

PART 10: MORE HISTORY

History 1: In the 1800s, Business People become the New Aristocracy

By 1830, business people had defeated the aristocracy, not completely, but enough. Business people controlled the wealth of England, most of Western Europe, and, soon, the United States. By controlling wealth, business people controlled seats in Parliament and in local governments. They had had control for long enough so that, in the eyes people then, it had always been thus. The business class was the new tradition, the new old, the new “ancient regime”, the new aristocracy. Ever since, the business class has seen itself as the effective aristocracy, as the best representatives of the nation and General Will, with an inherited right to be first in governing and dominant in governing. In places where the old aristocracy still held political and economic power, the business class and old aristocracy often allied. In America, business families began to act like European aristocracy, starting at least with the Vanderbilt family (railroads), and continuing with more railroads (Gould), oil (Rockefeller), steel (Carnegie), finance (Morgan), electricity (Morgan), chemicals (DuPont), cars (Ford), land (Buffet), software (Gates) and computers (Dell). Insurance is one of the biggest industries too but there is no single family controlling it that the American public immediately recognizes; Warren Buffet plays a role. Whether to act like the new aristocracy is good or bad for the nation depends on how business people see the role of the new aristocracy, on what they actually do, and on what other groups do.

Just as particular families tend to dominate particular industries for a while, eventually corporations and their officers dominate. They take over from families. I don't explain why. Families often do remain prominent in corporations as the Walton family still controls Walmart and the DuPont family still runs DuPont. After taking control, officers of corporations and the people that run corporations then play the role of the new aristocracy and they act much as the families did when families owned the firm.

What would be the view of wealthy people and business firms of their place in society and of their society? They could take motifs from old Liberals, old aristocracy, old Conservatives, the business ideals that came from Adam Smith (free market and minimal state interference), and from Jeremy Bentham (cost-benefit practicality). Not all these views are compatible, so they must pick and choose. They don't have to be entirely consistent but they have to appear consistent and they have to manage apparent inconsistency for the public and among themselves. Whatever they choose, they should make it appear consistent and make it acceptable to the masses. They could take what benefits them in the short run regardless of the welfare of the country, as most despots do, but, in the end, that strategy undermines their welfare and leaves their own children afloat. So thinking long term is better. On the one hand, they have kinship with all other business people. On the other hand, there is a qualitative gap between small business people versus medium-and-large-business-firms, and between medium-sized-business-firms versus large-sized-firms. The business aristocracy needed a political party as their focus and as the instrument of their national role. No tactical decisions need be made consciously but tactical decisions need to be made by leading families and corporations even sometimes when the families and firms fight

among themselves. By acting out all this, over the course of the 1800s, business aristocracy evolved into the stereotype of the Republican Party before about 1970.

Rather than put a list of features of that Party here, I rely on readers to have a sense of the business elite and the Republican Party until about 1970, discounting the “Goldwater Republicans” of the 1950s and early 1960s. The situation changed in the 1970s and with President Reagan later, and I would rather devote space to the modern Republican Party. One way to get a sense of what developed is through a few incidents and leaders that I do describe here.

Beforehand, I present an idea that actually affects the conduct of some privileged people in this nation, for the good. This paragraph is not an apology for business as the new aristocracy. “Noblesse oblige” means that a lord has not only privileges but also responsibilities. The feeling of being noble is not only a joy. “Heavy is the head that wears the crown”. As a lord, you must care for your people. “Lord” and “Lady” originally meant something like “keeper(s) of the bread” and referred to the obligation that the rulers had to keep an open table for guests and to alleviate hunger in times of need. You must act in certain ways and you must not act in certain other ways. Ship captains, including Kirk, know. Princes Charles, William, and Harry get it quite well. Many business people know the power of business. They try to use this power in the public interest when to do so does not destroy their firm or class. Here is an example that will bring me nothing but grief from anthropologists: business firms in old Third World nations, “banana republics”, often were the most stabilizing institutions and the instruments of social justice in the nation. They paid workers above the local wage rate. They gave their workers medical care above what the average local resident received, including care for children. The small houses of workers look like hovels to Americans bedazzled by the false American dream but they were far better than the huts of other locals. The business firms protected their workers from corrupt officials and local landowners. Of course, not all business people feel noblesse oblige and too many abuse their power. For noblesse oblige to work well, the people have to recognize the unusual rights of the nobles, and American people do act as if they recognize such rights for business people.

From the late 1700s until at least the Religious Right after 1980, America has not mostly been a populist democracy or a true representative democracy. Mostly America has been a “plutocratic aristocracy”, governed by a minority group of rich people with links among themselves. This “plutocratic aristocracy” has not always been bad and often has been good. It can claim a lot of the credit for the greatness of America, financially and morally. On the base that it built, came the moral social programs of the 1930s through 1970s. Usually other interest groups and the people in general have been able to control the excesses of the rich class and have been able to select good leaders from among them. Andrew Jackson was of this class and governed as a rich despot even if he was a Democrat in name. Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Jack Kennedy, Gerald Ford, and both Bushes were (are) of this class and governed like members of this class even if they were (are) Democrats. Abraham Lincoln had enough ties to this class so that he could fairly represent them and their view. Donald Trump did not start his candidacy or Presidency acting like a good member of this class but like a Right Wing bad populist.

To appreciate the growing importance of the state and of ties between business and the state, it helps to see what Liberals did. People think that Benjamin Franklin was entirely a self-made person but he owed much of his success to ties with the government. Franklin got a monopoly on delivering the mail and on printing government documents, monopolies that “made him”. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was a founder of the Democratic Party. Jefferson is famous (notorious) for saying, to remain free and responsive to the people, a nation should have a revolution every generation. He did not mean that literally but it shows the extent to which he placed individual freedom above the needs of the collective. Yet Jefferson had a vision of America as a great unified expansive country. He used federal money to buy Greater Louisiana and most of the land along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Jefferson used federal money to explore the area, at first through the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Jefferson began the University of Virginia not as a private college but as a publicly-funded institution. He began the Library of Congress by donating his collection of books and getting funding from Congress to house them, one of the biggest private collections in the world at the time (you can see Jefferson books in the online catalog but they are not available for general charging out). Jefferson did not rely primarily on individuals exercising their own freedom to make institutions. Jefferson had no consistent logical policy of private-and-public that I can make out.

Two episodes help show how the Republicans consolidated power in the growing state, the national bank and the railroads. (1) After the Constitution, Alexander Hamilton, who today we call a “Rightist”, laid the foundation for a central bank with one currency for the whole country. At the time that seemed like a good idea but Democrats fought it. Things went back and forth, with sometimes the central bank rising again and then being limited but not quite killed. Jefferson opposed the idea of a central bank. Eventually Andrew Jackson in the 1830s killed the central bank decisively for a generation. Jackson was a populist Democrat, proud to be for the “small person”. He said he killed the central bank so financial power would reside in local areas. Local areas know local needs. Local areas can give credit more easily and can give more credit. Each bank had the power to issue its own currency, so America in the early 1800s had dozens of currencies and did not have a single central currency as now. Jackson (or populist speakers) said the variety of local currencies also would help local farmers and small business people. In fact, a situation of many local banks each with its own money was a disaster. Nobody knew how good the money was from place to place. Local banks went bust often, and then their currency was worth nothing and the people who held their currency went bust along with the bank. Local business could not do business across county lines because nobody knew how to pay for anything and nobody trusted anybody else’s money. Some medium scale regional bankers and other regional medium scale business people were able to get “fast fake money” to start up ventures, and some of them did get rich. I return to the central bank shortly.

We now think of Andrew Jackson as a populist and champion of the “little guy”. But that is not all he was and that is not how Native Americans see him. He shows the mix of anti-centrist pseudo-populist ideology with central power that surged and ebbed under Democrats and Republicans. As President, when South Carolina threatened to leave the Union, in a precursor to the Civil War, Jackson made clear he would send troops to kill all the rebels there, and so delayed the Civil War for a generation. Jackson was a leader in the military campaigns that subjugated all the Native Americans in what is today the

American South, and killed their ways of life. He ordered the forced mass move of Native Americans from Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi to then-poor lands in Oklahoma and the surrounding area – move that very likely was unconstitutional and certainly inhumane. Jackson might have been for the little White guy but he was not for oppressed small people in general. He was happy to augment central military power and to use it. Perhaps the biggest difference between Jackson and Republicans was that Republicans had a better relation with business and so were in better position to build and use central power.

(2) Maybe Abraham Lincoln can convey the mix of ideas in the 1800s and what Conservatives became. Lincoln was a Republican in the 1850s, which even then was the party of business and central power. Contrary to popular opinion, Lincoln did not run for President so as to free slaves. His main goal was to hold the United States together so it could reach greatness. Read the Gettysburg Address. He fought the South to keep the United States together. He detested slavery and was happy to free slaves as part of keeping the country together. He had hoped to free slaves gradually over perhaps a decade but the War forced his hand. Lincoln took, from private small farmers and other private small landowners, the land needed for a national network of railroads and communication. In so doing, he laid the foundation for the national economy we have now and for later unified transportation and communication such as our network of roads and TV. Lincoln took lands from small landholders for his view of greater needs of the nation and regardless of the view of the people from whom he took lands. Eventually land grants given by Lincoln created the first great monopoly trusts in the United States, the railroads, and then led to the first populist reaction against big business. He was not the first big advocate of the state serving business, maybe Alexander Hamilton deserves the honor, but he was the first big successful advocate of the state serving business. I do not know if Lincoln thought helping business would also help common people but he did think it would help the nation as a whole.

(1 again) In the 1820s and 1830s, Andrew Jackson had all but doomed the idea of a central bank in the United States. Abraham Lincoln rescued the central bank from oblivion. He gave the central bank total victory and permanence when he made it necessary to use money from the Central Bank (note upper case letters now), and only the Central Bank money, to pay federal taxes and to make all payments to the federal government. Local money could not be used to pay federal debts or in any transactions with the central state. Money that cannot be used to pay federal debts has only limited use, and so it soon disappeared, leaving only money from the Central Bank and thus soon leaving the Central Bank as the only real bank. Our federal bank notes still say they are “legal tender” and usable for all debts public and private. Control of one central currency also gives a bank modest control over the interest rate. A permanent Central Bank that could control all commerce through manipulation of its currency and of interest rates was a great victory for central government, the Republican Party, and big business. Along with the railroad network, it was needed for a stable national economy. Together, those changes likely impacted the United States as much, or more than, the Civil War. The central bank by Lincoln was the ancestor of what we today call the “Fed” or Federal Reserve System.

Lincoln and the Republican Party fixed the ideas that America was big business and big business was America, and that politicians should take large actions to help big business in the hope that big business

would eventually help the nation. It is alright to take from many small people to give to a few big firms if the big firms might use the money to make America greater; Republicans hope forced redistribution of wealth eventually leads to greater wealth for all but we do it even if we are not sure. This attitude is the basis for what we now call “trickle down” economics, tax breaks, financial aid to big business, aid to all business, and corporate welfare. This policy is a reintroduction of Mercantilism (see above, and look it up) under a different name. This policy goes against the advice of Adam Smith and against the ideal of the free market.

By the late 1800s, American finance and American politics were led by “Robber Barons”, giant capitalists who controlled important industries such as railroads and who extracted big unfair profits. The Robber Barons had become part of the Republican establishment. At first the government protected them in their control of markets, and the government fought labor unions so that capitalists would be able to do as they wished. That kind of policy also is a far cry from Adam Smith and the free market.

In the part of this essay on Republicans, I described a contradiction in Republican ideas about capitalism and state aid. On the one hand, Republicans say the American economy is great and the state should get out of its way, meaning there should be no Democratic programs. On the other hand, the economy is always sub-optimal and always needs state aid to business. State aid will be able to raise the economy to run at an optimum level. When the economy is running at an optimal level, there will be no problems such as with unemployment and poverty. We must have state aid to business.

Republicans say Democratic programs do impede business, cause the economy to run below optimum, and cause hardship to many people and the nation. But Democratic programs alone cannot be the only cause of why the economy runs at a sub-optimal level and cannot be the biggest cause. The economy ran at a level below optimum before Democratic programs and after some programs had been removed. Republican say we should still remove all Democratic programs but they also imply there are still other causes that need the economy to need state aid to business. Republicans do not specify what those other causes are. Those causes cannot be the flaws and problems that I noted in Part 1 of this essay, for reasons explained earlier.

Republicans repress the contradiction, are deliberately unclear why the economy runs sub-optimally, are deliberately unclear why we need state aid to business, and overlook real flaws and problems, all because they want state aid to business and because they want to block all state aid to Democrats and their clients.

This Republican attitude is a form of Mercantilism. I don't know when this attitude first came together in its modern form. As the above makes clear, Republicans have always wanted state aid to business and were never shy seeking it. I don't think Republicans offered this rationale until after about World War 2. Maybe the Great Depression made it clear to everybody that the economy had some problems and did not always run optimally. Republicans had to get control of that realization and use it to their advantage even if they had to lie. They did not offer this view only to counter Democratic programs but mostly because they wished to keep state aid flowing to them. Opposition to Democratic programs was

an effective indirect way to promote the stance, to promote state aid to business, especially after the tumultuous 1970s and the rise of Reagan, but it was not the real goal. In any case, modern Republicans hold this stance strongly even if they will not be clear about other causes why the economy needs state aid to business and why state aid to business is the best (only) way to deal with other problems.

