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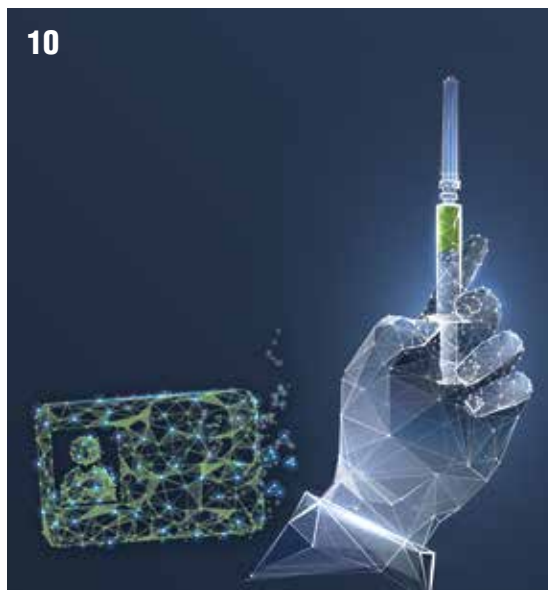
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China's Puppet

I want to commend THE NEW AMERICAN on the issue entitled “Coronavirus: Freedom Is the Cure” (April 20 issue). There is no question that reactions to COVID-19 are problematic and revealing.

China and the globalists have used Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general, and WHO to attack America and its allies. Tedros is not a medical doctor. He is a Marxist revolutionary politician who belongs to Ethiopia's Marxist Tigray People's Liberation Front. Prior to his election as WHO director-general, Tedros served as Ethiopia's minister of foreign affairs from 2012 to 2016 and as minister of health from 2005 to 2012. Ethiopia has an authoritarian tyrannical regime that has committed many human-rights violations: Political opponents of the regime are shot, and elections are fraudulent.

Moreover, Tedros is a globalist, and his organization supports the Chinese regime. One of the first things that Tedros did after taking his position, with China's support, was to try to install Zimbabwe's bloody dictator Robert Mugabe as a WHO goodwill ambassador. Tedros also went to Beijing to praise the health system of the Chinese regime. Tedros, China's puppet, has excluded Taiwan, a prosperous democratic nation of over 24 million people, from any assistance provided by WHO. Moreover, in order to please Xi Jinping, Tedros said — without any evidence — that he has received many insults from Taiwan. Taiwan responded to Tedros' comments, calling them “baseless” and demanding an apology.

Both WHO and the Chinese communist regime are responsible for the spreading of the Wuhan virus and committing genocide in 182 nations, by covering it up and downplaying it.

Tedros visited Cuba and met with its president, Miguel Díaz-Canel. Tedros praised Cuba's bloody regime, saying, “Cuba is an example to the world. We want and will have health for everyone.”

President Donald Trump put a hold on U.S. funding for the World Health Organization after the agency blew it by failing to sound the alarm sooner about the coronavirus. The United States allocated the most funds of any nation, between \$400 million and \$500 million, to WHO. That generous

funding represented 22 percent of its budget. China sent \$44 million.

While Washington pays, it is China that calls the shots with the corrupt WHO. Tedros has accepted China's falsehoods from the very beginning of the pandemic. President Trump called the Geneva-based international body “very China-centric.” He also said WHO was wrong to advise against travel restrictions he imposed on China.

The United States needs to quit the corrupt UN or severely cut the funding that it gives to the Third World club of anti-American and anti-Western dictators.

The United States and its allies need to hold China accountable by cancelling the debts owed to this enemy nation. The corrupt Marxist Tedros must be fired from WHO and indicted by an international tribunal.

FRANK DE VARONA
Sent via e-mail

ERA: Error-ridden Action

Regarding the two articles on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the March 23 issue: A leader of a black, “women's rights” organization opposed the ERA because it would do away with laws protecting women from being forced to lift heavy weights at their jobs. She called the ERA “the ‘liftin’ and ‘totin’ bill.”

The main problem with the ERA has always been that no one knows for certain what laws would change if the amendment is ratified. It reminds me of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's famous statement that Congress would have to pass the ObamaCare bill before we found out the terms of the law.

It would take years of expensive litigation and profound changes in tradition and family law before we'd know definitively what was the result of the ERA's passage.

DAVID HAMMER
Bronx, New York

CORRECTION: The April 20 article “Your Papers Please” incorrectly noted Governor Ralph Northam's state. It should be Virginia.

Send your letters to: THE NEW AMERICAN, P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54912. Or e-mail: editorial@thenewamerican.com. Due to volume received, not all letters can be answered. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

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Pope Rebukes Humanity — Calls for “Ecological Conversion”

During an April 22 video stream, Pope Francis had strong words for humanity on Earth Day, rebuking mankind for its collective failure to take care of the planet.

“Because of our selfishness we have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the earth,” the pontiff said in his address. “We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair.”

Pope Francis, who has made environmentalism one of the hallmark issues of his papacy and heaped praise on teenage climate-change activist Greta Thunberg, accused humans of having “polluted and despoiled” the Earth.

“For this reason, various international and local movements have sprung up in order to appeal to our consciences,” he added, perhaps an allusion to groups such as Thunberg’s Fridays for Future, as well as the United Nations (the pope spoke at the UN Assembly in 2015 shortly



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before member states unanimously adopted Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, which he called “a great step forward for global dialogue, marking a vitally new and universal solidarity”).

“I deeply appreciate these initiatives; still it will be necessary for our children to take to the streets to teach us the obvious: we have no future if we destroy the very environment that sustains us,” the pontiff continued.

“We have failed to care for the earth, our garden-home; we have failed to care for our brothers and sisters. We have sinned against the earth, against our neighbors, and ultimately against the Creator, the benevolent Father who provides for everyone, and desires us to live in communion and flourish together.”

As if treating the Earth as a sentient entity in parity with God himself weren’t enough, Pope Francis went on to call on his listeners to undergo an “ecological conversion.” “We cannot heal the earth unless we love and respect it,” he declared.

Under Biden, Gun Ownership Would Be a “Heavily Regulated Privilege”

Dave Workman, senior editor for GunMag.com (published by the Second Amendment Foundation), reviewed the 3,100-word anti-gun platform available at Joe Biden’s campaign website and called it a recipe “to turn the right to keep and bear arms into a heavily-regulated privilege.”

The de facto Democratic Party candidate for president insists, of course, that he will follow “constitutional, common-sense gun safety policies.” But consider just the first policy: abolishing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act passed in

2005 that keeps gun makers from being held liable for crimes committed when a criminal uses one of their products.

President Biden would ban the manufacture, sale, purchase, and possession of any semi-automatic firearm (which he broadly declares to be “assault weapons”). And he would work to declare such presently owned firearms to be covered under the National Firearms Act, passed in 1934, which at present is limited to machine guns and certain other short-barreled firearms.

By implication, anyone owning such a firearm would be subject to the \$200 tax on each firearm. But there’s no doubt that, having his way, he would bring that tax up to date, equivalent to nearly \$4,000 per weapon in today’s money.

He would require background checks on all firearms-related transactions. He would reinstate the Obama-Biden policy that keeps firearms out of the hands of people who are deemed unable to manage their own financial affairs for mental reasons.

He would push every state to enact “red flag” laws, and while at it, would require that when people become newly prohibited from owning a firearm, they would be forced to give up possession of their existing firearms.

He would enact other restrictions: “safe at home” rules, limits on how many firearms one may purchase in a month, and so on.

The de facto Democratic candidate can pontificate all he likes about what he’ll do to the Second Amendment once he is in office. There is not much chance that he’ll get the opportunity.



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Even Without a Strict Lockdown, Sweden Stabilizes COVID-19 Cases

Dr. Anders Tegnell, the state epidemiologist of Sweden, recently told the Swedish news agency TT that the Scandinavian country's more relaxed approach to fighting the coronavirus pandemic is beginning to yield results. Tegnell said the latest figures on infection rates and fatalities indicate the crisis is starting to stabilize.

"We're on a sort of plateau," Tegnell told the Swedish news agency.

A report in the U.K. newspaper *The Sun* on April 20 noted that Sweden recorded just 40 coronavirus deaths and 392 cases that day "as the country continues to avoid lockdown restrictions."

The Sun observed that Sweden is the only country in Europe not to have implemented lockdown measures on the public.

The 392 new confirmed cases is the smallest jump since April 12 and takes Sweden's total confirmed cases to 14,777, observed *The Sun*.

We compared Sweden's coronavirus statistics to Portugal's, since the countries have nearly identical populations (Portugal: 10,252,000; Sweden: 10,236,000). A report from Statistica.com showing the number of COVID-19 cases in Europe by country, as of April 21, 2020, revealed that Portugal had 20,863 cases, compared to Sweden's 14,777.

Sweden's neighbor, Norway, with half Sweden's population, at 5,333,000, also had half the number of cases at 7,113, as might be expected. So even with its more relaxed restrictions, Sweden is faring as well as its neighbor on a per capita basis.

Sweden's pandemic strategy has been described as trusting the public to act responsibly. Rather than imposing wide-ranging

bans and restrictions, authorities have advised people to maintain good hand hygiene, work from home, and practice social distancing. In other words, the same as all other countries, only without the heavy hand of the state.

One point that might be worth considering in view of Sweden's approach to handling the COVID-19 pandemic is, if less-draconian measures produce results as effective as shutting down a nation's economy, then why not take the less-intrusive approach?



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U.S. Cities Enforce Social Distancing With Drones — Donated by China

A number of police departments around the country are using drones manufactured by a company with ties to the Chinese government in order to enforce COVID-19-related lockdowns, prompting concerns from experts who say the drones may serve as a way for the east Asian communist regime to spy on the United States, reported Fox News on April 20.

Already, 43 law-enforcement agencies in 22 states are surveilling Americans with the help of drones made by China's Da Jiang Innovations (DJI), ensuring citizens remain in their homes and observe social-distancing rules.

While DJI denies it has any motives beyond altruism in its donation of drone technology to U.S. law-enforcement agencies, many — from lawmakers to watchdog groups to drone experts —

say America's reliance on Chinese technology to monitor its own citizens could lead to disastrous national security consequences.

DJI, based out of Shenzhen, China, is the world's largest and most well-known drone manufacturer, with a market share estimated to be between 87 and 90 percent. Due to the size of the company's profits and the number of its employees, it automatically falls under the eye of the Chinese government. Yet DJI claims it does not spy on Americans and that users have the option of preventing their devices from transmitting data.

But an expert with close ties to the intelligence community told Fox News that data could be collected without the awareness of even DJI employees — only DJI founder Frank Wang and the Chinese government would know.

Even prior to the coronavirus outbreak, U.S. intelligence officials were concerned enough about DJI to order the entire fleet in its possession grounded. Early in February, the Interior Department issued a no-fly order taking all of its drone fleet out of the sky — a move many believe was aimed at China. This was a follow-up to a temporary order issued in 2019 that arose from concerns of potential espionage. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that all 800 of the department's drones were either made in China or built with Chinese parts. ■



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England's Prime Minister Survives Coronavirus Attack, Praises Two Nurses

"When things could have gone either way, the reason my body did start to get enough oxygen was because for every second of the night they were watching, thinking, caring, and making the interventions I needed." Singling out two nurses who provided the exceptional care he received, **Boris Johnson** was able to walk away after spending a week in a hospital, including three nights in an intensive care unit.



Boris Johnson

ForeignandCommonwealthOffice

Supreme Court Justices Hearing Cases Electronically

"In keeping with public health guidelines in response to Covid-19, the justices will all participate remotely." Never before have Supreme Court justices not been in their chamber to hear arguments and announce their decisions. This unusual step, announced in a news release from the court, will have the justices carry out their duty electronically from home.

Congressman Notes That Federal Employees Are Still Receiving Their Paychecks

"Those who are government employees at all levels, including members of Congress, don't seem to mind the shutdown of most of America's small businesses. Many are probably even enjoying their extended vacations. After all, they are still drawing their salaries." Former Representative **John Duncan** (R-Tenn.) pointed to America's 29,000 to 63,000 deaths due to influenza every year, yet businesses are not shut down.



Bernie Sanders

GageSkidmore

Marxist Sanders Endorses Biden for President

"We need you in the White House and I will do all that I can to see that that happens."

In an earlier-than-expected announcement of an alliance between Marxist **Bernie Sanders** and hard leftist Joe Biden, the senator from Vermont indicated that his action was necessary in order to defeat Donald Trump in November. Sanders has never been a member of the Democratic Party, preferring always to consider himself an Independent. His recent praise for Fidel Castro provided evidence of his real political stance.

Tankers Having to Pay to Unload Oil — Isn't This Backward?

"The whole U.S. oil system is physically backing up because of a lack of demand and no storage space."

With far fewer people driving autos and using the airlines, oil tanker captains are having to pay to offload their cargo into storage facilities — a complete turnaround from customarily expecting payment for delivery of oil. **Frank Verrastro** of the Center for Strategic and International Studies explained what is occurring.

Most New York City Coronavirus Patients Have Chronic Health Issues

"The number of patients who had chronic comorbidities surprised us."

In an article appearing in the Journal of the American Medical Association, senior vice president **Karina Davidson** at New York City's Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research revealed that almost all of the patients admitted to her hospital had at least one major chronic health condition, and most of the 5,700 patients taken in had at least two such maladies, including obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Famed Basketball Coach Retires, Expresses Disdain for the Political World

"I'm a little too honest for politics."

After 33 years as the very successful coach of the women's basketball team at Notre Dame University, **Muffet McGraw** announced her retirement. Her teams amassed 936 victories and won two national championships. Asked if she might enter the political world, she rejected the idea with a caustic view of politics and politicians. ■

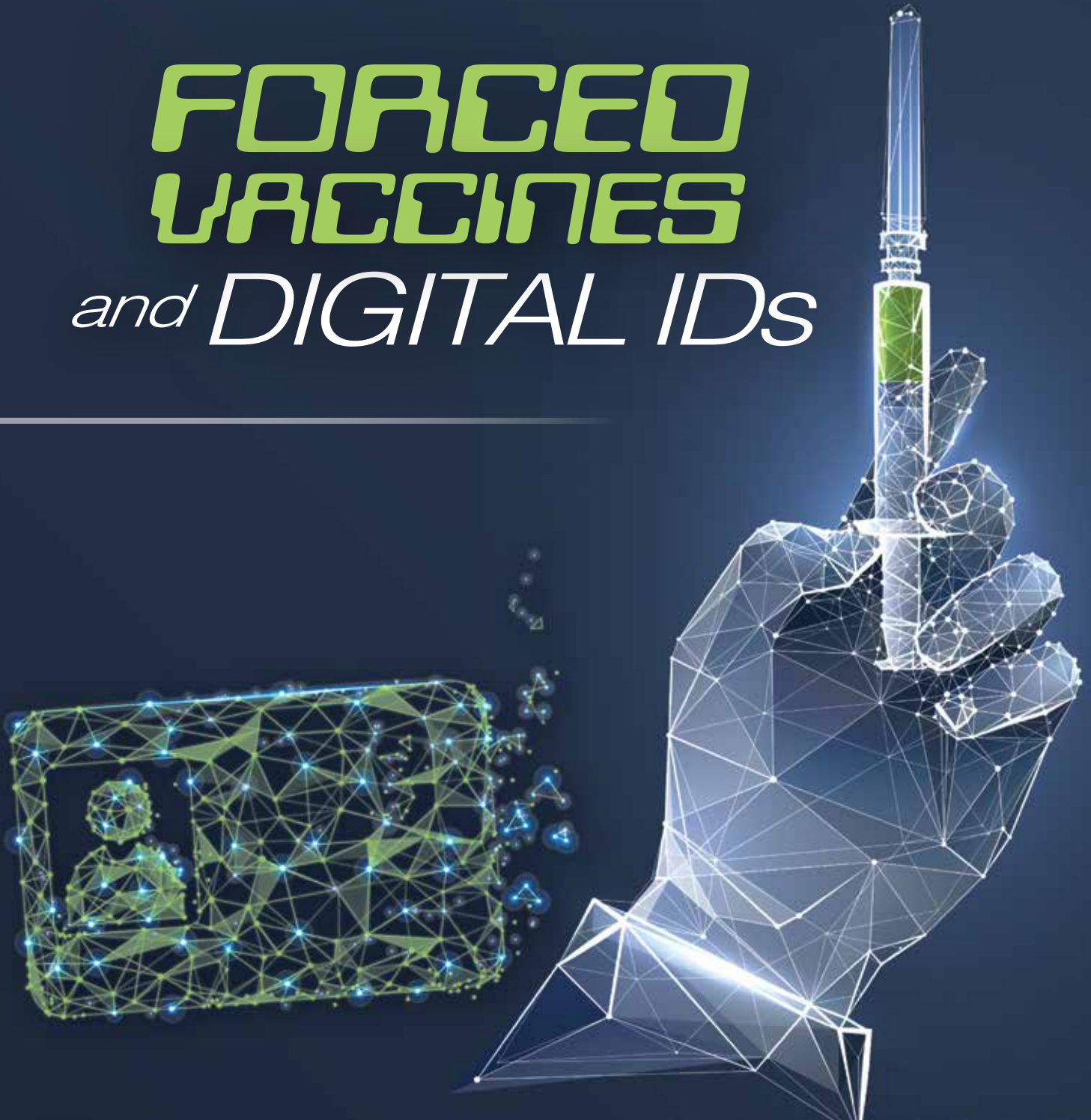
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Muffet McGraw

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FORCED VACCINES *and* **DIGITAL IDs**



Over the last decade, major component agencies of the international Deep State have been working to design an all-encompassing digital ID system that would allow the tracking and control of the population of the entire world.

by Dennis Behreandt

Here's what they are planning: a national health ID. This has been under development by international agencies along with the Gates Foundation for several years. Planning for this is being done by ID2020, an organization supported by Accenture, the Rockefeller Foundation, Microsoft Corp., the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and others. Of note, among the others is an entity named "Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance," whose support of ID2020 demonstrates the interest of would-be globalist regulators in tying vaccination to identification. This is all being built as part of an ongoing effort to force all of the world's peoples, Americans not excluded, into a thoroughgoing digital ID scheme.

