

# Book Reviews

**The Fourth Industrial Revolution**, by Klaus Schwab, 184 pp, softcover, \$20.20, ISBN: 978-0-241-30075-6, Penguin Random House UK, 2016.

Millions of people in the world, surely the vast majority affected, see the COVID-19 pandemic as a tragedy and a disaster. Loved ones are lost, livelihoods are destroyed, educational plans derailed. Beyond the effects on individuals, it appears that economic arrangements may be forever altered, and our representative form of government and individual civil liberties may be destroyed. For progressive elites, however, the crisis appears to be an opportunity to speed the revolutionary changes that they have foreseen and promoted long before COVID-19 hit.

Global elitists meet annually in Davos, Switzerland, at the World Economic Forum, of which Klaus Schwab is founder and executive chairman. Their vision of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is outlined in the book's Foreword by Marc R. Benioff, WEF Board of Trustees member. The new technology, he writes, is not only changing the way we live, but "in both subtle and explicit ways, ... changing what it means to be human."

Both the natural world and humanity will benefit, according to Schwab, from changing the world's business model from the linear take-make-dispose model of resource use to a "circular model." This requires tracking material and energy flows along the supply chain, made possible by the "internet of things," so as to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Satellite monitoring will make it possible to hold companies, countries, and individual landholders accountable for their use of resources, and to "shift citizen behavior on a large scale."

Instead of ownership, we will have a "sharing economy" with leasing models, and "agile governments," no longer hamstrung by political gridlock.

The effects of this organizational model will filter down to individual human beings. "Individuals used to identify their lives most closely with a place, an ethnic group, a particular culture or even a language." But with online engagement, "people are now much more comfortable with carrying and managing multiple identities." Familial identity will be redefined. "The traditional family unit is being replaced by the trans-national family network."

Along with radical changes in social relationships and individuals' self-perceptions, the human genome may be reengineered.

"We may see designer babies in the near future, along with a whole series of other edits to our humanity—from eradicating genetic diseases to augmenting human cognition." Concerning the soul, we must move from the me-centered society to one focused on a pervasive sense of common purpose, Schwab writes.

The lengthy appendix describes 23 elements of the "deep shift." These include implantable technologies, a wearable internet, ubiquitous computing, and the "connected home."

The enumerated positive impacts of the connected home include "home sharing." Monitoring in real time and remote home control would, for example, allow closing the gas valve. That might happen, one suspects, if the inhabitants were using more than their fair share of heat. The tipping point would be when more than 50 percent of internet traffic delivered to homes was for appliances and devices rather than for entertainment or communication. The book states that a majority of survey respondents expected this tipping point to occur by 2025.

Schwab predicts that by 2025 more trips will be made by car sharing than by private cars. Governments will collect taxes via block chain. Amazing medical developments will include the first transplant of a 3D-printed liver.

Shift number 22 is "designer beings." It includes the first human whose genome was directly and deliberately edited, along with changes in plants and animals.

In 2022, we are only three years from the 2025 end of these visionaries' 10-year plan for progress towards a utopia in which computer-aided man has become like God, reaching far higher than the Tower of Babel.

The author lists potential negative as well as positive impacts of the deep shifts, but seems to entertain no doubt about the desirability and inevitability of this coming revolution.

Will we let it happen?

**COVID-19: The Great Reset**, by Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret, 180 pages, softcover, \$19.99, ISBN: 978-2-940631-12-4, Forum Publishing, 2020.

As the title shows, the concept of COVID-19 as an opportunity for "The Great Reset" is not the product of the fevered imagination of vaccine skeptics or "far-right ideologues." What most people might see as a horrible catastrophe is, in the view of these

authors, a "crucial moment in history."

This book outlines the impact of the pandemic on economic, societal, geopolitical, environmental, and technological factors, but also on specific industries and companies as well as individuals.

Unlike in all prior pandemics in world history, a full return to "normal" cannot be envisioned before a vaccine is available, the authors assert. After developing the vaccine and manufacturing billions of doses, the authors note that the next hurdle is "the political challenge of vaccinating enough people worldwide (we are collectively as strong as the weakest link) with a high enough compliance rate despite the rise of antivaxxers."

Institutions and organizations such as the European Commission are developing frameworks to govern public policy decision in the post-pandemic world. The "crises" of the pandemic and climate disaster are intertwined, the book states.

