the civil rights movement was uninvolved in this showdown,” wrote Ricks of Ole Miss. “Its leaders saw Meredith as an irascible loner, not a member of any group, and not working in conjunction with them except to seek legal support from the NAACP.”

Additionally, the federal forces sent to integrate Ole Miss were a hastily assembled and insufficiently equipped hodge-podge collection. In his faulty planning, Meredith apparently didn’t ring up JFK and tell him to send in the A-team. Ricks quotes the analysis of a U.S. Marshal at the scene: “We were sent in unprepared, with nowhere near the equipment we should have had.”

The book tallied the casualties: “By the time the sun came up on Monday, more than a hundred of the federal representatives would be injured, and two onlookers—a foreign reporter and a local man—would lie dead.”

In its best places, *Waging a Good War* is nothing if not an account of the heroic nonviolent stands made by civil rights figures—even in some cases minor children—as they are

CC —————  
*James Meredith comes off as a man who unilaterally grabbed major pieces of the federal government and forced them all to do the bidding of the civil rights movement.*





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*Martin Luther King Jr. and others joined to pick up the march from the wounded James Meredith. When Meredith reemerged from the hospital, he returned to rejoin what Thomas E. Ricks described as “the largest civil rights gathering” in the history of Mississippi.*

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being violently assaulted and sometimes killed by racists. At Ole Miss, a military veteran brought federal forces into conflict with the violent racists and yet did so without getting innocent civil rights marchers—let alone their children—involved in the consequences.

This followed Meredith’s single-minded and successful effort to get the U.S. Supreme Court to integrate a major southern state university. Afterward, the upshot of his moral courage was a change of heart by the White House regarding which side the Kennedys should take at this pivotal point in American history.

Even in Ricks’ account, James Meredith comes off as a man who unilaterally grabbed major pieces of the federal government and forced them all to do the bidding of the civil rights movement.

In June 1966, once again acting mostly alone, Meredith embarked on a “March Against Fear” from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. According to the account from Ricks, “a white man from Memphis fired three 16-gauge shotgun loads of birdshot at him.”

Martin Luther King Jr. and others joined to pick up the march from the wounded Meredith. When Meredith reemerged from the hospital, he returned to rejoin what Ricks described as “the largest civil rights gathering” in the history of Mississippi.

Generously conceding the obvious, the book provides this personal observation about Meredith, from NAACP official Medgar Evers: “He’s got more guts than any man I know, but he’s the hardest-headed son-of-a-gun I ever met.”

There is no mass planning of a movement in the story of James Meredith, no military precision, little logistics, few instances of coordinated action, almost nothing of what Ricks refers to as a “similarity to military operations.”

The treatment of Meredith isn’t the only instance where Ricks rammed needless judgments into the narrative of *Waging a Good War*. In two other examples, the NAACP and Thurgood Marshall, the first Black Supreme Court justice, were repeatedly criticized because their conduct failed to fit the military mold cut out for them by the author.

There is no question that planning, logistics, leadership, and all the rest are critical if a mass social movement—or much of anything else people join to accomplish—is to enjoy sustained success. But huge, consequential, earth-shaking change can and does occur when one—just one—stubborn S.O.B. stands up alone, says “enough!”—and forces the world around them to surrender to their moral courage.

It isn’t surprising that James Meredith was one such person. To take just the legal aspect of his story, a careful reading of the names on many Supreme Court decisions will reveal others like him. It takes a special personality to look at the government and say “no, not me, and not today, I’m taking you to court.”

A better book with a useful premise would have recognized the immensely important power of the individual, alongside that of the masses, and not characterized Meredith as part of a “shitshow,” let alone just a “sideshow.” ■

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**LEFT OF CENTER** *RIGHT-LEANING*

## Political and Policy-Oriented Giving After *Citizens United*: An Update to CRC's 2017 Analysis

CRC's update to the 2017 report found: In the 2018 election cycle, liberal grantmakers increased their public policy 501(c)(3) giving, increasing the imbalance from nearly 3.4 to 1 in 2014 to 3.7 to 1 (\$8.1 billion to \$2.2 billion) in 2018. "Dark money" funding through 501(c)(4) groups flipped from a 3.6 to 1 advantage for conservatives to a nearly 2 to 1 (\$81 million to \$42 million) advantage for liberals.



## BOOK REVIEW: *THE TRAGEDY OF AMERICAN COMPASSION*

By Hayden Ludwig

Marvin Olasky's *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Regnery, 2022) turned 30 last year. Three decades later it still stands as one of the most important books challenging modern America's enormous welfare state, warranting an anniversary reprint and a fresh look by a new generation.

