

ductive and obtrusive interventions. There is no better way to think about regulation, the rise of the nation-state, and the future of the West than by pondering Heckscher's magnum opus about the growth of mercantilism and the pernicious effects of bad laws on the common welfare. Sadly, it is out of print. Go to your library and read.

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Walter Olson

Policy buffs have long treasured John Kenneth Galbraith as the short sale that keeps on earning: Exhume a copy of *The New Industrial State* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967, out of print except as audiotapes) and marvel at the resistless advent of central planning and "administered" pricing, or the inevitably declining importance of individual creativity amid the coming ascendancy of committees and bureaucracies, to name only two of the trends that have so failed to typify the past 30 years.

With the toppling of the idea of a society run from above by experts, American cities have had a chance to recover from many of the social-engineering schemes that had begun to render them unlivable. Honors for seeing the problem early might be divided between Edward Banfield (*The Unheavenly City*, 1970; *The Unheavenly City Revisited* reissue in 1974, Waveland) and Jane Jacobs (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vintage, 1961). Banfield often gets pegged as a neocon and Jacobs as vaguely countercultural, which points up the dangers of facile categorization based on choosing up sides regarding the '60s: both were in fact defending natural patterns of living against authorities' efforts to superimpose artificial structures on the social (Banfield) and physical (Jacobs) forms of community. Fearless, forthright, and intensely factual to the point of reportage, both books are still terrific reads, while the involuted condescension of Galbraith's style, which so impressed the critics of his day, has worn poorly.

Of the battles ahead, few will involve higher stakes than the defense of the Enlightenment and its libertarian values from assaults of both Left and Right. It's today's most unsettling alliance-in-practice: campus-based identitarians and a prominent body of conservative intellectuals agree with each other that "tolerance" and "free speech" are meaningless or overrated concepts, that claims for the objective authority of science should be cut down to size, that official neutrality on such matters as religion and identity is a chimera, that liberal distinctions between public and private are suspect because they tend to insulate bad conduct from social correction, and so forth. (In the August 17 & 24 *New Republic*, Richard Wolin traces parallels between today's postmodernists and the influential reactionary theorist Joseph de Maistre, who wrote that "what we ought not to know is more important than what we ought to know.")

To see how the antirationalist right met its downfall the first time around, head back to the freethinkers' shelf for another look at Hume and Gibbon and Lecky, Darwin and Tom Huxley, Mencken and Ingersoll; at the moment I'm browsing Andrew

D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896, Prometheus paperback reissue). The former Cornell president can be dated or quaint, but more often his book is packed with astonishing, colorful, and, yes, inspiring accounts of the achievement we call the modern mind, formed as one discipline after another, from meteorology to sanitation, economics to philology, epistemology to medicine, pulled free from superstition.

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Randal O'Toole

The accurate book: Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Vintage, 1961). After 35 years, Jacobs's book remains the best critique of urban planning—and a wonderful critique of American planning in general. The book almost single-handedly demolished the federally funded urban-renewal movement.

Jacobs was scathing in her attacks on planners. "The pseudo-science of city planning and its companion, the art of city design," she wrote, "have not yet broken with the specious comfort of wishes, familiar superstitions, oversimplifications, and symbols." When "contradictory reality intrudes" on planners' preconceived notions, they merely "shrug reality aside." Ironically, planners today use *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* as a textbook as they try to turn suburbs into the dense cities that Jacobs admired. They ignore her specific warnings against doing so even as they overlook her assaults on their profession.

The fall-flat book: A.Q. Mowbry's *Road to Ruin* (J.B. Lippincott, 1969). *Road to Ruin* was one of the first in an unrelenting series of attacks on the automobile, attacks that continue today in Jane Holtz Kay's *Asphalt Nation* (Crown, 1997) and James Kunstler's *The Geography of Nowhere* (Simon & Schuster, 1993). Americans would rather not drive, these books claim, but they are forced to do so by a conspiracy of auto manufacturers, highway builders, and housing developers. "The automobile population is growing faster than the human population," warned Mowbry. "Under the doctrine that the machine must be served, the highway advocates are already laying plans for an accelerated effort to blanket the nation with asphalt."

Americans today drive three times as many miles as they did when Mowbry wrote. Yet well under 2 percent of the United States has been "blanketed" with asphalt—and much of that was roads before autos were invented. Though *Road to Ruin* and similar books convinced U.S. governments to spend billions of dollars subsidizing urban transit, Americans stubbornly continue to drive nearly everywhere they go. Those hostile to the automobile never see the enormous benefits that the auto has produced.

