

# Book Reviews

***The Breakdown of Nations***, by Leopold Kohr, 256 pp., paperback, \$15.99, Green Books, ISBN-13: 978-0857844309, Cambridge, England, Green Books, reprint 2016.

“Wherever something is wrong, something is too big,” the quotation for which Leopold Kohr is most famous, has applications broader than one might think at first glance. In a mere 218 pages, Kohr, known for his contribution of “Size Theory,” applies this concept to misery, aggression, war, physics, politics, culture, and economics. Just as fascinating as his ideas and their applications, is his ability to move imperceptibly from the practical and utilitarian to the abstract and theoretical.

Written in 1957, *The Breakdown of Nations* is considered Kohr’s most important work and represents his reaction to the prospect of the annihilation of civilization by nuclear war. Having fled the Nazis, Kohr brings a predictable contempt to nationalism and tyranny, and reserves the best of his devastating wit for these concerns. His comments apply not only to the goose-stepping Nazis he fled, but to the empire builders of today, whose “bigness” fuels their aggressive agendas.

The initial focus of the book involves the more war-like nature of large nations, their violent nature a direct result of their size, and therefore their power. Rather than go to war to achieve loot and power, Kohr maintains that “bigness” itself independently begets aggression, and that power and bigness are, in fact, the sources of aggression. The etiology of power and aggression is discussed at the beginning of the book. Kohr saves his utilitarian solutions and prognoses for the end.

Kohr describes the mass-state citizen, referring to him as “average man,” the inevitable consequence of a large state or society increasingly incapable of original thought or action. He describes the individual as “first oppressed and then impressed by physical strength,” referring to the worship and awe that

is paradoxically offered to tyrants. The inevitable “average man” syndrome that results is stifling to creativity and individual achievement, Kohr maintains. “Outnumbered and out-awed on all sides by packs and groups and gangs and clans, he (the individual) will at last lose faith in his own significance and replace it with a new faith—faith in the significance of the organized group.” This average man “has no chance of resisting the influence and spectacle of mass deployment which must eventually swallow him up in an orgiastic cloud of panting nationalism.”

Building on Aristotle’s admonition not to mistake “a populous state for a great one,” Kohr describes the inevitable transition that independent individuals must undergo to survive in a “mass” state. Individual achievement in a mass state succumbs to the accolades showered on those inventions or developments designed to cope with the increasing “largeness” of city/state size or population. For instance: “In large states we begin to address the public lavatory attendant, once his lavatories add up to impressive enough totals, as His Excellency and call him Minister of Public Hygiene, from whom we consider it an honour if he lets us wait not more than fifteen minutes.”

With great insight, Kohr provides three reasons that small states have historically given rise to the great artists of the past in his section on culture. “The first reason for the intense cultural productiveness found in little states lies thus in the fact that the absence of power will almost invariably turn rulers who might otherwise have become common arsonists and aggressors into patrons of learning and the arts.” A second reason is that a small state loots and interferes less in individuals’ lives, leaving them more “time and leisure without which no great art could be developed.” The third reason is the intellectual sterility of a large state, as much of its energies must be devoted to maintaining itself.

Kohr, like C. Northcote Parkinson (Parkinson’s Law), urged “smallness as a solution to the problems of bigness” for his entire career as an economist. As

Henry Hazlitt in *Economics in One Lesson* provided an economic lens through which events could be interpreted more insightfully, Kohr provides the lens of “smallness,” which can help us understand that if something is broken or not working, it is likely too big.

For physicians practicing in an environment increasingly dominated by the menacing and growing state, I believe Kohr has much to offer. Applying Kohr’s ideas would preclude consideration of national solutions to local issues like delivery of medical services. Kohr, I believe, would caution against overarching plans, however well-meaning, meant to affect (or “cover”) large numbers of individuals, as their “bigness” not only dooms them to failure, but condemns each individual patient.

**G. Keith Smith, M.D.**  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

***Restoring Care to American Healthcare (Book 5): Single Payer Won’t Save Us***, by Deane Waldman, M.D., M.B.A., Kindle, \$4.99, ISBN 978-0-9847686-6-0, Albuquerque, N.M., ADM Books, 2016.

***The Cancer in the American Healthcare System: How Washington Controls and Destroys Our Health Care***, by Deane Waldman, M.D., M.B.A., 328 pp, softcover, \$19.90, ISBN 978-1-68181-381-3, USA/Singapore Strategic Book Publishing, 2015.

These two books are a small sample of Dr. Waldman’s extensive publications devoted to the mission of educating the public about American medical care.

Dr. Waldman practiced pediatric cardiology for 37 years, serving as department chief at Children’s Hospital of San Diego, the University of Chicago, and the University of New Mexico. He reluctantly retired when the Supreme Court upheld the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2012. In August 2016 he became the director of the Center for Health Care Policy at the Texas

Public Policy Foundation of Austin.