Of course, this sounds crazy. First, vaccines are always good, aren't they? Second, there has to be some means of tracking who has and has not been vaccinated, right? Third, naturally, there needs to be some means of proving who you are. Finally, there can't be some worldwide coordination on all of this, centralizing it and imposing it on everyone without Americans having come to know about it. That would be impossible, right?

Wrong. Far removed from the day-to-day concerns of average Americans, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national and international government agencies work together to craft policies without notice being given to citizens, without mainstream media reporting, and without legislative oversight. In this case, for more than a decade these groups have collaborated on two tracks of tracking and control: a general-purpose digital ID to track each of the world's inhabitants, and vaccination-based health IDs to allow governments and NGOs to track the health of citizens. In the age of COVID-19, the world's would-be technocrat controllers and oligarchs are working to merge this pair of efforts into a single, foundational ID that would be used to constrain and control human activity.

Dennis Behreandt works in the chemical technology industry and has served as an editor for several publications, including THE NEW AMERICAN.

Chan has worked with Mike Bloomberg's Task Force on Fiscal Policy for Health. That effort resulted in an April 2019 "study" calling for all nations to raise taxes by 50 percent on sugary soft drinks, alcohol, and tobacco.



Dr. Anthony Fauci: A key member of President Trump's coronavirus task force, Dr. Fauci has speculated that Americans will need to have immunity cards to prove they are virus-free before they can regain some of their lost freedoms.

Conditioning, Then Control

A first step toward implementing a vaccine-based ID scheme is conditioning people to accept the idea that they will need to prove their vaccination and health status before being allowed by government to engage in any activities that, heretofore, were exercised without restriction by a free people. This is perfect for the age of COVID-19, when mainstream media organs and government "experts" have worked overtime to instill extreme levels of fear into the American people, forcing them into what amounts to house arrest to fight the "war" on the virus. Now, to regain freedom, it has been suggested that people will need to prove that they have gained immunity to the virus. To this end, Anthony Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and a key member of the

Trump administration's coronavirus task force, admitted that the federal government is considering forcing citizens to use coronavirus immunity cards.

"You know, that's possible," Fauci told CNN. "I mean, it's one of those things that we talk about when we want to make sure that we know who the vulnerable people are and [are] not," he continued. "This is something that's being discussed. I think it might actually have some merit, under certain circumstances."

Importantly, the idea was also floated by Bill Gates, former head of Microsoft and current international supporter of digital ID schemes tied to vaccination. During an "Ask Me Anything" session on the social-media site Reddit, Gates said he supported using immunity IDs. "Eventually we will have some digital certificates to show who has recovered or been tested recently or

WHO: “The rapid expansion of information technology should be leveraged to establish immunization registries and electronic databases that will allow each individual’s immunization status to be tracked.”



Bill Gates: The billionaire former head of Microsoft Corp. now leads a worldwide, multifaceted effort to develop vaccines, vaccine IDs, and centralized digital ID schemes to be used to manage and control the world’s population.

when we have a vaccine who has received it,” Gates remarked. This is significant, as Gates and his foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have been among the key players in the decade-old effort to develop both general-purpose digital IDs and vaccine/immunity tracking.

The constellation of efforts Gates has been making around digital identity and vaccination includes funding research at MIT on encoding health and identity data into a quantum-dot based system that can be embedded in the skin. Described by researchers in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*, the researchers said they had developed an “approach to encode medical history on a patient using the spatial distribution of biocompatible, near-infrared quantum dots (NIR QDs) in the dermis. QDs are invisible to the naked eye yet detectable when exposed to NIR light.”

The journal translated this into less technical terminology: “McHugh *et al.* developed dissolvable microneedles that deliver patterns of near-infrared light-emitting microparticles to the skin. Particle patterns are invisible to the eye but can be imaged using modified smartphones. By codelivering a vaccine, the pattern of particles in the skin could serve as an on-person vaccination record.... These results demonstrate proof of concept for intradermal on-person vaccination recordkeeping.”

Records in scientific journal research databases reveal sources of funding for studies such as this one. In this case, funding was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with the National Science Foundation, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Institutes of Health here in the United States. Funding sources also included the Youth Innovation Promotion Association of the Chinese

Academy of Sciences, the China Scholarship Council, and the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

WHO Is the Vaccine ID Granddaddy

Fauci and the NIAID have a history of working with the Gates Foundation on worldwide vaccination programs. In 2010, the World Health Organization launched the “Global Vaccine Action Plan to guide discovery, development and delivery of lifesaving vaccines.”

“The World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have announced a collaboration to increase coordination across the international vaccine community and create a Global Vaccine Action Plan,” said the WHO press release announcing the plan.

It continued: “The collaboration follows the January 2010 call by Bill and Melinda Gates for the next ten years to be the Decade of Vaccines. The Global Vaccine Action Plan will enable greater coordination across all stakeholder groups — national governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, the private sector and philanthropic organizations — and will identify critical policy, resource, and other gaps that must be addressed to realize the life-saving potential of vaccines.”

The leadership council for this initiative included:

- Margaret Chan, director general of WHO;
- Anthony Fauci, director of NIAID, part of the National Institutes of Health;
- Anthony Lake, executive director of UNICEF;
- Joy Phumaphi, chair of the International Advisory Committee and executive secretary of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance; and
- Tachi Yamada, president of global health at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Among these names, readers of THE NEW AMERICAN may be familiar with Anthony Lake, who previously served as national security advisor to President Bill Clinton. Lake, who had been nominated by Clinton to head the Central Intelligence Agency, infamously wasn’t sure if notorious Soviet spy Alger Hiss was actually a spy.

AP Images

Also noteworthy is Margaret Chan, former longtime leader of the World Health Organization. Before taking the reins of WHO, Chan served as director of public health for Hong Kong. There, in 2004, she came under criticism from the city's Legislative Council for her handling of the original SARS outbreak that led to 299 deaths and considerable economic turmoil for the city. Reporting in 2004, the *Hong Kong Standard* noted that Chan was "unanimously condemned" by the council for what was described as "dereliction of duty before and during the early stage of the Sars outbreak," said Tim Pang from the group Society for Community Organisation, a group representing the interests of SARS victims in the city. Chan's inaction "had a serious impact on public health and global health, which should disqualify her from working for the WHO," Pang concluded, according to the *Standard*.

Her record at WHO, where she gained the top job after being boosted by Com-

munist China, as reported by *Politico*, was also not without controversy. In 2009, under her leadership, WHO promoted the idea that the H1N1 swine flu pandemic would be a worldwide catastrophe. In fact, it proved to be much milder than the WHO health bureaucrats promised, prompting noted German physician and one-time member of the German Parliament Wolfgang Wodarg to note in response, "WHO in cooperation with some big pharmaceutical companies and their re-defined pandemics ... lowered the alarm threshold." The organization pushed a mass vaccination program for the swine flu, and these vaccines proved dangerous in some cases, causing narcolepsy in some, according to *Politico*. Though judged safe by the likes of the CDC, the swine flu vaccine was viewed with increasing suspicion.

Chan was also known for her deferential treatment of communism. She appeared particularly fond of North Korea, where she noted, according to Reuters, that there were no signs of obesity and that

"nutrition is an area that the government has to pay attention [to] and especially for pregnant women and for young children." This in a country where at least 40 percent of the population teeters on the verge of starvation. She also praised the communist dictatorship's vaccination programs, Reuters reported. "They have something which most other developing countries would envy," she said of North Korean healthcare.

Most recently, Chan has worked with Mike Bloomberg's Task Force on Fiscal Policy for Health. That effort resulted in an April 2019 "study" calling for all nations to raise taxes by 50 percent on sugary soft drinks, alcohol, and tobacco. She is now part of the Council of Advisors for the China-based globalist organization the Boao Forum for Asia, run by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Zhou Xiaochuan, former governor of the People's Bank of China, the communist nation's answer to the Federal Reserve. At the Boao Forum, she is president of the organization's Global Health Forum (GHF). The GHF's first annual conference was held in June 2019, and among the organization's stated goals was to "advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Among a broad menu of other things, that UN program promises by 2030 to "provide legal identity for all, including birth registration." This UN program is the framework on which all other world government organizations and NGOs are basing their efforts to build health, vaccination, and digital ID plans and programs.

In its documentation, the World Health Organization's Global Vaccine Action Plan, led by Chan and Fauci, called for numerous steps, including the use of ID technologies to track those vaccinated. According to the *Global Vaccine Action Plan 2011-2020* summary available as a PDF from WHO: "Reaching every community will call for an understanding of the barriers to access and use of immunization; it will also require the underserved to be identified, and micro-plans at the district and community levels to be reviewed and revised in order to ensure that these barriers can be overcome. The rapid expansion of information technology should be leveraged to establish immunization registries and electronic da-



AP Images

Margaret Chan: Former head of the World Health Organization, Chan now leads the Global Health Forum, an organization dedicated to achieving the goals put forth by the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among those goals: providing "legal identity for all, including birth registration."

tabases that will allow each individual's immunization status to be tracked, timely reminders to be sent when immunization is due and data to be accessed easily to inform actions. The introduction of unique identification numbers could be a catalyst for the establishment of such systems."

Schemes for Global ID Control

Tying vaccine and health data to identification documentation is a twist on an already elaborate, emerging constellation of efforts to subjugate the population of the entire world using a universal digital ID.

In a 2019 paper, the McKinsey Global Institute (McKinsey) described how a digital ID would take the place of traditional paper IDs. The organization worked with all of the leading players in the development of these ID schemes. "Our understanding of good ID was informed by extensive consultations with our research collaboration partners Omidyar Network, the Open Society Foundations, and the Rockefeller Foundation," said the McKinsey report. "We also conducted in-depth discussions on the opportunities and challenges associated with digital ID with experts from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Center for Global Development, iSPIRT, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Group's ID4D initiative, and the World Economic Forum."

This is a rogues' gallery of NGOs if there ever was one. The Omidyar Network, for instance, thinks capitalism should be "reimagined," which is code for being "managed" by planners to "rebalance power," shifting it from markets to the state and from businesses to workers' groups in such a way as to explicitly undermine free market economics, which the organization identifies with its bogeyman, the "Milton Friedman-Friedrich Hayek paradigm."

In addition to the Omidyar

Network, the Open Society Foundations from internationalist mastermind George Soros is the chief NGO involved in the disruption of national sovereignty worldwide, while the Rockefeller Foundation has a deep history of dangerous subversion of individual dignity and rights. The latter organization, to point to just one disturbing example, played a key role in the perpetuation of the eugenics scheme worldwide, including in Nazi Germany. This, of course, sounds preposterous to those unfamiliar with this bit of hidden history. But as pioneering journalist Edwin Black, author of several books on

the eugenics movement and Nazi Germany, points out, "The Rockefeller Foundation helped found the German eugenics program and even funded the program that Josef Mengele worked in before he went to Auschwitz."

These are some of the key organizations that now want to be trusted to guide the creation of a world scheme of digital identification.

Based on their discussions with these and other organizations behind the scheme, McKinsey reported that a "good ID" (a euphemism preferred by the Omidyar Network) would be authentic-

digitally, and could be issued by "a national or local government, by a consortium of private or nonprofit organizations, or by an individual entity." Technologies used for authentication, McKinsey wrote, could include everything from "biometric data to passwords, PINs, or smart devices and security tokens."

Building a digital ID platform, McKinsey notes, is needed in order to reach the goals outlined by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — the same program guiding the efforts of Margaret Chan's Global Health Forum.

Describing digital ID as an opportunity — the main theme of the report — McKinsey pointed directly to the UN program, arguing that the world body's "Sustainable Development Goals promote legal identity for all, especially birth registration, by 2030. Furthermore, digital ID is increasingly seen as a prerequisite to participate in the digital economy, for example in digital finance. Digital inclusion is considered so important to promote economic development that the United Nations has highlighted digital inclusion as a key enabler for 13 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals."

That last bit is promoted by those behind the digital ID



Anthony Lake: A Clinton administration bureaucrat, Lake participated in the leadership council of the World Health Organization's Global Vaccine Action Plan, which was a joint operation with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Joining Lake on the leadership council were Margaret Chan and Anthony Fauci.

AP Images

schemes as a benefit. People provided with these new digital talismans will be able to get financing, secure jobs, purchase products, participate in democracy, and so forth, according to the prevailing propaganda.

But the reverse is also true. Without the digital ID, freedom will be revoked. There will be no freedom to work for a living, to purchase property, to move about freely, or to trade for goods or services. The digital ID is, in fact, a scheme to restrict or eliminate individual freedom outright and to provide it only on the authority of some NGO or government agency.

Turn over enough rocks and you'll find some of those behind the push for a digital ID admitting that the scheme is actually about controlling people and behavior. While pushing for adoption of digital IDs, McKinsey admits: "Without proper controls, digital ID system administrators with nefarious aims, whether they work for private-sector firms or governments, would gain access to and control over data. History provides ugly examples of misuse of traditional identification programs, including tracking or persecuting ethnic and religious groups. Digital ID, if improperly designed, could be used in yet more targeted ways against the interests of individuals or groups by government or the private sector. Potential motivations could include financial profit from the collection and storage of personal data, political manipulation of an electorate, and social control of particular groups through surveillance and restriction of access to uses such as payments, travel, and social media."

One of the companies building the technological infrastructure for digital ID schemes is arms manufacturer and security firm Thales Group. Partially owned by the French government, the key division of Thales working on Digital ID is Gemalto, a formerly independent company that Thales acquired in 2017 for \$5.4 billion.

As with every other participant in the digital ID scheme, Gemalto points to its alignment with the UN's goals in its literature on building a digital ID. And it admits that a future digital identity will be necessary for individuals to engage in activities that, today, don't require an ID. "Without a robust means of proving one's identity, exercising one's basic rights,



George Soros: The billionaire globalist mastermind's Open Society Foundations are among several internationalist NGOs working behind the scenes to create a digital ID scheme.

claiming entitlements, accessing a range of governmental services, and conducting many daily activities could be hampered," Gemalto warns.

It should be noted that this is not something coming in the distant, far-off future. Digital IDs are already being implemented. For just one example, in July 2019, Thales launched the Gemalto Digital ID Wallet. In a press release the company described the function of this technology:

With Thales's new Gemalto Digital ID Wallet, governments will issue a secure digital version of official documents including identity cards, health cards and drivers licenses, available to all citizens on their smartphones. Citizens will therefore be able to prove who they are, both online and in the "real world," and access their rights and services at the touch of a button. The solution uses multi-layered security techniques and sophisticated encryption to achieve robust protection of personal data, whilst offering users complete control over what information they choose to share, with whom, and when.

Solutions such as this would invariably be tied to various databases housing informa-

tion about each person. It is a trivial matter to include in such databases information about credit scores, consumer behavior, and more. In China, the population is increasingly controlled by the communist regime's "social credit score." Writing for *Digital Trends* in 2018, Luke Dormehl pointed out that the West is closer to China's system than many think. Of China's Orwellian plan, he wrote: "In addition to more mundane areas like whether you pay your community charge on time, the system's reputational algorithm will also factor in your choice of online friends. That person who complains about how the government is doing its job could suddenly cost you some serious social cred. Befriend too many wrongthinkers and you could quickly find yourself classed as a wrongthinker too."

It's disturbing, and it's not going to be confined to China. "It's an idea straight out of the oft-invoked George Orwell dystopia *Nineteen Eighty-Four*," Dormehl continued. "But it's also not wholly unique to China. True, the U.S. government isn't publicly instituting a Social Credit System, but the idea that digital reputation analysis isn't something that affects us all in 2018 is patently untrue."

While somewhat informal and dispersed today in America, a worldwide digital ID would offer the planet's would-be ruling

class — the international “Deep State” if you will — the opportunity to roll out a communist China-like system for everyone, offering a level of control over people never before possible, or even dreamed of by tyrants of the past.

The Health ID Scheme

One of the key international organizations working to integrate digital ID and health ID is the World Bank, through its Identification for Development (ID4D) scheme. In 2018, the world financial body revealed in a report on its ID4D initiatives that it was receiving key support from certain governments and from a pair of the internationalist and subversive NGOs that are prominent throughout the movement to shackle the world’s people to an ID control scheme. “The work of ID4D is made possible through support from the World Bank Group, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK Government, the Australian Government and the Omidyar Network,” the World Bank report notes.