As I said, holding contradictions about big issues, and repressing, both lead to bad character and bad relations.

History 2: Liberals Learn to Crusade for the Marginal, Downtrodden, and Underdog.

By about 1870: the Big Revolutions had been won; democracy was growing almost everywhere; few armed battles between the people versus the aristocracy remained; people knew of self-determination, self-government, and democracy, and felt the need for them; and more people of all nationalities came to see themselves as a person in the Liberal way. It would seem most of the job had been done and all that was needed was a long “mop up” operation, done mostly by people themselves without too much Liberal leadership and interference. Still, Liberal attitudes and the Liberal need to act carried on with momentum. Liberals still believed in: fighting for some just cause; society needed to be corrected so as to make sense; society needed better overall order; helping a just cause would add to making sense for society and to making a better overall order for society; and only Liberals could do the job. This attitude is not restricted to Liberals but is typical of any group that is politically, religiously, morally, academically, or artistically active including Conservatives and Republicans.

Liberal feelings did not end, they were redirected. Increasingly “make sense” became “find a problem, underdog, or marginal group, and fight” regardless of the overall needs of society or how helping that particular group would help society as a whole. The idea of social order became the Liberal idea of hyper-rational Liberal people talking to each other constantly and helping out people who are not yet as hyper-rational as Liberals are. The Liberal idea of a person came to resemble a busybody constantly looking for ways to correct affairs, people, and groups even when they don’t need it. All issues came to be: a particular group is oppressed, does not have freedom, is cheated out of its share of resources, and we have to save them and raise their character. Later, nature was added to the candidate list. The way to correct all problems was to make “over dogs” stop oppressing an underdog group, make that group see the Liberal idea of a person and the Liberal idea of freedom, that is make that group “hip”, give that group strong legal standing, and take resources from other groups in society to give to that group so it could take its strong rightful place. Liberals lost the ability to assess society as a whole to see what most needed to be done and what had to wait. Liberals lost the idea of apportioning limited resources among many needy causes so that the overall benefit made the most sense for society as a whole. Liberals lost the original idea of “make sense”. They lost many of their original ideas about a correct overall social order. In fact, they lost sight of any overall correct social order in favor of working on particular issues and with particular groups.

Eventually Liberals replaced the idea of hyper-rational persons with the idea of passionate persons. Eventually the Liberal idea of a rational person became the rational Democrat using emotional and

moral appeals to save and guide an as-yet-not-fully-rational marginal group. That is a story in itself. I touch on it below.

Liberals increasingly developed the attitude that there is ALWAYS something wrong, big enough so it requires major attention and major action. Liberals developed the attitude that they are the only ones who can see what is wrong, can see the big wrong problem accurately, and know what to do. They developed hyper-moral constant self-righteous indignation that I always associated with the Right and with “religious people” when I was young. The Left developed Political Correctness. I don’t know when this attitude set in and why it set in so hard. I think it was apparent in America by the late 1800s and it certainly played a part in Russia. In the modern era, I do know it was well developed by the late 1960s before I saw it. Bill Buckley, a popular, entertaining, often-accurate, but quite annoying, Republican pundit, criticized Liberals for this attitude long before I was aware of it. He did not criticize Republicans, Rightists, and “religious people” for their versions, which are equally annoying. I don’t know why Liberals developed this attitude so strongly.

Once Liberals had developed this stance, they ceased to be Liberals and became Democrats. By the late 1800s, they were the Democratic Party, almost as we know it, but not quite. To be accurate, it would be better to call post-Liberals “Leftists” but I wish not to multiply terms. So I use “Democrats” for Leftist people even before the development of the Democratic Party as we know it now sometime between Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson.

This transformation of Liberal thinking into “save the underdog by fighting the over dog” is not all bad. By helping marginal groups, and by working on some particular issues, Liberals did a lot of good and still do a lot of good. It is worth pausing here to think of all the groups that Liberals have genuinely helped and to think about how much worse off they would be, all of us would be, and society as a whole would be, if Liberals had not taken up the groups. Even gun owners are better off because of Liberal insistence on individual rights over the state. Even gun owners owe a debt to the American Civil Liberties Union. Groups in society, especially underdogs or groups with a problem, need to feel they can call on some group with power for help. They need to feel they are not alone and need not suffer in silence forever. Since the Civil War ended, they have not been able to get help from Republicans or other groups on the Right. Many ordinary people still see that society does not make sense and still see how to make things better. Some of them actually see accurately and actually have good ideas about how to make things better. These people cannot go to Republicans. They need some group to go to for help, and that has to be, now, Democrats. Democrats might not act on the ideas of social critics as the critics would like but at least Democrats offer some channel. Could women or gays really have gotten where they are without the Democratic Party? Could they really have gotten help from Republicans?

Once the main mode of operating for Democrats became to find groups and issues so as to crusade, then the questions become: “Which groups and issues?” “Which groups and issues take precedence and which get ‘put on the back burner’?” “How much in resources do we give to each group or issue?” If you do not decide these questions, then you will have too much to do and you cannot act effectively, especially you cannot act effectively in a big political arena. These needs lead to a big political strategic

rationale overriding the original rationale of “help groups”. Who you help, who you do not help, and how much you help, are as much a part of the Democratic political stance as the need to crusade. This political rationale should stem from comprehensive good ways of looking at the world and society but that is rarely so. Even if you do not say outright what your view is, what you do says it for you. This is where Democrats need a comprehensive view of a better America, better world, and the role of a better America in the better world; but don’t have it.

Because Democrats don’t have it, they have to choose groups according to two not-so-admirable and obviously-political strategic criteria. They choose according to what preserves the Party and augments its power. I phrase in terms of groups but you should also think in terms of issues such as gun control. (1) Who screams the loudest? Who can cause the most trouble if we don’t help them? The squeaky wheel gets the grease. (2) Who can serve as the most useful client? Who is likely to “get out the vote”? Who is likely to provide us with success stories? Who can give us the best “photo ops”? Who are the most voters likely to feel the most sympathy for, enough sympathy to go out and vote? Who can we use to attack Republicans and their clients, or to scare Republicans and their clients, but not so much as to cause backlash?

When the program becomes like this, regardless of what the Party says, and regardless of whatever the issue that holds particular groups together, really the program is not help “groups and issues” but help groups. Issues are only a medium by which to work with groups. Groups might carry issues but their particular issues are not as important as that they are a group that can serve as a focus and a client. Issues become more important for their ability to attract groups than for their intrinsic merit. Having the reputation as a “Liberal” party is more important for Democrats as a way to attract populist groups than for any meaning now intrinsic to “Liberal”.

I leave you to look at particular groups and their issues that the Democrats have taken up and not taken up. Think about the likely shift of Democratic emphasis so Hispanics get more support while Blacks get less. Think about all the uproar after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. Note that the reasons do not include: “What does America most need help with?” “How can we do the most good?” “What would lead to the best lasting change in America overall and so to the best long-term good?”

The people in general can see that Democrats allocate not on the basis of need by various groups or on the basis of what is good for America as a whole, and can see that allocation shows Democrats do not have a vision for America and the world. You get judged by your actions.

Republicans are equally self-serving in their choice of clients and issues, and equally lack a believable good view of America and the world. In presenting “An Inconvenient Truth”, Al Gore pointed out that neither Party put its resources into curing the most harm and into what needs most care but instead both Parties allocate resources strategically to use clients and gain power. Truth was “inconvenient” because it exposed what the Parties were doing and not doing and it hopefully forced them to re-allocate against their own short-term political strategic interests. People saw Gore’s work as an attack on Republicans but it was more than that, it was an attack on the whole client system, the whole system

of choosing groups, and of choosing issues according to how they are likely to lead to the most useful groups for the Party. Gore wanted people to think in big images and put their resources into what was most needed.

Briefly recalling some episodes of Liberal-Democratic action helps to see the transformation and to put it into the proper perspective.

When Liberalism became a force in the 1700s, to make more sense of society, it naturally focused on the class system in Western Europe. Any person who is not self-blinded could see that the class system had many faults, did not make as much sense as a system of government should make, did not lead to the best overall order, and did not lead to the greatest good. The simplest correction would be to allow the lower classes to move through society, get some benefits of the upper classes such as an education, and allow them to hold real political offices with real power. To help the marginal, underdog, and weak against the strong would make more sense and would make society better. Original Liberals did not take the formula so simply as “to help the underdog always makes sense and makes society better” but that is what the formula became.

When America fought its revolution, compared to its English masters, ALL of America was lower class, underdog, disenfranchised, and marginal. It did not matter that America was larger than England or that it would soon have more people. When the American Revolutionaries fought for freedom, they fought as lower class underdog marginalized rebels seeking to re-order society along lines that made sense by giving the lower class new power, status, and mobility. It is hard to see how a person can claim to be an American and yet deny all claims of the lower classes, marginalized, and underdogs as do Republicans. The only “underdogs” that Republicans support are those with a big voting block and that already have a lot of political power such as the Cubans of Florida and the unhappy White middle class.

Of course, the idea of giving the lower classes more power and near-equality, primarily by taking it from the upper classes, can be abused and was. Extreme equality and extreme populism almost always are abused. The idea that the lower classes, marginalized groups, underdogs, and rebels, are ALWAYS right and the upper classes are ALWAYS abusive oppressors and ALWAYS wrong, is itself wrong and is always abused. That idea led to the Terror in France after its Revolution and led Cambodians under Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge to murder everyone with a fountain pen as an oppressor elitist.

If Republicans feared the rise of Pol Pot from the ranks of the Democratic Party in America they might have an excuse for turning a deaf ear to marginalized underdogs but that is not how extreme populist terror will come to America. As I said before, Huey Long of Louisiana long ago said that such terror is more likely to come as “Mom and apple pie”, from populist Rightist patriotism. The biggest populist Rightist patriotism now is Trump-ism, based on the people who entered the Republican Party in the 1970s and '80s and on their children and grandchildren. If Republicans fear populist pseudo-egalitarian terror, these days they need to look in the mirror.

After the American Revolution, the idea that the lower classes and marginalized groups are often more correct than they get credit for, and society should be re-ordered to hear their voices regularly, spread around Europe and the world, often not with bad results but with good results. It led eventually to good changes in governing in France, Germany, and most of Western Europe. It led to fights for freedom as when Lord Byron, the English poet, died fighting for Greek independence.

No original American Liberal in good standing ever believed in mass populist democracy of the kind that led to the Terror in France and, later, in Russia. None of them were stupid enough to think every Tom, Dick, and Sally was smart enough, experienced enough, and had the right temperament to govern. The solution to all problems is not to raise the lower classes and marginalized people so that they take over from their former oppressors as the new oppressors. Simply empowering a marginalized group does little good if the empowerment is not part of a better structure that makes more sense and leads to the overall good. Such a new better structure is likely to include a lot of the old, including nearly all that was good about the old. All original American Liberals knew that only a few people among "all the people" were qualified. The trick is to get the qualified people into office and to keep out less qualified people and bad people. It does not matter which groups or socio-economic classes the qualified people come from. So far, neither Democrats nor Republicans have mastered that task, and, at least since Reagan, have not done a very good job.

John Stuart Mill was English but his story applies to Liberals everywhere including Americans. He was a Liberal of the old school. He flourished in the early to middle 1800s. He was one of the first men to look clearly at the situation of women and to see that their situation must change. Several strong smart women helped Mill to see but he was not merely their spokesperson, and, to avoid errors, I stick with his change rather than write about the women. Women were marginalized then and still are. They deserved help from people with power, and, at the time, that had to be men. Women still deserve help from people with power but now that need not be only men. Mill applied the Liberal view of the lower class, the underdog, and the marginalized to women. The fact that women deserve help does not mean helping them was only an exercise for men such as Mill to feel good about themselves. It was not selfish but a genuine act from a-person-to-persons. The advancement of women is a real cause with real merit. So, as a person with power, a man, Mill learned about women, a downtrodden group, help them. He did this because it made sense to him and he believed it would make better sense of society. It would lead to better order and more benefit for all by using the suppressed abilities of women for common good. The case of women shows how Liberals shifted ideas about class structure and abuses of class structure onto other groups and other relations. The case of women shows how Liberals implemented ideas of freedom, equality, make sense, order, and common good by applying the ideas primarily to a marginal underdog group. As Liberals became the champions of marginal and underdog groups in general, one of the first groups was women. There is nothing wrong with this in itself and much right with it.

As time went by, other groups called for help from Democrats. Then the issue became which group to help, how, how much, in what order. Democrats made their new identity not around ideas of Jefferson, Franklin, or Washington but as helper (savior) of marginal groups and fighter against the wealthy and privileged. That new vision does not mean the causes are silly or that Democrats only help so as to

make themselves feel better. Usually the causes are just. It does mean that Liberals, now Democrats, took on a new role, and eventually that new role became their primary role.