The first framework, to be presented by the Municipality of Amsterdam, resembles a doughnut in which the inner ring is the minimum we need to lead a good life as enunciated by the U.N. Sustainable Development goals and the outer ring is the ecological ceiling defined by earth-system scientists. In between the two rings is the "sweet spot" where our human needs and those of the planet are being met.

In discussing economic factors, the book states that "the post-pandemic era will usher in a period of massive wealth redistribution, from the rich to the poor and from capital to labour." There has, indeed, been massive wealth redistribution, but primarily from the poor and the middle class to the world's wealthiest elite and mega-corporations.

The book states that COVID-19 is "likely to sign the death knell of neoliberalism, a corpus of ideas and policies that can loosely be defined as favouring competition over solidarity, creative destruction over government intervention and economic growth over social welfare." Liberalism, the authors say, has been increasingly denounced for its "market fetishism." COVID-19 brought the coup de grace, with the U.S. and the UK, the two countries embracing neoliberalism with the most fervor, suffering the most casualties.

In the authors' view, the 21st century is supposed to see the end of an absolute hegemon, with power and influence redistributed chaotically and in some cases grudgingly. Concerning power, influence,

and wealth, the authors propose that “there is a globalization trilemma.” This suggests that economic globalization, political democracy, and the nation state are mutually irreconcilable, based on the logic that only two can effectively coexist at a time. Evidently, the nation state needs to be eliminated.

In today’s messy world, the authors suggest, “nobody is really in charge.” Who should be in charge? The authors discuss the United States and China and their rivalries and the need for “international cooperation.” Reading between the lines, it is apparent that the players in the World Economic Forum envision themselves as being the ones to govern from the pinnacle of technocratic expertise. They favor “stakeholder capitalism,” as opposed to shareholder capitalism. Those who create and invest in the new technology are apparently not the ones who will ultimately control it.

Despite their extremely moralistic tone, the authors fail to give any attention to what the foundation of our morality is. “Good” appears to be mainly focused on the common good, and on being “clean” as they define it from the standpoint of a radical environmentalist view. Individual human rights appear to have no place. Everything is subject to the demands of “equality,” and apparently the commandment “thou shalt not steal,” which in the broader sense encompasses taking anything that belongs to another including honor, spouse, life, or reputation, does not apply. It appears that they have rejected the idea that anything actually belongs to an individual, not even his soul—“you will own nothing.”

The book claims to show us where to start for human beings to “take their destiny into their hands and plan for a better future.” But in reality it describes the end of self-governance and self-determination, a future of totalitarianism never before contemplated but now enabled by astonishing gains in technology.

**Stakeholder Capitalism: A Global Economy that Works for Progress, People and Planet**, by Klaus Schwab with Peter Vanham, 285 pages, hardcover, \$24.95, ISBN 978-1-119-75613-2, Hoboken, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons, 2021.

One can identify the priorities of these authors from the subtitle: Progress, whatever that means, is first, and the Planet is in the top three. And the economy, like the new politics, is global, not local.

Schwab writes that in early February 2020 he sat down in Geneva to discuss the book with a colleague. He was reflecting in depth on the global economic system built in the 75 years since the end of World War II and in the 50 years since the creation of the World Economic Forum. He was considering what changes to the system are needed to make sure that it would be “more equitable,

sustainable, and resilient for future generations.” His long-term agenda, he writes, was upended by a call from the head of the Beijing representative office in China, concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. Time is now divided into a “B.C.” and “A.C.”

By “equality,” Schwab apparently means equalizing the results of the system that brought the greatest prosperity and freedom the world has ever known with the results of regimes that brought the most oppressive tyranny and poverty—applying a supposedly new system called “stakeholder capitalism,” which sounds very much like communism.

New growth cannot be part of this because we have the Planet to worry about. Schwab calls the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) “Kuznets’ Curse,” referring to the Kuznets Curve, a hypothetical curve that graphs economic inequality vs. income per capita over the course of economic development.

Schwab’s deplorables include the collapse of what he calls the political center and the surge of populism. The Brandenburg Gate, which once stood as a symbol of unity and hope, “now symbolized an entirely different reality, that of a more polarized and highly skeptical society.” He also deplores the spread of “conspiracy theories” about the “alleged true nature of the pandemic.” He states that “in Germany, media reported that neo-Nazi elements were involved in the protest for freedom from government measures against the pandemic.”

