

Zubrin is right on just about every count. The only flaw is a lack of appropriate skepticism.

I bought this book expecting to agree with Zubrin. I heartily agree that the "Merchants of Despair" have sewn irrational fear about DDT, nuclear power, climate change, genetic engineering, overpopulation and world hunger.

The centerpiece of the book is the famous 1980s bet between Paul Ehrlich and Julian Simon about the changing price of commodities over time. Ehrlich and the Club of Rome contended that humanity was running out of resources. We would overpopulate the planet and starve. Actually, as Zubrin points out with a number of useful graphs, food per capita increased significantly even in the poorest countries, notably India.

Zubrin is right to say that the increase was due to human ingenuity. A lot of great brains working together, such as Norman Borlaug in agriculture and the silicon geniuses, allowed mankind to increase productivity faster than population. Even as the earth's population expanded from under one billion to more than seven billion over the course of a century, our ability to feed ourselves more than kept up.

Where he goes wrong is to project this trend to infinity. This remarkable increase appears to have been a one-time event caused by the constant increase in intelligence in Europe and Northeast Asia over the course of the prior millennium, culminating in the Industrial Revolution, the harnessing of electricity and fossil fuels.

Newton and Gauss' physics, Maxwell and Faraday's work on electricity, the increasing exploitation of coal and petroleum had a transformative effect. They led to the electrification of the entire world, electronic communications, the train, the steamship, the automobile and the airplane. The last such major innovations, atomic energy and computers, are already fifty years old and they have not transformed our lives as dramatically as the above-named.

I was surprised that fully half the book consists of an attack on Darwinism as practiced and especially on eugenics. Zubrin is especially harsh on Darwin's acolytes Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, the Huxley's and the leaders of world industry of that time. These people feared that the world would be overrun by the "lesser races." There was already concern that the best and brightest were not reproducing themselves.

An Englishman today would say that these fears were not misplaced. Like just about every ethnicity in every time, the swarms of immigrants protect their own and dislike the other, in this case native Englishman. Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" prediction of a half-century ago appears to be being borne out. Francis Galton would certainly not repent of history having proven him wrong.

Zubrin is an optimist and a humanist. In his conclusion he writes "In a world of plenty, antihumanism declares that the hungry may not eat. Where there is space enough for everyone, antihumanism insists that myriads must be slain to make room for others. Where cures are available to avert disease, antihumanism demands that they not be employed. When new technology could make power cheaper and cleaner, antihumanism cries halt. When improved crops offer more food with fewer chemicals, antihumanism says no. Instead of welcoming the human spark of inventive genius, antihumanism decries it as a threat. When the human race improves nature, antihumanism condemns it for doing so, and calls for arrest and severe punishment. Where democracy allows for freedom of thought and conscience, antihumanism seeks to submerge reason and compassion and turn citizens into a herd."

He is too optimistic about human nature. He makes a twofold denial of evolution. First, he denies that evolution is a process of differentiation that has resulted in human populations being significantly different. Secondly, he does not want to acknowledge that nationalism, ethnocentrism, is innate, part and parcel of evolution.

He loudly condemns not only the English and American, but German ethnocentrism, epitomized by Ernst Haeckel. He cites Daniel Goldhagen writing "Hitler's Willing Executioners" in condemning that nationalist spirit. Looking out for your own is not confined to the Germans and the English. Goldhagen might note that Stalin too had his willing executioners. That story has been written – and suppressed. The English translation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's last book, "200 Years Together," entitled "The Crucifixion of Russia" has been so thoroughly suppressed in the United States that you cannot buy it for any price. It is available only as samizdat. To quote Voltaire, "to know who your masters are, look only at whom you cannot criticize."

Throughout history Jews were a minority wherever they lived. They promoted peace because it was in their evolutionary interest. However, in the instances in which they have attained power they have proven to be just like everybody else. The Bolshevik movement in Russia was Jewish led. Jews dominated the ruthless cheka Secret Service and led the Holodomor in Ukraine. Norman Finkelstein says that their ethnic cleansing of Israel echoed the Turks ethnic cleansing of the Armenian areas of their empire.

This is not the blame the Jews, simply to say that every people has used argument when it served their purposes and power when they were able to. The nineteenth and twentieth century English, Germans and Americans who lead the eugenics movement were not uniquely evil. They were simply uniquely positioned, at their point in history, to put their ethnocentrism in action. The Jews did so in revolutionary Russia and modern Palestine.

Zubrin's history is several decades old. For the past half century at least the countries of Europe and North America have been hammered with messages of white guilt. They have been told that they are uniquely evil, responsible for colonialism, slavery, and the second-class status of people of color not only in their own countries but throughout the world. It is remarkable that the native Caucasian inhabitants of these countries have swallowed and internalized the message. The proponents of this message are not all of one mind or one people, but certainly a certain highly intelligent non-Christian minority with control over the media almost every place has had a remarkable influence.

Included in the message that we are historically evil is reference to our treatment of women and sexual minorities. The notions that a woman's place was in the home, and that homosexuality should be shunned, were evolutionarily favorable to those who held them. They had been tenants of the Christian church. The message of the past fifty years has been cast as one of freedom. We are free to abandon traditional senses of obligation to wife and family; traditional senses of how to channel one's sex drive; traditional senses of how a family is constituted; traditional senses of obligation to the society and restraint when it comes to our own pleasures.

It is wrong to argue that the Jews systematically advance their own interests by undermining the Christian societies' ability to reproduce itself. While it may be true of individual Jews, such as Susan Sontag who openly disparaged Christians, it was certainly not a conspiracy. More to the point, these movements have adversely affected the Jews' ability to reproduce themselves even more severely than the Gentiles. Jews not only advocated abortion, women's rights, homosexuality and so on, but they tend to be disproportionately represented among the practitioners. As a consequence, the Jewish people of America and Europe are not reproducing themselves. The children they have are more often than not born to non-Jewish partners. This 4000 year-old tribe's undoing itself with unprecedented haste.

We have a situation in which the smartest major populations in the world (Jews, East Asians and then Caucasians) are not coming close to reproducing themselves. Francis Galton's fears are being realized. Moreover, just as Galton noted in his day, the most intelligent strata of European and American society are the ones who are tending to have the fewest children. Intelligence being at least 80% hereditary, the median intelligence of even the native populations of Europe and the Americas are declining. See [[ASIN: 9781845409852 At Our Wits End - Why We're Becoming Less Intelligent and What it Means for the Future]] and Helmuth Nyberg's books on the subject.

Zubrin's case for increased productivity depends on human ingenuity, which in turn depends on human intelligence. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed remarkable innovations in just about every field of human endeavor. However, as the eugenicists said, they also witnessed a reversal in the long-term trend toward increasing intelligence. That decline, at first slow, is now accelerating.

The result is that most of the population no longer has the intelligence required to understand the wonderful arguments that Zubrin makes in this book. The leading nations of the world are more and more nations of sheep, accepting the propaganda that is fed to them, just as Zubrin says.

Zubrin is absolutely right that the world's resources would be adequate to support a growing population. Whether or not it would support the burgeoning populations of Africa and the Middle East is a moot point. Going to his primary point, it will never be put to a test. We are too stupid and fearful to try.

This book is a five-star effort, a masterful survey of the ways in which the supposed best and brightest of mankind are dooming our species.

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Zubrin, Robert. Merchants of Despair: Radical Environmentalists, Criminal Pseudo-Scientists, and the Fatal Cult of Antihumanism (New Atlantis Books) . Encounter Books. Kindle Edition.