By the late 1800s, the Democratic Party had become the chief foe of wealth and chief proponent of the “small man (and woman)”. They were populists as we know the term but not populists like the people who follow Donald Trump.

By the 1870s, and then increasingly after, powerful men (usually not women) and their families, ruled American business. See above. Usually each family had one kind of business such as railroads, oil, or finance, but sometimes interests overlapped and sometimes one family bought out another. The rich men who controlled markets were called “Robber Barons”. The trend goes back to the railroads, the ones for which Lincoln laid the foundation. The railroads came under the control first of the Vanderbilt family and then other families such as the Gould family. The railroads were never a system of small independent business firms as is needed for a fair free market that leads to the most good. Big wealthy families controlled manufacturing such as textiles and even controlled the making of cigars, where one of the first labor unions later gained power.

What happened in America from about 1870 to World War 1 is complicated by populist movements such as the Grangers, International Workers of the World (“Wobblies”), and the Socialists in Wisconsin, but, for brevity and clarity, I leave them out. One reason Americans turned to Democrats was because these alternatives were too radical, too Left, and too Socialist. Democrats seemed like the reasonable American-style alternative to control by big business bosses.

An important arena of centralized power and the resultant conflict came between the railroads and the farmers. Farmers needed railroads to send their crops (including especially beef and pork) to market. Railroads controlled access to markets. As a result, railroads set fees, and set fees not on the basis of cost-plus-a-reasonable profit but on the basis of taking all the profit away from farmers and keeping it all for themselves. Regardless of how much farmers grew and sold, they were always broke or always in debt to the railroads. Food prices were not as low as they should have been given America’s bounty but as high as railroads could push them. This incident drove the farmers, workers, and the people to look to the Democratic Party for help.

When labor unions gained successes and some real power after 1900, labor unions naturally allied with the Democratic Party. In popular culture, laborers were the new rebels against wealth and power, and the Democratic Party the leader of the new rebels.

I do not know when the idea that the lower classes are ALWAYS right and ALWAYS oppressed, and the rich and powerful are ALWAYS wrong and ALWAYS oppressors, began as perhaps the central image of the Democratic Party version of Liberalism. Likely it began as early as the 1830s with Andrew Jackson. In any case, by the late 1800s, with the fights between labor and bosses, and between farmers and the railroads, it did become the central image of the Democratic Party. Around this same time, the idea that the Democratic Party is concerned with the marginalized, underdogs, and lower classes became another

core idea in the Democratic Party. By this time, the Democratic Party was not Liberalism in the original sense.

The Federal Reserve Board (the “FED” or “Fed”) was set up in about 1905 as a way to counter the ability of Robber Barons and their financiers to manipulate markets for finance, and thus manipulate many businesses, and to manipulate interest rates and loans. When it became obvious that the FED was here to stay and had some real power, the leaders of big finance, such as J.P. Morgan, were able to make sure people friendly to them were put on the FED. The FED did not always serve big finance but neither did the FED successfully control it. Big finance controlled the FED at least until the Great Depression and the election of Franklin Roosevelt. The policies of big finance and the FED likely contributed to the start and length of the Great Depression in 1929 and after. The FED story is typical of relations between big business, Republicans, and programs that could be controlled by Republicans. After Roosevelt, after about 1940, but not necessarily with the help of Roosevelt, the FED became more independent and has been able to help America. I think the FED-as-state-institution has been much more beneficial than harmful at least since World War 2 but not everybody agrees with me.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Robber Barons were opposed by the “Trust Busters”, a group of Republican and Democratic politicians and activists who could see that Robber Baron monopoly control hurt the economy, working people, small business, and America in general. The famous Sherman Anti-Trust Act dates from this period. The early FED was part of the anti-trust movement until taken over by big finance and Republicans.

A leader of the Trust Busters was Theodore Roosevelt, although he was a Republican. Roosevelt came to power by opposing gangsters, party bosses, political insiders, and electioneers (often there was little difference between them). For a while, he was Police Commissioner of New York City; in the TV show “Blue Bloods”, the Tom Selleck character has a picture of Teddy in his office; Teddy Roosevelt is the Police Commissioner in the TV show “The Alienist” set in New York around 1896. When the anti-big-business group became powerful, Republican Party stalwarts moved to control its activities and to again open the way for big business. Teddy Roosevelt saw he could not do what he thought right within the Republican Party, so he left the Republican Party to run for President under his own party, the Bull Moose Party. Roosevelt lost, but his actions showed common people the need for an alternative to the Republican Party, his loss showed the alternative had to be the Democratic Party, and his actions paved the way for Woodrow Wilson and later Democratic success.

The alliance between the Democratic Party and labor held up through the Great Depression, especially when Republican policies were blamed for the Depression, Republican policies clearly made it worse, and the Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt got all the credit for ending the Depression. At first, workers and the Democratic Party were behind the “New Deal” semi-socialist programs of Roosevelt, including, for example, Social Security. This alliance with labor endured until backlash in the 1970s by labor against the Democratic Party for its support of Blacks, until the rise of Reagan and Reagan-ites, and the demise of organized labor after 1980.

After World War 2, with the American economy doing fairly well, both Parties saw a chance to gain new better-off clients by offering services to returning veterans and to the growing groups of working class and middle class people with good jobs. Both Parties helped veterans to go to school and buy houses. Both Parties were supposed to help veterans with medical care but that did not work out so well and it is a long story that deserves its own attention, so I leave it here. Rather than argue which Party did the most to get the most clients, in particular veterans, I leave it that both did.

Helping these people was not really in accord with original Liberal or Conservative ideas but it did serve in partisan politics. If one Party did not help the rising working and middle classes, then the other would have and would have gained all the votes, and that mattered. Helping these people was somewhat in accord with original Liberal idea of helping the lower class against the aristocracy, thus leading to more sense in society for everybody; and that is how the actions were presented in popular culture. But the similarity covers up two big differences. First, the new working and middle classes of America in 1960 were not oppressed as were lower classes in France and England in 1740. Rather, Americans wanted to get ahead. They needed a Party to make sure the new aristocracy, the business class, did not stand in their way. Second, they also needed the Party not to destroy the new aristocracy when the upcoming Americans got far enough ahead to join the new aristocracy. They wanted the Republicans still to be there when they got rich and powerful enough for their children to be Republicans, as it did happen in the 1970s and 1980s. This double need led to several further contradictions but I can't go into that issue here. Please think about it yourself and watch reruns of TV shows such as "Family Ties".

In the next phase of helping working and middle class Americans to get ahead, in the middle 1950s to middle 1970s, Democrats did more than Republicans. Not only did returning veterans need school and housing, so did their children and eventually grandchildren. Their old parents needed security in their homes and needed fair medical care, and so eventually would the people in their youth in 1962 when they got old. Programs for college education and scholarships were extended to qualified children in any class. A lot of children qualified. The people most to take advantages of the new student aid were the working class and middle class. Colleges and universities in America grew fantastically. People forget that Republicans did not often wish to give aid for education. If aid were extended, Republicans wished the aid to be loans at market rates or near-market rates. Democrats fought for more direct aid and for low-rate loans. Likewise, Democrats fought to give "tax breaks" on interest for house payments to anybody whose house was physically sound enough to qualify. Democrats built Medicare and, later, Medicaid.

Without those programs, new families with young children, and later the families of those children with their own young children, could never have been able to look around for jobs all over the country, could never have trusted the schools wherever they went to provide a good education, and could never have been able to buy a decent house in a decent school district wherever they went. They would have had to stay where the old people were and take care of the old people whatever way they could in whatever job they could get. This relation held up until the 1980s when it broke down, largely due to decline of the quality of local schools. The breakdown became really noticeable in the 2000s when children with crappy jobs still lived with Mom at age 30.

In the 1940s and 1950s, to deal with big business, labor became big. For that, it needed legal protection and it needed a legal frame to handle pension and medical benefits that it could then win for workers. Republicans opposed such legislative aid to unions but Democrats helped.

In turn, because of the new freedom of the working and middle classes, and because they were more educated and more diverse in their skills, employers, chiefly big business, had a huge mobile educated qualified labor force. Business could offer the new better educated better tempered work force new better jobs. The sides helped each other. Smart business people knew unions actually helped mutual support but wished to make sure unions stayed the right size with the right limited power. When the economy turned down in the 1970s, this coalition fell apart and business people had to turn against all organized labor.

This attention in the 1940s through 1960s by Democrats to the working and middle classes turned many newly affluent Americans into young Democrats and it helped with other programs by the Democrats. This coalition is the only way that Civil Rights could have succeeded. This coalition is what held up until the downturn in the 1970s. When the economy went down, the working and middle classes still needed the benefits for education and housing but forgot who gave them those benefits.

Another chapter in the transformation from original Liberalism to the Democratic Party happened with Civil Rights after World War 2. I mention this phase below.

The Democratic Party in the American South differed. Southerners joined the Democratic Party only because it was NOT the Republican Party, which had fought the South, freed the slaves, and protected the "carpet bagger" exploiters of the South. In the South, the Democratic Party did not back laborers, unions, or women - the opposite. The "right to work" laws of the South have effectively stopped labor organization in the South. The laws might have been aimed largely at Blacks and at "low class" White Southerners ("White trash") but they worked against all laborers and unions. When Democrats backed Blacks and labor rights, when it became clear that Republicans now cared only for business and not at all with freeing slaves or anybody, and when it became clear Republicans would support laws to maintain hierarchical social order, then Southerners led the charge to the Republican Party in the 1970s through 1990s.

This brief history as given in the previous section and this section should show the background behind the associations of the Republican Party with business, and the Democratic Party with little people and their causes, show the Republican attitude against little people and their issues until recently, and the Democratic attitude against big business and, by association, most business. These links do not make sense in the original Liberal way or original Conservative way but do make sense in the ways of partisan power. These are not the links that traditional Conservatives would have seen as growing organically to help the nation and create good traditions. Neither old style Liberals nor Conservatives would have accepted blind Republican support for business or automatic Democratic recruiting of marginal groups and automatic support of their causes. Neither old Liberals nor Conservatives would have supported

recruiting client groups in the pursuit of power and through the use of vague ideologies, or the twisting of the economy and politics that follows.

History 3: Religion in the 1830s and After

People think Colonial America was awash in fervent fundamental Christianity but that is not true. I think only 17% of people in Colonial America went to church regularly. People believed in God and Jesus but church was not a big deal. They could take it or leave it, and they had no interest in forcing their beliefs on others. They also did not want others to force their beliefs on them. They were more interested in business, farming, hunting, distilling, family, children, and the frontier. The old TV shows “Daniel Boone” and “Davy Crockett” might not have been that far off. They felt that fervent religion hindered a free well-ordered state; fervent religion did not help a free well-ordered state. If original widespread American attitudes were not this way, if all Americans really had been fervent Rightist Christians, we would never have had separation of church and state, religious freedom, or the Bill of Rights.

Fervent religion had developed with Protestants in the 1500s and 1600s but then had calmed down by the early 1700s. Fervent religion revived again in the 1820s to 1850s. The 1830s were a Golden Age of fervent religion in the United States. There were similar rises in the early 1900s, after 1950, and after 1980. There is no point going into why. The kind of religion that developed in 1830 is much like the fervent religion that we associate with the Religious Right and with the importance of Christianity in the Republican Party. You can get a good idea from TV, including many Protestant shows and channels such as The 700 Club and from the Roman Catholic channel (EWTN, the Eternal Word (or Wisdom) Television Network).

There are links between the rise of capitalism-and-business and the rise of this kind of fervent religion but the links are too complicated, and social scientists disagree about them too much, to go into here. You should use your imagination.

The original Conservatives of the late 1700s and early 1800s did not share fervent religion. They thought fervent religion was as dangerous to the state and people as unbridled populist egalitarian Liberalism. It was too much like English Protestant Roundheads of the 1600s. Both fervent religion and egalitarian populist Liberalism are extremes and to be distrusted. I agree.

Even after the religious revival of the 1830s was widely accepted, still business people, workers, and the farmers that sold much of their crop rather than eat much of their crop (capitalist farmers), varied in attitude. Some endorsed religious fervor while some were moderate and looked down on fervor. It is tempting to think that big business people and farmers with large stable firms were calmer while small business people, workers, and small farmers were more fervent; but any simple division does not hold well enough to rely on. Some big business people held strong religious beliefs and some workers could care less about religion.

Max Weber, around 1900 in Germany, made a big point of relations between religion and business, arguing that business people needed discipline and that strong religion, usually Calvinism, went with that discipline. The religion gave them what they needed, it gave them an excuse for what they would do anyway, and it validated their success by saying success in business showed God's favor. Fervent Protestant religion had been a key factor in the rise and continuation of capitalism. I think Weber is overly-simplistic and the key factor was the mixing of ideas and mixing of methods in socially diverse urban areas. But religion does play a role and Weber's ideas are true enough. I recommend him.