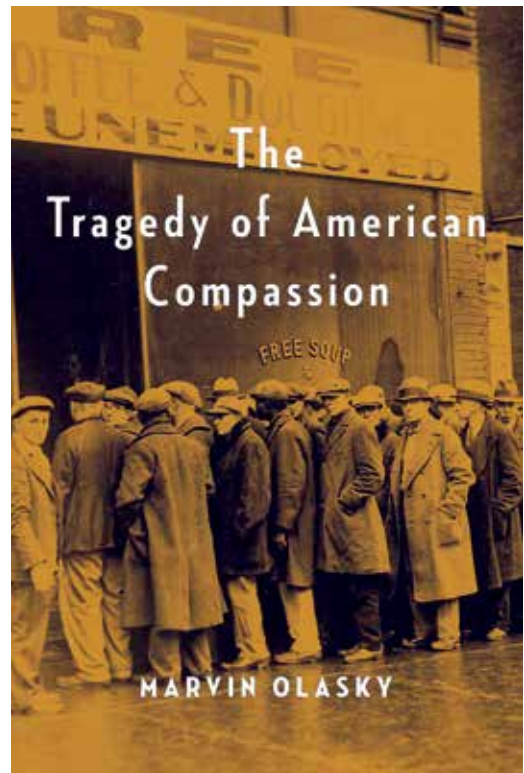
Olasky is one of the conservative movement's sharpest thinkers and most prolific writers. Born to a Russian Jewish family in 1950, he converted first to Marxism in college, then the Communist Party in the early 1970s, and finally to Christianity in 1976, later becoming an elder in the Presbyterian Church in America. Olasky might be best known for his decades-long work at the Evangelical magazine *World*, which he left in January 2022 to become a senior fellow for the Discovery Institute, a think tank best known for its work on intelligent design theory.

At its core, *Tragedy* rejects the old liberal idea that poverty is the root of all social ills. Americans have spent countless trillions of dollars in government aid, only to find our cities are brimming with more indigence and addiction than ever.

Olasky recasts the tenets of welfare from "entitlement, bureaucracy, and secularism" (EBS) to "challenging, personal, and spiritual help" (CPS) rooted in the Bible's understanding of charity. It launched a new era of books, articles, and fiery debate over the role of the government—and its oft-competitor, the church—in charity.

The first edition of *Tragedy* proved influential to the passage of bipartisan welfare reform legislation in 1996 and propelled Olasky into what he (almost bashfully) calls "an informal, occasional" advisory role for then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush (R).

Three decades later, Olasky has a few ideas of where to improve upon his original thesis. Nineteenth-century terms like "worthy poor," which merely describe a biblical willingness to work, offended more often than edified. The collapse of American manufacturing, too, discouraged countless workers and amplified drug addiction across the Rust Belt.



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*Marvin Olasky's The Tragedy of American Compassion (Regnery, 2022) turned 30 last year. Three decades later it still stands as one of the most important books challenging modern America's enormous welfare state, warranting an anniversary reprint and a fresh look by a new generation.*

Yet its central warning remains the same: All the money in the world cannot lift men out of the gutter. Reducing national poverty takes more than cold hearts and soft heads. Fortunately, Americans have an excellent model in our own country's history.

*Hayden Ludwig is a senior investigative researcher at CRC.*



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*Marvin Olasky is one of the conservative movement's sharpest thinkers and most prolific writers.*

## Pilgrim Beginnings

The lesson begins in colonial America with William Bradford, head of Massachusetts' tiny Plymouth Colony founded in 1620, who wrote of the Pilgrims' tender care toward their sick and dying. Later, ministers across the 13 colonies made hospitality, discipline for children, and self-sacrifice central to their sermons. That sometimes meant withholding charity from those unwilling to work—not out of malice, as is often criticized today, but to correct sinful idleness. The goal was edification: turning the downtrodden into productive, Godfearing churchgoers.

This system worked because it emphasized personal responsibility, treated the family (rather than the individual) as the basic unit of society, and was rooted in the commandments and examples set by a holy, gracious God. It wasn't perfect. But early America's Christian—and particularly Calvinist—convictions made the nation famous for caring for its poor and "distressed" through hospitals, poorhouses, and schools.

