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REVIEW OF BOOKS

A Journal of Political Thought and Statesmanship

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CORRESPONDENCE

Bipartisan Affirmative Action

I am writing to quibble with one very small part of William Voegeli's excellent essay "They Never Did Mend It" (Summer 2023). He writes, "Democrats never could bring themselves to mend affirmative action." This is true. But it is also true that Republicans, even in states like Texas, never could either.

Edward Blum
South Thomaston, ME

William Voegeli replies:

Edward Blum is right: Republicans did much less than they could have, and should have, to make sure that all Americans, not just some, were afforded equal protection of the laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin. Republicans did more than nothing, however. Republican administrations from 1981 to 1993 took steps that challenged and constrained preferences, and Republican politicians and activists were promi-

nent supporters of the California Civil Rights Initiative in 1996, and measures modeled on it that were enacted subsequently in other states.

Following this year's Students for Fair Admissions decisions, for which Mr. Blum deserves more credit than any other individual, some Republicans will be tempted to outsource further anti-preference efforts to the six Supreme Court Justices who ruled that the affirmative action practices at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina were unconstitutional. This would be a political mistake, given evidence from polls and election results showing that affirmative action is unpopular. And it would be a policy mistake, since legislative and administrative actions are needed, in addition to judicial decisions, to give substance to the imperatives to treat all citizens equally and encourage all to fulfill their potential.

Faith in Markets

Julius Krein seems to have missed the point of our book, *The Big Myth*, which was to show how discussions of American political economy have been dominated by a set of ideas about the power of "The Free Market" and the incompetence of government that is to a substantial extent the outcome of a decades-long propaganda campaign ("Plutocrats and Propagandists," Summer 2023). We show in specific historical detail—most of which Krein ignores—how trade organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers and plutocrats like J. Howard Pew worked to promote these ideas in public discourse, in academia, in popular culture, and, ultimately, into mainstream American politics.

Our book begins in the early 20th century, with an emphasis on the National Electric Light Association (NELA), which, Krein acknowledges, is "largely forgotten today, [yet] pioneered the forms of future neoliberal campaigns as well as much of their content." In the 1920s, NELA ran a propaganda campaign, grounded in falsehoods, misrepresentations, and the recruitment of experts for hire, designed not merely to influence what Americans thought about the electricity industry, but how they felt about capitalism and the potential role of governance in correcting its failures.

We show how the NELA campaign had an anchoring effect on decades of later debate, including additional propaganda campaigns run by the National Association of Manufacturers, efforts to steer the Chicago school of economics toward an extreme free-market orientation that included the misrepresentation of Adam Smith and of the history of anti-trust legislation, and a conscious program to orient Hollywood away from criticism and toward positive portrayals of American banks and business.

We also show how Democrats as well as Republicans were influenced by these pro-market, anti-government arguments, culminating in the so-called "Washington Consensus" of the 1990s. Contrary to Krein's review, we do not defend Bill Clinton's (or other Democrats') embrace of neoliberal policies. On the contrary, we highlight how it was Clinton who declared that the "era of Big Government" was over and we conclude that his championing of telecommunications deregulation has been a disaster for consumers and arguably for American democracy.

Krein also misrepresents our position with respect to the relationship between business and politics. We hold no naïve view that business and politics should be separate. On the contrary, we argue clearly—with multiple historical examples—that the market fundamentalist claim that government should "get out of the way" and let the "market do its magic" is unsupported by either economics or history. Business and politics have been intertwined since the rise of capitalism, which is why 18th-century theorists spoke not of "economics" or "politics" but of "political economy." The point of our book is not to argue for political-economic apartheid, but rather to recognize the essential role that government has always played in American economic life, and to figure out how to better harness it.

The views many Americans now hold are not based on a realistic appraisal of their history—of what has worked and what has not worked—but an unhistorical appraisal that has been unduly shaped by plutocratic propaganda. Our conclusion is that the broad embrace of an exaggerated faith in markets—not just by conservatives but by liberals, as well—has done serious damage.

Is there more to be said about neoliberalism, American conservatism, and the role of corporations in our political and social lives than we were able to say in this book? Of course. But none of these topics can be fully understood without the key part of the story that we have told here.

Naomi Oreskes
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA

Erik M. Conway
Altadena, CA

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Julius Krein replies:

Anyone who suffers through the partisan scholarship of both progressives and libertarians will notice a perhaps surprising convergence: both blame corporate lobbying for a significant share of the world's evils and vehemently resent the fact that politics and business are often deeply intertwined. To be sure, these resentments flow in different directions. Libertarians want to keep politics out of business and government out of markets, saving the utopias of their imagination from political interference. Progressives like Oreskes and Conway, meanwhile, want to keep business out of politics. They seem to believe that "democratic" government is one dominated by ideologues and academics and "activists," and that their utopia is held back by the nefarious influence of corporate lobbies. Both progressives and libertarians, in other words, view government and business as inherently antagonistic forces rather than potential partners in a project of national development.