In contrast, Soren Kierkegaard, in the 1830s in Denmark, sternly scolded business people, the middle class, and upper middle class for lack of commitment to true old strong simple fundamental Christian ideas and ideals, and for the overall tepidness of their lives. Kierkegaard was not what today we see as a religious Rightist but was more like a direct person who believes Jesus is God, Jesus died for us, and we should live our lives in accord with his teachings and what he did for us, such as by helping other people even at great cost to ourselves. You have to commit, commit to the right ideas and ideals, and follow your commitment. He said, in his time, religion and all the churches were mere social conveniences and business methods. A person could do business while holding only token belief and external gestures. In fact, token belief and mere external gestures was the best religion for business. Real commitment to Jesus and his teaching hindered business. Kierkegaard thought Christian belief should come before business but business people did not act as if they believed in Jesus and were committed to Jesus. They acted as if they were committed to business. Kierkegaard is as true as Weber. His criticism is still valid against Rightist business-minded Christians today.

It is not hard to merge Weber and Kierkegaard if we see the true religion of business people as wealth and power rather than Jesus. Modern business people are fairly austere, driven, well-organized, and "called" to their role in the Protestant sense of a calling. They use tools officially made in one arena, religion, to succeed in another arena, business. Likewise, the heads of corrupt political machines usually themselves are austere, driven, well-organized, and not debauched or drunken even when they know how to use those faults as tools to control others. I don't carry out the merger here.

Whether as with Weber or Kierkegaard, business people knew the value of religion for keeping order among people with whom they did business, among workers, and in the state; so business people firmly endorsed religion in general. You had to have some religion to do business or to get a job regardless of which particular religion and whether you were fervent or weren't very fervent. Churches were great places to meet people, make connections, keep connections, and maintain socio-economic class solidarity. You could get a comprehensive course in what we now call "networking" at church. From 1850 on, business, religion, and the pseudo-Conservative stance were tied together. The exact threads of the rope varied but the overall rope was always present.

By taking the role of the new aristocracy, business made economic ideas one foundation of the once-new-now-old tradition and the once-new-now-old social order. In taking on the role of the aristocracy, business people also committed to stability, law and order, morality, preserving whatever tradition that did not openly undercut economics and business, the church, and economic rationality. Business

became the guardian of traditional religion and traditional morality. Ideas and programs now should be judged both by, on the one hand, their cost effectiveness and their role in spurring business and, on the other hand, by their morality in service of the whole state. Humans are both supremely rational and incapable of self-leadership so that they have to be guided by the new nobility.

Like morality and practicality, these two standards, (a) economic rationality and (b) tradition in service to the whole state, are not the same and often cannot be reconciled. Sometimes you have to choose between morality versus cost effectiveness. Sometimes you have to choose between tradition versus business projects. Sometimes you have to mix them in ways that do not serve a particular political party and that hurt some particular self-interest groups. Business dominance relied on business leaders and business-based politicians being able to apply rational economic logic to individuals and situations when that suited its power and being able to apply irrational traditional moral religious logic when that suited power. Business has been adept at doing so. The dominance of business and of the coalition between business and traditional-religion-and-morality depends on business being able to do so in modern times. Since America entered the new world economy in earnest in the 1970s, and because the United States will not face and deal with all the issues, the ability of business to mix logics, appeals, and situations does not work out often enough, does not always convince people, and too often has led not to the best for America but to some of the worst.

You should pause to think about morality versus business. Business people and Republican politicians really can't have it both ways but they still claim they can have it both ways and claim they miraculously do. Far too often, they pick-and-choose not to serve morality and religion but to serve power and wealth. You should think of cases in which they use a claim of morality to support power and wealth. From a TV show I recently saw on the History Channel about jazz in Pittsburgh, "urban renewal" comes to mind. From the shooting at a school in Florida in which 17 people died, I think of defending not just gun rights but crazy gun rights. I think of not feeding children lunch at school. Usually Republicans are not aware of when they use morality to excuse power. Some of them would stop doing that if they could see themselves clearly. Many Republicans really do believe in their religion and really do want to serve God and morality. But they fear Democratic clients and they fear twisting of the state; or they simply lust after wealth and power too much; and so they do not see clearly enough.

Modern clients of the business class, working class people with a steady job and the right ethnicity, and middle class people, are happy to go along with a proposed mix of morality and practicality when they think that mix serves their interests right now, even if it does not serve the interests of the nation as a whole, does not really serve their interests, and does not serve the interests of their children. Denying global climate change in favor of incentives to business firms and portraying abortion as the big way to be "pro life" are two examples. Business is careful to phrase proposals so the proposals seem to help clients even when the proposals do not and business phrases proposals so clients can feel morally good about themselves even when clients have not thought out situations. I am amazed at how often the clients of business go along with its framing and proposals. I am not sure what will happen in the future.

At least since the late 1960s, despite that Democrats inherited (a) the idea of making sense, (b) the ideas of economics including practicality, and (c) moral sensitivity especially to people on the edge, Democrats have rarely been able to balance morality and practicality, and Democrats have not been able to apply the right logic to the right situation nearly as well as Republicans, not well enough to sell themselves to enough of the American public. Democrats are not able to apply logic, practicality, and morality so as to figure out the best for America, convince Americans that it is the best, and lead the people to it. They seem to have little idea what is going on generally.

After 1970, the ties between business, morality, and religion would become stronger and the fervent religious-moral people would dominate in the Republican Party.

Some of the Religious Right in America really is like the English Roundheads in the 1600s and like Roman Catholics in France who murdered en masse French Protestants (Huguenots). They are like the zealots behind the Terror in the French Revolution, like the fictional but realistic Madame De Farge. They are like fundamentalist Islam. They are not like the moderate belief of most Americans in the Revolution. Much good can come of sincere belief that slows down to act well but much harm comes of zealotry that speeds up to get what it wants now. The Religious Right and its parallels such as the Tea Party and Trump supporters can be effective political tools in the short run but the Republican Party does not control them. They are more dangerous than previous simplistic hippy culture and drug culture. This is not a good thing. Using them might seem a boon to Republicans but Republicans should think more of the nation as a whole over the long run and less of their own power gains over the short run. That is true Conservative thought.

History 4: 1950s Golden Years and What Happened to End It

Most official value sets refer back to an imagined golden time and most unofficial value sets do too even if not the same golden time. I used a golden time when I described original Liberals and Conservatives in the 1700s and early 1800s. In 2018, the best candidate for a golden time by which to understand both Democrats and Republicans is the 1950s to early 1970s, before world economic competition took its toll. President Reagan and other Republicans have alluded to a time before Franklin Roosevelt and the social programs of the New Deal such as Social Security, and Republicans have tried to kill those programs; but I still take as my reference the period of the 1950s to early 1970s.

The prosperity of America then depended on the fact that the economies of all other major nations had been destroyed in World War 2, so America was the only maker of manufactured goods such as cars, TVs, and refrigerators. America's prosperity ended when the world recovered, caught up, and surpassed us. China is only the most recent, and biggest, world competitor. I do not go into what happened when the rest of the world caught up.

America after World War 2 had essentially full employment and continuous industrial operation. Almost any able American who wished could work, including most women. An unskilled factory worker alone could get enough in wages and benefits to support an entire family, buy a house with a yard, buy a boat,

and take a long vacation. Women rarely got such good jobs or made so much. Americans solidified the ideology of men work out of the house and women work at home to make a home. Because America was making oligopolistic (monopoly) profits, business people could afford to pay for retirement benefits, and medical and dental insurance. Any job that did not have all this was a “bad” job. Medical and dental costs were less comparatively then than now; I do not explain why. Nearly all American schools could train children well enough to get a good enough job. You did not have to go to a “good” school to go to a “good” college for a “good” graduate school for a “good” job. People finished high school not because it was needed, although a high school diploma helped, but because high school built character. Because state governments, such as California, paid for college, and because education costs were less, a family could put a promising child through college. If a worker did not get retirement benefits directly from his-her employer, then Social Security was enough to cover old age, especially because people died by the age of seventy. About nine workers supported every person on SS; now, three workers support everyone on SS, and those three make comparatively less apiece than the nine made apiece before.

Minorities had been pushed into bad jobs for decades in the past, and still most bad jobs were given to minorities. In that time, minorities began to move into good jobs, especially in factories in the Midwest and on the coasts. The situation of minorities improved even before social programs although the social programs of the 1960s and 1970s added. The situation of minorities deteriorated in the 1970s and after the 1970s until they were worse off than they had been in the 1960s without programs. Only after 2000 has the situation of minorities improved to levels comparable to the 1960s, without programs.

People did not feel as if they had to “beat out” their neighbor to get a job good enough to raise a family and educate children. People did not have to “beat out” their neighbor to live in a good school district in a safe neighborhood. People felt they could get along with neighbors and work together to make things better. A small sacrifice would receive an even bigger reward later, if not directly to the person who made the sacrifice then to the community in general. Good deeds would not be punished or even wasted. Good deeds would count. The world was not a “zero-sum” game.

People felt two things that are not compatible: (1) On the one hand, they felt everybody who was not handicapped could get a good job if he-she would take the trouble to get a minimum education, would develop good work habits and a good character, and try hard. There was no reason for anybody not to succeed. Not everybody would succeed well because not everybody had the same talents or chances but everybody could succeed well enough. To help somebody financially when they really could help themselves was not to help them or their children but to teach bad attitudes and, in the long run, to hurt them and their children, and to hurt the nation. People needed a fairly even chance, maybe even a second or third fair chance, but should not be helped continuously. (2) On the other hand, poverty persisted and persisted by group. Poverty was not random and was not merely the product of refusing education, a bad character, or refusing work. Poverty hurt not only the poor but the nation as a whole. Discrimination hurt not only the people discriminated against but also the people who discriminated and the nation as a whole. Poverty and discrimination hurt everybody. They were national issues, not just moral issues. Because we had more than we absolutely needed, we, as a nation, collectively, could do something about poverty and discrimination, should, and would.

Both Conservatives and Liberals held both views, and one person could hold both views at once.

Social programs then were not begun simply from guilt, although “White Guilt” played a part. Programs were begun out of real concern for other people because they were people and out of real belief that programs would work. (First) People saw other (second) people as persons, and wished to treat them as persons. First people assumed ALL other second people would respond in kind, much as the first people would respond in the same situation, much as their kin and neighbors would respond if they needed help and got help. Motives were good. Belief was based on such empirical evidence of neighbors as the working class and middle class people had. Programs were not the result of being conned or “guilted”. I see this kind of social action, even through the state, as coming from good religious values, values found in all religions but in particular from Christianity, and I see a religious source of values as a good thing on the whole.

I do not describe the various programs.

By the middle of the 1970s, the economic base for social good will had eroded. The facts are confusing because average money salaries did not go down but average money salary is not a good indication of well-being, security, and feeling secure. Attitudes changed, at least among working Americans and most middle class Americans. Because their financial base did not erode as much, attitudes did not change among the upper middle class. It is not clear how much attitudes changed or stayed the same among the young people under the influence of the upper middle class such as college students.

Americans felt that good jobs were now scarce and that not everybody could get a good job. Those people who got a good job could make sure their children got a good job while those people who did not get a good job could not help their children to get good jobs and could expect to see their children in bad jobs.

Americans felt they did compete directly against neighbors for now-scarce jobs that paid enough, had benefits, could allow a family to live in a safe good neighborhood with a good school.

Americans who did not benefit directly and largely from social programs felt that the programs undercut the ability to raise children so that children could compete for ever-scarcer good jobs. Social programs undercut the future of the people who paid for them in favor of the future of people who received from them. Hard work, some training, some ability, and a good character were punished only to reward the competitors of hard work, training, ability, and good character.

Most American felt that the social programs had failed. I agree. Programs had been tried long enough, and had not done what they were supposed to do. The people on the programs did not improve at all or did not improve enough to warrant the cost: ethnic minorities, single parents, people with some disabilities such as drug addicts, immigrants, and the children of all these groups. Instead, these people became permanent clients of the state and lived off the hard work of people with jobs, and these people

abused programs such as by having many children, using money for drugs and alcohol, and not taking good care of children. Americans felt the programs promoted bad family patterns such as a woman with many children each by a different father; these family styles produced children who were prone to crime and who would themselves be clients of the state. The programs were unfair not only in that people who worked hard had to support people who did not work hard but because Americans of some ethnic and cultural groups (Whites, Asians, and some Hispanics) had to support Americans of other ethnic and cultural groups (Blacks and some Hispanics). Americans who felt the programs had failed knew of cases in which people had been helped such as children of welfare mothers who went on to school and to get decent jobs. Americans knew that some programs were overall cost effective and did not promote bad families such as Social Security and Head Start. Americans knew that members of all ethnic and culture groups were in-the-programs-and-out-of-the-programs but still felt that the programs were unfair and differentially benefitted some groups at the expense of others. Americans who felt the programs had failed thought that the abuse and waste as-a-whole overwhelmed the benefits. They tended to attack all programs, even ones that worked.