Dr. Waldman wrote *Uproot U.S. Healthcare* in 2010 and *The Cancer in Healthcare: How Greed is Killing What We Love* in 2013. In 2016, he started a series of e-books on *Restoring Care to American Healthcare*. He has given a large number of public presentations.<sup>1</sup>

In all his works, Dr. Waldman provides a careful and thorough analysis of what has happened to American medicine that has caused it to be less accessible, much more expensive, and less attentive to effective care. He also hammers on the importance of reducing the bureaucratic inefficiencies and the market-killing effects of third-party payer systems that encourage waste, nonsensical pricing, and mediocrity in service.

Dr. Waldman founds his discussions on the obvious: that under our liberty, medical care is a professional service provided by free persons to patients who are also free. Therefore, it cannot be imposed or mandated as a right. The “healthcare system” comprises a bureaucracy dominated and controlled by government. His key points include:

- Care is compromised by government-mandated busywork, burdensome computer data entry, regulations, demands, and guidelines, along with monetary limitations, delay, and denial, deferral, or cancellation of care.
- Care is compromised by the increasing presence of non-care givers who control and manage institutions with objectives and goals other than effective, efficient, compassionate care.
- Care is compromised by nonsensical and often misguided and excessive risk management mandates and guidelines created by bureaucrats.
- Care is compromised by a loss of focus on the objective—to assure that services are provided to make sure Americans are as healthy and long-lived as a modern society with a modern medical system can accomplish.
- Care is compromised by any system that is born of the misconception that healthcare is health insurance and is subject to the dynamics of third-party payment controls
- Care is compromised by any system of payment where rationing is controlled by third parties.
- Care is compromised, and economic

good sense is nullified by the moral hazards introduced by third-party payer systems.

Dr. Waldman is an erudite, competent, dedicated, and energetic professional on a good mission. His scholarship and good sense are convincing and encouraging.

**John Dale Dunn, M.D., J.D.**

Brownwood, Texas

1. Waldman D. AAPS Has (IS) the Cure for Sick Healthcare. Presented at: Texas Chapter of AAPS Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Tex.; May 19, 2018. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wihf2AnaM4>. Accessed May 23, 2018..

***The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left***, by Dinesh D’Souza, hardcover, 293pp, \$29.99, ISBN 978-62157-348-7, Washington, D.C., Regnery Publishing, 2017.

A constant feature of today’s electoral politics, particularly by Democrats, involves playing the “race card,” or “the Hitler or Nazi card.” As is so often the case, the accusers are guilty of the crimes of which they are accusing others.

The big lie, which D’Souza exposes in meticulous detail, is that the labels that are being applied are generally the exact inversion of the truth. Conservatism is not an extreme right-wing philosophy, nor is it the opposite of socialism or communism. The latter ideologies, in fact, are from the radical left, as D’Souza documents historically. And most Americans may be shocked to learn that fascism and Nazism derive from socialism.

Racism and fascism are indeed grave threats to the American republic, and the U.S. has a disgraceful history with respect to both. The history, however, has been obscured, ignored, or presented in a very deceptive way. Today, as in Hitler’s time, the ones wearing masks, throwing rocks, and setting fires are the fascists, even if they now call themselves Antifa for anti-fascism.

Fascism is by no means conservative or reactionary. It seeks to create a new man and a new utopia free from the shackles of the old religion and old allegiances. This whole mood is about a “tomorrow” that “belongs to me.” It considers itself progressive and forward-looking.

Hitler and Mussolini were nationalists, but simply being a nationalist does not make one a fascist. Both sought a new type of nationalism, D’Souza writes, that bred loyalty not to the nation as it was, but to the new nation they sought to create. He calls it “statist or collectivist nationalism,” which, D’Souza writes, more closely resembles the American left than the American right.

D’Souza identifies Giovanni Gentile as the founding philosopher of fascism. He was a widely influential thinker of his time and served in a variety of important government posts. He believed there was no distinction between the private interest and the public interest, and that all individuals were obligated to serve the state. It was a centralized state that was unaccountable to citizens. “The authority of the State is not subject to negotiation.... It is entirely unconditioned. It cannot depend on the people, in fact, the people depend on the State. Morality and religion... must be subordinate to the laws of the state.”

D’Souza writes that the reason for Gentile’s obscurity is “not that his ideas are dead, but that they are very much alive.” While Gentile seems to be speaking directly to leftist activists, the left will never embrace and celebrate him because of its need to conceal fascism’s association with contemporary leftism, D’Souza explains.

Hitler and Mussolini originally called themselves socialists. Mussolini claimed to have founded “the only genuinely socialist government in the world, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union.” Hitler changed the name of the German Worker’s Party to the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*; the first two German syllables sounded as “Nazi”). It offered a platform that D’Souza thinks could be easily confused with the 2016 platform of the Democratic Party—or at least a platform directed jointly by Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

D’Souza explains how fascism arose because people began to realize that the working classes or the masses were not going to rise up, but a revolutionary vanguard had to do the work. Subsequently, the revolutionaries pressed their case on the basis of national (Italian) allegiance, and in Germany they emphasized race. The Third Reich became the first state in world history

whose dogma and practice was racism.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935, officially called the Law for the Protection of German Blood and the Reich Citizenship Law, were modeled on U.S. anti-miscegenation laws, immigration laws, and Jim Crow laws, an ugly historical fact that American progressives would like to erase. D'Souza details the similarities and important differences between Nazi slave labor camps and slavery in the American South.