I do not believe this point in my review was especially obscure, but since it appears to have eluded Oreskes and Conway, I will reiterate it: correcting the errors of neoliberalism requires such a project of national development, not ideological crusades of either the progressive or libertarian variety. While Oreskes and Conway may reject neoliberal policy, their naïve moralism is very much complicit in its rise—and forms a part of what Nancy Fraser of the New School for Social Research has termed "progressive neoliberalism." The latter makes for mediocre history and even worse policy, as seen, unfortunately, in *The Big Myth*.

Multiculturalism and Islam

David Goldman gets one thing right in his review of my book,

Out of the Melting Pot, Into the Fire: I am a former tech engineer ("From One, Many," Summer 2023).

Consider his claim that the historical examples I provide are "less than convincing." In three of those examples (Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka), I show how multicultural and affirmative action policies that distinguished people by group and sequestered ethnic groups on separate educational tracks led directly to extreme ethnic violence and genocide. Goldman is the first person I've encountered who isn't persuaded by the evidence. He refers to these examples in three short sentences that evince a misunderstanding of the circumstances in these countries—a misunderstanding that reading those three chapters would have dispelled.

The historical examples are only part of the argument. They serve to add color to the hard statistical analysis presented, which is convincing in its own right. For example, the book establishes that ethnically divided multicultural societies fare worse on almost every measure of social pathology, e.g., riots, political violence, corruption, and suppression of rights. This statistical analysis constitutes 50 pages of a book that has only 190 main pages of text. Yet Goldman never even mentions it. Given the statistical significance of the data, this is hard to explain, except perhaps as a failure to read the book.

Goldman's criticism of my coverage of Islam stands out as particularly ill-informed. He opines, "Heycke claims that the 'Islamic regime' treated Jews and Christians as 'believers and did not persecute them over doctrinal niceties.' That is a controversial statement at best, in need of more support than a footnote referring to the 9th-century Persian historian al-Baladhuri." Goldman fails to acknowledge that the book qualifies this statement; it notes that, after the first seven decades,

non-Muslims had to "obey a set of rules that distinguished them from Muslims and subordinated and humiliated them." But more importantly, there is not "a footnote" supporting the claim that Jews and Christians were initially treated tolerantly as "believers," there are *nine*, referencing contemporary Christian sources, early Islamic coins with crucifixes and menorahs stamped on them, and an entire book devoted to the subject. Beyond that, there is an appendix containing my translation of the Constitution of Medina—included because the document stipulates that Jews (and probably other non-Muslims) were included in the *ummah* of believers. That's quite a volume of material to overlook.

In another risible example, Goldman writes: "in [Heycke's] telling, ancient Athens is supposed to have collapsed because 'nearly a third of the population were...foreigners who had few rights and a vastly inferior status to ethnic Athenians.'" Really? I would love to see a page number for that, since I never once mention Athens's "collapse."

I could rebut each of the other misreadings and misconceptions, but it would take many pages to cover them all. I could also highlight the numerous factual errors in the review. For example, the people of Thailand would be really surprised to hear that Goldman believes "most Thais are ethnically Chinese" (the actual number is less than 15%). But I think the point has been made.

I enthusiastically embrace thoughtful criticism of my work, but only if it considers and engages with what I have actually written. It is a wonder to me that someone would ever submit a review that is so orthogonal to the work under consideration and that fails in the most fundamental requirement of reviewing a book—that is, to actually read the book.

Jens Heycke
Medford, OR

David P. Goldman replies:

I praised Mr. Heycke's attempt to gauge societal success and failure by a single factor, namely social cohesion, but pointed to the risks inherent in any such simplification. Some parts of his account are merely eccentric, for example, his focus on Islam as an exemplar of cohesion.

There is an extensive literature reporting Islam's extreme cruelty toward religious minorities, from the slaughter of the Banu Qurayza tribe of Medina in A.D. 627 to the eradication of North African Christianity a few decades later, to the conquest of Visigoth Spain, and so forth. Historians like Bernard Lewis, Raymond Ibrahim, Robert Spencer, and Bat Ye'or, among many others present a portrait unrecognizable from Heycke's laudatory account of an Islam that "followed assiduously" Rome's "continual assimilation of diverse populations." I gently chided him for relying on apologetic Muslim sources; I might have said that his failure to mention voluminous evidence to the contrary is downright unprofessional.