Part of the reason the programs failed was that the advantage America had had disappeared just as the programs were getting off the ground. Each program had a big burden and the burden increased not only because people took advantage but because the economy “went South” and forced people onto the programs even if people detested the programs. People were supported while they were supposed to look for jobs that no longer existed. People were trained for jobs that no longer existed. So people could not get off the programs, again, not because they were welfare junkies but because there were no jobs to go to. From many jobs that did not disappear, benefit packages did disappear and wages dipped in real purchasing power so people could make more money and have more security on programs than off. The programs ballooned far beyond initial estimates and could not be reduced. The courts ruled many of the programs to be entitlements. So either taxes increased or money came out of other needs such as roads, science, and the military.

Part of the reason the programs failed was human nature, and part was the culture-and-or-attitudes of groups that programs were aimed at. We cannot blame all the expansion on changes in the economy. We have to look at human nature and at the culture of receiving groups. When given the chance to be supported without working, even at a level lower than people could get through working, a lot of people choose not to work. When given a chance to have other people support their children, many people choose to let other people support their children. This falling into dependency varies by group so that some groups seem much more prone while other groups resist. I do not say which groups are which because that will distract most readers from the main points of this essay. Selfishness-rooted-in-human-nature-and-in-the-culture-of-some-groups is more important than most Liberals and Democrats admit. Although selfishness is rational in a strict economic sense, and so Democrats should have expected this outcome, this selfishness is irrational if you want programs to work and you want the nation to stay afloat. It goes against the way that Democrats wanted people to be and goes against what Democrats hoped was deeply ingrained American character. The Liberal-Democratic view of human nature and American nature was much too hopeful and was wrong.

Part of the reason the programs failed is that American schools were no longer able to train children so children were likely to get good jobs or any jobs at all. Jobs required more education. Jobs that did not require much education vanished or had low wages with no benefits. The quality of education at many local schools fell. School districts separated into those where the children likely could get enough good education to go on to good jobs versus those where children could not. Bad schools outnumbered good schools. People began not to believe in local schools. Comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans moved into good districts, leaving only working class, insecure middle class, and poor people in the bad districts. I do not ascribe blame.

I cannot here go into which cause of overall failure is most important when. All are significant.

(A) The failure of programs due to bad attitude, bad subgroup culture, or greed was an assault on the Liberal view of human nature in which people are reasonable and they know how to contain themselves for the general good. People do not make sense in the way needed by Liberals for a state that makes sense. The failure of programs was an indirect vindication of a part of the Conservative view of human nature. (B) The failure validated the Conservative idea that humans were not one step below the angels but instead people were governed by animal passions. (C) Of course, it also invalidates the Conservative hope that the mass of people would follow ideals given to them by religion and by their leaders. The old social rules and the old social rules do not carry over enough into modern situations to save modern situations. If people will not follow ideals and roles given by religion and leaders, then what do you use to properly govern? Later Conservatives tried to use greed but that failed. (D) Which lesson you take from failure of programs impacts your view of human nature, the state, Liberals, and Conservatives.

Medical, housing, retirement, and insurance costs increased faster than inflation and faster than wealth creation, much faster than the wages of people below the comfortable middle class.

Income and wealth disparities increased between people of the comfortable middle class and above versus everybody below comfortable middle class.

Many comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans avoid seeing that programs did not succeed well or failed. They avoid seeing that human nature and the culture-attitudes of groups play parts in the failure. Against evidence, they insist all programs are an overall success, fair, cost effective, and make sense. Comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans insist the blended and mixed families of the poor do not have bad effects even while middle and upper middle class families strive mightily to provide their children with stable families with two parents, and strive to buffer their children against the bad effects of divorce, death, remarriage, and blending. Comfortable middle and upper middle class Americans are not threatened by programs, their children will go on to succeed with the programs or without. Comfortable middle and upper middle class Americans pay proportionately less of their income to support the programs than do working and lower-middle class Americans. Supporting the programs lets comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans feel good about themselves at little cost to themselves but at considerable cost to the working class and lower

middle class whose children compete with their children. It is easy to be Liberal (or Conservative) when you don't pay as much as your rivals and when your rivals are likely to fall while you stay steady.

Comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans get great benefits from the government at all levels and from programs but they get benefits of different kinds and from different programs than do the poor. Comfortable middle class and upper middle class Americans tend not to see the benefits as benefits and do not see their benefits as the same kind of state help that the poor get. The middle and upper middle classes benefit greatly from police and fire protection, good roads, good schools, good parks, sanitation, insurance, health programs, sports programs, and (in 2017) from being able to deduct their mortgage interest from federal taxes and being able to deduct state and local taxes from federal taxes. The poor, the working class, and the lower-middle class cannot benefit from these opportunities as do the comfortable middle class and upper middle class because, for example, they can't buy a house and do not make enough income to deduct their state and local taxes - even if they pay proportionately more income overall to taxes (as in sales tax) than does the middle class and upper middle class. Middle class and upper middle class don't see benefits in their privilege over the working class and lower middle class but the working class and lower middle class certainly do. They see that the comfortable middle and upper middle class are forcing them to support the poor and support the comfortable middle class and upper middle class so that the comfortable middle class and upper middle class can feel good about how they support social justice.

America as a whole refused to see these problems or deal with them. Instead America escaped into bad Conservative reactionary stances such as Reagan-ism or into Liberal targeted giveaways.

On top of the situations and changes that I described here, as mentioned in Part One of this essay, all capitalists nations face an inevitable base amount of unemployment (due to imperfect competition) and they face a recent rise in unemployment because many people are not smart enough for jobs in modern capitalism. I do not go into details here because I do that elsewhere. In America, the inevitable baseline is about 5%; in other countries, such as in Europe, it is higher. People who used to be able to find good jobs in factories now can only find bad jobs such as in fast food restaurants. All this unemployment, the lack of good jobs that people can actually get without skill, and the rise in the proportion of bad jobs, all enhance the comments above. They also add to the misery of life and to political unrest.

All these changes, and the new stances, affected the values of Democrats and Republicans.

History 5: From 1990 to Now, Back to the Future

Problems with the modern world intensified as time went by despite a few brief episodes that covered over problems temporarily such as the "dot com" bubble of the 1990s. Like all capitalist countries, America faces booms and busts that alternate. Usually a cycle takes about ten years but can happen in as little as eight or as long as fifteen. Economists and the states have long known about these cycles, and have devised fairly good techniques for minimizing the bad effects. No policy ends the cycles, and,

for reasons I can't go into here, likely we don't want the cycles to end entirely, especially if we can deal with the unemployment of the bust phase.

Republicans wrongly explained the busts as due to the bad policies of Democrats and the selfishness of client groups such as Blacks and Hispanics, and Republicans wrongly took credit for booms. Republicans also falsely blamed the busts on Democratic immorality and especially on the immorality of clients such as Liberated Women and Gay people. A bad economy is punishment for moral turpitude, either handed out directly by God or because it comes automatically somehow as part of God's plan. Democrats did little to cause busts although they also did little to prepare against them, and Republicans did little to cause booms although they took full credit. One episode of Republicans claiming credit for a recovery happened in the early 1980s when Ronald Reagan and the Republicans wrongly took credit, through a tax plan, which, as usual, favored the rich and business. Another episode happened in the early 2000s when George W. Bush took credit for staving off a recession, also through tax cuts for the wealthy and business. The recession was due and it was staved off, not by the Bush tax cuts but by massive deficit spending mostly on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and partly on the military in general. Barack Obama inherited the Great Recession that had been overdue for at least eight years, and which was worse than usual because of the bad Bush domestic policies, including the Bush tax cuts, and the bad operation of the housing market and financial markets. I can't go into more details here.

The litany of modern problems due to merging into the world economy is familiar: rising costs of food (yes, really, food), housing, health care, transportation, and education; outsourcing of jobs to other countries; disappearance of manufacturing; the fact that Americans are not prepared by education or temperament for jobs in the new economy; the growing disparity between school districts and the fact that only a few school districts offer good preparation; everybody now has to go to college even if going to college does not guarantee a good job or any job at all; rising military costs to fight wars against unhappy people who use religious fundamentalism as an excuse; growing disparity in income between the rich and upper middle class versus everybody else; stagnant real buying power among all but the upper middle and upper classes; the growing disparity in wealth; massive ballooning of welfare, Social Security Disability, and other entitlement programs; the growing victim mentality; the fact that wealth, and thus political power, is now concentrated in less than 1% of the American public; inflation; deficit spending; huge national debt; huge personal debt; inability of otherwise sound programs such as Social Security to cope because policy makers won't do what is required; growing ethnic strife as groups use ethnicity to consolidate their hold; growing religious strife for the same reason; culture wars over issues that really should be small such as abortion and religious monuments on public land; refusal to accept evidence and science; false but violent rebellion; and the bad war on the police.

Neither Democrats nor Republicans will deal with these problems. Instead, as I say often, they solicit client groups that can help them to win elections by promising to clients some economic and political security, especially at the expense of rivals. Democrats use the impossible "everybody gets absolutely full social justice and everybody is an equal winner". Republicans use an impossible mix of practicality with religious and moral rectitude. Neither side really does much good. Both sides enable bad ideas

and bad politics. There is no middle because the middle requires facing problems and dealing with them as a nation. It does not look as if this pattern will end soon.

If you care about these issues and are tired of non-answers, you have to work to figure out things for yourself. A good place to start is to figure out what an American deserves for doing particular kinds of work given that similar work is being done all over the world by similar people but maybe in a different setting of technology, resources, and institutions. What is the productivity of an American compared to the productivity of a German or Chinese doing the same job? What does an American who assembles cars deserve to get paid given that an Indian or Mexican can do the same job? What does an American dentist deserve given that a Mexican dentist can do just as good work? What is the cost effectiveness of an American worker, dentist, lawyer, teacher, or programmer? Why might productivity be different in America than in another country, say India or France? What level of living can this level of pay bring? I did not ask "what level of pay should an American get just because his-she is an American and thinks he-she deserves to live well?" I asked "what level of living should an American get for doing particular kind of work here?" What is the real "new normal"? We might deserve more than most of the rest of the world (due to abundant resources, much technology, and what used to be a good work ethic) but we do not deserve as much as we think and not as much as Liberals or Conservatives imply. Especially the comfortable middle class and upper middle class do not deserve as much as they think they do. When you can honestly consider how much you deserve and what kind of lifestyle that warrants, then you will be better able to understand other issues. You will be fooled less often. You will see for yourself how distorted the present situation is.

What policies-programs would lead Americans to get what they deserve for the work that they do, how can we get that level of pay lead to decent lifestyles, how can we get Americans to accept the level of lifestyle warranted by their productivity, and how can we get Americans to live graciously at the level of lifestyle indicated by our productivity? If you can answer those questions, you should be a national level politician - but no party will have you.

History 6, 7, and 8: Introduction: Morality versus Practicality Again.

The three sections below here are related. This one introduces them. From Conservatives, Republicans inherited the duty to guard general morality and the morality of the state. Republicans must be moral and they must be exemplars of morality. From business-people-turned-dominant-group, Republicans inherited the drive to be practical and to make the state make practical sense.

As I have said often, these two needs often can go together but sometimes conflict. When they clash, somebody has to sort it all out and decide which needs takes precedence, and how much we can fill each need. Somebody has to balance morality and practicality. To balance morality and practicality, we need to know how much morality will cost and if we can afford the cost. Cost is not only the immediate money cost but also the cost of what we forego if we act morally, the bad example that we set if we do not act morally, and the temptation for people to abuse help and become dependants of the state. We have to set this particular moral need against all the other needs of the nation, moral and practical, such

as support for old people, highways, national forests, and defense. When we see a moral need such as to feed children and give them health care, we need to know if we can respond, and how much we can respond, given everything else we have to do.

Republicans insist they do this task for us and only they can do it. Democrats are too blind to morality and practicality. In fact, Republicans do this task only quite poorly or not at all. Instead, they use moral posturing, contrived impracticality, and contrived practicality, in the war of clients and power. They insist on morality when they want to please clients even at some cost such as in the war on abortion and the war on drugs. They insist on impracticality when they do not wish to help such as with medical care even though state sponsored medical care could be made quite cost efficient and practical. They insist on practicality when they wish to do something that might be morally “hinky” such as give big tax breaks to rich people.

Republicans could only sort out morality versus practicality if they had a consistent view of morality and practicality, and if they had a consistent rationale, but they have neither, and won't.

History 6: Democrats Lose Practicality and Appeal only to Morality

Following the original Liberals and Conservatives, some thinkers of the 1800s, and some real politicians such as Lincoln, did try to mix morality and practicality well, and did give good arguments for one course or another. The speeches of Lincoln, and his appointments, are at the highest level of the human search for the best mix of practicality and morality. No other politician did it better.

Republicans and Democrats both mix morality and practicality and both claim to mix it in the best ways. Of course, they differ in how they mix. Their mixes have a distinct feel that comes more from their self-interest and how they appeal to clients than from deep thoughtful considered morality and from what is best for America. Republican morality is a blend of patriotism, their version of worship of the family, and their version of Christianity. It includes a fair dose of outrage and “holier than thou”. Democratic morality is an appeal to moral outrage and to help the downtrodden against all the harm that is done to a client group. Both versions are really roundabout ways to feel justified and feel good about yourself while thinking you help others and while getting a good practical reward of power and security as well. I don't like either version and don't think either version represents well morality in general, the general morality needed by a modern state, and the morality that I would teach children.