The World Bank calls for the linking of a health ID with existing national IDs into a resulting, all-encompassing digital ID called a “foundational identification.”

“Integration between foundational identification and healthcare systems has the potential to not only improve the delivery of health services and public health management, but also to strengthen identification systems themselves,” the World Bank report notes. “This is particularly the case where there are strong linkages between identification and civil registration systems, the latter of which already relies on the health sector for birth and death registration. Incorporating foundational systems into healthcare can strengthen and streamline these processes and create further demand for identity documents and civil registration.”

On the latter point, generating citizen demand for more ID documents, the World Bank report is slyly admitting that demand for IDs will be driven by restricting services to only those who already have the ID required. “Where a unique foundational identifier is required to enroll in or access health services, it may increase incentives to obtain the ID, as in Estonia and India,” the report notes. Again, that’s because without the new ID, citizens would be prevented from accessing services.

Of course, the World Bank’s 2018 report

also pointed out that a “foundational identification” scheme that incorporates health ID would be “useful” during health emergencies. “Stronger vital statistics generated by CR [civil registration] systems also benefit public health by improving the accuracy and timeliness of important indicators — e.g., mortality, morbidity, maternal and child health, etc. — used in health policy and planning and emergency response to disease outbreaks,” the organization says.

Population Control

As if tracking and controlling people isn’t bad enough, there may be a more sinister population-control plan afoot. Speaking at a TED conference in 2010 on the subject of cutting carbon emissions to prevent global warming, Bill Gates pointed to population control as one area where an impact could be made. Among other things, he singled out vaccination as having a role in population control.

“First we’ve got population,” Gates began. “The world today has 6.8 billion people. That’s headed up to about nine billion. Now if we do a really great job on new vaccines, health care, reproductive health services, we could lower that by, perhaps 10 or 15 percent.”

Now, most people make the reasonable conclusion that vaccines, making people less prone to disease and, therefore, healthier, promote population stability, if not outright growth. But Gates, quite curiously, tied vaccines to population control in this talk.

Subsequently, Melinda Gates attempted to explain his counterintuitive philosophy on vaccines for population control. In the couple’s 2017 Annual Letter, she wrote: “Saving children’s lives is the goal that launched our global work. It’s an end in itself. But then we learned it has all these other benefits as well. If parents believe their children will survive — and if they have the power to time and space their pregnancies — they choose to have fewer children.”

Credible but also creditably disputed claims, especially in Kenya, that some Gates-related vaccines intervened in human reproduction aside, Gates and his organization are interested in population control. Their work for a decade or more on tying vaccination to identification is clearly part of this agenda. Even tak-



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Gemalto: Now a division of French security firm Thales Group, Gemalto is one corporate entity working to build the infrastructure for a digital ID. The company has noted in its literature that without a future digital ID, “conducting many daily activities could be hampered.”



AP Images

Managed like livestock: Tagged in the ear, cows and other livestock are identified and managed by their owners. People saddled with a centralized digital ID by some governing body would no longer be free and possessed of the unalienable human rights described by Thomas Jefferson, but would instead be reduced to a mere herd of livestock to be managed and controlled by international technocrats.

ing the generous position of assigning to Gates the possibility that he is attempting to simply improve childhood health and reduce poverty does not remove or make illegitimate concerns about using vaccination and health IDs to track the world's population, as such a scheme creates a system of control for population technocrats to direct the lives of billions of people in a power grab of unimaginable proportions — and consequences.

At least not everyone in the Trump administration is simply going along with the internationalist plan for the implementation of health IDs.

Speaking to Laura Ingraham on Fox News, Attorney General Bill Barr said he didn't like the idea of vaccine IDs and certificates to prove immunity to COVID-19.

"I'm very concerned about the slippery slope in terms of continuing encroachments on personal liberty. I do think during the emergency, appropriate, reasonable steps are fine," Barr said when asked about vaccine certificates. Asked for more specifics, he continued: "I'd be a little concerned about that, the tracking of

people and so forth, generally, especially going forward over a long period of time."

Opposition aside, if technocrats such as Gates achieve their aims, Americans will not be able to shop, work, travel, or do anything else without their vaccine/health ID, which will almost certainly end up in some sort of technological and possibly injectable form. This likely would then be combined in the future with your credit score and other social scores, becoming an all-encompassing tracking and management technology for the world's population.

Keep in mind, too, the very important point that plans for a digital ID imposed worldwide are not schemes for the far-distant future. The UN development goals motivating the construction of the ID scheme call for implementation by 2030, just a decade away. But already, much of the infrastructure is in place. From Thales and

Gemalto already launching digital ID wallets, to pilot projects in places such as Bangladesh and early digital ID operations in Estonia and India, to name just two of many, the electronic control trap is ready to spring.

"The technology sector is on a mission to equip everyone on the planet with a digital and online presence," wrote Gavi Vaccine Alliance CEO Seth Berkely in *Nature* in 2017. "One of the biggest needs is for affordable, secure digital identification systems that can store a child's medical history, and that can be accessed even in places without reliable electricity. That might seem a tall order, but it is both achievable and necessary," he concluded.

Again, Berkely was writing in 2017. The scheme has made great strides since then, and a pandemic is just what is needed to scare a fearful populace into submission.

Contrary to what the Deep State schemers and planners claim, people receive neither legitimacy nor identity from an NGO- or government-administered database or tracking system. Each person's natural rights are inherent in their humanity and cannot be subjected in any legitimate way to control, management, and regulation by some oligarchic international bureaucracy.

A digital ID scheme is nothing more than a means of tracking personal activity and limiting and regulating access and behavior. It is antithetical to a free people. That the plans for this have been and continue to be made at international conferences and behind the closed doors of international agencies and NGOs, unreported by the media and without citizen knowledge or assent, tells you much about their essential nature.

Technocrat oligarchs and planners are not looking to emancipate the peoples of the world, but to enslave and control them. Don't let them.

Live free — oppose the ID! ■



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ARE MANDATORY VACCINES COMING? (They've Already Begun.)

Big Brother has been calling the shots on school kids for decades. Is the next step a mandate for all?



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by **Rebecca Terrell**

Major media assure us that help is on the way. “There are reasons to be optimistic about a coronavirus vaccine,” declares *The Guardian*, “but it will take time.” Public health officials give a 12- to 18-month window, though an experimental version for high-risk groups is said to be on the fast track. Worldwide, as media primes a quarantine-weary public with promises of a quick fix, some see red flags.

Rebecca Terrell, a contributor to THE NEW AMERICAN since 2009, writes on science and energy topics. She is a licensed nurse in Tennessee and holds a master's degree in marketing.

Recalling what happened in the 1970s when Congress helped speed a swine flu vaccine to rapid approval, former Texas Congressman Ron Paul, a medical doctor, says he voted against the measure. “They rushed the vaccine through,” he told Dan Dicks in an April *Press for Truth* interview. “The vaccine was not properly made.... It caused a lot of harm. More people ended up dying from the inoculation than died from the flu that year,” while others suffered serious complications from the faulty med. “But that’s what happens when governments get involved and you do things for political reasons.”

There is even more cause for alarm about a premature coronavirus vaccine because, instead of simply making it

Revoking rights: New York’s Jewish community leaders are staunchly pro-vaccine, yet government used their neighborhoods, hit hardest by the 2019 measles outbreak, as scapegoats to strip the entire state of religious exemptions.

available for those who want it, government may force it on everyone. As Dennis Behrendt reveals in the cover story of this edition of *THE NEW AMERICAN*, officials are now considering a federal mandate and national immunity ID cards. Those who refuse would forfeit their freedom to shop, travel, attend school or work, etc. Disturbed at plans in the works, Attorney General Bill Barr told Fox News, “I’m very concerned about the slippery slope in terms of continuing encroachments on personal liberty.”

Unfortunately, most Americans are already desensitized to such encroachments in regard to vaccines. Though federal mandates are unprecedented, compulsory vaccines for schoolchildren are the law of the land in every state and are based on recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It started with only one vaccine for a truly dangerous killer: smallpox. In the 1920s, some states began requiring that children receive it in order to attend school. Kids in the 1940s began getting DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) shots, and to the relief of many parents, polio inoculations joined the fray in 1955. Eight years later an MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine made its debut. Smallpox was eradicated in the 1970s, but the remaining seven medications, given in 23 doses, held steady for roughly two decades. Research and development exploded, beginning in the late 1980s, and vaccine requirements predictably ballooned. Since

2014, children have been receiving 69 doses of 16 inoculations starting the day they are born. Many doctors and parents question the need for them all.

Even chickenpox makes the required list in all states, though before development of the money-making vaccine, the only way chickenpox made TV ratings was on PBS Kids where government downplayed this common childhood malady. (On *Caillou*, the four-year-old's mom told him, "They're just little itchy spots. Nothing to worry about." And on *Arthur*, the main character recovered in a few days, enjoying extra attention he got in the meantime.) Now CDC says chickenpox is dangerous "even in healthy children," and vaccine sales are booming thanks to a government mandate. Cha-ching!

The agency is far less vocal about the officially reported 4,000 serious adverse events and 200 deaths associated with the chickenpox vaccine since its introduction, most cases involving children under six. News such as that spoils the party line that vaccines are safe — the inevitable response to skeptics. The reality is that, like all pharmaceutical medications, vaccines can cause harm and even death. For instance, the whole-cell pertussis vaccine was axed in the 1990s because it inflicted severe permanent brain damage. Health officials pulled the Rotashield rotavirus vaccine only one year after FDA approval because of so many severe reactions in children, including the death of an infant. Another blot on the record is LYMERix, a vaccine for Lyme disease, which lasted less than four years before class-action lawsuits linking it to rheumatoid arthritis forced it off the market.

As for the remaining vaccines, "There are no rigorous safety studies of sufficient power to rule out" complications, warns a 2019 statement to Congress from the Association of American

Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS), a pro-vaccine organization that opposes government mandates. Likewise, there has never been a comprehensive investigation of the safety of the *combination* of drugs in the U.S. vaccination schedule.

Manufacturers have no incentive to test vaccine safety because the federal government protects them from virtually all liability when their products kill or injure patients. Federal law passed in 1986 prevents vaccine-injured victims from suing pharmaceutical companies, forcing them instead to petition the U.S. government's

National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (NVICP), in a process that disillusioned claimants have discovered to be heavily weighted against them. In its 34 years, NVICP has paid out nearly \$4.1 billion in claims but has denied far more. Through fedgov's cozy relationship with Big Pharma, U.S. taxpayers incur the liability costs, while big drug companies reap the profits.

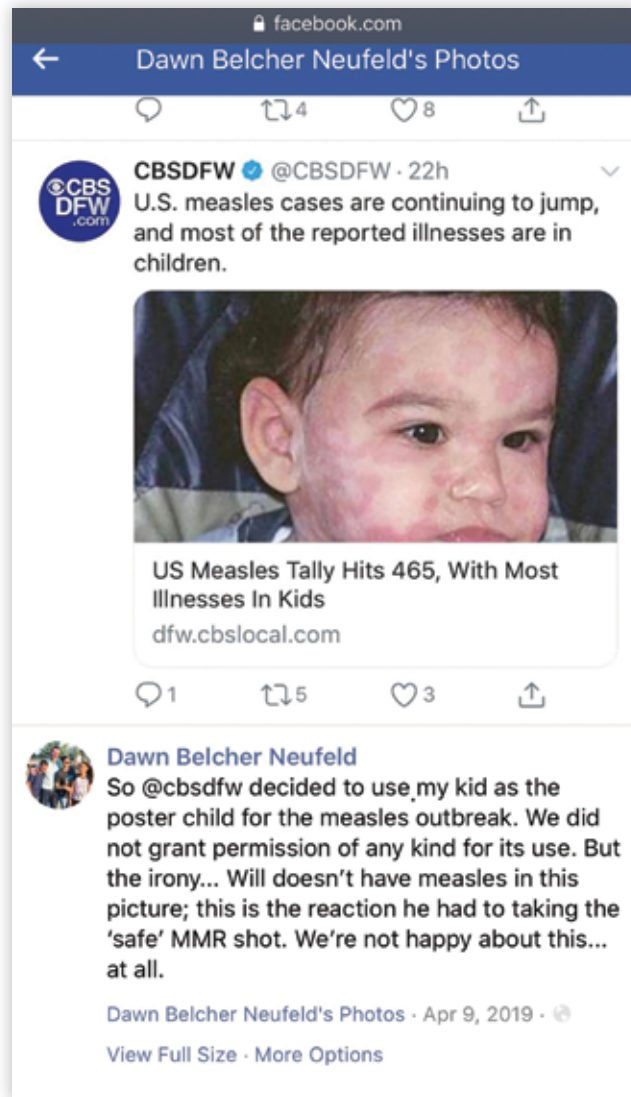
Acknowledging the reality of risks, states have historically allowed medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions to vaccination requirements. As regulations ceaselessly expand, however, the rights of parents to choose which chemicals are injected into their babies' bodies are under increasing attack, even in relatively low-risk cases.

Consider what happened last summer in New York. On a single day in June, without notice or public hearings, the state legislature slipped a bill (A2371, repealing the religious exemption to vaccinate) out of committee, quickly rammed it through both Assembly and Senate, and plopped it onto the desk of Governor Andrew Cuomo, who dutifully signed it into law. What emergency called for the record-breaking pace of this bill's approval? The 2019 measles outbreak in New York City and neighboring Rockland County.

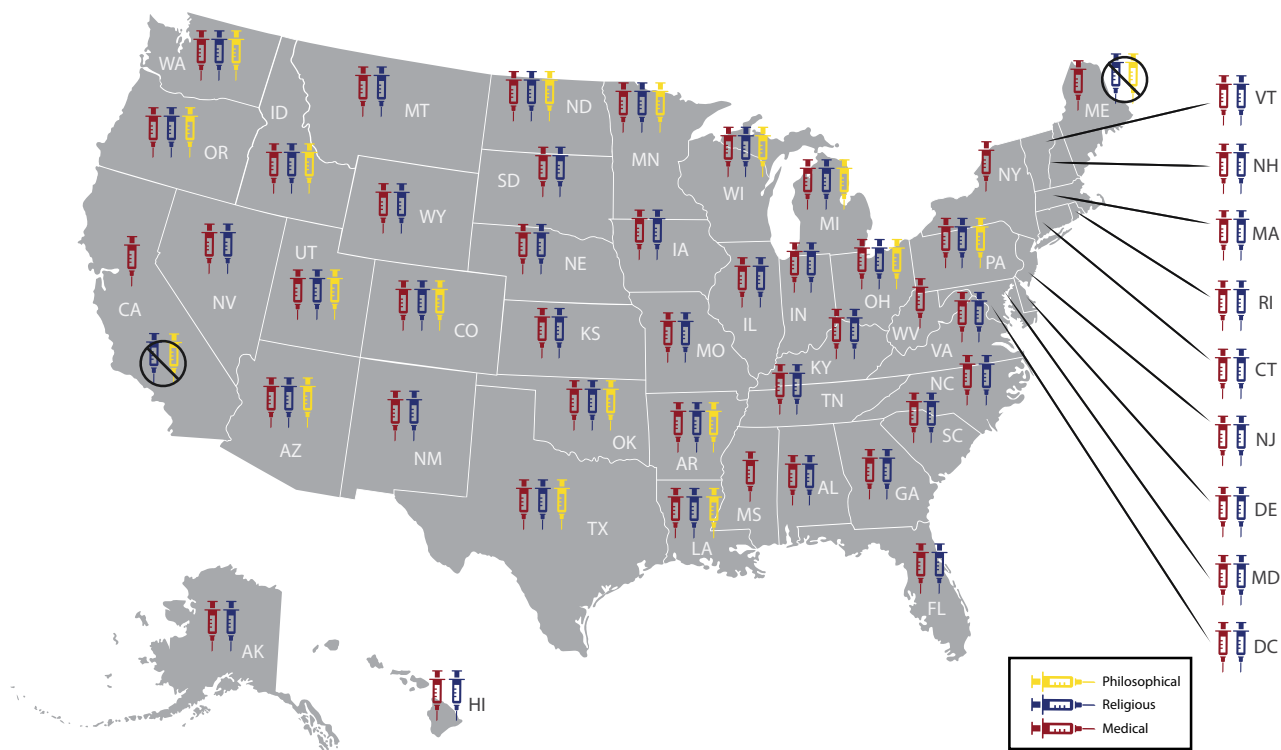
People must have been dropping like flies!

Not exactly. In an area with a population of more than 8.7 million people, there were fewer than 1,000 measles cases all year, according to CDC data. When the top official of Rockland County catered to media hysteria by declaring an emergency and banning unvaccinated children from public places, threatening to fine and imprison their parents, a judge had to come behind him and lift the ban. There were simply not enough cases to meet the legal requirement for an emergency declaration.

Nor were these measles victims "challenging public health systems," as the pot-stirring bas-



Yellow journalism fever: CBS broadcast this picture of a baby supposedly suffering from measles, but his mom called the phoniness out on Facebook. It was the vaccine, not measles, that injured her son.



data: based on state government information

Granting rights as privileges: According to the National Vaccine Information Center, state legislators introduce bills every year to expand, restrict, or eliminate state vaccine exemptions.

tion of yellow journalism, CNN, exaggerated. In fact, of the 1,282 measles cases nationwide last year, CDC reported 128 hospitalizations and no deaths.