In his catalogue of complaints, Mr. Heycke doesn't mention the most important: his failure to identify Christianity as a unifying social factor. That is not a minor omission, but rather Hamlet without the Ghost. Rome, which he rather likes as a model of assimilation, collapsed and splintered, and Christianity integrated the barbarian remnants and invaders into the most successful civilization of all time. America's melting pot is unimaginable without its religious foundation. It would be charitable to say that Heycke's predilection for Islam as a unifying factor and his silence on the subject of Christianity is odd in a book written for an American audience.

I agree that multiculturalism is a bad idea, but we cannot eschew multiculturalism without affirming what the monoculture ought to be. We may argue about

the best way to understand our unifying culture, but it simply won't do to ignore the issue.

Criminal Justice

As William Voegeli deftly points out in his essays "Criminal Negligence" (Summer 2021) and "Crime and the Democrats, Revisited" (Spring 2023), big-city Democrats have long counted on their constituents ignoring the violence and havoc caused by soft-on-crime policies. Progressives have forgotten the narrow but important purpose of the criminal justice system: not to solve all of society's ills, but simply to hold criminals accountable and seek justice for victims. In too many cities this isn't happening.

Nonetheless, rather than confront Voegeli's well-reasoned arguments, many on the left will play coy, as they always do when someone has the temerity to point out why, and how, their policies have failed. Instead, they offer (at least) three variations of excuses and misdirection.

First, progressives urge people not to believe their lying eyes. Crime isn't as bad as it seems, they say, as they trot out study after questionable study to support their claims. These studies are often methodologically flawed, and when they're not, they don't say what the Left claims they do. Given that crime is hyperlocalized, the murder rate in some cities is actually worse today either on a per capita basis (as in St. Louis) or in real terms (as in Philadelphia) than it has ever been before.

Second, many on the left try and pivot away from violent crime to so-called quality of life crimes like shoplifting, drug possession, and prostitution. These crimes, rogue prosecutors claim, can go unenforced without any adverse consequences for their communities. Of course, that's nonsense. Retail theft alone is a \$100 bil-

lion per year problem and when essential establishments such as grocery stores and pharmacies close due to rampant theft, it's often the poorest members of the community who bear the brunt.

Third, and finally, many Democrats on the national stage want to have their cake and eat it too when it comes to crime. They want to appear tough on crime (when politically convenient) but want to appease their radical base at the same time. Voegeli correctly points out that in early 2023, "President Biden announced that he would not veto a congressional resolution that rescinded the Washington, D.C., city council's criminal code" due to its radical soft-on-crime features, with his veto refusal incensing progressive Democrats in Congress.

But there's more to the story. Shortly after Congress overrode the D.C. City Council's radical criminal code, it also overrode a local law that implemented many of the worst aspects of the failed George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. In short, it hamstrung police officers, making their jobs more difficult and dangerous. Without much press or fanfare, President Biden did veto this override and allowed the law to go into effect. As a result, D.C.'s local police department faces a staffing crisis that is only likely to worsen in the coming years unless things change.

All that to say, Voegeli's essential point that where there's crime there must also be punishment—or more crime will follow—is one that all elected officials and citizens would do well to remember.

Zack Smith

The Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

Changing Laws, Changing Hearts

Hadley Arkes's excellent analysis of the Supreme Court's

judicial philosophy and its abdication of moral conviction in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* was revelatory ("The Wages of *Dobbs*," Summer 2023). The backlash last summer's decision sparked proved what I have long contended: without a reformation in the hearts of the people, a law imposed from above will not change their behavior. Indeed, if the Court had grounded its decision in the personhood of the unborn under the 14th Amendment and banned abortion entirely, it would only have created a more violent backlash.

The irony is that, in talking about the "fetus," the Justices ignore the meaning of the Latin word, which is "baby" or "young child." Even "embryo" means "offspring in the process of development." We cannot get around, even in our language, the reality of our humanity in our earliest stages of life.

So far, *Dobbs* has been but a Pyrrhic victory for the pro-life movement, judging by the losses at the state level in places like Kansas. Even Donald Trump is now backtracking on his pro-life convictions for political expediency, calling Florida's six-week abortion ban a "terrible thing." As John Adams wrote, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Without a change in the hearts of the people, no law will govern those who are lawless at heart. Would that we had a new Great Awakening like the first, which bound the colonies together and led to the establishment of the Republic, or the second, which led to the abolition of slavery through the Civil War. Of course, one hopes that instead of war we may pray for national conversion through tears of repentance for what we have done to God's children.

Jefferis Kent Peterson
Wimberley, TX

On Stephen Douglas

I do not intend to engage in the practice of "author beats (up on) critic" in which an author responds in anger or dismay to his reviewer. I would like, however, to clarify one aspect of my book *A Nation So Conceived* reviewed in the *CRB* ("Reading Lincoln," Spring 2023). The reviewer had what he thought a "gotcha" moment when he claimed to find a contradiction in my account of Stephen Douglas's position. The contradiction was of the reviewer's making, however. He writes in his review, "The 1854 remarks by Douglas, four years before the speech in Chicago, must be the 'earlier formulations of the doctrine' Zuckert is referring to."