The next-30-years book: Joel Garreau's *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (Doubleday, 1991). Garreau, a *Washington Post* writer, coined the term "edge cities" for the most recent trend

in urban development: concentrations of retailing, manufacturing, and entertainment in new towns on the fringes of major urban areas. Conditioned by writers such as Mowbray, Garreau's first reaction to an edge city was one of horror: "It seemed insane to me. It was a challenge to everything I had been taught: that what this world needed was More Planning; that cars were inherently Evil; that suburbia was morally wrong."

Garreau soon realized that planners had no foundation in reality, while the developers building edge cities had to be in touch with what people wanted, or they would lose their shirts. *Edge City* is as much a celebration of the marketplace as it is a prediction of what 21st-century American cities will look like—provided government doesn't try to keep them in the 19th century.

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John J. Pitney Jr.

In 1969, at the age of 14, I read my first serious book about elections: *The Emerging Republican Majority* (Arlington House), by Kevin Phillips. Its 482 pages of maps, graphs, tables, and analysis grabbed me the way a baseball almanac would fascinate a more normal kid. I've kept my copy all these years, and I recently took a close look at it again. While Phillips's subsequent books (e.g., *The Politics of Rich and Poor*) have been more debatable, this one got it right.

Voting power, he said, was shifting from the Northeast to the Southern and Western states of the Sun Belt—a term that he coined in this book. Since Republicans were strong in the Sun Belt, they could look forward to an advantage in presidential elections. (He made no claims about congressional races.) At the time, many commentators belittled his analysis, noting Goldwater's massive 1964 defeat and Nixon's narrow 1968 victory. Phillips won the argument. Since the publication of the book, every presidential race has gone either to a Sun Belt Republican or a Republican-sounding Southern Democrat.

A year after Phillips foresaw the shape of presidential politics, Charles Reich took on all of society. "There is a revolution coming," he said in *The Greening of America* (Random House). "It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a new and liberated individual." He never defined his terms precisely, but the new "Consciousness III" apparently spurned materialism, capitalism, and competition. It also meant wearing bell-bottoms. No kidding: "Bell bottoms have to be worn to be understood.... They give the ankles a special freedom as if to invite dancing on the street."

Reich pictured the America of the future as "an extended family in the spirit of the Woodstock festival." It didn't happen, thank God. At Woodstock, people who took drugs and rolled around in mud were "hippies" or "flower children." Today we call them "the homeless." Fortunately, many of the Woodstock generation grew up, got haircuts, opened money-market accounts, and joined the emerging Republican majority. Some even

subscribe to REASON.

Because of *Greening*, Reich was the most famous professor at Yale Law School at the time that Bill Clinton was attending. Some of Reich's goopier language about idealism seeped into Clinton's rhetoric, but here's one line he won't be quoting: "To be dishonest in love, to 'use' another person, is a major crime."

What comes next? That's the question James P. Pinkerton addressed in his aptly titled 1995 book, *What Comes Next* (Hyperion). The government's vast "Bureaucratic Operating System," he wrote, has degenerated past the point where incremental patches can work. We need a new system that includes privatization, decentralization, elimination of failed agencies, and a fairer way to raise revenue, such as the flat tax.

That's a positive vision of the future, but there's no guarantee that it will come true. Although Republicans have praised these goals, they have lately been timid about acting on the specifics. Too bad. If supporters of free minds and free markets don't act on their beliefs, supporters of bureaucratic government will stay in charge. And the future will bear a depressing resemblance to the past.

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Robert W. Poole Jr.

One of the most prescient books of the past 30 years appeared at the end of 1968: Peter Drucker's *The Age of Discontinuity* (Harper & Row). At a time when the world of policy and government was dominated by the ideas of people like John Kenneth Galbraith, Drucker challenged the conventional wisdom across the board. He foresaw a half-century of fundamental change, in both the U.S. and the global economy, and in the ideas by which we attempt to make sense of the respective roles of government and the private sector, both for-profit and nonprofit. He identified knowledge as the key factor in economic growth, and he challenged governments to rethink their policies so as not to inhibit the huge changes that would be necessary as societies adjusted to the emerging knowledge-based economy—especially the revolution to be unleashed by widespread access to inexpensive computer power.

For me, Drucker's book first identified the concept of "re-privatization," calling for a fundamental rethinking of government's role (seeing it primarily as policy maker and regulator, rather than provider of goods and services). This insight was one of the critical influences that led me to research and write about privatization, and to set up what became the Reason Foundation.

The booby prize for prescience surely belongs to another 1968 volume, Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (Ballantine). Evincing complete economic ignorance, combined with blindness to demographic evidence already becoming available, Ehrlich presented a Malthusian scenario under which out-of-control population growth would lead to mass starvation. He predicted that even England "will not exist in the year 2000." Despite their obvious absurdity, Ehrlich's views helped ignite today's enor-