But desperate times call for desperate measures, and the pro-government mandate crowd needed a scapegoat — not to save people from measles, obviously, but to remove the state’s religious exemption for vaccines. They found it in two Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods in Brooklyn, having the highest concentration of measles cases in the city, as well as a high percentage of unvaccinated families. Though the community’s religious leaders confirm that vaccine refusal is not part of their belief system, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio targeted these limited areas with a mandatory vaccine order, ignoring their civil rights and slapping a misdemeanor charge and \$1,000 fine on anyone who refused. In response to the Hasidic Jewish community’s lawsuit against his tyrannical edict, de Blasio rebuffed his own constituents’ concerns in a WCBS news radio interview and bragged, “We will beat them.” And he did — courtesy of the New York legislature and bill A2371.

California has gone even further than

New York. First, the Golden State used 2015’s Disneyland measles outbreak as an excuse to repeal religious and personal exemptions to its vaccine laws. (Incidentally, CDC defines the worrying term “outbreak” as three or more cases of a disease within a limited time frame. Among the 320.7 million people populating the United States in 2015, there were 188 cases, which amounts to a statistically insignificant 0.00006 percent.)

Fast forward to September 2019, a few days after the New York City Health Department declared its outbreak over. That’s when California’s governor signed two bills imposing the strictest vaccine law in the country. The draconian measures place doctors who grant more than four medical exemptions per year under investigation by the Department of Public Health. Both public and private schools with student bodies that do not meet a 95-percent vaccination minimum are also scrutinized. State officials can even revoke current medical exemptions that they deem inappropriate. In other words, bureaucrats can overrule your doctor.

Were these measures necessary to stem some tide of murderous measles mayhem in the state? Hardly. Only 73 Californians

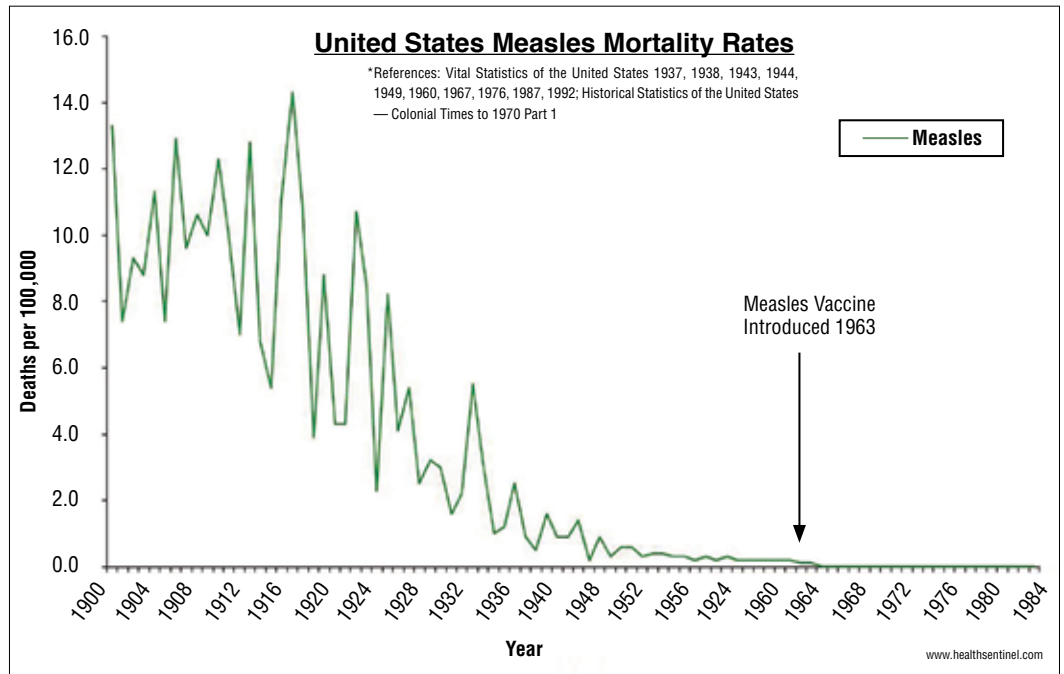
caught the virus in 2019 (a whopping 0.0002 percent), and no one died, according to the state’s public health department. Those 73 not only survived but now boast life-long immunity to the disease, a boon the vaccine cannot supply.

Obviously, measles isn’t the deadly killer that bureaucrats and their propaganda-peddling media cronies claim. In fact, CDC data reveal that nationwide only two measles-related deaths have occurred in the U.S. since 2003, out of 3,724 cases. That’s a rate of 0.05 percent, hardly equivalent to the CDC claim that death strikes between one and three of every 1,000 measles victims “even with the best care.” Yet none of these facts have stopped California from usurping the role of a doctor who, unlike a bureaucrat, is actually licensed to practice medicine. When government so decidedly overreacts to such a non-emergency, it doesn’t take a brain surgeon to tell that there is an agenda afoot.

Other states are following suit in withholding exemptions to vaccine law. Last year, Washington state stripped its residents of personal exemptions to MMR.

Maine is scheduled to lose religious and philosophical exemptions altogether next year. The National Vaccine Information Center reports that exemptions in many other states are hanging by a thread.

Even if there were no threats imposed on individual patients by this cookie-cutter approach to medication administration, it's disconcerting to ask: What limits can be placed on the power of a government that can tell you what you must inject into your own body or your own children? And despite any threats from coronavirus, do we really want to hand control over our medical decisions to Uncle Sam, when our rights at the state level are already in such jeopardy? ■



Did we really need it? Measles mortality rates plunged a dramatic 98 percent prior to the 1963 advent of the measles vaccine, due to improved sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition.

The Solution to Vaccine Mandates

Vaccines are one of the greatest medical breakthroughs in history. Prior to their advent, smallpox was one of the most feared infectious diseases worldwide since it claimed the lives of one in five victims and often left survivors blind or disfigured. Within 50 years of introduction of the smallpox inoculation in 1796, vaccination became the accepted norm. Less than 200 years later, the World Health Organization announced smallpox effectively eradicated from the globe because the vaccine had achieved herd immunity — the indirect protection everyone receives when most of a population is immune to an infectious disease.

Achieving herd immunity is a critical goal, but does it justify compulsory vaccination? After all, if those who are already vaccinated are immune to a disease, how does it hurt them if others choose to remain unvaccinated? Who is being protected?

Moreover, there is a downside to near-universal vaccination rates: Artificial immunity is far less reliable than its naturally acquired counterpart. For instance, “measles, when it does occur, is four to five

times worse than in pre-vaccination times ... because of the changed age distribution,” warned the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons in a statement to Congress last year opposing federal mandates. “[It affects] more adults, whose vaccine-based immunity waned, and more infants, who no longer receive passive immunity from their naturally immune mothers to protect them during their most vulnerable period.”

And we should never forget that, like all pharmaceutical medicines, vaccinations carry their share of risk and are known to cause harm and even death. For example, between 2004 and 2014, the federal government linked the deaths of more than 100 children to the measles vaccine, while no one died of measles during that time.

Government mandates presume the right to suspend personal liberties for the supposed (but not always real) safety of the general public. “It’s based on authoritarianism — that government knows what’s best, and individuals are incapable of taking care,” stated former Congressman Ron Paul on his April 7 episode of *The Liberty Report*. “It really boils down

to this whole concept of who’s responsible for protecting against risk, and obviously, in a free society, the individual is.”

What is the solution? “There is a way back, but it requires some work,” advises Bill Hahn, chief strategy officer of The John Birch Society in its April 20 *Analysis Behind the News* episode. “It requires you to get organized, and to push back using education; to meet face-to-face with your friends and neighbors ... to distribute information to get others to join you, to make enough of an impact that many of the elected officials in your district adhere to the Constitution and use the constitutional tools to protect the rights and freedom of those under them, including standing up to the federal government.”

The John Birch Society offers a host of online tools at jbs.org/covid19, empowering individuals to stop the tyranny and restore American freedom and independence. It is up to each of us to decide if we want to make our own medical decisions with the help of our own physician, or have medical decisions imposed on us by government authority. ■

— REBECCA TERRELL



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Steve Stockman

Crooked Congressman or Political Prisoner?

After Steve Stockman repeatedly investigated Obama administration malfeasance, the FBI was sicced on him, despite a lack of evidence against him.

by *Michael Tennant*

On July 11, 2014, then-Congressman Steve Stockman appeared on Fox News Channel to discuss a resolution he had introduced directing the House sergeant-at-arms to arrest Internal Revenue Service (IRS) official Lois Lerner for destroying evidence and refusing to testify about her role in the agency's targeting of conservative nonprofits.

Two weeks later, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents appeared at the Virginia apartment the Texas Republican shared with his wife, Patti, reigniting an investigation that would ultimately land Stockman in federal prison for 10 years after being convicted of fraud and other crimes.

Is Stockman guilty as charged — or is his real crime simply trying to hold the Obama administration to account?

From Park Bench to House Seat

Born to Christian parents in Michigan in 1956, Stockman became something of a prodigal son in his high-school years, partying and having a few scrapes with the law. After dropping out of college, he

Michael Tennant is a freelance writer and regular contributor to THE NEW AMERICAN.



Political prisoner? Former Texas Congressman Steve Stockman, champion of the Constitution and foe of the Clinton and Obama administrations, says he is “absolutely not” guilty of the crimes for which he was convicted.

wound up living in a public park in Texas. Once he'd had enough of that, he cleaned himself up, found work, returned to the faith of his parents, got married, and finally finished college. He started a local chapter of the Young Conservatives of Texas, rising to state chairman.

Then he set his sights on Congress. In 1994, on his third attempt, he finally succeeded in unseating longtime Democratic Congressman Jack Brooks. Two years later, he lost the general election as a result of redistricting. In 2012, he ran for Congress again in a newly redrawn district and was sent back to Washington. Rather than seek reelection in 2014, he decided to challenge Texas Republican Senator John Cornyn but lost.

Throughout his two terms in Congress, Stockman was a staunch defender of the Constitution, earning him a 98-percent cumulative score on THE NEW AMERICAN'S Freedom Index.

He was also a thorn in the side of both the Clinton and Obama administrations. As a member of the House Banking Committee, he investigated Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real-estate scandal. He also harshly criticized the Clinton administration's handling of the deadly federal assault on the Branch Davidian complex near Waco, Texas, in 1993. He earned Obama's enmity by supporting the Benghazi investigation; revealing that Obama had paid for the release of Army Specialist Bowe

The government had already spent a year investigating him and convened a grand jury, which failed to indict him. Stockman thought his troubles were over, but they were just beginning.



Lerner's permit: While former IRS official Lois Lerner was not charged with any crimes for targeting conservative groups, Stockman's call for her arrest may well have been the impetus for his prosecution.

Bergdahl when he was captured by terrorists after deserting his post in Afghanistan; distributing a book making the case for impeaching Obama to his colleagues; cosponsoring articles of impeachment against then-Attorney General Eric Holder; and, as previously mentioned, seeking the arrest of Lerner.

Fishing for Felonies

The troubles that led to Stockman's imprisonment began in 2013, when two campaign staffers sought to help pay off cam-

campaign debts by donating their own money to the cause, unaware that Congress had a rule prohibiting it. When their mistake was uncovered, the campaign's accountant decided to alter the record to indicate that the staffers' parents had made the donations. Then the campaign's attorney tried to make it look like the staffers weren't even working for the campaign at the time they made their donations by retroactively firing them for that single day. All of this had the effect of making an unintentional violation that could have been — and

eventually was — easily corrected by returning the donations and amending the FEC (Federal Elections Commission) report look like something sinister.

Despite the fact that everything had been made right, a D.C. "watchdog" group referred the matter to the Office of Congressional Ethics, which opened an investigation into Stockman. "Under the guise of responding to 'ethics' complaints, the office can vacuum up emails, testimony, and information that can then be handed off to the Justice Department for prosecution, even on unrelated charges to the original complaints," Benjamin Wetmore, a Texas attorney and longtime Stockman associate who was called by the prosecution as a witness in the case against Stockman, wrote in an *IntellectualConservative.com* column.

By the time Stockman introduced his resolution to arrest Lerner, the government had already spent a year investigating him and convened a grand jury, which failed to indict him. Stockman thought his troubles were over, but they were just beginning.

New agents sent to investigate Stockman were "a pit bull kind of team," Patti Stockman told *THE NEW AMERICAN*. They dug into every aspect of Stockman's life, subpoenaing over 250,000 documents, some of which were from many years before the crimes for which he was eventually convicted were supposedly committed. FBI agents followed Stockman wherever he went. Once, after returning from abroad, he was detained at Dulles International Airport, where Transportation Security Agency (TSA) agents took all the documents he was carrying, copied them, and then handed them back to him in a jumble, recalled his wife. The five-year investigation, which cost taxpayers an estimated \$15 to \$20 million, was "the absolute definition of a fishing expedition," penned Wetmore.

After the FBI had spent all that time, effort, and money, reeling in their catch turned out to be harder than expected. Three grand juries refused to indict Stockman; a fourth one finally did. One of the signers of that indictment was a Justice Department official who had also been copied on Lerner's e-mails plotting to deny tax-exempt status to Tea Party groups.

Although the federal complaint record

authorizing Stockman's arrest had been sealed, a reporter from the Houston NBC affiliate showed up in court to report on Stockman's appearance the next day. In a brief telephone interview with THE NEW AMERICAN, Stockman said he was unaware of the complaint until he was arrested, so the leak had to have come from the government. (THE NEW AMERICAN asked the Justice Department for the name of the leaker and other details concerning Stockman's case, but the department declined comment.)

Three-ring Trial

On March 19, 2018, Stockman's trial began in federal court in Houston, with U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal presiding.

"It was a circus," Wetmore told THE NEW AMERICAN, calling it "the worst courtroom I've ever seen overseen by the worst judge I've ever seen."

According to Patti Stockman, "The feds totally controlled what was heard, who was heard from, and what evidence was presented." The government was given *carte blanche* to make whatever accusations and present whatever evidence it desired, regardless of its relevance to the charges against Stockman. Stockman's attorneys, meanwhile, were completely hamstrung. Not one defense motion was sustained, and only two defense witnesses were permitted. The defense was limited in the theories it could present, giving the jury few alternatives to the government's story. Rosenthal also forbade the defense to suggest that the case was motivated by politics or to mention Lerner's name.

"Steve said many times, 'I feel like I'm in a trial of chefs and you can't talk about food,'" said his wife.

Even prosecution witnesses weren't free to testify as they saw fit. "The judge said that I am only to answer as succinctly as possible to correctly answer the question," recounted Wetmore, "and I asked her, 'Then

you're telling me not to be thorough? You're telling me not to give context?' and she said, 'Yes.'" Wetmore also claims the government took other actions to intimidate him, including siccing Child Protective Services on his family, but he was not allowed to mention it in court.

Fraud — or Just Failure?

The central charges against Stockman concerned contributions totaling \$915,000 from two donors to nonprofit organizations that employed him. The donors, who were kept aware of how their money was being spent, never complained or sought relief. The government found them, then it charged Stockman with defrauding these donors, a task made easier by the fact that federal law never defines *fraud*.

"The courts' reluctance to define the term 'fraud' with specificity gives prosecutors, judges and juries wide latitude to criminalize behavior which offends their personal sense of right and wrong," attorney Lawrence Bader wrote in a Forbes.com post.

The first allegedly defrauded donor was Stanford Rothschild, Jr., a Baltimore money manager and philanthropist. In 2010, Stockman solicited a \$285,000 donation from Rothschild to the Ross Center, a 501(c)(3) for which Stockman worked. Two years later, Rothschild contributed a combined \$165,000 to the Ross Center and Life Without Limits, another Stockman nonprofit. Rothschild understood the donations were to be used for voter education and fundraising efforts.

Although Rothschild died before Stockman's trial and thus could not testify, "the government's own evidence shows that Rothschild got what he wanted," Stockman argued in a document appealing his sentence to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Stockman said the government demonstrated that he had put out a book, which he claims was Rothschild's idea, and provided a copy to Rothschild. Stockman also held a fundraiser as agreed. "The whole thing," Stockman declared, "is ridiculous."

Businessman Richard Uihlein was the second donor the government claims Stockman defrauded. In 2013, Uihlein donated \$350,000 to the Stockman-headed Congressional Freedom Foundation (CFF). At the time the donation was solicited, Uihlein understood it to be seed money for the nonprofit, which would undertake a variety of activities, including the purchase of a townhouse in Washington, D.C., to house conservative congressional interns; this building would become known as Freedom House.

Even though Uihlein's contribution was used for legitimate nonprofit purposes such as training interns, educating voters, and paying salaries, because



AP Images

Contempt of court: U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal had "unveiled contempt for Stockman," wrote prosecution witness Benjamin Wetmore, adding that she rolled her eyes and laughed at Wetmore's testimony.

Freedom House never came to fruition, the government charged Stockman with fraud. But Uihlein was aware from the start that his contribution to CFF would aid any number of projects, not solely Freedom House. Indeed, the written budget and proposal he had been shown at the time of his contribution, and which he kept for his files, clearly stated that Freedom House was but one of many projects CFF hoped to complete. In addition, according to Stockman's appeal, "Uihlein never asked that his contribution be restricted to" Freedom House.