## Nationalizing Poverty

The incredible growth of American cities and immigration in the 19th century changed that. Observers pined for that old philanthropic spirit that had inexplicably dried up. Others petitioned the federal government to establish asylums for the mentally ill, the beginning of its long slide into welfare programs.

Universalist preachers such as Horace Greeley—better known today as a radical abolitionist—denied the doctrine of innate human sinfulness taught by their (orthodox) predecessors and began to advocate charity for even the able-bodied poor who refused to work. Across America, liberal and radical theologians founded communes free from private property and other "obsolete" assumptions. Civilization, not sin, was proclaimed the cause of all poverty. Men were naturally good but corrupted by bad institutions. They called their message the "Social Gospel."

Socialism and Darwinism hit 19th century America hard. Socialism, a revolutionary import from Germany, threatened social cohesion and turned the problem of poverty into a class struggle to the death between rich and poor. The idea that wealth was not created, only stolen, burst violently into American cities and never left.

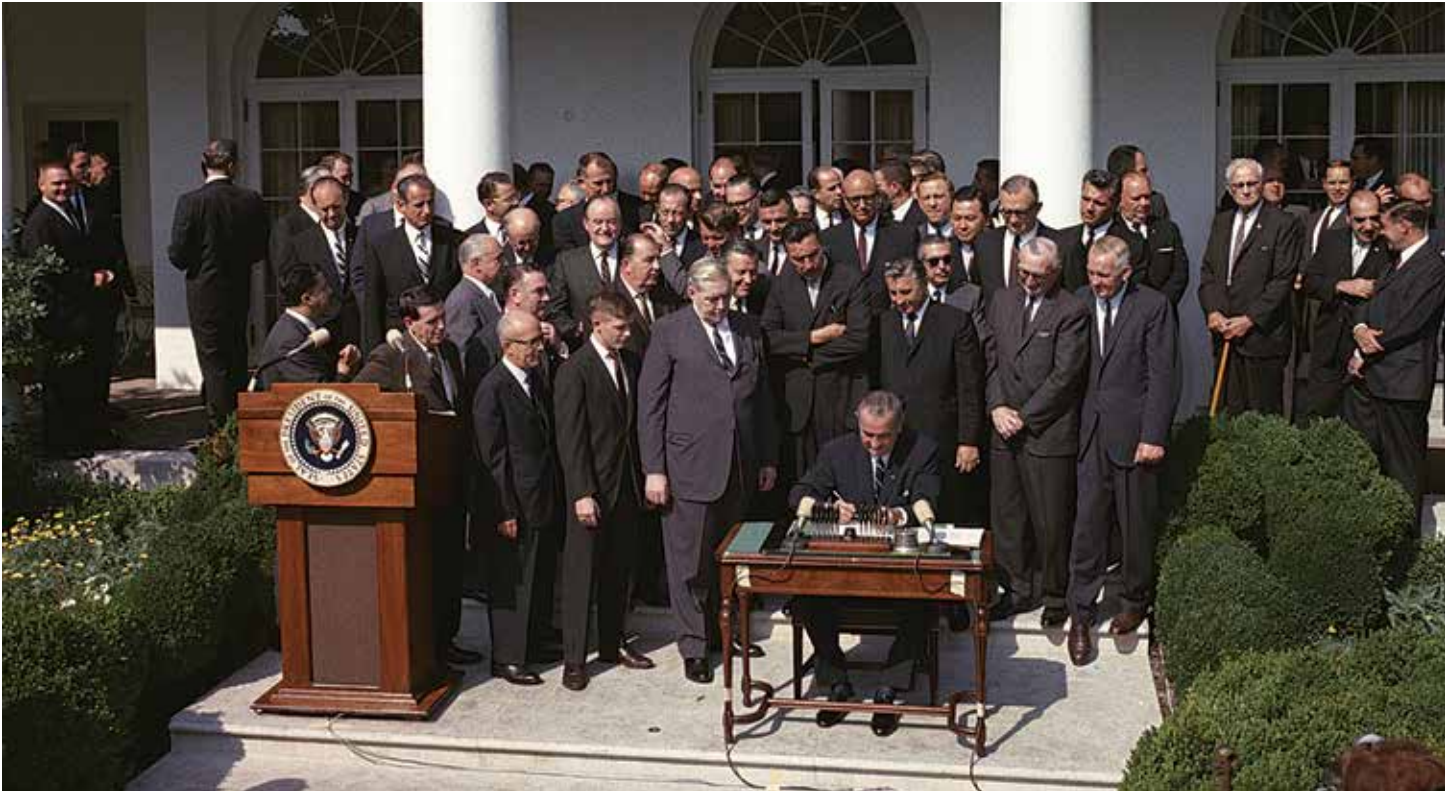
Many elites found validation of their own supposed superiority in Charles Darwin's theory of human evolution—their success was unquestionably a product of natural selection, not chance or God's providence. Who could argue with nature?

