

The Sovereign Individual

A continuation of thoughts expressed in the author's [essay](#), "On Persuasion, Crowds, Christianity, and Our Farcical Politics"

by [Carl Nelson](#) (November 2024)



Humans do not obtain god-like knowledge, wisdom, or goodness by acting politically. –Donald J. Boudreaux

Politics is coercion.

Of all 36 ways to get out of trouble, the best way is—leave. –Chinese proverb

America is not dying; it's transforming.

At my undergraduate college, I had an English Literature professor who was a Marxist and ugly as a squat toad. And I don't think I'm being excessive in my description, but instead perhaps lenient. Because she was one of a piece as the

repulsive charms of her mind outdid even the ugliness of her shape and features. Students touched by any of her thinking would surely develop warts.

I've known a handful of stubborn Marxists in my time and they were all smug and Stalinesque in the period's proclamation embodied in the phrase: "The personal is political." Their haughty pronouncements unleashed the furies which would eventually tear our culture and country apart, placing their fingers and rainbow colored false nails so as to eventually interfere in every aspect of our life. Home heating, appliances, air conditioning, language use, free speech, schools, sexual preference, on and on ... as the bureaucrats multiply, each new wave brings new tyrannical revelations, each more cemented into the growing prohibitory pile of paper made rules than before. (If only paper cuts could infect, or bleed someone out until ... they die!)

Politics does not join people; it tears people apart on the cultural level, the family level and eventually the personal level—on every level like thinly sliced deli meats. Politics is coercive, and acrimony is the natural outcome of a threat. No one likes being told what to do, or threatened. This is why political types are always arguing, even amongst themselves where it ironically becomes most heated. Nobody agrees with anybody entirely about everything. In fact, even the individual might very well change their opinion about some matter in the very next moment. How do they square this? Either they are an enemy to themselves and the friends they once had—or they had been hoodwinked, and by them also who were in league with the traitors. There is no peace in politics in which personal agency is acquired by coercing someone else to do the hard work—no self-confidence created, no skill set acquired, no agency, and no satisfaction. Even in the shower, how much water to use nowadays is a political decision. Whether you eat the meat of flatulent cows is another. So much needs deciding by so many, because ... freedom

requires eternal vigilance! So that it is important to be aware of, well ... all of it! And with all of the trade-offs and such (if trade-offs could in fact exist within the Marxist mind) –God-like knowledge is required (though He does not exist in the Marxist mind, either). During Perestroika, Western economists were brought over to explain the supply and demand cost pricing of the free market, to which their native economists responded,. “We have enormous bureaus to deal with this problem without success—and now you propose to handle the same problem by doing nothing?” They guffawed.

Surely, some of the most oxymoronic phrases ever uttered by a politician are those who would cast themselves as “unifiers.” Uniting against what? (Their opposition!) Where is the threat? (Just across the aisle!) “Uniting for a better world!” Why can’t people do this independently, without government involvement? Doesn’t everyone want and choose a “better world?” And, isn’t it individual endeavors which create a better world? After all, “Poverty has no causes [as it’s the natural state we are born into]; wealth has causes.”
–Boudreaux

A large portion of this essay is drawn from the book, *The Sovereign Individual* by James Dale Davidson and Lord William Rees-Moog, published in 1997. A few of their predictions have missed by a bit, but the thrust of it still deserves attention. The armature of the book is the premise that we are now on the cusp of the Information Revolution, the fourth of four sweeping civilizational upheavals: the first being the Age of the Hunter-Gathers, second the Agricultural Revolution, the third being the Industrial Revolution, and the fourth being the Information Revolution. Each of these revolutions changed the “logic of violence” which is “the ultimate boundary force on behavior.” These revolutions changed the shape and possessor of power, by changing the landscape of who would be the greatest creators of wealth and then, in consequence, who would rule this wealth. And history is like

water, it follows opportunity. Armies are very expensive. Nation states are very expensive. As the money flows, so flows power.

Up until the Information Revolution, wealth was anchored in location. Its possessors were congenital vassals of the Tribe/Nation/State. This is, or will be, no longer the case, according to Davidson and Rees-Moog. The digital world has made society and its wealth far more mobile. Encrypted communications and blockchain technology have made it possible for wealth to escape confiscation by avaricious governments—to be held in a location-free cybersphere—to be utilized from where their owners work and produce and from physical localities whose laws are more fitting their desires. They will become “citizens of the pale,” voting with their feet—as did serfs of feudal lords who would move to live under the more business-centric, favorable laws of the city. This is a very reduced version of the authors’ argument.