(It's worth noting here that the government's sole witness concerning Stockman's intern program, who called it "horrific," quit after his first day on the job and thus could hardly have known what happened in the program. The defense was prepared to have other interns testify to the quality of Stockman's program, but Rosenthal refused to allow it.)

Apparently happy with how Stockman was spending his money, Uihlein made another contribution in 2014, this time for \$450,000, the purpose of which was to pay postage on *The Conservative News*, a newspaper to be published by the nonprofit Center for the American Future (CAF). The newspaper, published by a former Stockman aide, assisted Stockman's Senate campaign by portraying him positively and his opponent negatively. Since he was paying postage, Uihlein made his check out to the U.S. Postal Service.

Over half of Uihlein's contribution was used to pay postage. The rest would have been used for that purpose as well, but the mail shop was unable to complete the order and returned the unused funds not to Uihlein but to CAF, which used it for other legitimate nonprofit expenditures. As a result, the government charged Stockman with fraud.

Failing to complete a proposed project, however, does not indicate fraudulent intent. It just means that sometimes things don't work out as planned. "The fact that the mail shop was subsequently unable to finish the mail-

ing and refunded the postage money to CAF rather than Uihlein, is not evidence of intent to defraud, particularly where there was no agreement on how to deal with the circumstance that gave rise to the refund of the postage money," said Stockman's appeal. Besides, said Patti Stockman, Uihlein was aware that the money had been refunded to CAF and "didn't have a problem" with it.

The government also charged that Uihlein's donation for *The Conservative News* constituted an illegal campaign contribution since the paper was clearly aimed at helping Stockman defeat Cornyn.

"If you publish a newspaper and you say, 'John Cornyn's a piece of crap because he doesn't like gun racks,' and in that same newspaper you say, 'Steve Stockman is a good guy; he likes gun racks,' is that a campaign donation?" queried Wetmore. "As a legal matter, there is no question that it is not."

Indeed, FBI Special Agent Spencer

Brooks testified that while *The Conservative News* published "favorable qualities as to Mr. Stockman and unfavorable qualities as to Mr. Cornyn," it did not rise to the level of "express advocacy" for or against either candidate (such as saying "Vote for Stockman"). Thus, it was perfectly legal for CAF, a 501(c)(4) organization, to publish the paper and for Uihlein to contribute to its mailing. At worst, the mailing constituted a "coordinated expenditure" between CAF and the Stockman campaign, a civil offense that could have resulted in a fine. According to Patti Stockman, even the prosecutor admitted that there was no precedent for treating it as a crime.

A "Tapestry of Evil"

The government additionally contended that Stockman diverted some of Rothchild's and Uihlein's contributions to support his own "lavish lifestyle." To make its case, the prosecution entered into evidence Stockman's personal credit-card statements, some of them from years

before the donations were made.

They neglected to mention, however, that Stockman paid these bills out of his personal funds, some of which came from the perfectly legal salaries he drew from the nonprofits. Furthermore, they tried to make much of such seemingly frivolous nonprofit expenses as dolphin rides without bothering to prove the expenses were illegal.

"They didn't have a Rolex to point to, they didn't have a Lamborghini to point to, they didn't have a yacht to point to, and so they focused on these trivialities like the dolphin rides, but they never told people how much money it actually involved," said Wetmore. He looked into the matter and found that the dolphin rides cost all of \$73.

"In a case where you're talking about ... several-hundred-thousand-dollar checks, should we talk about something that was a \$73 charge?" he asked.

Stockman was charged with money laundering and wire fraud for depositing money into one bank account, transferring it to



"Department of Injustice": Former federal prosecutor Sidney Powell believes Stockman was prosecuted for political reasons. "If the government wants to put you in prison, you will go to prison," she said.

another, and transferring it back. This, of course, is something millions of Americans do every day. Moreover, it is not even known whether the transfers were initiated by Stockman or by the bank, Wells Fargo, which got caught after doing this for years without its customers' knowledge.

As if all this weren't enough, the government piled on all kinds of irrelevant accusations simply to make Stockman look bad.

They claimed Stockman was engaging in "covert surveillance" of political opponents via a "spy network." In reality, said Wetmore, Stockman was doing investigative journalism on various political figures in the Houston area, following up on tips he'd received that he figured the media wouldn't pursue.

The prosecution referred to extra cell-phones Stockman's associates used in the course of these investigations — their own evidence showed Stockman himself had never used them — as "burner phones." They also insinuated that Stockman's interest in cryptocurrency — he was the first congressman to accept cryptocurrency contributions and the first to introduce legislation protecting cryptocurrency from onerous federal regulations — was somehow nefarious.

"They talked about all these salacious things, and it was just to make him sound like a drug dealer," said Wetmore. "It was just part of this very sophisticated campaign to frame it up as something it was not."

The government also repeatedly referred to Stockman's various organizations as "sham nonprofits," yet one of the prosecution's key witnesses, with whom they had negotiated a plea bargain, continued to work for one of the nonprofits on matters unrelated to and unknown to Stockman even as he testified against him, Wetmore said.

Stockman's many trips to Africa to arrange for the distribution of surplus medical supplies to needy nations were also used against him. Although Stockman had several African leaders prepared to testify on his behalf, only one was allowed to speak — and that person's testimony was used to suggest that Stockman was a flight risk and therefore should be imprisoned while awaiting sentencing.

"They took a bunch of disparate facts,



Party favor: While the Obama administration dropped serious campaign-finance charges against former Democratic Senator John Edwards, it pressed forward with its investigation into the Republican Stockman, despite repeated failures to get an indictment.

and they wove them together in this intricate tapestry of evil and intrigue and wrongdoing," lamented Patti Stockman. "They made [the case] so complicated and wove such complicated stories that even Steve and I had a hard time following them."

And where were Stockman's attorneys in all this?

"Steve had a defense team, and it's what we could afford, and unfortunately, we got what we paid for," said Patti Stockman. "They did not know anything about nonprofits and the nonprofit law. They did not know anything about campaign finance and campaign-finance law. And they didn't seem to make any effort to figure it out."

While the deck was certainly stacked against Stockman, his attorneys seemed content to let the prosecution control the narrative and then argue that while the government's version of events may have been true, the jury should acquit Stockman because what he did was not technically il-

legal, a strategy that rarely succeeds. They even advised Stockman against testifying on his own behalf. According to his wife, Stockman himself said more than once, "If I had sat there for these two weeks and heard what the jury heard and saw what they saw, I would convict me."

That, of course, is precisely what the jury did, finding Stockman guilty of 23 out of 24 counts. Stockman was immediately imprisoned even though his sentencing was seven months away.

Run-on Sentence

On November 7, 2018, Stockman was sentenced to 10 years in prison. "That's a long time," Rosenthal said, "but Mr. Stockman, I think you earned it." But did he?

Other politicians caught misusing campaign funds or even taking bribes have suffered far less. When Louisiana Democratic Representative William Jefferson was convicted in 2009 of taking \$500,000 worth of bribes and engaging in other lucrative chicanery, he was sentenced to 13

“It’s not even a matter of opinion. Under the applicable law, there is no way he can be guilty of what they said he was guilty of. There’s not even a gray area.”



Pardon me: Stockman is hoping President Trump will pardon him for his alleged crimes as he pardoned Obama critic Dinesh D’Souza (shown) after he became the victim of a political prosecution.

years but later got his sentence reduced to time served, just over five years. North Carolina Senator John Edwards, also a Democrat, was indicted in 2011 for using political contributions to pay off his mistress during his 2008 presidential bid; after he was acquitted on one count and a mistrial was declared on the others, the Obama administration dropped the charges. Obama’s 2008 campaign was caught hiding contributions from the FEC and retaining contributions that should have been refunded, but the campaign got off with only a hefty fine; no one was charged with criminal offenses.

A 2016 study published in the journal *Public Integrity* found that the average sentence for public corruption in the

United States was just 13 months, a far cry from Stockman’s harsh sentence.

This assumes that Stockman should have been convicted in the first place. The former congressman told *THE NEW AMERICAN* he is “absolutely not” guilty of any of the crimes for which he was convicted; many others concur.

“There is no doubt that he is 100-percent innocent on every count,” declared Wetmore. “It’s not even a matter of opinion. Under the applicable law, there is no way he can be guilty of what they said he was guilty of. There’s not even a gray area.”

Over two dozen prominent individuals, including former congressmen, conservative activists, and writers, signed

an *amicus* brief calling for the Fifth Circuit to overturn Stockman’s sentence. The “standards used by the government punished normal logistics, lawful strategies, or failure as fraud,” the brief reads. “Stockman’s conviction,” it concludes, “should be reversed.”

Political Prosecution?

If Stockman is innocent, why was he prosecuted? There’s no “smoking gun,” so to speak, but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that his prosecution was motivated by politics.

Stockman recalled that when the FBI showed up at his apartment, one of the agents said, “You’re going after our boss [Holder], we’re coming after you.”

Wetmore claims that an attorney with whom Stockman had worked in the House told him that an FBI agent had told the attorney, “This is for Lois [Lerner],” though the attorney later denied it. In his *IntellectualConservative.com* article, Wetmore wrote: “Stockman reported that the IRS agent who arrested him and picked him up for court on March 16, 2017[,] said from out-of-the-blue, ‘I hate the [border] wall.’ The FBI agent in the front seat commented, ‘you defeated my dad’s friend.’”

Sidney Powell, a former federal prosecutor who briefly worked *pro bono* on Stockman’s legal team after his conviction, told the *Western Journal* in 2018 that the Department of Justice’s Public Integrity Section, which brought the case, “is notorious for political prosecutions. It is highly likely they targeted former Congressman Stockman and have been extremely and unreasonably harsh toward him because he was so outspoken in trying to hold Lois Lerner, the Clintons, and Obama accountable.”

Powell, author of *Licensed to Lie: Exposing Corruption in the Department of Justice*, was particularly incensed at Stockman’s immediate imprisonment. “That Congressman Stockman is in prison now before he is even sentenced is a further outrage calculated to impede his ability to appeal and to break him,” she said. “I’m appalled at what the Department of ‘Justice’ has become. It has completely lost the trust and respect of the people.”

Although she doesn’t discount the Ler-

Gage Skidmore

ner theory and, in fact, has subscribed to it in the past, Patti Stockman now says she and her husband believe he was targeted because of his knowledge of the collusion between the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Ukrainian embassy during the 2016 presidential campaign.

“We’re inclined to think Steve’s knowledge of the Ukrainian matter is why he’s in prison and why he was put in prison just as soon as the verdict came down,” she said. Stockman, she continued, “had a very good relationship with Andrii Teilzhenko,” the embassy’s former political officer who claims he was ordered to help the DNC dig up dirt on Donald Trump’s campaign manager, Paul Manafort, so as to paint Trump as a Russian stooge and drive him out of the race.

Certainly alleged ill treatment of Stockman in prison, if true, suggests someone in Washington has a vendetta against him. According to Wetmore, on his first day behind bars, the diabetic former congressman was denied his insulin and blood-pressure medication. Later, he was given off-brand medicine and decidedly non-dietetic meals.

Stockman claims that when he arrived at the Oklahoma City federal prison, where he was held for about a week, he overheard a guard say of him, “This guy’s got some media issues, and the captain told us to take care of it,” whereupon he was immediately put in solitary confinement, supposedly for his own protection. After he registered a complaint about this, he was joined by a violent criminal (nickname: “Psycho”) who had just spent 33 months in solitary, he said. (The Bureau of Prisons refused to comment on these allegations, citing “privacy, safety, and security reasons.”)

Although Stockman, having survived his encounter with “Psycho,” has since been transferred to the Beaumont, Texas, penitentiary, he says he’s “extremely concerned” about his own health because diabetics are not treated properly there. He claims to know of one diabetic prisoner who died and another whose toes and then foot were amputated, and he says his own foot neuropathy has increased. He is also worried about the coronavirus. At age 63 and compromised because of his existing health problems, Stockman

is already at high risk for the disease, and he is currently being housed in a facility that he described to his wife as “like a big cattle barn,” with inmates separated only by “chin-height” walls. If even one man in the prison comes down with COVID-19, chances are they all will.

Unappealing Implications

A three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals heard Stockman’s appeal in January and denied it. Stockman then asked the entire court to review his case but was rejected.

“Our next choice,” Patti Stockman said, “is to petition the Supreme Court to hear the case because it sets new precedents for fundraising for nonprofits . . . and on campaign finance.” Columnist Rachel Alexander observed that the decision “should terrify any nonprofit that gets close to any political campaigns.”

The Stockmans are also holding out hope that Trump will pardon Stockman as he did conservative author and filmmaker Dinesh D’Souza, who pleaded guilty to similar campaign-finance “crimes” in 2014. On April 2, Patti Stockman posted a video on YouTube imploring Trump either to pardon her husband or to allow him to serve out his sentence at home because of the risk COVID-19 poses to him. Days later, a group of more than 50 conservative leaders sent a letter to the president, asking him to release Stockman on humanitarian grounds. As of this writing, a pardon petition on the Stockmans’ website, defendapatriot.com, has over 850 signatures.

If, as the evidence suggests, Stockman really is innocent of the crimes for which he was convicted, his case serves as a chilling warning to all other Americans. As Powell explained in an interview with *Bill Martinez Live*: “If the government wants to put you in prison, you will go to prison. It doesn’t matter whether you are innocent or not. They will make up crimes against you. They will indict you. They will search your house. They are willing to make up evidence. They’re willing to put pressure on witnesses to get them to say whatever they want them to say — anything.”

Or as Patti Stockman put it, if it can happen to her husband, “it can happen to anybody.” ■



Patriot act: The Stockmans’ website, defendapatriot.com, houses a trove of information concerning Stockman’s case, plus letters and a petition asking Trump to pardon him.



THE GOODNESS OF AMERICA

Coronavirus Kindness Continues

As COVID-19 continues to impact the everyday lives of people across the United States, Americans continue to prove that they can make lemonade out of even the bitterest lemons.

Free Food

Uber driver Tammy Rivera of Memphis has made it her mission to feed healthcare workers fighting the coronavirus. “I’m southern, so feeding people has always been my love language,” Rivera told *People* magazine.

It began on March 20 when Rivera picked up a nurse getting off her shift at Methodist Le Bonheur Germantown Hospital. The nurse told Rivera she was “starving” and asked if Rivera could stop at a fast food restaurant so that she could pick up something to eat on her way home.

Rivera recalled, “We just talked and I learned ... how she was working 12-14 hour shifts. The cafeteria isn’t open 24 hours a day, and she was working overnight.”

For Rivera, the encounter was eye-opening. She knew that the nurse she met was just one of many in a similar situation and she wanted to find a way to help. “I wanted to find a way to feed the people that are in the most danger right now, those in the ER and in the COVID unit,” she said.

Rivera decided to start a fundraiser on the Germantown community Facebook page and within just a few hours, had enough money for the first night’s meal. By the middle of April, she had raised more than \$12,000 in food funds and made 27 deliveries to hospital staff.

According to Rivera, the meals have varied from pizza to fish to roast chicken. “So many incredible local groups and restaurants are so loving and giving,” Rivera said. “That’s what Memphis does. Whenever you talk to somebody about this city, Memphis hospitality comes first.”

It turns out that Rivera’s good deed isn’t just benefiting the hospital workers, but also restaurants that are struggling because of the pandemic, Fox News reported.

“It was set out to give to locally-owned restaurants that are struggling through this, I just didn’t realize that there was that great a need,” Rivera said. “I had one restaurant contact me that had temporarily closed their doors who couldn’t make their last payroll ask me, ‘Could you let us in on this?’”

And the restaurants have used the opportunity to write positive and uplifting messages to the hospital workers on the paper bags containing the food.

Rivera asserts she will continue to deliver food to the hospital workers as long as they are on the front lines of the pandemic. “I will stop when there is no need or no more money, but our community just keeps giving,” she said.

For Rivera, the response from the hospital workers is the greatest reward for her efforts. “Every night, I pull away with tears,” she said. “There is such appreciation for such a small act. It’s amazing.”

Meanwhile, the staff at the hospital have been moved by the good deeds of Rivera and the local restaurants. “Our associates have been working around the clock to provide the best possible care for the patients and the communities that we serve, so Tammy’s generosity and thoughtfulness has really given a boost to our health care workers,” Sarah Farley, communications specialist with Methodist Le Bonheur Germantown Hospital, told Fox News. “It’s a nod of encouragement.”

Free Coffee

And while Rivera is feeding hospital workers to help get them through the crisis, an aspiring barista in San Francisco has turned his kitchen into a coffee shop and is offering free coffee to essential workers directly from his kitchen window, CNN reported.

Ben Ramirez was taking barista classes with the intention of opening his own coffee shop when the pandemic struck. Though he has since been forced to stay inside under California’s stay-at-home orders, Ramirez has decided to put his skills to the test, while simultaneously spreading love and positivity.

With the abundance of coffee supplies he has obtained, Ramirez has been making

and serving coffee to essential workers as they pass his house. He set up a sign just outside of his house to alert passersby.

“We have a lot of people in the neighborhood who either are nurses, doctors or postal workers.”

Ramirez has been making anywhere from 10 to 15 cups of coffee a day, CNN reports, and he even has “regulars” who drop by for one of his coffees.