By the late 1950s, to most people, it appeared that Democrats no longer sought both practicality and morality. Democrats overlooked practicality entirely in favor only of moral appeals from groups and for groups, such as Blacks, Jews, labor, and women. Individually, Democrats certainly knew that practicality was important and that it had to be mixed with morality; but, to the Party, practicality, and a good mix of morality and practicality, were not important. Republicans could at least use “free market” and “cost benefit” as a pretend rationale but Democrats had no consistent rationale for how they were practical. Democrats had only case-by-case claims that they were practical. People who did not wish to believe Democrats were practical could easily choose not to believe them even when Democrats were being

practical in specific cases; people who gained from Democratic practicality didn't care if Democrats were practical and would rather believe they gained because they were clients; people who lost condemned Democrats as impractical to cover their own desires for gain and their fear that they wanted too much even at the expense of the whole country; and people in general could easily believe Democrats were not practical even when overall Democrats might be more practical than Republicans. So, people did believe that. How did this result occur and what were its effects?

Again, I don't know the material from the 1800s well enough to say much. I think the shift happened in a big way first between about 1880 and 1920, again during the Great Depression, and then again after World War 2. By the early 1900s, moral appeals to labor and by labor worked so well that Democrats did not need explicit practical arguments. Democrats and labor assumed that what was practically good for them was practically good for the country, and what was morally correct for them was also morally correct for the country; moral appeals alone worked well enough; and so Democrats and labor stressed morality. Labor deserved its fair share. Clearly owners got too much. The imbalance was immoral and also hurt the country. By acting against immoral unfairness, we could also help America. Democrats could use morality and immorality as a signal to act, a signal that our Democratic action reliably helped the whole country. At the time, Republicans could not argue against them in the case of owners versus labor and versus America.

Some programs that blossomed in the Great Depression had begun in the 1920s as somewhat practical ideas to help particular groups. The current farm programs that continue into 2018 began in the 1920s to stabilize crop prices, stabilize agricultural markets, and protect farms from encroaching capitalism (a lesson that benefits, once begun, are hard to stop). When the Great Depression began, similar ideas were applied to other markets such as metals. The idea was not so much to increase American wealth as to protect groups from erosion of their economic security, an assault that seemed like moral attack. Economists, Democrats, and Republicans knew that much of the protectionist laws would not work, and would make things worse, but they had to go along with. Congress protected shipbuilding, textiles, shoes, food and agriculture, among many industries. Some legislation was obviously moral and did a lot of both moral and practical good such as giving work even to artists and actors. Remember, too, this was the age of Prohibition, when the morality of one group could prevail so strongly as to forbid alcohol. The mindset of strong moral considerations had set in.

World War 2 was both a practical and moral effort headed by a Democrat. Judging from movies and the war propaganda, the War was mostly a moral effort. The close coordination of industry and state during the war was an instance of how greater good and greater moral good could overcome selfish economic and practical forces – the Nazi war machine - and could lead America on to more than could be done by the market only. Contrary to current myths about inefficiency of the state, the America war effort was amazingly effective. But war success was still a case of morality leading practicality and so making practicality better. You should think whether you consider war more a practical effort or moral effort.

With American prosperity after World War 2, it began to seem as if America could right all wrongs, put everyone on a level playing field, and afford it all easily. We were the richest nation ever in the history

of the world, and we could do what we thought right. We didn't have to worry much about practicality. We could concentrate on morality and inspiration. Democrats led the charge. These were the days of the first great space effort, the days of Civil Rights. Efforts to integrate Jews and Blacks were not at all about practicality but entirely about morality. Efforts to help women and nature were almost entirely based on morality. Modern Political Correctness (PC) tries to replace the old stern morality with a new stern morality that is almost exactly like the old in form and very much like it in content. Attempts to help nature are the Lefty equivalent of the moral approach to family values. The Presidential campaigns of George McGovern in 1972 and Walter Mondale in 1988 were entirely based on moral appeal.

Then the 1970s came, and America was not as comparatively prosperous, we could not afford it all, we had to decide how much to spend on what, we could not afford feel good unbridled morality, and we had to be practical. But Democrats couldn't be practical enough to make the public believe they had changed horses or had harnessed two horses to the same buggy.

There were Democratic practical efforts. To take only the Presidents: Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama, have been noticeably practical, more so than Ronald Reagan and GW Bush, and more so than Donald Trump if he got his wishes instead of being guided by Republicans in Congress. Harry Truman dropped atomic bombs on Japan so as to save far more lives than were lost (I would have done the bombings differently but that is not the issue here.) Truman also forcibly racially integrated the US military; his act was both strongly moral and fairly practical. Jimmy Carter de-regulated more than Ronald Reagan. Clinton actually controlled the budget deficit when no Republicans have been able to do that. Barack Obama tried hard to use the spending that was needed in 2009 to keep us out of Depression for practical uses but he was overcome by a sadly shortsighted Congress. Obama actually did keep the deficit as low as it could have been under the conditions.

Still, all in all, Democrats do not have a unified practical approach and the public has looked on them as not heeding practicality. In fact, the public has looked on Democrats as being positively impractical or positively anti-practical. The silliest most expensive idea makes sense to at least some Democrats and you can get them on your side for it. You can't depend on them to control spending well enough not to hurt the country. Democrats are fiscally dangerous. Democrats want to live in communes and eat tofu. Democrats don't want to legalize marijuana to take advantage of the taxes, ease pressure on the police, and ease pressure on citizens, but because they want to release a bunch of bad guys from prison, get stoned, and pretend this is fairy land. These charges are untrue but they stuck.

Democrats come across as essentially impractical because they can offer no consistent rationale for why we should spend here but not there, or why we should spend this much here and that much there. Why can't they offer a believable rationale? There are enough reasons, and the reasons have to be looked at in enough detail, so I can't go into that topic much here. Unlike Republicans, who can unite around the idea that business automatically solves all problems for everyone, Democrats know that spending on one client makes others fear they will be slighted, and so it is not possible to offer a unified reasonable limited program. If we keep spending on old people, does that mean programs for Blacks in cities get less? Does welfare get cut? Also, most important, Democrats just do not understand capitalism well

enough to see where to spend and how much to spend, and to give solid reasons. (Republican reasons are wrong but they are believable enough to work in politics.)

There is nothing wrong with a moral approach as the first look at issues but, if the moral approach does not also take practicality into account, then it cannot respond to changes and it will fall in the end. That is what happened. I don't see the situation changing in the near future.

Practical arguments have been given for why discrimination is foolish, for giving help to labor, for giving help to nature, and giving help to some families, not mostly by Democrats, but mostly by Republicans. I find the arguments strongly appealing. But they have hardly entered Democratic thinking at all. These analyses are well worth reading; you can find them on the Internet.

When it became obvious that Democrats are susceptible to moral appeal and do not filter morality by practicality, Democrats, and the country, opened up to exploitation. People or groups could say they are victims and so deserve help and so must be helped. Because there are no rationale for saying this group is needier than that, and no rationale for why we should spend on this group or that, or why we should spend only so much, then anybody, with any claim, no matter how silly, has an equal claim with all other victims. Everybody must be served bountifully. Trying to be too moral fosters a breakdown in morality and in character. It fosters the culture of victim. It reinforces a defect in American character that is independent of either Party, emphasizing rights over responsibilities. It fosters selfishness. It makes the Democratic heart a bleeding heart with a lot of "me first" arrows stuck in it. It puts the edge into PC and it makes PC taste bad. It is what happens in a family when the kids run the family. This topic deserves more space than I can give it here.

When people in general saw how susceptible Democrats were, how easily groups could get stuff from Democrats without giving anything back to the country, and how people in general had to pay for it, naturally people in general got angry. If they had been Democrats, they switched parties. The response is not irrational and not selfish. It does not mean the people who feel this way have no heart. It does not mean the people who feel this way must be racist and must hate single mothers and children.

The response to the success of the victim ploy could be a backlash and could support racism, sexism, ageism, and other prejudice and discrimination. It can support hate. The desire to make morality most important and to have a big Christ-like (or Krishna-like) heart is, ironically, the opposite. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. I don't make too much of "things turn into their opposites". Hate does not usually turn into love. I only point it out to show that we need to look for unexpected results, often especially when we try to do only good. The only antidote to these mistakes is experience. When we have the experiences, we need to learn from it and act on it.

History 7: Recent Republican Versions of the Small State.

I don't know Republican or Democratic thinking in the 1800s about the Small State well enough to write about it or say how it influenced recent thinking. My comments here come mostly from my experience since the 1950s.

Before World War 1, most Americans, both Democrats and Republicans, were close to what we now call "isolationists". America was nearly self-sufficient. It needed the rest of the world for export markets. So, let the rest of the world fight its fights and leave us alone.

At first, in 1912, President Woodrow Wilson won election and re-election by following the isolationist view. He "kept us out of war". Then, America had to enter the War. Wilson changed his public policy. He saw that America could not remain isolationist and had to get involved. He tried to set up relations between nations, relations between blocs of nations, and international institutions, so America could get involved in good ways, less chance of war, and more chance of continued peace and prosperity. He was a founder of the "League of Nations". Wilson was the first powerful American internationalist. He failed and others of like mind failed, leading to Hitler and Stalin. His failure should not be held against him or other like-minded internationalists.

Wilson was a Democrat. I don't know if Americans in general blamed Democrats for the failure of internationalism, or if Republicans used the failure of internationalism to blame the Democrats. I have heard modern quasi-isolationists (with stances similar to Libertarians) claim Wilson started America on the path to bad modern internationalism, over-commitment in many international arenas, and the big bureaucratic state, but I cannot say if Republicans in general share the opinion or even know of it. I am not sure if Republicans between World War 1 and 1950 were more given to isolationism than were Democrats but I doubt it.

When President Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, first came to power in 1928, in public he held America aloof from Europe. In private, he knew war was inevitable and America must take a large role. America reverted to isolationism until World War 2 when the War and the international spread of Communism and Fascism forced us back to engage with all the rest of the world. The war required a huge war effort and required strong links between the state, big business, and big labor. Those links persisted after the war and served as the basis for building a big state.

After World War 2, in the later 1940s and through the 1950s, America was again self-sufficient and quasi-isolationism again arose. America soon found it could not be fully isolationist because it had to deal with Russian and Chinese Communism, with the need to re-develop Europe, and with the need to keep "Third World" free enough of Communism, and developed enough, to serve as economic partners with US business. America had to balance "keep us out of your problems" with "develop enough and stay free enough to be our business partners".

By 1955, America had the beginnings of the modern ideology of a Small State. The ideology then was largely a reaction to government programs, particularly the New Deal that fought the Great Depression, and that had helped old people and poor people, such as Social Security. My memory is that the idea

then of a Small State was evident in the Republican Party but not a strong force. It was linked to groups that had anti-socialist anti-Communist agendas such as the John Birch Society and linked to Presidential candidate Senator Barry Goldwater from Arizona.

At the same time, big business, big labor, and big government were growing, and they had little to do with the kind of socialism feared by Right Wing Republicans of the time. Big government grew at all levels, not only at the federal level. In fact, contrary to myth, the biggest growth has been at the state and local levels. I believe state and local governments grew faster than big labor and even faster than big business.

Some programs that Republicans dislike most as part of a Big State, such as social work and welfare, had their roots in the 1920s but really “came of age” in the 1950s. The Civil Rights movement began in the 1950s. These programs were a response by affluent Americans to help other Americans who suffered by comparison due to unemployment and bad jobs. You can see the attitude in movies such as “The Blackboard Jungle” and, in England, “To Sir, with Love”. The affluent Americans who were willing to try these programs were not only Democrats but a lot of hopeful Republicans as well. They understood the problems with the Big State but were not overly worried.

Beginning in the 1950s, politicians many times tried to establish mild forms of health care for the poor, administered by the states and the federal government. The opponents called it “socialized medicine” or “socialist medicine”. Doctors and the American Medical Association hated it, and it never came close to passing. It was rarely proposed in as strong a form as even now operates in Canada and was usually only a mild form of what is not called “Obama Care”. It was usually about what Mitt Romney passed in Massachusetts when he was governor there.

Many people, including Democrats and Blacks, worried about the effect of programs on the character of all Americans. They feared the programs would make Americans dependants on the state. As a child, I personally talked to these concerned people and I sympathize. They understood the need to help but correctly foresaw that programs would be abused, and correctly saw that the abuse could do more harm than the programs did good. They did not know the roots of unemployment, bad jobs, socio-economic class, discrimination, and social conflict, in how capitalism worked; and they wrongly believed everybody could get a good job if he-she had the right attitude (at the time in America, that idea was nearly true). They did not think about how to make the programs work better. I don’t think they worried about a Big State nearly as much as about the effects of programs on character. At the time, I don’t think they saw Blacks as the primary carriers of bad attitudes about work, family, and crime, and Whites as the primary carriers of good family values, but they saw any people who did not look for work but instead accepted welfare as abusers, including a lot of White people.