Global industries already anchor portions of their operations in tax havens. Bill Gates, for example, runs his ‘non-profits’ out of Switzerland where the laws free them from liability. (Very useful when your non-profits are pushing the mandated vaccines you sell.)

What the authors see in their crystal ball is an extension of what they currently see. And in this they follow the thinking of economic historian Fredric Lane who “analyzed the control of government in economic rather than political terms. In this view, there are three basic alternatives in the control of government, each of which entails a fundamentally different set of incentives: proprietors, employees, and customers.” (Pg.135)

The authors chart the current Western Nation/States, as employee controlled entities. In an employee based incentive structure it is the governmentally employed, or governmentally supported (welfare, institutional, subsidized) citizen-

employees who determine policy. As these citizens carve out greater and greater slices of the wealth and tax revenue for themselves, the government gradually (and then, suddenly!) slides into debt as the government no longer has the money to cover the insatiable appetite of its political base—which will honor no spending cap. Communism, in their view, is structured on the same ‘employee’ basis but lacked the wealth-generating capacity to compete with the Western Nations and so collapsed first. But the Western Nations are now not far behind, as the tremendous wealth generated during the Industrial Revolution (employing free market principles) was able to generate returns enough to cover both governmental expenses and ever-rising employee expectations. But as Herb Stein, economist, once noted: *“If something cannot go on forever, it will stop.”* And forever isn’t so long anymore.

The bleating of the Democratic base for more governmental goodies became surreal with the 2020 election as each of the candidates maneuvered to promise even more and better than their competitor. That there were limits to what could be done, or that there were budget considerations was way outside the debate’s Overton Window. Much (or most) of reality, in that 2020 Democratic ‘debate,’ was ignored. Since then it’s gotten worse.

In a book by Aeron MacIntyre, *The Total State: How Liberal Democracies Become Tyrannies*, notes N.W. Lyons in his [article](#), “Twilight of American Democracy”: “A growing group of dissident right-wingers has sought to supply an explanation. United around the premise that the governance of the United States doesn’t function as we’re told it does, this group believes that the country has not operated as a constitutional republic for some time; it is only the facade of one, effectively controlled by a cadre of plutocratic elites, party insiders, unelected bureaucrats and subservient media apparatchiks—in short, an unaccountable oligarchy.”

“The resulting “total state” now operates in increasingly

flagrant contradiction to the broader interests of the American people and democratic government, while “wearing the old regime like a skinsuit.”

Essential to understanding this total state is the concept of managerialism... In this framing, America is today effectively run by a managerial elite, which presides over a broader professional managerial class-think of college administrators, corporate HR managers, and nonprofit activists. Fundamentally, the business of such people is not producing or building anything, providing any essential service, or even making critical leadership decisions, but the manipulation and management-that is, surveillance and control-of people, information, money and ideas.

Doesn't this pretty much describe the structural arrangement of a government based on an employee basis?

According to the authors of the *Sovereign Individual*, blockchain technologies, allowing for cryptocurrencies and encrypted communications, have removed many of these managerial prerogatives, while opening many doors for the evasion of governmental taxes, censorship and surveillance.

The best way to avoid evil is not to feed it. Christian teachings tell us this.

You certainly cannot win a fight against a lion, or a grizzly, or a tyrannosaurus. But starved till near death, they might well be easy pickings.

Nobody will come to break down your door at 3 am if they are not paid. They would rather be in bed asleep, themselves. These tyrannical leanings of the 'nominally' democracies are too large, powerful and embedded throughout the culture and

institutions to fight successfully. They are the very Devil themselves.

The first order in an exorcism is to not speak or answer to the demon. A recent [column](#) in the Last Refuge website noted that the first priority of the FBI, for example, is to protect itself and the managerial elite in which it is embedded. "This operational mission of the FBI explains why when a citizen brings an issue to the FBI, the citizen is more than likely going to end up as a target. This reality is key to understanding the disparity between what people perceive as the FBI mission, and what the ACTUAL mission is."

The key strategy in avoiding sin in the many ways St. Paul described is to keep one's distance from it. You keep your distance, but most importantly, you do not feed it. As noted, you might not be able to defeat a huge beast of the wild, but if it is never fed ... eventually you won't need to. This is how the Communist side of the employee based 'democracies' fell. It couldn't feed itself. And now the Western democracies are failing likewise to assuage their followers' ravenous hunger. Printing money can only delay the inevitable. This is why the future citizen of a differently structured, customer based government must remove their money in order to hasten the process. But also—in the process—to save themselves and the cultural freedoms they still possess.