According to WABC, Ramirez does all this while still observing social-distancing guidelines. Ramirez says his makeshift to-go café has proven to be a good opportunity to “bring the community together.”

Free Gas

Allen Marshall of Michigan has used his savings to purchase gas for nurses fighting the coronavirus.

Starting on April 1, Marshall stood outside of a local Exxon gas station at a busy intersection near the Detroit Medical Center with a sign that read, “Free Gas for Nurses.” Using \$900 of his own money, he ended up filling the tanks of anywhere from 50 to 80 vehicles belonging to medical workers on the hospital’s front lines over the course of several days, WDTV reported.

WDTV also reported that a woman, identified only as Alana, had contributed \$200 to his cause to help purchase more gas. Alana said she wanted to do something nice for the nurses since her nephew is also a nurse.

“They’re heroes and we need to do what we can to support them,” she said.

When Marshall ran out of money, he remained at the intersection and held up a sign of support: “Thank you for all you do!”

Marshall originally intended to use the \$900 to purchase a knife-sharpening tool, but was instead inspired to do something altruistic with the money after dropping off his wife at her shift at Blue Cross Blue Shield.

“With all that is going on with the coronavirus, I wanted to thank the essential workers the best way that I can,” he told the *Detroit Free Press*. “I really don’t need that tool and thought this was a better way to spend the money.” ■

— RAVEN CLABOUGH

The ROARING Twenties



AP Images

Unlike the impression modern-day history books present, the Roaring Twenties boomed when government was muted and sputtered when government interfered.

by Steve Byas

Crossword puzzles. Speakeasies. Jazz music. The Charleston. Massive increase in wealth. Babe Ruth. Jack Dempsey. Charles Lindbergh. Flappers.

This was the Roaring Twenties, now 100 years ago, when American life changed dramatically in a very short period of time. It was a decade in which government largely got out of the way, and the economy boomed, leading to innovations we benefit from — and, in some cases, suffer from — yet today.

In analyzing a “decade,” certain events tend to “bookend,” if

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Flappers: The 1920s saw many women challenge traditional clothing styles. “Flapper” dresses often were sleeveless, and exposed legs up past the knees. The dresses also became the name for the women who wore them and an enduring symbol of the Roaring Twenties.

you will, the beginning and the end of that period of time. For example, the culture of the “Fifties,” another decade known for its rapid lifestyle changes and economic prosperity, largely begins with the end of the Korean War and ends with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

Similarly, we can bookend the 1920s with the depression that President Warren Harding faced upon taking office in 1921 and with the stock market crash in October of 1929, which marked the beginning (although not the cause) of the Great Depression. Before Harding and Calvin Coolidge, two conservative presidents who largely held to a limited government perspective, was the “progressive” President Woodrow Wilson, and after them another Progressive, President Herbert Hoover.

The Progressive Era of American politics was largely rejected by the American electorate in the congressional elections of 1918 and the presidential election of 1920. With the end of the First World War, Americans suffered from a global pandemic — the

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased almost 50 percent from 1921-1929. By 1926, unemployment had dipped to less than two percent. And there was an explosion in the supply of items for consumers.



Unleashing liberty: Although rated as near the bottom of American presidents by modern historians — usually liberals — Warren Harding was actually among our better presidents. He favored limited government, cut taxes, and reduced the federal budget around 40 percent.

infamous Spanish Flu — and a raging rise in price levels brought on by the inflationary spending to finance the war.

A dozen eggs, priced at about 34 cents before the war, now cost 62 cents. Prices for milk, steak, butter, and rents (for which most tenants blamed their landlords, not government-caused inflation, which devalued the dollar) had similar price increases. Between 1914 and 1920, prices rose at a compound rate of about 14 percent per year. This inflation was followed by a rather severe economic contraction — in which unemployment reached 12 percent.

Harding opted to let the market make the necessary adjustments, and within a matter of months, the economy took off. Fortunately, because Harding did not in-

tervene, this is often dubbed “the forgotten depression.” Unfortunately, the lesson that could be derived from Harding’s wise inaction was not learned at the end of the decade by President Herbert Hoover, whose actions contributed to turning the contraction of 1929 into the Great Depression.

The Great Prosperity of the 1920s

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased almost 50 percent from 1921-1929. By 1926, unemployment had dipped to less than two percent. And there was an explosion in the supply of items for consumers, as real wages — what a person’s income will actually buy — increased. In May 1919, there were fewer than seven million automobiles in America. By 1929, there were 23 million. Not only was there

a quantitative improvement in cars, but a qualitative improvement, as well, as “closed cars” — with a roof and windows — replaced the less practical “open cars” of the early years of the industry. As Frederick Lewis Allen wrote in his famous book on the decade, *Only Yesterday*, the percentage of closed cars was less than 10 in 1919. By 1927, it was nearly 83 percent.

While Americans were spending increasing amounts of time driving, they also enjoyed at home an invention that exploded in popularity in the decade — the radio. There was no radio broadcasting at all in the fall of 1920, but less than two years later, radio sales and accessories had reached \$60 million. By the end of the decade, it was approaching a billion-dollar business. By 1927, there were more than 700 radio stations in the country. From 1913-1927, there was an increase of 465 percent in the number of American homes that had electricity, but even homes without it could still listen to battery-powered radios. By the end of the decade, radios were even being placed in the ever-increasing number of cars.

The radio brought entertainment into even the most modest of homes, with music ranging from classical to jazz and country (then often called “hillbilly”). One person who benefited greatly from this explosion of the number of phonograph record machines and radios was a railroad worker from Meridian, Mississippi, Jimmie Rodgers. Rodgers is considered the father of country music, and was the first professional musician to make most of his income off the sale of phonograph records, which were also played widely on the radio, in place of live appearances.

Rodgers was able to relate to the average American with his music, including his own struggle with tuberculosis, then an incurable disease, by writing a song about it, the “T.B. Blues” in 1931.

Whether performed on the radio or in person, music entertained Americans blessed with increased leisure time, which came from the rising prosperity of the decade. Jazz music, which came from the improvisations of both black and white bands centered in New Orleans and Memphis, produced stars such as trumpeter Louis Armstrong. George Gershwin even adapted jazz music to the symphony.

When not driving or listening to the

radio, more and more Americans could talk to friends and family without leaving home, via the telephone. The number of households owning a phone increased by 35 percent in the 1920s. The decade saw other consumer items making their way into American homes, such as electric washing machines, vacuum sweepers, and the electric iron.

Although some newspapers had featured crossword puzzles (originally known as word-cross puzzles) a few years earlier, it was in 1924 that an entire book was published, featuring nothing but these puzzles. Soon, practically every newspaper in America found that they were an important feature that had to be included to sell papers. They proved so popular that one man was jailed for refusing to leave a restaurant — he had been struggling for four hours to complete a puzzle.

Those who were more inclined to physical activity became enthralled with a new dance, the Charleston, which was unlike the tamer ballroom and square dancing of

previous eras. Even members of Congress got caught up in the new dance.

The Impact of Willis Carrier's Air Conditioning

Perhaps the most underrated invention that became widespread in the decade was air conditioning, developed by Willis Carrier. Before Carrier, even with radios, crossword puzzles, and telephones, remaining inside a house in the summertime, suffering from the heat and humidity, was often intolerable, particularly in the Southern states. His invention, however, made much of modern life possible, including shopping malls, transatlantic flight, computers, and servers that power the Internet. Eventually, air conditioning would transform Southern housing architecture, with its large porches that had often encircled the house (so its inhabitants could move with the shade and the breeze). Today, porches are less and less of a feature in Southern homes.

Before the 1920s, the Southern econ-

omy had lagged behind the North for several decades after the Civil War. Over time, as air conditioning tamed the excessive heat and humidity associated with the Deep South, more and more industry saw the region as a place to locate.

Along with many other factors, air-conditioning no doubt contributed to increasing the life expectancy of Americans (53.6 years for men and 54.6 for women in 1920). It certainly can be credited with improving the quality of life.

Carrier Corporation was formed in 1915, but its greatest impact was in the following decade, in the cooling of commercial buildings, not private homes. It was first developed to cool printing presses, which experienced much trouble with humidity. Another industry that benefited greatly in the decade from air conditioning was the growing motion picture-theater industry. Americans already loved the movies, which were silent movies for most of the decade, but in the summertime Americans flocked to the theaters to beat the heat, as air-conditioned theaters were a huge draw.

Movie stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Tom Mix, and Will Rogers became “heroes” to many Americans, as politicians and industrialists became less interesting. The first full-length “talkie” movie was *The Jazz Singer*, with Al Jolson, near the end of the decade. Before that, actors emphasized body motion and facial expressions, with words appearing on the screen periodically. The “sound” was usually provided by an in-house piano or some other musical instruments, using musical compositions provided by the movie studios.

Valentino was one of those actors who was unable to make the transition from silent movies to talking pictures. Known as a screen “heartthrob,” his high-pitched voice damaged this romantic image in talkies. Like some other actors, he had trouble learning his lines, so important in the talkies.

Other Americans enjoyed marathon dancing sessions, while some gained notoriety for breaking records for time spent sitting on flagpoles.

College students often created their own “entertainment.” Parties sometimes featured necking (hugging and kissing, brought about by the increase in the num-



AP Images

Mad about movies: Americans flocked to the movie theaters in the twenties. Motion pictures were silent movies at the beginning of the decade, but at the end “talkies” were taking over the screens.

ber of young women on the campus), the eating of goldfish, and seeing how many individuals could cram inside a phone booth or an automobile. Even with Prohibition, one would suspect that there might be some alcohol involved.

Much has been written about the bootleggers and the violent crime associated with national prohibition of alcohol in the decade, which spawned gangs such as that led by Chicago's Al Capone. It is estimated that Capone pulled in an astounding \$60 million per year (between \$850 and \$900 million in today's inflated dollars) during his reign as the premier mob boss in the Windy City. While overall liquor

consumption did decline with Prohibition (more in the early years than in the later), it still continued in illegal establishments, known as speakeasies, where women joined men in drinking spirits.

Women were employed outside the home in larger numbers during the decade, partly because their increased employment during World War I simply continued, and partly because, to many women, it indicated their increased independence. It was the "Flapper Era," a time when women cut their hair short and wore shorter dresses, even exposing their knees. Some dresses were even sleeveless.

Before the 1920s, smoking was largely a

man's pastime, and usually involved cigar and pipe smoking. But during the war, American soldiers were given cigarettes in their rations. By the end of the war, many were hooked on cigarette smoking, and the habit quickly supplanted other forms of tobacco consumption in popularity, with cigarette sales more than doubling. Women increasingly joined men in the practice. As art follows life, then life follows art, the motion pictures, which featured almost incessant smoking by actors — and actresses — no doubt added to the consumption of cigarettes by both sexes.

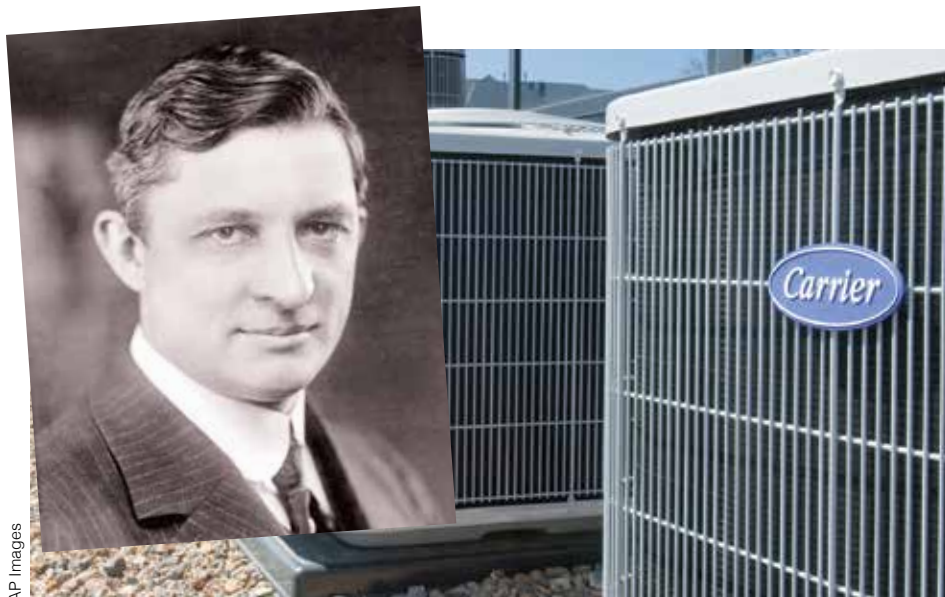
In 1920, before this wider use of cigarettes, there were fewer than a thousand lung cancer deaths in the United States.

The Rise of Spectator Sports

In addition to driving cars, smoking cigarettes, and listening to the radio, many Americans, with rising incomes and more leisure time, turned their attention to sports. Although professional football had been played as early as 1892, it was in 1920 that the American Professional Football Association (later renamed the National Football League) was formed. But pro football's years of glory were still in the future in the 1920s, as the college game was more prominent at the time. It was in the 1920s that Knute Rockne made Notre Dame a national power in college football.

However, Red Grange, nicknamed "the galloping ghost," opted to leave the University of Illinois in 1925, without getting his degree, to play for the Chicago Bears. In one game — played less than a week after leaving college — Grange made an astounding \$12,000 (about \$177,000 in today's dollars).

Once considered such a brutal sport that it was often banned, boxing took in its first million-dollar gate in the decade, on the strength of the appeal of heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey. Dempsey dominated the sport thoroughly for most of the decade, but finally, Father Time and Gene Tunney scored a decision over Dempsey in 1926. At the end of the bout, Dempsey's wife was said to have been distraught at Dempsey's face, compared by some to the look of uncooked hamburger meat, to which Dempsey replied, "Honey, I forgot to duck." The return match the next year had a gate of \$2.6 million (or \$38.5 million in today's dollars).



AP Images

That's cool: Willis Carrier's invention of air conditioning has made life much more tolerable. In the twenties, its use in movie theaters made them even more popular to the public, providing relief from hot and humid summers. The use of air conditioning eventually transformed the architecture of Southern homes, as porches — often circling around the entirety of a house, providing relief from the even hotter conditions inside — began to disappear.

Harding had inherited a growing national depression from Progressive President Woodrow Wilson, and a national debt that had grown from \$1 billion to \$24 billion. Wages had fallen by 20 percent, and 100,000 businesses had closed up.

It was also the age of Bill Tilden in tennis and Bobby Jones in golf. But the dominant sport of the decade was baseball, and its dominant player was George Herman “Babe” Ruth, whose ability to hit home runs (one of every 12 times at bat) brought thousands of fans to the ball park. A new stadium — Yankee Stadium — was built to accommodate the adoring fans, and it was nicknamed “The House that Ruth Built.” In 1927, Ruth hit 60 home runs, a record that would stand until Roger Maris, another Yankee, would hit 61 in 1961. Before Ruth, home runs were relatively rare in major-league baseball.

Despite the movie stars and the sports icons of the twenties, no man captured the national imagination like Charles A. Lindbergh, the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, in 1927. The son of a U.S. congressman — who had fought against the establishment of the Federal Reserve System over a decade earlier — Lindbergh was the darling of the nation. Aviator caps soon became a very popular present for children.

Aviation’s place as an industry in the early years was more in air shows and mail delivery than in passenger travel. There were those who foresaw its military and passenger value, but in the 1920s, not so much. Billy Mitchell, a famous “ace” from the first World War, would even be drummed out of the Army for his insistence that his superiors were underestimating its importance in any future wars. His prediction in 1926 that the Japanese would be able to bomb Pearl Harbor was ridiculed at the time as technologically impossible.

The Role of Warren Harding in the 1920s

Perhaps the judgment call that made so much of the prosperity of the 1920s even possible was when President Warren Harding opted to not intervene in the depression of 1920-21. He rightly understood the limited role that government had to play in society when he specifically rejected the premise of the Progressive Era, saying in 1920, “The world needs to be reminded that all human ills are not curable by legislation, and that quantity of statutory enactment and excess of government offer no substitute for quality of citizenship.”

Today, Harding is regularly placed at



Rolling right along: Before 1920, there were fewer than seven million automobiles in America, less than 10 percent of which were “closed cars.” By 1928, 23 million cars were on the road, almost all of the “closed” car variety, such as this 1928 Rolls Royce.

or near the bottom of American presidents, but the truth is that Harding accomplished quite a bit. He cut federal spending a whopping 40 percent from Wilson’s peacetime level, and he allowed wages to fall to their natural level (which avoided higher levels of unemployment). Yet he was everything Progressives in academia, in politics, and in the media of that day and today hate. He was a small-town businessman who reluctantly entered politics at the urging of his wife. He opposed American entry into the League of Nations. Contrary to the distorted image of him today, Harding did not spend all of his time playing golf and cards, and drinking whiskey all hours of the night. As journalist William Crawford, a Wilsonian Democrat who worked for *McClure’s* magazine, wrote after being allowed an entire week to observe the president during his day, Harding put in “an eighty-four-hour week.”