Right Wing Republicans such as the “Birchers” and the Goldwater supporters picked up on the fears of these people, and mixed their fears with fears of the Right Wing about Communism and with general anxiety about Civil Rights and Blacks. Programs, abuse of programs, race, American character, family

values, fear of socialism, fear of Communism, pro-business ideology, and pro-military ideology began to mix and later would be impossible to separate.

The roots of modern corporate welfare likely go back to the 1920s with programs to help farmers and, later in the 1930s, with programs to help business during the Great Depression such as to stabilize markets and to stop foreign competition. The programs did not work well but that did not stop the idea of pro-business state programs from setting in. The pattern is called “Mercantilism” and arises almost every time it possibly can. The pattern is at least 600 years old in the West. Modern Republicans forget about that bit of history. During World War 2, business and the state worked closely to make arms. After the war, and during the Cold War, those relations continued. Modern corporate welfare began in the 1950s under Republicans when the state supported research, through business, for many reasons including the Cold War; the state helped to stabilize markets such as for metals and electricity; the state solidified the modern communications industry, the telephone, by working with AT&t and IT&T; the state created and regulated the television industry; the state protected American industry by continuing to limit overseas competition; the state granted tax concessions to business so that business would go in directions that the state wished; the state gave help to returning veterans so they could buy houses, go to school (state universities), and start families; the state vastly increased support for schools and, to some extent, increased its control of curriculum, largely to make sure science and mathematics were taught so American could compete; the state expanded tax write-offs and tax-breaks for individuals and business; the state inspected food and drugs more; and the state began to develop programs for auto safety and product safety. All this greatly enlarged the state. But no Republicans complained about all this help as the Big State, and wished to eliminate this help when they clamored for a Small State. Most middle class and upper class Republicans loved help with schools, product safety, food safety, drugs, and tax breaks. They loved that the new state aimed at making sure their children stayed healthy and got good jobs.

President Eisenhower, from 1952 to 1960, like Abraham Lincoln before him with the railroad system, used the federal government to build the modern American highway system, at the time the best road system ever in the world. He helped build the American infrastructure that also served as a world model but that is crumbling today (2018). America also saw the growth of the modern defense (war) industry. For the first time in its history, America had a big standing military, and the Republican Party supported this growth and maintenance, because the growth and maintenance helped business. Eisenhower, in a famous speech, warned sternly against what he called the “military industrial complex”. He feared that the state and business would merge and that business influence in Congress would drive ever more investment into an ever larger and more powerful industry. He was correct, and people knew he was correct, but nobody did much about it. In 1960, John Kennedy won partly through a deliberately false that America was behind the Soviet Union in military power and should spend more on the military. If Republicans wanted a Small State then, they did not show it.

See above for the entry of America into a growing world economy and the effect of the entry on the poor, working Americans, and middle class Americans.

Two of the dividing lines between big state and small state came with school busing and abortion, both in the 1970s. At first, Republican parents loved that the state helped with school funds and pushed the study of science and math. They loved that the state helped their children get good jobs in the modern world. They got angry when the courts decided that federal funding for schools and the idea of equal education allowed the federal government to order busing of students from one school to another so as to make sure all students got an equal opportunity at good education and that the races were not kept separate (*Brown v. Board of Education*). Contrary to what parents said, parents were not angry mostly that students had to be bussed a long way or that students did not go to their traditional local school. Parents did not mind busing their kids to private schools after 1980. Parents were angry that their kids were sent to bad schools, often Black or Hispanic, at which their kids' chances for a good job dropped drastically. Parents were angry that badly educated badly behaved kids from bad schools elsewhere, usually Black or Hispanic, were bussed into local school districts where the new students lowered the performance and reputation of the school, and so drastically lowered the chances of their kids still in the school to get good jobs. To stop the busing, the parents had to find reasons. One way was to paint the busing as big state intrusion on local freedom.

Women, including many Republican women, including Betty Ford, all of whom knew abortion could not be entirely stopped, and legal abortion helped White working, middle, and upper class women, loved the Supreme Court decision (*Roe v. Wade*) that allowed legal abortions. They did not mind that the big central state used its authority to override laws. Some other people hated all abortion, and hated that court decision. To muster feeling against the decision, they portrayed the decision as an egregious evil big state intrusion into local laws, local self-determination, local power, and local morality, chiefly through the meddling of Liberal courts. To end the Supreme Court decision, the anti-abortion activists painted the entire state as too big and too intrusive, so Americans first have to shrink the state and keep it out of local business. The anti-abortion activists did not notice that local laws and federal laws against abortion were an instance of a big state intruding into private lives, and that the Supreme Court stopped laws against abortion because anti-abortion laws were a state intrusion on individual freedom and individual privacy. The Supreme Court decision protected against state intrusion yet the anti-abortion activists were able to paint the decision as an instance of big state intrusion.

The first time I recall the modern argument about a Small State was from President Reagan in the late 1970s and through the 1980s. To get elected in 1980, Reagan famously declared that government was not the solution to all problems, or to any problems, but instead government is the root of all problems, government is THE problem, the Devil. The state is the root of all evil. If we could make the state small, then somehow, automatically, mysteriously, by God's gift, all problems would disappear. He said this in a famous speech but he had earlier given this view in other speeches. In another famous speech, he held up the want ads in a newspaper as the solution to all problems of unemployment and bad jobs. At the same time, he said America had fallen behind the Russians and that we must spend vast amounts on defense (war) even if we went into debt. He proposed the stupid ineffective expensive anti-missile "Star Wars" defense.

What the White secure working class and middle class took him to mean was: We Republicans will stop spending on your rivals for welfare, education, and jobs, that is, your rivals such as Blacks, Hispanics, and immigrants. We will stop programs that help them and for which you pay. We will not stop corporate welfare or military spending. We will expand state spending on programs and activities that are likely to get you jobs and to help your children through school such as on the military and on corporate welfare. We will not reduce your tax breaks and programs that help you such as the IRA and 401-K even though we know poor people pay for you. We will aim expansion of military bases and programs at areas which are more likely to help Whites than other groups.

I do not know if Reagan believed at face value what he said. I think Reagan was well-intended but wrong, and he knew he was wrong, but didn't know what better to do.

As to what he actually said, Reagan was simply wrong and still is simply wrong. State programs are not the main cause of problems, and ending state programs would not solve all problems. Problems come from many sources including human nature, how a real capitalist economy works, nature is limited, we do really pollute and hurt nature, world politics, humans operate in terms of groups, technology changes everything constantly, and people really do believe some annoying ideologies including bad religious dogmas such as fundamentalism. Minimizing the state would do nothing to end those problems and, in fact, certainly would make most of them worse.

The state does waste resources and does carry out some silly programs. The state likely is too big not only in its entitlement programs but in all spending including corporate welfare and military spending. Sometimes, often in fact, the state is quite efficient at using resources. Often the state is the only realistic way to get things done such as the national highway system, national rail system, water supply, clean environment, watching over financial markets, protecting consumers, and national defense. The state usually can do these jobs quite efficiently when selfish groups do not interfere with the state. I remind readers again that it is a lot cheaper to keep someone on welfare than to keep him-her in jail. It is a lot cheaper to keep a family on welfare than to put the parents in jail and then to support the kids in foster homes.

The point is to evaluate each program according to public well-understood good realistic criteria, and then to carry on or end a program accordingly. Evaluation can and should include moral and practical considerations. Sadly, this assessment we will not do, not only because we can't agree on criteria or because Democrats block Republicans but because Republicans know that, if we did this, Republicans and their clients would lose at least as much as Democrats and their clients. Doing this would end the client game, and neither Party, nor their clients, wish to end that game.

Since Reagan got it started, that is what the phrase "Small State" has really meant: Republicans spend a lot on programs that help their clients, in particular Whites; Republicans spend as little as they can on programs that help other groups, in particular Democratic clients that compete with Whites, such as Blacks, Hispanics, and immigrants; as much as possible, Republicans make poor people, non-White ethnic groups, and other Democratic clients pay for the help to Republican clients such as through tax

breaks; and, so, Republicans punish the Democratic client rivals of Republican clients. Republicans will spend in this way to support their clients even if it means the US goes deeply into debt. Republicans certainly will deny that “Small State” means this but, judging by their actions rather than their words, I don’t see how “Small State” can mean anything else.

Republicans have a large body of analysis about how private action can replace state programs, or how we can simply stop state programs. This thought is not nonsense. Some of it makes a lot of sense. But that is not what “Small State” really means. Private alternatives have been blocked but not because evil Democrats are so adept at stopping Republicans and at wasting US money to serve their clients. Some alternatives have been used and have worked, but that is another essay. Most alternatives are wishful thinking and would not work, but that too is yet another essay. Alternatives to state programs have not become a central part of how we look at the state and the private sector because, if they did become central, alternative non-state programs would undercut most state support for the working class, middle class, and upper middle class clients of the Republican Party, in particular undercut Whites. Non-state private solutions would undercut massive defense spending. They would end the war on drugs and end the massive spending for it. They would end most public education beyond grade school. They would end support for Democratic clients too but that is not what is really at stake. Private initiatives might even make peace between doctors, lawyers, and insurance companies.

If the policies of the Tea Party about a Small State were carried out, and state subsidies for education, housing, water, police, roads, safety, food, drugs, food inspection, drug inspection, car inspection, etc. were really removed, as I have said before, the working class and the middle class would riot violently. Removing those programs is not what the Republican ideology of a Small State is all about.

When I think about how successful “Small State” propaganda was with Reagan, and how it has stayed on since, I am amazed at how easily people fool themselves and how far they go. Nobody could believe that crap yet people acted as if they did because to believe it gave them excuses.

My skin crawls now at the phrase “Small State”. The modern Republican version took a real concern, turned it into its opposite, made it into something bad, and made us overlook what really needs to be done. My skin also crawls when I hear Democratic clients say “but that’s not fair”, they refuse to take responsibility for themselves, and they won’t do for themselves what they imagine the state should do for them.

History 8: “Greed is Good”, “Let the Market Decide”, and “Private Action over State Intrusion”.

The phrase “greed is good” was spoken by Gordon Gecko in the movie “Wall Street” by Oliver Stone, starring Michael Douglas and Charlie Sheen. I mentioned the phrase in the sections on Adam Smith, and said the phrase represents what happens when we let practical reason overcome moral reason and we allow a mere institution, the market, to decide all issues for us. Here I repeat the damage that this attitude does to moral reason. I explain why this attitude became important with Reagan and why it has stayed important since.

The ideas “let the market do it” and “private solutions instead of state solutions” are linked even if the ideas are logically separable. When someone says “private solutions” people don’t automatically think of an institution such as the Scouts, a charity, or a church but think of two “outs”: (1) Letting people do what they wish and then hoping some people will take care of the problem. When people seek a private alternative to abortion they think of many couples adopting all the babies that some pregnant women didn’t want but they don’t think about how that gets done.

(2) Republicans fall back on an amorphous “it”, the private market, to make decisions that they don’t want to make or that they can’t make publicly. People fall back on a vague all-powerful market to do what they don’t want to do, don’t want to think about, and don’t want the state to do. Especially people wish the market to make moral decisions that they don’t want to make or to think about. They use the idea of the market to block the moralizing of the Democrats and their clients.

The market is an instrument of practicality. The market is driven by personal desire, including greed. It is a way to carry out self interest with huge practical efficiency. People can pretend that the outcome of the market is the greatest total of satisfaction and so the greatest welfare for the country. That is why Gordon Gecko could say “greed is good”. People who say “let the market decide” substitute practicality (practical reason) driven by self-interest alone for moral reason. People assume there is an established institution of practicality based on human self interest and on human self interest alone, the market, an institution that can magically automatically use practicality and self-interest to make correct moral decisions. I find this view odd and disturbing.

To take this attitude is to completely give up personal moral responsibility and so give up on what most makes us human.

As self-styled Conservatives, Republicans should balance morality with practicality. They inherited the moral mantle from the old aristocracy and inherited the practical mantle from the first economists and first big business people. Yet relying on the market to make moral decisions on the basis of self-interest-carried-out-with-ruthless-practicality is to give up one side entirely for the other. It is not just a simple single failure to use morality; it is also a failure to choose at all. It is a double failure. It is a total failure to be a human being through using your duty to choose, to choose among moral options and to choose between practicality and morality. It is a total failure to carry out the Republican idea that we are what we are because of moral choices and all choices. It is a total failure of the original Conservative mission.

Republicans insist they are the guardians of morality and morality requires choices. Republicans insist that we let the market do as much for us as possible. These two views are incompatible. This is as silly and hypocritical as Democratic appeals to morality alone in service to its clients. Republicans get away with saying it because their clients know that Republican politicians won’t really do it.

If any Democrat proposed this attitude, Republicans would wail to high heaven and low hell about the obvious Democratic lack of morals.

The first time Republicans seriously offered this idea was with Reagan. Reagan did not originate this idea but he presented it well. He would not say “greed is good” but he did say “let the market decide” and “private solutions instead of state programs”. People took him instead to mean much of what I said above even if he did not say it outright.