Of all 36 ways to get out of trouble, the best way is—leave. —Chinese proverb

In *The Sovereign Individual*, the authors point out areas in which doors are being opened allowing citizens to distance themselves. Prior to the book's publication date of 1997, it was already possible to purchase a Swiss residency through a fixed annual payment of a \$45,000. (So if you can work from

anywhere and currently pay over \$45,000 in taxes ... maybe move?) A wealthy person could buy a citizenship in the Seychelles which has no extradition treaty, and which also comes with a diplomatic passport. And, as the authors note: "...human ingenuity usually finds a way to create institutions to capture profitable opportunities, even where the demand arises from personas who can pay little. "Consider, for example, the growth of medieval towns that served as safe havens for serfs escaping feudal subjugation. Their practice may prove analogous to the role of new jurisdictions in accommodating the coming exit from nation-states. The acceptance of aliens escaping from some lord as "citizens of the pale" defied the prevailing conventions of feudal law and Episcopal authority." And history has many examples of fringe areas of low population density, such as was in earlier times the vaguely characterized boundary between France and Spain, where an individual could pledge to abide by French laws in one respect and under Spanish law in another. Currently, the Basque region in Spain operates under a different system of laws than Spain proper.

*Under feudalism, landlords who owned property on both sides of a nominal frontier faced a serious conflict of duties. For example, a lord on the frontier of Scotland and England who held properties in both kingdoms could theoretically owe military service to both in the event of war. To resolve this contradictory obligation, almost every one up and down the feudal hierarchy could choose whose laws to obey through a **legal process called avowal**. (Pg. 189)*

Certainly our own country, (the United States) might mutate in a like manner, such as the regions of Eastern Oregon combining with Northern Idaho in order to operate under a special charter of laws germane to their needs. The United States

already has “enterprise zones,” that is, “a geographic area that has been granted special tax breaks, regulatory exemptions, or other public assistance in order to encourage private economic development and job creation.” It would be a simple step for a federal government starving for tax revenue to establish like enterprise zones for people most expert already in economic development. The authors suggest:

In the Information Age, growing numbers of sovereignties will be small enclaves rather than continental empires. Some may be North American Indian bands who will claim tax jurisdiction over their reservations and reserves much as they now claim the right to operate gambling casinos or to fish in the defiance of limits. (Pg. 244)

Stubborn monolithic national governments may well begin to negotiate the creation of these “enterprise zones” within their own borders, as they compete with smaller, hungrier and more flexible foreign governments for their most productive citizens. In a conversation with my neighbor just this past week he spoke of flying to San Diego on business. Apparently, many of the citizens there find the current California state government so hostile to their interests that the city is losing population – thanks the Rapid Pass border commuting corridor, which enables Americans to live in Mexico but commute to their work in San Diego. A civil war is not necessary, as I would repeat:

Of all 36 ways to get out of trouble, the best way is—leave. —Chinese proverb

"If something cannot go on forever, it will stop," as Herb Stein noted. The question now seems to be: will it grind to a halt, or blow up? The answers, whichever they are, seem to be all pointing into the red. Whoever is running the country seems to favor eliminating realistic sources of energy, collectivization of our food supply, unbridled illegal immigration, universal vaccinations, censorship, and rampant government spending. They also seem determined to finance foreign wars escalating into a flirtation with nuclear weapons. Whether we will end up without possessions and eating bugs in the cold while chronically ill from pharmaceuticals, or vanish into a mushroom cloud might seem a toss-up.

If you want maximum fragility, put all your eggs in one basket, and make that basket untested. Have a new, charismatic idea and place all your chips there. What could go wrong? Well, with a top down, herd structure—everything, and all at once.

No doubts can exist in the herd; the bigger the crowd the better the truth—and the greater the catastrophe. —C.G. Jung

As a further cautionary corollary, we should think very hard about living among large bureaucracies, or allowing large governmental organizations (crowds of their own sort) altogether—as they are in effect like standing armies. A bureaucracy will, on the one hand, utilize and contort policy in as self-serving manner as is possible while employing all of the powers of the state to enforce it while, on the other hand, bureaucracy will enforce any policy sent down from above, no matter how irrational, counterproductive, immoral, or flatly mental. So to be the citizenry corralled within these bureaucratic jurisdictions is like being housed among munitions bunkers. These things could go off, (explode!) at any

time wreaking all sorts of havoc.