Unfortunately, Harding picked Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico to head up the Department of the Interior, tasked with leasing federal lands. Fall leased federal oil reserves under his charge at the Teapot Dome reserve in Wyoming and the Elk Hills reserve in California to oil tycoons

Harry Sinclair and Edward Doheny. Fall was later convicted of taking bribes from the two men to do so. When he picked Fall, Harding had no knowledge that the senator was corrupt. But if Harding is to be held accountable for Fall’s corruption, then perhaps the entire U.S. Senate that confirmed Fall, in less than one minute with no hearings and without a dissenting vote, should also be held to account.

In his book *The Growth of America*, historian Clarence Carson summarized the impact of the scandals of the Harding Era: “After all this furor, the worst that could be said about President Harding was that he used bad judgment in one or two (among numerous) appointments.... That his reputation should be so badly tarnished by these wayward events does not speak well for historians who have generally downgraded his achievements.”

Harding died of an apparent heart attack in the summer of 1923, and faced with running against the Republicans in the midst of a roaring economy and a nation at peace, the Democrats desperately needed an issue. As such, they attacked the Teapot Dome scandal. Despite their onslaught upon a defenseless dead

man, the Democrats got very little electoral help from their vicious attacks upon Harding. Harding's vice president, Calvin Coolidge, who was sworn in as president after Harding died, won a huge victory in the election the next year, almost completely untarnished by all the mud thrown on the memory of Harding.

The Republican Party, determined to win in 1924, is at least partly to blame for the destruction of Harding's reputation. In their effort to deflect attention away from their new president (Coolidge), Harding became a convenient scapegoat on whom to place the blame for all scandals.

Harding had inherited a growing national depression from Progressive President Woodrow Wilson, and a national debt that had grown from \$1 billion to \$24 billion. Wages had fallen by 20 percent, and 100,000 businesses had closed up. When his secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover, suggested government intervention into the economy, Harding chose to

let the free market correct the downturn. "Here at home," Harding said, "we have too much encouragement given to the idea that a government is a something-for-nothing institution."

Not only was federal spending cut nearly in half, but tax-rate cuts contributed greatly to the general prosperity of the decade. Harding explained his course: "There is not a menace in the world today like that of growing public indebtedness and mounting public expenditure. There has seemingly grown up an impression that the public treasuries are inexhaustible things."

Harding's predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, had jailed thousands of dissenters during the World War, including a man who had simply made a movie (*The Spirit of '76*, a historical film version of the American Revolution) that federal prosecutors contended was far too negative toward our war time British allies. Harding began the process of pardoning many of

these jailed individuals upon settling in at the White House.

"The deconstruction of the real Harding and his reconstruction as a crook, a philanderer, and a sleazy no-good was an exemplary exercise in false historiography," wrote historian Paul Johnson in his book *The History of the American People*. Much of it began as the work (which has been swallowed whole by their modern counterparts) of progressive-minded journalists and historians of the day who simply hated Harding's conservative political philosophy.

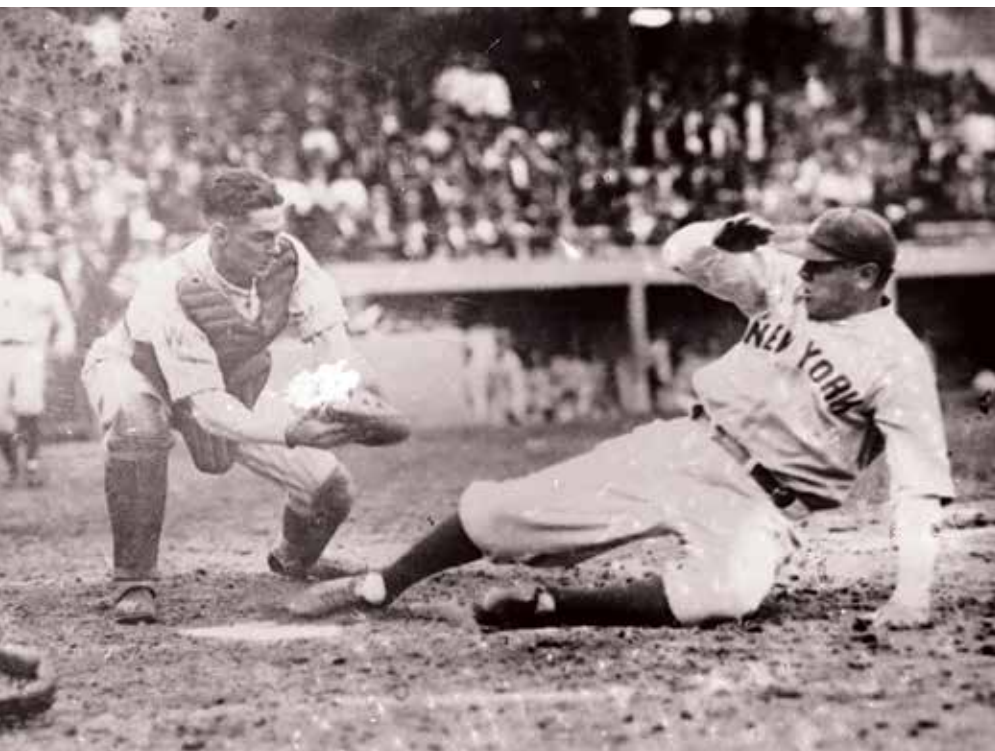
The Alienation of the Progressive Intellectuals

In the midst of the prosperity, the public's support for the conservative leadership of Harding and his successor, Calvin Coolidge, left many Progressives seething with anger, wanting a return to what they considered the progressive good old days under Wilson. Some, such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T.S. Eliot, were so alienated from the America of the 1920s that they left the country.

Sinclair Lewis did not leave, but he did write a series of novels stressing the alleged negatives of the country. His book *Main Street* offered his readers his version of small-town life in America as "dreary," places full of prejudiced and vulgar inhabitants. In his novel *Babbitt*, the socialist Lewis pictured the typical businessman as someone who "votes the Republican ticket straight, he hates all labor unionism, he belongs to the Masons and the Presbyterian Church, his favorite author is Zane Grey.... He is a bag of aggressive wind." In his *Arrowsmith*, the target was the medical profession, and in *Elmer Gantry*, he targeted Christian evangelists.

Not surprisingly, these arrogant intellectuals hated the small-town businessman in the White House, Warren Harding. They also hated the man who took his place, Calvin Coolidge. If anything, Coolidge's limited-government, free market philosophy was even more pronounced than Harding's. He had certainly expressed it more often.

Like Harding, Coolidge saw no point in interfering in the internal affairs of other nations, saying, "America seeks no earthly empire." He saw war as a threat to liberty.



AP Images

The game was a home run: With expanding incomes and leisure time, major league baseball became big business. No player brought in the fans like Babe Ruth of the New York Yankees. In 1927, he hit 60 home runs, a record that stood for 34 years. So many fans showed up to see the Babe hit the ball out of the park that they built Yankee Stadium, popularly known as "the house that Ruth built."



AP Images

The national pastime: Even President Calvin Coolidge (like Harding, a small-government Republican who continued to cut the budget) enjoyed baseball. Here he shakes hands with Washington Senators pitcher Walter Johnson, congratulating him and his fellow players for winning the American League title in 1924.

“The government of the United States was not established for the continued prosecution, or the perpetual preparation, of all its resources for war.”

He did not share the Progressives’ view that it is the role of government to change society. “The attempt to regulate, control, and prescribe all manner of conduct and social relations is very old.... There is no justification for public interference with purely private concerns,” he said in 1922, while still vice president. In 1926, while president, his views had not changed. “It is too much assumed that because an abuse exists it is the business of the national government to provide a remedy.”

He applied this philosophy in 1927 and 1928 when Congress passed the McNary-Haugen bill to help farmers who were having to contend with difficult economic times. The bill proposed that the U.S. government would buy “surplus” agricultural products. Coolidge vetoed the bill both times, with the same explanation. First, it would require a huge bureaucracy to administer. Second, it was not the role of the government to “fix” prices, and by purchasing “surplus” commodities, it would only promote more surpluses.

The End of the Roaring Twenties

Perhaps the most serious fault of Harding and Coolidge, from a limited government/free market point of view, is that neither had much to say about the role the Federal Reserve System was playing in the manipulation of the money supply in the 1920s. Created by an act of Congress in 1913 during the Progressive Era, it was charged with controlling the nation’s supply of money and credit.

While there is no question that the vast increase in the nation’s wealth during the Roaring Twenties was a direct result of government simply unleashing the free market, the Federal Reserve’s increase of the nation’s money supply by 62 percent caused a boom that would inevitably lead to a bust, as it did in 1929. Much has been said about the stable level of prices during the decade, but the fact is, without the massive infusion of money, prices would have fallen — thus making goods even more widely available.

Instead, by artificially keeping prices higher than where the free market would have had them, signals were sent to businesses, industry, and financial markets — including the stock market — that there was more demand than there really was.

Clarence Carson explained the problem in his *The Growth of America*: “Money, as such, is not really demand, though it appears to serve that function when it is exchanged for goods.... When a credit expansion occurs, an imbalance in trade results. The imbalance is that the goods for which the goods are ultimately to be exchanged have not yet been produced.”

The great economist Ludwig von Mises predicted the Great Depression: “There is no means of avoiding the final collapse of a boom brought about by credit expansion.”

Herbert Hoover, a man whom Coolidge dismissed in private as “wonder boy” and a man who had given him bad advice for six years, followed Coolidge into the White House. Although Hoover was a Republican like Harding and Coolidge, he was no conservative, but rather a Progressive. The depression predicted by von Mises occurred during his watch. But rather than approaching it as Harding did in 1921, Hoover called for massive government intervention. This time, there would be no “forgotten depression.”

Thus, the Roaring Twenties came to an end, to be replaced by the Great Depression of the 1930s. ■

Father Saves Family

WGN Television out of Chicago reported on April 7 about a deadly home invasion in Arlington Heights, Illinois, where the homeowner's Ring doorbell camera recorded a lot of the action. The video of the incident shows two men with their faces covered approaching the home. The two men rang the doorbell, and when the father opened the door, they pushed their way in and drew guns. A struggle immediately broke out between one of the suspects and the father, while the other armed suspect chased after the man's wife and kids, who hurriedly ran into an upstairs bedroom and locked the door. The father was clearly able to handle himself in a physical struggle, as the Ring camera showed him forcing the suspect out of the house through the front door and toward the driveway. The father repeatedly pummeled the burglar. The video shows the burglar getting up and running from the scene after receiving a brutal beating.

Then, as reported by the *Daily Herald* (Chicago), the father quickly ran back into the house, where he was physically attacked as he retrieved his own firearm. The burglar struck him in the head. The father and the burglar engaged in a fight, and the burglar shot at him but missed. As the two men struggled, the burglar pulled a knife from his waist and went to stab the father, but the patriarch fired at the suspect, hitting him in the abdomen and mortally wounding him. The family called 911, and arriving authorities discovered the suspect, whom they later pronounced dead at the scene. The father was bleeding from the head when police arrived.

The police identified the deceased suspect as 58-year-old Larry Brodacz, and released a statement explaining that “Brodacz pointed his handgun at the homeowner's wife and children.... Fearing for his life and the lives of his wife and children, the homeowner discharged a round from the family handgun, striking Mr. Brodacz in the abdomen.”

Law enforcement soon arrested the suspect who had fled the scene after being beaten up by the father, and identified him as 39-year-old Bradley Finnan. Finnan is now being charged with the death of the

other suspect under the state's felony murder law, which holds accomplices vicariously liable for homicides that occur during the commission of a violent felony. The two intruders knew each other through a car lot where they worked. Brodacz told Finnan that he had seen boxes of cash in the house years earlier, and expected to make a haul of \$200,000.

The father who defended his family is the cousin of the extremely popular comedian, Sebastian Maniscalco, and is also named Sebastian Maniscalco. He took to social media to express his gratitude for the support the family received from the community after the incident. Maniscalco wrote, “Please bare [*sic*] with me through this post, I am still quite overwhelmed. It has been the most challenging last few days for our family. Most are aware of the armed home invasion in Arlington Heights on Saturday, April 4th. Many of you are aware, and for those that are not, this is about our family, OUR HOME. This is an open case therefore I will limit any description of the horror, terror and fear my family had to endure that day and all that continues. There are no words to be found to appropriately define the ongoing aftermath of this event for our family. We are doing our best and praying each following day will bring better than the last. With all of this distress, our family has been blessed with the most incredible outpour of concern for our family. The calls, the texts, the emails, family, friends, neighbors, Thomas Middle school, friends we have lost track with over the years and so many of the Arlington Heights community that without knowing us just wanted to help. Unbelievable numbers opening their homes to us for a place to stay during this already unprecedented quarantine time. Offering to get us groceries, prepare meals for our family, get or buy us clothing. Offering to do anything and everything that would HELP. This speaks volumes of the GOOD that is out there. This not only touches our souls, it places hope in our hearts. HOPE that we will heal from this event, HOPE that we will one day feel safe again, HOPE that the images and sounds that currently hold us hostage on replay in our minds will begin to fade. We want each an [*sic*] every one of you that extended your hand to our

family to know, we are forever filled with gratitude and heartfelt emotion. You have no idea how much it means to us and how very much your genuine care & concern for our family has been a monumental part of getting us through these days and our journey in healing moving forward.”

He Made Her Shoot

The Associated Press reported on April 1 about a mother who did not hesitate to use lethal force to protect her family. The woman, a 42-year-old mother of three teenagers, was home with her children when an intruder, later identified as 32-year-old Joseph Roberts, broke in to her house in Volusia County, Florida, despite being repeatedly told to halt.

Roberts broke a front window of the house, which alerted the mother to grab her handgun and call 911. The mother was on the phone with the 911 dispatcher when Roberts climbed into the house through the shattered window. The 911 transcript reveals the mother yelling in a terrified voice “I don't want to shoot him, but I'm going to have to!” right before she fired one shot injuring the suspect. The woman quickly grabbed her children and fled the house.

Responding officers discovered Roberts at the scene, suffering from a gunshot wound. It was at that moment that the injured intruder reportedly told cops a wild story about why he broke into the home. Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood held a press conference where he discussed the incident and explained that Roberts told police “that the dinosaurs were chasing him and he thought he got some bad weed.” Chitwood said that Roberts is receiving treatment at a medical facility and his injuries are not life threatening, adding that “he's lucky she was a bad shot.” Chitwood also said prosecutors are looking into enhanced penalties for Roberts considering the crime occurred during the COVID-19 national emergency. Chitwood tried to make light of the situation by telling reporters, “I guess the only explanation is watch where you're buying your weed at during this time.” ■

— PATRICK KREY



Coronavirus Serves as Pretext for Larger, More Invasive Government

ITEM: The cover story and feature editorial in the *Economist's* issue for March 28-April 3 focus on the response to the coronavirus pandemic. The editorial is entitled "Everything's under control," with the subtitle reading, "Big government is needed to fight the pandemic. It may not shrink again afterwards." The "record suggests," says the *Economist*, "that crises lead to a permanently bigger state with many more powers and responsibilities and the taxes to pay for it." The publication opines that many of the changes "will be desirable" — mentioning, for example, a larger "investment" in "public health" in many nations, specifically the United States, where such "reform" is said to be "badly needed."

ITEM: Time magazine in its April 6 issue features a paean for an organizer (named *Ady Barkan*) and the belief that "COVID-19 is yet another reason to pass Medicare for All." This is said to be an "opportunity," in part because "the Democratic base — moderates and liberals alike — appears to support some version of Medicare for All."

ITEM: The *Financial Times*, an international paper headquartered in London, declares in its edition dated April 3 that, because of the pandemic, "Radical reforms are required to forge a society that will work for all." Here, among others, is what is being promoted by the editors: "Redistribution will again be on the agenda; the privileges of the elderly and wealthy in question. Policies until recently considered eccentric, such as basic income and wealth taxes, will have to be in the mix."

ITEM: Writing in the *New York Times* for March 18, columnist *Jamelle Bouie* states that "even the most ambitious proposals are nowhere near powerful enough to actually stop the coronavirus from destroying the economy. To do that, policymakers have to go beyond stimulus or bailouts for select industries. They have to take responsibility for economic life on a scale not seen since the *New Deal*."



Big government, little people: While the Left is calling for scads of new government programs in the face of the crisis, government is already failing. Not only did the government monies "for small business" typically go to big business, but the process to apply was mind-numbingly convoluted.

The column is entitled "The Era of Small Government Is Over." (The piece somehow fails to note that "small" government spending in 2018 was a substantial 37 percent of Gross Domestic Product.) The article promotes, among others, a progressive program where "workers would remain formally employed but receive unemployment benefits." Also advocated is legislation that calls for "unconditional cash assistance, with universal programs that would assist all of us."

Now, according to the *Times* columnist, is an "opportunity to once again embrace direct state action as a powerful tool for preserving and promoting prosperity."

CORRECTION: Leftists relish crises as pretexts for grabbing power and more revenues for their causes. While the *hoi polloi* has to scramble to feed their families because millions of jobs have been destroyed, elitists with a longer view envision globalist controls, widespread redistribution of wealth, and centralized regime programs.