The Nazis were actually more liberal in at least one respect. In Nazi Germany, one had to have three Jewish grandparents to be considered a Jew, unless one married a Jew or practiced Judaism. In the South, the "one drop rule" prevailed, referring to Negro blood. Thus, one would be classified as "colored" if one had a single Negro ancestor.

The big lie, D'Souza writes, is in attributing this American racism to conservatives or to the political right. In fact, progressives and the Democratic Party were responsible for this legacy. The Ku Klux Klan was a creation of Democrats and served for 30 years as the "domestic terrorist arm of the Democratic Party." Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass) in November 1938 appeared to be a re-enactment of the Ku Klux Klan-instigated Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. Afterward, Democrats and Nazis came out against random street violence and instead implemented a formal system of segregation and state-sponsored discrimination.

In the South, the de-facto racial segregation that also existed in other parts of the country was more invidious because it was backed up by force of law. Blacks were systematically excluded from virtually all government positions except the lowliest and most menial for three-quarters of a century from the 1880s through the 1960s.

U.S. progressives also led the way in coercive "eugenic" sterilizations, and even congratulated themselves on their influence on the Nazis. Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger was an avid advocate for eugenics and a flagrant racist. She considered blacks to be in the category of what she called "human weeds." Eugenics has marched under the banner of "pro-choice" in the past few decades, D'Souza states, although Sanger opposed choice. She demanded that the rich, educated,

and "fit" populations must have more children, while poor, uneducated, and "unfit" population must have fewer children. She, like Hitler, believed that reproductive decisions must serve the larger interests of society and the species.

The "choice" strategy came from the century-old Democratic method of dealing with slavery. "Choice" was "the rallying cry of the northern Democrats led by Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas. Douglas used this doctrine to support slavery in the South while assuring his Northern constituents that he was not himself advocating slavery.

In D'Souza's chapter entitled "American Führers," D'Souza quotes a review of Franklin Roosevelt's book *Looking Forward* from the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*: "Many passages in President Roosevelt's book could have been written by a National Socialist. One can assume he feels considerable affinity with the National Socialist philosophy."

Progressives portray leaders, from the New Deal through Johnson's Great Society through Obamacare, as the "middle way" between socialism and capitalism, D'Souza states. But he points out that the technical name for that is fascism. The foundational point is *Gemeinnutz über Eigennutz*, the common good over the individual good.

"The whole middle path nonsense is part of the big lie," D'Souza states. "In reality, socialism, fascism, and progressivism are three similar—though not identical—forces of leftism. All three march in the same direction, away from liberal capitalism, so there is no middle path at all."

The photographic plates in the center of the book will astonish most Americans. For example, there is a photo of the young John F. Kennedy returning from his trips to Germany in the 1930s "effusive about Hitler and Nazi Germany." In 1945, D'Souza states, JFK described Hitler as a "legend."

Boldly, D'Souza even challenges the popular notion that FDR saved us from the Depression and from the Nazis. The Soviet Union, he states, was the most important force in defeating Nazi Germany. "The fight between FDR, Hitler, and Mussolini was an intramural fight and a struggle for power among once-amicable leftist leaders with a shared collectivist ideology."

The roots of progressivism in the U.S. preceded FDR, D'Souza writes. He calls Woodrow Wilson a "protofascist," noting that Wilson implemented racist policies throughout the federal government and helped revive the dormant Ku Klux Klan. The federal government had not been segregated since the end of the Civil War. Wilson's reversal of this policy was bitterly protested by Booker T. Washington, who was a Republican.

D'Souza's next-to-the-last chapter on "The Politics of Intimidation" concerns what's going on at present in the left's effort to oust Trump. Sub-headings include the "Culture of Intimidation," "Progressive *Gleichschaltung*" (bringing all of society into line with the leftist priorities), "The Left's Favorite Nazi," "Brown Shirt Tactics 101," "The Deceitful Origin of 'Anti-fascism,'" and "Repressive Intolerance."

The concluding chapter, "Denazification," contains some practical suggestions for how to turn things around. Importantly, D'Souza is opposed to turning the deadly apparatus of government against the left. The first step, he writes, would be to rip the masks off the progressives, to show their own history, and to thwart their effort to project a history of abuses onto their opponents.

The book is indexed and heavily referenced.

It would be an interesting experiment to lock some young "social justice warriors" in a room without a television, internet connection, or smartphone, until they could pass a quiz demonstrating that they had read this book.

**Jane M. Orient, M.D.**  
Tucson, Ariz.