For example, consider these excerpts from the novel *A Prison Mosaic* by Armando Simon:

In this following scene, a fellow innocently implicated in a hold-up (his 'friends asked him to stop at a 7-11 in order to buy cigarettes) is talking to his hired Defense Attorney, who states:

And third," she continued, "the District Attorneys don't care whether you're really innocent, or guilty, they just want to convict as many people as possible. Add another notch to their gun, in a manner of speaking. I daresay," she went on, "that if there had been a six-month-old baby in the car (utilized in a convenience store hold-up), he, too, would have been arrested, fingerprinted, and charged with Armed Robbery—if they were assured that the public wouldn't laugh them out of office. (Pg.243)

Bureaucracies are like sticks of dynamite, (or rather crates or warehouses of it), which need only a fuse to become "weaponized". Consider another passage from the same book (Pg.266), in which a scholar of bureaucracies (Kemp) is holding forth:

Me, I worked in the V. A. Hospital for a couple of years—now there's a bureaucracy for you!" she smiled as she spoke. "Anyway, my particular field of expertise, as it happens, is bureaucracies. I find them fascinating. It's almost as if they were alive. I've done some research on them, they can accomplish great things, send a man to the moon, win a war, build the Hoover Dam. But, they can also

do tremendous harm.

My particular interest in this subject," said Kemp, "is not just from a viewpoint of social psychology, but also historical and political. See, when the Bolsheviks took over Russia in 1917, they made very effective use of the existing Czarist bureaucracy to implement their policies. And it wasn't because the bureaucrats were Bolsheviks. It was that they quickly changed their outlook to conform with the new totalitarian policies. They went along. They adapted and conformed to the new regime and proved their loyalty by enthusiastically applying those new policies with zeal—regardless of the issue of right or wrong, and regardless of the consequences—like mass starvation. Their moral values went out the window. And, of course, the same thing happened in 1933 in Germany with the Nazis. The German bureaucracies were originally not staffed by the Nazis, yet they implemented their policies. And same thing with China in 1949 with the Maoists. (Pg.266)

And you know, " said Kemp, "as well as I do that, if tomorrow, the order was given to shoot every prisoner in jails and in prisons, and, give the shooters a rationale to do it, they would. All of them. Forget individual conscience. I know that they would! And we're talking about essentially good people who'd nevertheless, carry out those orders. (Pg. 268)

The modern nation-state, in whatever guise, is a dangerous and unmanageable institution, presenting itself on the one hand as a bureaucratic supplier of goods and services, which is always about to, but never actually does, give its clients value for money—and on the other as a repository of

sacred values, which from time to time invites one to lay down one's life on its behalf ... it is like being asked to die for the telephone company." –Scottish-American philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre.

Predicting the future is certainly a rare talent—so rare that it's generally only recognized historically. But if history will give us clues, what then about life? The trend of life is for antagonists to become symbiotes who negotiate continually (rather like phone calls back and forth) for their mutual benefit. Examples might be the millions of bacteria which inhabit our intestinal tract creating a multitude of necessary nutrients and vitamins, or the viruses which have altered our genetic code to mutual benefit, or most importantly the bacterial infection which eons ago negotiated with our cells to provide energy as mitochondrial processors. If you've ever visited Australia, which is said to be evolutionarily 200 million years behind, you've seen the weird creatures—and also left with the idea that everything there is trying to kill you, and that the past is violent! The wildlife really do get along better in the present where I live.

The future of life would seem to be symbiotic. Humans and machines are trending towards various cyborg states. And currently our political systems are hemorrhaging from their cocoons.

*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?* –Yeats

As more and more of the citizenry decide not to die for the phone company, what does the future bode? And how do we get there alive? Will we be able to even buy the breakfast cereal

we want without inciting a political action? Or will we purchase it in the same way we purchase our government? Watch for my upcoming thoughts (and offer some of yours) in the final third of this series, "Special Ways of Surviving until the Next Symbiosis."

When a house is collapsing, it's a great advantage to be on the outside. –R. R. Reno in First Things

[Table of Contents](#)

Carl Nelson's latest book of poetry titled, *Strays, Misfits, Renegades, and Maverick Poems (with additional Verses on Monetizations)*, has just been published. To have a look at this and more of his work please visit [Magic Bean Books](#).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)