Why could a national figure say that message when Reagan said it? Why that time? Why would people accept it at that time? Why would Republicans, who so often stress their morality as with family values, accept “let the market decide” when Reagan said it and with the implications behind what Reagan said? I don’t have a full answer but it is worth guessing.

By the middle of the 1970s, people had a strong sense that many of the social programs of the 1950s and 1960s were failing and that we really couldn’t afford it all. We could not go on thinking that “we are the richest nation ever and we should be able to help every group and right every wrong”. We had to have criteria but nobody could come up with acceptable criteria. We needed solid reasons to accept some programs and reject others but nobody come up with acceptable criteria. We had to know how far to go with any particular program, when to stop, who to include, and who to exclude, but we had no acceptable criteria. We had to know when to end a particular program even though some people still benefitted but we had no acceptable criteria. We still don’t but that is another issue. After a big dose of susceptibility to moral pleas over six decades (1920s through 1970s), we needed a dose of practicality medicine. “Let the market decide” and “private solutions” was a way to sidestep the need for generally acceptable criteria and to interject the big dose of practicality that we needed. Everybody knew “let the market” decide was only code for other messages, but, at the time, people didn’t worry about other messages because they had big real problems on their hands then.

Republicans never let the market decide all issues and they never let the private sector take over all actions from the state. What would happen if we let the market decide abortion, military, and police? It would be fun to give some graphic guesses but I let you use your imagination. As an example: if we let the market decide abortion, on the basis of self-interest and practicality, then almost certainly there would be few rules against abortion and abortion would be widely available. The same is true of birth control, booze, and many drugs. Maybe Democrats should support the market sometimes.

Why do some arenas fall into morality, some into the state, some into the practicality of the market driven by self interest, and some into private action rather than state action? The ideal answer is that we think through the issues and the options, use basic moral and practical principles, use knowledge of human nature, human social life, politics, and capitalism, and choose how to handle which issues according to basic principles for the best morality and best overall general good. “Fat chance”. We might pretend to argue this way but we never really argue this way. I repeat myself: The major Parties present a division of issues that allows them to appeal to, and hold, clients so as to get the most power. This Party accuses that Party of bad allocation to morality, practicality, the state, or private action, because the accusation helps this Party in the battle over clients, knowing that some clients are reliable for us and some are reliable for them.

In the late 1970s, after decades of successful Democratic appeals to morality, Republicans needed a way to divide issues by morality and practicality so as to favor Republicans. Republicans used market and private initiative when that suited them, and used family values and religion when that suited them. Democrats had no similar nice filter and similar basis for wide appeal, and suffered in comparison. The Republicans used their newly found filter adeptly, Republican clients knew what was going on, loved it, and bought it. The Democrats have been behind ever since.

The ability of Republicans to say they correctly mix morality and practicality, even when they don't mix morality and practicality, even they don't do it correctly, and, in fact, especially when they don't mix morality and practicality correctly, likely is the biggest single arrow in the Republican quiver, the pose that is most responsible for Republican success.

Many individual Republicans do understand the need for both moral and practical considerations. Many Republicans are thoughtful as individuals and do their moral and intellectual duty as individuals. But few Republicans in private divide realms close to the lines of the Party. They go along in public because they have to. They go along with some over-morality such as the crusade against abortion because they need that energy. They go along with some over-practicality such as privatizing prisons and schools because they know they need to keep up the rationale. They go along with protecting crazy gun rights (not all gun rights) because they know they need that energy too and they fear the gun lobby.

Individual Republicans, and the Party, should give a consistent rationale for why some arenas are moral, practical, state, or market-private. But the Party cannot give a more consistent rationale because then it would offend clients. It would not hold together and would not keep the upper hand. I would love to see a true thoughtful deep Conservative (not merely Republican) account of when moral, practical, state, or market-private apply and why. We don't have that and won't have that.

I imagine Democrats would love a similar technique that lets them assign to moral, practical, state, or private so as to best keep their clients and power. Since Democrats gave up using practicality as primary appeal, and have used only morality, I think Democrats have not had a good method to sort morality, practicality, state, or private. They can't build a good filter and a good rationale. At this point, any try at consistency would alienate so many clients so much that Democrats can't afford to try for consistency. Instead, they keep repeating that America is so rich everybody can have everything, and we are bad if we don't give it to them.

History 9: We got badly selfish for a long time, and now maybe we are getting better

Readers could dismiss this section as "grumpy old man looks down on all young people" but there might be a little more to my concern than that. This section refers back to changes that I noted earlier but did not pronounce on.

-starting in the 1970s, the rest of the world caught up to America economically, and America entered the world economy as more of an equal partner. We managed the transition badly.

-We believe we can go back to a Golden Era of dominant easy prosperity when we cannot.

-Economic reality hit as we were making progress on social justice for ethnic minorities (Blacks), women, and nature. Economic reality delayed or derailed progress. The broken hope led to bitterness, anger, fear, hate, and mutual blame.

-Programs to help the downtrodden ballooned, and the financial burden fell on the working and middle classes just when those classes were faced with adjustment to the world economy, and when it became clear that most programs would not work as they should.

-Relations between Blacks and non-Blacks had been getting better in the 1960s. The status of Blacks had been improving. Then, in the 1970s, the status of Blacks stopped improving. Blacks blamed racism by other groups against them. I think Blacks ignored the results of entering the world economy and the implications of failing programs. Relations between Blacks and Whites (including Jews), and relations of Blacks with Asians and Hispanics, got strained, and have stayed stained since.

-In the 1970s, relations between men and women also got more strained. Since then, relations between men and women have been ruled as much by ideology as by spontaneous decency. Relations between men and women began to improve in the 2000s. Much misunderstanding remains, as evident in salary gaps and in the bad acts exposed during the "Me Too" movement.

-The status of LGBTQ (gay) people got better. Their movement made continual, if often slow, progress toward near success in the 20-teens. One reason their status improved is because improvement in their status does not depend on financial sacrifices by other groups, increases in the income of LGBTQ people, or even much on their political power.

-Even so, it is not clear why some movements toward social justice succeed pretty well, some succeed half well, and some go backwards. It is hard to discuss these issues, partly because to do so reveals continuing biases on all sides but also because to do so reveals continuing bad attitudes by groups that have trouble.

-The 1970s and 1980s set the pattern of bad feelings that has persisted since.

-People needed ever more educational certification to get a job. People got trapped into a system of needing more certificates to compete but certificates did not guarantee a job.

-The American public school system got uneven. The middle and upper middle classes made islands of good schools. Only a minority of American children could get into the good schools. The good schools

cost a lot of money, usually not so much in direct tuition costs (local taxes to pay for local education) but in the costs of buying and owning a house in a good school district.

-In addition, costs went up for medical care, housing, insurance, and transportation.

-Real incomes for the working and middle classes stagnated or decreased even while real incomes for the upper middle and upper classes increased and continue to increase.

-We do have enough wealth to help each other a lot if we did not need all the wealth to play the game of keeping our heads above water and keeping up with the neighbors, as long as the game is not fraught with so much insecurity. But that is how the game is now. As long as the game is that way, people now will feel they do NOT have enough wealth and security to help the neighbors, even when they live in big houses, have lots of gadgets, and own three cars.

-The United States got invaded by cocaine, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine.

-Working and middle class people, mostly White and Asian, blamed Democrats for everything.

-People began feeling family is most important by far. Family is not only most important, it is now so much more important that nation, religion, and even ethnicity fall far behind. State, religion, and even ethnicity are merely tools to make sure the family does well. People got selfish about family but they covered their selfishness in words about patriotism, God, and race.

-The Reagan era gave us these false dangerous ideas: (1) All that we need to make everything come out alright is to go after everything that we wish for with little regard to anybody else. Competition and the (not free) market can give us everything. We hardly need a state except for international competition. (2) Business is the best friend of America and, now, the only friend of America. Business is how we go after what we want against everybody else. (3) Get a job in a big business firm. Get training that you need for a job in a big firm. (4) There are no issues with unemployment, bad jobs, racism, sexism, single parents, or anything else. All these issues go away automatically when people get a job in a big business firm. (5) We can use deficit spending to finance what we want. On a personal level, we can go in debt to get all we want. Big debt is just fine. Reagan himself did not believe all this but he did not separate his rhetoric, and what people took from his rhetoric, from what is real.

-The 1970s became the "me" generation. The 1980s was more so. Among most people, the 1990s and 2000s continued the trend. But a small growing group of young Americans got disgusted and sought something better.

-America has some big enemies such as fundamentalism of all kinds and terrorism based on all kinds of wrong ideologies. These enemies are real, not the figments of Rightist imagination. America thought Russia had gone from enemy to friendly rival but then Russia emerged as an enemy again. China could become a friendly useful rival or a bad enemy. The enemies of America increased the fear, anger, and

bitterness here. They increase the bad ideas and bad stances of the Reagan era. This response is not a good response but it is natural. America will never cease to have rivals but we have not learned how to keep rivals from become enemies and we have not learned how to deal with enemies when nations and groups are determined to be our enemies.

-People who came of age in the late 1970s through about 2000 seem selfish, lost, or bitter. The selfish people rely on religion, patriotism, and race to cover up their selfishness. The bitter people use racism and sexism as an excuse for their bitterness and for not taking responsibility. The lost people get movies made about them and songs written about them. People took "gangsta" as good. Along with emphasis on family, these attitudes seem to be the basis for a new general American personality.

-The fear, anger, mutual distrust, and sometimes hatred, damaged American democracy and America. They set up the trend toward modest fascism that is evident under Donald Trump.

-To me, one of the most telling signs that something deep has changed for worse are mass shootings, especially at schools and places of religion. When and where I grew up, many (maybe most) of my friends' fathers had guns. It was common to see guns in the hallway closet. A lot of my friends had 22 rifles (I did not) and-or BB guns (I did). Handguns were usually in drawers but everybody knew where they were and nobody worried. I have seen old pictures of children stacking rifles at the school house door in the morning in so they could hunt after school. Farmers, ranchers, and people in the woods, routinely carried firearms. The idea of shooting a particular person that had wronged you made sense but the vast majority of people had enough heart not to do it. The idea of shooting up a place, or shooting innocent people, along the way to getting your particular revenge, would have made no sense at all. Nobody would have thought of it. It would have been unmanly, unwomanly, and un-American. That is not what an adult would do, no matter how personally wronged. I can understand feeling angry about how the people in a place have treated you and about how it seems the place as a whole treated you. But I cannot imagine killing innocent people, most of whom you do not know. It is blocked out of my brain. Now, Americans think about it and do not see that it contradicts the good American character that made America, should have made them, and that they wrongly think did make them.

Drive-by shootings and mindless gang violence are similar. The tendency to shoot your cousin or your neighbor in a dispute over some trifle also is similar.

Of course, the huge vast majority of Americans do not think like this. The vast majority think like people my age did and still do. The good parts of the American view are still running at depth even if they have been covered up by confusion and badness.

Some Americans can think of mass murder as a soothing act, even if the vast majority of Americans still do not. What does that fact indicate about how Americans think? I cannot say because I cannot put myself into that mindset.

-I don't know how badly American democracy and America have been hurt. I don't know how selfish people have become. I don't know how important it is for people to put their families and reference groups (race, gender, religion, tough guys, class) above neighbors, America, and democracy. I doubt I can judge well. Other people who know more than I and who have great experience also fear that this time America has crossed a bad line. Even Republicans worry.

To get a better handle on this, we could compare America now with societies in other periods and other conditions, both similar enough and different enough to make the comparison useful. But most other societies did not begin as big democracies with abundant capitalist economies. We are not Rome at the end of the Republic, France in 1788, Russia in 1917, Germany in 1930, the Galactic Republic before the Emperor took over, or the Galactic Empire just before the return of the Jedi.

-Slowly a new normal has emerged. The new normal does not serve all of us perfectly. It does not solve problems with unemployment, sexism, etc. We can see what is better but we can't see how to get there from here.

-Some people who came of age in the 1990s, and many people who came of age after about 2005, are willing to work for the good of society and the planet, even to sacrifice. They are still self-absorbed and are addicted to devices and to media that enable them, but they have seen beyond the accusations of the 1970s and the false ideas of the Reagan era. Too much bitterness, fear, and anger remain. Young people do not blame Democrats for everything but they do not hold out much hope from Democrats either. It is not clear if this trend to awareness and some sacrifice will overcome the 1970s and Reagan, and if we can find a basis for strong long-term good action. It is not clear if the deep American character that we had for over 250 years can overcome non-American fascism. To have some hope, think of modern better attitudes toward women and LGBTQ people, better attitudes by women and men to each other, and returned willingness to say "Merry Christmas"; and watch the work of Seth MacFarland, Seth Rogen, and Judd Apatow. Watch the movie "This is the End".

-When people feel dangerously insecure and feel they must "screw their buddies" to make sure their own families do well, we see the ideas and pattern from the 1970s and the Reagan era supporting the "culture wars" and the incipient fascism of Trump. Where people feel more secure, and have some good experiences with people not exactly like themselves, we get something more like the better people after 2005.