In the 1870s, New York City was crime-ridden to the extreme. Alcoholism, muggings, murder, and drug abuse—exacerbated by overcrowding in filthy slums—made the country's cities practically unlivable. Even Horace Greeley complained in 1869 that "the beggars



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*Universalist preachers such as Horace Greeley began to advocate charity for even the able-bodied poor who refused to work.*



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*President Lyndon Johnson signing the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a key component of his War on Poverty. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation "was truly a triumph of faith," Olasky writes, "the social gospel walking on earth."*

of New York are at once very numerous and remarkably impudent," deciding that their only hope was to reform themselves or die.

"Social Darwinism" became the new religion of America's aristocracy; eugenics—improving the populace through selective breeding—its sacrament. Social Darwinists blamed the rampant crime and mental illness in equal measure on biologically "unfit" immigrants and naïve Christians, who aimed to stave off welfare dependency by establishing thousands of new charities nationwide. And both Protestant and Roman Catholic missions answered the call—saving countless thousands from addiction, abuse, and damnation. Evangelicals founded the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Salvation Army to encourage a strong work ethic based on biblical principles.

Yet the notion that the *government* should save the destitute through YMCA-style anti-poverty programs also spread rapidly. Professional social workers and federal regulations would do what volunteer Christians and heartfelt ministry did. Utopians even toyed with the idea of a "new man" perfected through scientific social engineering.

As Olasky puts it, "bad charity drove out good charity."

## Government "Compassion"

The stock market's collapse in 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression put to rest any shame of going on the government dole. Even so, Olasky points out that many in Franklin Roosevelt's administration saw the New Deal programs as temporary, not permanent entitlements. They had to be or the country would sink into pauperization, officials warned.

Even a *New York Times* editor writing in *The Atlantic* in 1938 lamented that "personal conscience in the United States has fallen to a new low in our history as a nation . . . the very foundation upon which any broader conception of individual responsibility towards society must rest is being washed away."

The New Deal's liberal social ideas could not withstand the assault of Marxism. By the 1960s it was obvious that the social revolution had landed in America. Evangelicals and Roman Catholics continued to oppose welfarism, but their warnings held almost no cachet either in Washington or the popular mind. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation "was truly a triumph of faith," Olasky writes, "the social gospel walking on earth."



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*“Pass the bill now, worry about its effects and implementation later” was the mantra of the Johnson administration on the so-called War on Poverty.*

“Pass the bill now, worry about its effects and implementation later” was the mantra of the Johnson administration on the so-called War on Poverty. One top administration economist even proposed a “guaranteed income,” calling it “the next great social advance [that’s] got to come.” Another official sermonized that “the way to eliminate poverty is to give the poor people enough money so that they won’t be poor anymore.”

Such proposals would have been outlandish in 1930 and unfathomable two generations earlier. But by 1970 they were the inescapable conclusions of a society that had jettisoned its biblical origins for a new view of human nature and the source of poverty.

Social mobility, the hallmark of 19th century American life, soon eroded. Federal action undermined private charitable missions, which became just another welfare program in the public mind. Marriage suffered, too, as young women “married the government.” When out-of-wedlock pregnancies soared in the postwar period, social workers swooped in to provide rich benefits for teenage mothers, provided they received no support from their family or the child’s father. The message was clear: Fathers need not apply.

Olasky sees this last victim of American “compassion” as its deadliest. Coupled with feminist ideology’s war on “patriarchal values,” new laws encouraged easy divorce and extra-marital births—or abortion—while handwringing liberals watched the family structure dissolve into total anarchy, helpless to do anything but propose new spending dockets.

## Old-Fashioned Charity

But amid this sad decay, Olasky also calls attention to the quiet, unshowy work of millions of everyday Christians engaged in old-fashioned ministry. He documents homes set up to tend to impoverished pregnant mothers; men’s outreach to homeless fathers in Washington, DC; foster care programs that teach couples how to care for infants; and churches that offer meals for homeless who serve in public clean-up crews and apprenticeship programs.

Each of these commitments shares one powerful goal: restoring the family as William Bradford would have recognized it. Nothing short of true, compassionate, personal charity will do. ■

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