The reviewer takes it for granted that in my chapter 5 I was presenting the "earlier formulations of the doctrine" as Douglas held them in 1854. The chapter begins with Lincoln's 1854 Peoria Address but goes on to speak of the two debaters over the course of the 1850s. So, I give an account of some Lincoln texts from later in the 1850s and of the later Douglas also. Chapter 5 is less attached to a single speech than much of the rest of the book is and instead gives a sort of overview of the contest between the two in the 1850s. I describe Douglas's position in the same terms I later use for his later formulations because I am speaking of those later formulations in both places.

Michael P. Zuckert
Chicago, IL

Glenn Ellmers replies:

I thank Michael Zuckert for his letter and wish to note that I have profited from his scholarship over the years. I must confess, however, that his attempt at clarification only confirms my original puzzlement. With-

out having the book at hand, it is impossible for anyone to judge this matter. I encourage interested readers to consult Zuckert's work for themselves. Perhaps others will find clarity where I remain in perplexity.

The Charm of Baseball

I enjoyed and applaud Douglas Jeffrey's review of Roger Angell's baseball writings, but I must respectfully disagree with his opposition to Major League Baseball's new pitch clock ("Once Upon a National Pastime," Summer 2023). The charm of baseball's not having a clock is that the game doesn't end at a set time; one must get the 27th out (or more outs if the game goes into extra innings), however long that takes. The charm is *not* that no one knows how long the plodding pitcher and batter will needlessly make fans wait to see another pitch get thrown.

A year or two ago, my son and I were flipping the TV channels back and forth between a baseball game and a college football game, and we found that there was almost exactly the same delay between pitches as between

plays—which, of course, is very much against the natural order of things. It shouldn't take a pitcher anywhere near as long to get the ball back from the catcher and throw the next pitch as it takes for an eleven-man football team to call a play, line up, and run it. Yet it did.

In marked contrast, we once flipped from live college football to a recording of the first game of the 1968 World Series, when the Cardinals' Bob Gibson struck out (what remains) a record 17 batters against my dad's boyhood friend Denny McLain (baseball's last 30-game winner) and the Detroit Tigers. Vin Scully said Gibson "pitches as though he's double-parked," and the game was so brisk, and therefore so compelling, that we just kept watching. With slight variations, that's how baseball was played in its golden age.

The Gibson-McLain duel took two hours and 29 minutes, four minutes less than the average game took that year. By 2022, the average game took three hours and six minutes, a whopping 22% increase. With the introduction of the pitch clock, the average game time fell to two hours and 42 minutes for the 2023 season—shaving 24 minutes off with no reduction in action. That's still not sub-two hours, like games generally were in

Babe Ruth's or Ty Cobb's day, but it's shorter than the average had been since 1984.

So, I'd say the pitch clock has done a remarkable job of restoring baseball to its appropriate pacing, and in the process has helped reclaim the spirit of the game. Now, if MLB could just avoid ruining its postseason....

Jeffrey H. Anderson
Alexandria, VA

Douglas A. Jeffrey replies:

Jeffrey Anderson's nice letter refers twice to flipping channels between games, something that drives me nuts, and posits the compacting of an equal amount of action into a shorter unit of time as an unqualified positive good. No wonder he likes the pitch clock! But as Dizzy Dean (Pee Wee Reese's partner in the first TV baseball announcing team I recall as a boy) would put it: baseball ain't football! I have fond college memories of studying Classical Greek while listening to the Texas Rangers on the radio in the 1970s. That would have been impossible during Cowboys broadcasts for a reason.

As a practical matter, Vin Scully's description of Bob Gibson pitching like he's double parked wouldn't be one of Scully's

best-remembered lines if Gibson's aggressive pace of pitching hadn't been as remarkable (i.e., unusual) at the time as his effective use of the high inside heater. Also, it is highly misleading to suggest that the pace of pitching is solely or even chiefly responsible for the increased average length of games over the past century. Apart from the other reasons noted in my essay, the most obvious variable to factor in is the advent and then increase of radio and TV advertising time between each half inning. Prior to the mid- to late 1930s, games weren't regularly broadcast on the radio even in New York City, and televised games remained relatively rare until cable access boomed in the late 1980s and '90s.

The golden age when every pitcher (even "with slight variations") was a Bob Gibson is entirely imaginary. The actual golden age was when there was no "little box" (as Roger Angell referred derisively to TV) to dictate baseball's rules. The latest relentless demand from the voices in the box is for doing away with the home plate umpire calling balls and strikes. I hope Mr. Anderson and other fans younger than I will start drawing the line at least there, even if they don't come to their senses on the pitch clock.

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