It is happening now. And the demands for even bigger government schemes are seemingly endless. Many have little or nothing to do with stopping the spread of the coronavirus. Here's just a sampling of what the Left is pushing: more generous unemployment benefits, some that could serve as a disincentive to rejoining

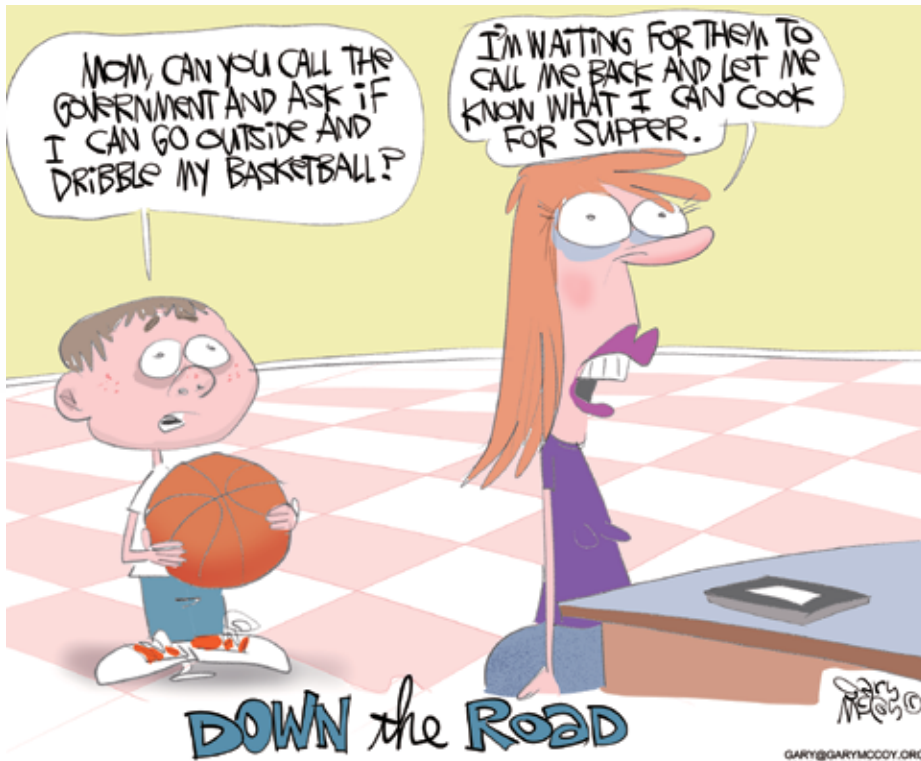
the workforce; universal basic income; weakening of state election laws by federal mandates for early voting and mail-in voting; requiring same-day voter registration, though not allowing voter-ID laws; and even requiring American women to register for the military draft (a project of one congressional panel).

Here's more, with most of these being projects of a Democratic Party "idea factory" called the Center for American Progress: work-sharing; dramatically enhanced state and local aid; larger and automatically extended direct payments to households; and requiring more universally available paid leave — "all while filling gaps in those programs that leave out people who are experiencing severe need." Also: mandatory support for child care; subsidized abortions; additional food assistance; aid for illegal aliens; canceling of student loans; and securing "critical services and medical care for LGBTQ people."

Steve Hanke, a professor of applied economics and co-director of the Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, writing in *Central Banking*, notes that liberals in France also want more state controls. He writes, "Indeed, the cries in Paris for more 'state' and less 'private' are deafening —



Correction, Please!



never mind that government expenditures already account for more than 55% of French GDP?”

Professor Hanke does not ignore the United States, noting in April that

the drums for more central government are beating louder with each passing day. And that’s despite reportage about massive government failure in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Indeed, as I write, Reuters has just issued a special report entitled, “How federal government snafus slowed testing at a top US hospital.”

Undaunted, the wizards on the Left rarely notice the holes in their logic when pressing the federal government to do much more — even after it has proven incapable of acting appropriately in the first place. Case in point: Donald Trump’s political enemies berate him as a “fascist,” while also insisting that he nationalize industries to better fight the virus.

Such statisticians also would like to place the United States under the control of a single-payer healthcare system. Yet,

consider the shoddy counter-virus record of the central government. Christian Britschgi, writing for *Reason*, summarized how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “monopolized testing for the virus early in the year, and then shipped out defective tests to labs, likely blowing the country’s best shot of containing COVID-19 early on.”

The CDC is assuredly not alone in its stumbling. Other agencies were also involved. Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, discussed the process after the coronavirus was seen as a threat. As Tanner recounted,

the most egregious errors have actually been made by government organizations, from the FDA to the CDC to FEMA, while many of the breakthroughs that we’ve seen, such as rapid tests, potential treatments, and possible vaccines, have originated in the private sector. We might have seen even quicker results from the private sector without the government regulations and bureaucracy that slowed it down.

Does anyone really believe that we should put the same government that can’t manage the acquisition and delivery of ventilators and personal protective equipment in charge of even more of our health-care decisions?

The question answers itself.

Indeed, the progress gained against the spread of the virus largely took place when government regulations were relaxed or waived. That should prove instructive.

Steven Greenhut, writing in California’s *Orange County Register* in April, also commented on the inaccuracy of the CDC’s COVID-19 tests. Moreover, as he observed, companies in the private sector “were forbidden from developing tests unless they went through the long process of Food and Drug Administration approval. The Trump administration has temporarily waived those rules, but they left our country in a precarious position when a pandemic struck.”

Federal regulations are ubiquitous. And nothing seems to be more permanent than a “temporary” government regulation. Deregulation, in contrast, works. Thus, when public pressure about the virus revealed the extent of holdups, the Department of Transportation began “waiving restrictions on how many hours truck drivers can work,” wrote Greenhut. And as he put it, the Department of Health and Human Services has been “waiving privacy laws so more Americans can use telehealth services — allowing them to access medical advice from home.”

Yet statisticians want to add to the rules. And they get them. Robert Higgs, a professor of political economy, dubbed this the “ratchet effect.” He documents how the additional powers that are assumed by government during an emergency do not get completely relinquished when the crisis wanes.

Accordingly, in Higgs’s words, “crisis typically has produced not just a temporarily bigger government but also permanently bigger government.” He documents such episodes of American government from the Progressive Era through two world wars and beyond in his classic book *Crisis and Leviathan*.

Following the ideological transforma-

tion of the Progressive Era, as Higgs wrote in his book, each

genuine crisis has been the occasion for another ratchet toward Bigger Government. The Progressive ideological imperative that government must “do something,” must take responsibility for resolving any perceived crisis, insures new actions. The actions have unavoidable costs, which governments have an incentive to conceal by substituting coercive command-and-control devices for pecuniary fiscal-and-market means of carrying out their chosen policies.

The professor cites multiple examples:

Military conscription, wage-price controls, assignment of official priorities and physical allocation of selective commodities, countless economic and social regulations, import quotas and export controls — all confirm the hypothesis. Knowing how much a crisis facilitates Bigger Government, special interests always use such propitious occasion[s] to seek whatever governmental assistance they think will promote their own ends.

As he concludes, “Once undertaken, governmental programs are hard to terminate.”

The global record in this regard spans centuries. The same issue of the *Economist* previously cited also recapitulates a number of such outcomes. Since the Napoleonic wars, says the publication, the “responses to crises” have “further consolidated the power of the state.” For instance, the top rate of income tax in France

was zero in 1914; a year after the first world war it was 50%. Canada introduced [the] income tax in 1917 as a “temporary” measure to finance the war. During the second world war [the] income tax in America turned from a “class tax” to a “mass tax”, with the number of payers rising from 7m in 1940 to 42m in 1945 (today more than twice as many Americans are caught in the net). The second world war also led to calls for the introduction of cradle-to-grave welfare systems.

When it comes to the aftermath of the coronavirus, the numbers keep mounting — in lives, expenditures, and debt. As we write, the government in Washington is spending almost \$4 trillion more this year than it will receive in revenues.

Additional spending and debt are being planned as we write. The United States, on average, borrowed 2.1 percent of its Gross Domestic Product each year between the end of World War II and 2019, according to Phil Gramm of Texas, the former chairman of the Senate Banking Committee; yet, this year to date the federal government is in line to borrow an astounding 20.6 percent of GDP.

What will we learn from this experience? Perhaps there might be a silver lining if we realize that the vaunted “models” that helped to drive the wholesale closing of the U.S. economy were erroneous, often badly. This happened in part because the data being input about the virus kept changing, sometimes daily. (As for a potential lesson: Consider that many of the same progressives who demand that we retool the nation’s entire economy because of their “climate change” projections insist that we trust their models. These “scientific” versions of crystal balls supposedly forecast the fine points of Earth’s temperature a hundred years hence.)

Worse than huge spending and larger deficits, our very freedoms face additional threats, as happened after 9/11.

The communists in China — the apparent origin of the coronavirus — already use drones and informers to track potential carriers of the disease and to augment their other widespread surveillance systems.

Can’t happen here? Police in New Jersey already have deployed drones to warn people to stop gathering if they appear to be breaking social-distancing guidelines. And radical New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently announced a snitch line so dwellers in the Fun City can turn in their neighbors who might be breaking the rules for social distancing. “It’s simple,” the mayor assured his subjects on Twitter. “Just snap a photo and text it” to the provided number.

All of these restrictions and mandates, big and small, are said to be necessary for our protection. Edmund Burke put it differently in his letter to the sheriffs of Bristol in 1777, warning, “The true danger is when liberty is nibbled away, for expedients, and by parts.” ■

— WILLIAM P. HOAR



Government priorities: Following federal recommendations on how to deal with the coronavirus, more than 20 million Americans became unemployed, even while government-favored concerns, such as the lottery, government construction projects, and more continued on as before.

Should We Lift the **Shutdowns?**

Wisconsin’s Governor Tony Evers initially imposed his stay-at-home order on March 25, until April 24, then extended it until May 26. Despite the coronavirus largely being a problem in small areas of the state, he continued a blanket shutdown of “nonessential businesses” across the entire state. No scientific rationale has been given for his decision.

Even though reports have already come through of shutdown-related suicide and small-business owners struggling to not lose their hard-earned businesses, the governor, like others, has not relented.

As to hardship, at a cheesecake store in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the owner has been manning the business nearly without help to the point of exhaustion, because she can’t afford to pay her employees, desperately hoping the drive-through traffic will be enough to keep her business afloat. The extension meant keeping this workload up for another month.

So should shutdowns such as Wisconsin’s continue? No. Why?

First, the shutdowns aren’t doing much in terms of what they specifically were begun to do — keep hospitals from being overwhelmed by coronavirus patients. While a few hospitals in New York and elsewhere have been filled to capacity, most hospitals across the nation are mobilized for action — and patiently waiting for virus-laden patients, even as patients with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, are refused appointments with their doctors (many of these patients will suffer long-term injury or death). Abiding by the rationale for the imposition of the shutdowns, we can conclude, “If hospital resources are not stressed, shutdowns should not happen.”

Note, too, that there are three ways to deal with the coronavirus: Find a vaccine to prevent it, find a treatment to cure it, or let the disease run its course so that enough Americans are exposed to the virus (and recover) that the disease is essentially stopped from spreading by acquired immunity. With a vaccine said by experts to be at least a year away, and treatments for the virus so far only helping portions of those affected, our only real option is to let the disease run its course.

Since shutdowns are intended only to slow the rate that people catch the disease, not stop it altogether, with few exceptions the shutdowns are not going to reduce total lives lost. The shutdowns will only prolong the agony — while endangering the country as a whole with economic destruction.



State Street is mostly empty due to the coronavirus pandemic in Madison, Wisconsin.

AP Images

What will the shutdowns do? According to an interview with Harvard infectious disease epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch by wired.com entitled “The Mathematics of Predicting the Course of the Coronavirus,” his team expects that the virus’ spread will likely continue until the year 2022, unless a treatment or vaccine is found earlier. And during this time period, we will need “massive testing and quarantines of the ill, and aggressive social distancing.”

This is the plan despite the fact that there is no chance that Americans will actually practice rigorous social distancing for up to two years, considering that it would mean stopping classes, sports, family get-togethers, and unmarried sex.

As economist Walter Williams noted, decisions should be based on cost-benefit analyses. For instance, if the country reduced road speeds to five mph, we could likely stop 40,000 traffic deaths each year (benefit), but we don’t do this because of the consequences (cost).

If Americans keep the shutdowns going, the economy will be devastated, and it may take many years to get going, causing untold hardship and suffering for millions of Americans. On the other hand, if we allow the virus to spread among the young and healthy through such methods as opening schools, while keeping vulnerable populations (the elderly, the obese, and the immunocompromised) “safe-at-home,” it’s likely that total coronavirus deaths will be the same or less than if we spread out exposure over a longer period of time.

Getting the scourge over quickly is the advice of Knut Wittkowski, the former longtime head of the Department of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design at Rockefeller University in New York City. He stated that lifting the shutdowns would cause the Wuhan virus to be “exterminated” in weeks.

A couple of factoids seem to suggest he is correct. First, a diary from the Spanish flu epidemic shows that it hit Seattle in early October 1918, and was mainly done there in early November (“Attempts to control the outbreak were,” as historylink.com noted, “largely futile”). Also, studies done in New York, California, Italy, and more indicate that the coronavirus has little or no noticeable effect on most people, so the small percentage who get very sick will be able to get treatment, while country-wide herd immunity is quickly built to stop the disease.

Moreover, the longer the virus circulates in the population, the greater the chance that it will mutate dangerously, causing us to have to do this all over again. So let’s get this done already. ■

Kurt Williamsen is managing editor of THE NEW AMERICAN.

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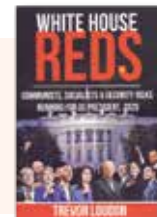


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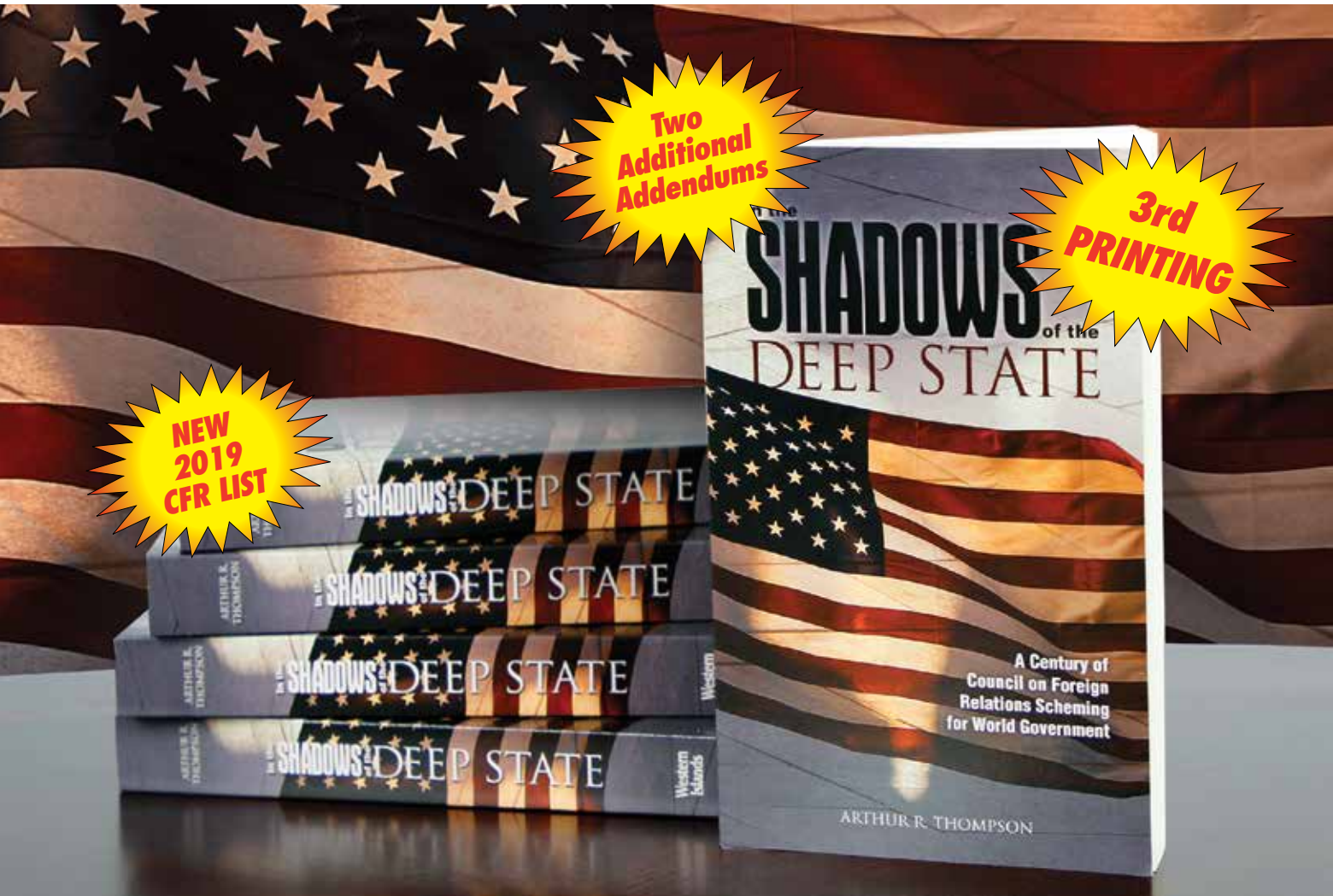
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