Schwab criticizes both the shareholder capitalism that has predominated in the West and the state capitalism model that has brought enormous economic progress to China. He states that the government is the dominant stakeholder because it has “a strong hand in the distribution of resources and opportunities, can intervene in virtually any industry, and can direct the economy by means of large-scale infrastructure.” Apparently, he does not see any difficulty with China’s destruction of individual human rights or its concentration camps.

In his vision, the ideal world will “pursue the wellbeing of all people and the entire planet.” It will be able to answer questions like these: What is the gender pay gap in company X? How many people of diverse backgrounds were hired and promoted? What progress has the company made toward reducing its greenhouse gas emissions? How much did the company pay in taxes globally and per jurisdiction?

Who will be in charge of directing all the global “cooperation”? It will not be Black Lives Matter, or the diverse groups promoted in Critical Race Theory, or other groups such as Fridays for Future or #MeToo, which Schwab acknowledges as contributing to the “sense of urgency.”

For decades, the WEF has been training up “young global leaders” now insinuated

at all levels in governments, media, science, military, law enforcement, and so on. They include Gavin Newsom, Pete Buttigieg, Huma Abedin, Chelsea Clinton, Paul Krugman, Leanna Wen, Angela Merkel, Emanuel Macron, Sebastian Kurz, Justin Trudeau, and thousands more. These are the people who have been selected to create an “inclusive and virtuous economic system,” shaped by ideals like truth, trust, and service, to “bind us together as one species caring for each other and for our planet.” It is not by accident that we hear the slogan “build back better” emanating simultaneously from governments throughout the world, not just from the Biden Administration.

COVID-19 did not slow but accelerated the development of a system of global metrics, evidently modeled on the Chinese social credits system. The window of opportunity for a #NotMe resistance movement may be very narrow.

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**Judgment in Moscow: Soviet Crimes and Western Complicity**, by Vladimir Bukovsky, 726 pp, hardcover, \$23.99, ISBN 978-0-9980416-2-9, Ninth of November Press, 1996 (Russian), 2019 (English).

Soviet dissident Vladimir K. Bukovsky (1942-2019), who spent 12 years in Soviet prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals, lived in the West after being traded for a Chilean communist in 1976. After the fall of the USSR, he gained access to the Soviet archives and smuggled to the West the documents that formed the basis for this book. He had hoped for a Nuremberg-style trial of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before the Constitutional Court of Russia.

Energized at age 14 by Khrushchev’s secret speech exposing the horrific tyranny under Stalin, by age 19 Bukovsky was persecuted as a dissenter and dismissed from biology studies at Moscow University for organizing against the regime. He then endured serial incarcerations and forced psychiatric “treatments,” diagnosed with a newly invented form of schizophrenia manifested by dissent from communist tyranny.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Soviet authorities began widespread use of psychiatric treatment as a form of punishment and deterrence for the independent-minded. This involved unlimited and arbitrary detention in mental health facilities called *psikhushka* that were either conventional locked-ward psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric prison-hospitals set up as part of an existing penal institution. Healthy individuals were held among mentally ill and often dangerous patients and were forced to take various psychotropic drugs.

In 1971, Bukovsky sent documentation of these psychiatric abuses to a group of French mental health professionals called the International Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, who released them to the press with comments. Bukovsky's correspondence appeared in the *Times* of London and the *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

In retaliation, Bukovsky was arrested and held in isolation for nine months, awaiting trial for slandering Soviet psychiatry, making contact with foreign journalists, and the possession and distribution of dissenting publications called *samizdat*. He was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison, five in a labor camp, and then five in internal exile.

With a fellow inmate, Bukovsky wrote a manual of advice for those targeted by political psychiatry, advising on how to avoid the diagnosis of mental illness. This *Manual on Psychiatry for Dissidents* was widely distributed and translated into many languages, but it is not available for purchase now.

In 1977 the World Psychiatric Association condemned the Soviet use of psychiatry for political suppression, and in 1983 Soviet representatives resigned from the association under threat of expulsion.

In 1979, Bukovsky's book *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter* was published.

*Judgment in Moscow*, his most important book, is the product of the dissolution of the USSR, a lawsuit filed by the Communist Supreme Soviet officials to compel return of their properties lost to the new government, and the rise of Boris Yeltsin to the presidency (1991–1999). Yeltsin was succeeded by former KGB high official Vladimir Putin (2000–present).

Yeltsin invited Bukovsky to be an expert witness for his government, which was the defendant in the lawsuit—a monumental turn of events. The Yeltsin side intended not only to defend its actions to take Communist Party officials' property, but also to show the rapacious and criminal conduct of Communist Party officials and Soviet government agencies.

In April 1991, 15 years after his deportation or release from USSR, Bukovsky's citizenship was restored and his convictions annulled by the Supreme Court. He was even considered for a role as vice president in the Yeltsin administration in the 1991 election, but a military hero was selected instead.

Bukovsky was critical of the new Russian constitution because it was too prone to produce a dictator and ceded too much power to security and secret service/intelligence bureaucracies. His predictions proved correct. However, the Yeltsin administration opened the door to Bukovsky and allowed him access to the archives of the former communist government.

By electronic means, Bukovsky copied and saved thousands of communications at

high levels of the Communist government, including reports from the KGB to the Central Committee. The materials were organized and published on line, forming the foundation for the book that appeared in French in 1995, in Russian in 1996, and then other languages. But Random House, which owned the publishing rights, suppressed publication in English. Only after 20 years, when Random House relinquished the rights and they were picked up by a boutique anti-communist publisher in California—Ninth of November (Fall of the Berlin Wall) Press—did the book appear in English.

Bukovsky asserts, without denials from Random House, that they insisted that he rewrite the book from a leftist perspective. His reply was something like the Russian equivalent of "nuts." Why would an American publishing house suppress this material? The English language edition finally appeared in May 2019, five months before Bukovsky's death from heart disease.

Testimonials by many important political figures support the theme of the book—that Russia has been interfering in American politics for decades, enabled by dupes or willing actors in the West. The book has been called "essential for understanding why Russia did not make the transition to democracy after 1991 and why the men who now rule the Kremlin operate just like the communist apparatchiks and KGB bureaucrats who preceded them."

Matt Laar, former prime minister of Estonia, writes that the book is "an essential warning of the dangers of collaborating with authoritarian regimes." He states that "Bukovsky's moral compass has never failed.... No one has written with greater clarity on why engagement between the free world and despots spreads corruption, not freedom." He quotes Bukovsky: "Our fall began from the moment we agreed to 'peaceful coexistence' with evil."

The Introduction by Edward Lucas, senior editor for *The Economist*, sets the table:

This book is on one level an archival achievement: the distillation of thousands of top-secret Kremlin documents brought to light by the author's ingenuity and determination in the brief window that opened after the collapse of communism. But it is far more than that. It is the story of a terrible crime and three great scandals.

The terrible crime is the depredations, destruction, and mass killings and pogroms/genocide perpetrated by the Soviet Communist regime. The three scandals are: (1) Western delusions about civilizing the Soviet system; (2) the failure of the West and Russian domestic political officials to impose accountability on the criminals and savages of the previous regime, resulting in the development of the hybrid Kremlin evil of political, economic, and gangland tyranny;

and (3) the suppression of Bukovsky's book and his efforts to expose Soviet perfidy. Lucas suggests that "Bukovsky's sweeping and unsparring condemnation of Western cupidity and culpability are a factor in the Random House effort to suppress Bukovsky's eloquent appeal to demand accountability."

Part I of the book, "In the East," is extensive biographical information on important individuals, followed by an exhaustive glossary of communist activities and policy matters.

Chapter 4, "Betrayal," describes Bukovsky's encounters and interactions with the leftist Western chattering class, who had no concept of evil and certainly no sense of honor or commitment to good and righteous political conduct.

Chapter 5, "The Watershed Years," covers the conduct of Western and Soviet actors from the 1979 Soviet invasion of and withdrawal from Afghanistan, along with other events of the 1980s.

Chapter Six adds information obtained from the Gorbachev Foundation archives, debunking favorable attitudes of Western dignitaries toward Gorbachev.

From 2000 to 2018, Bukovsky was very politically active. He was a candidate for president four times. He had strong support but was unable to unseat Putin. As Stalin said, the important factor in an election is who counts the votes.

Bukovsky also weighed in on then-current problems and warned about how Russian diplomacy and influence peddling takes advantage of European Union weakness. He also argued that the EU had an unfortunate tendency to totalitarianism. He frequently spoke out on the side of human rights against state tyranny.

Bukovsky was energetic and honorable, the emblematic resistance leader. His books need to be read as long as Soviet-style tyranny remains.

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