

## CHAPTER 15

### *American Walls and Demagogues*

Illegal immigration? Put a fence up and start shooting.

—SAM WURZELBACHER, *aka Joe the Plumber*

JOSÉ ROMERO, an agent with the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), drove me along the El Paso sector of the frontier with Mexico—260 miles long, with 86 miles of metal fencing. Not far away, on the other side, lay Tanila Garcia's shack. Romero was what you would expect: spit-shined, sporting a crew cut and dark brown uniform, a third-generation Chicano, by the book, ideologically all-American, and a nice host.

"If you have an illegal that crosses here, you can pick them up by their tracks if they cross these breaks. Then the agents can move up to the next section to find where they cross again," Romero said, as he showed me the wide dirt belts, raked bare to catch migrants running north.

Climate change will increase the number of people trying to enter the United States. Recall the estimates that by 2050 as many as 250 million to 1 billion people will be on the move due to climate change.<sup>1</sup> Britain's 2006 Stern Review estimated that by the latter half of this century, climate change will create 10 times the current number of refugees.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the border becomes a text from which to read the future—or a version of it. Here we see how the catastrophic convergence simultaneously creates

both state failure in the Global South and authoritarian state hardening in the Global North.

Climate change is an increasingly important driver of immigration. Describing the greenwashing of xenophobia in the US Southwest, Andrew Ross wrote, "An estimated 50 million people have already been displaced by the impact of climate change, and the numbers will escalate in years to come. In northern Mexico, a primary source of migrants to Arizona, soil is eroding rapidly from the decline in precipitation, and studies predict that regional rainfall could decrease by 70 percent by the century's end. Are the emissions pumped into the desert air above central Arizona's sprawl already responsible, however indirectly, for some portion of the 500,000 undocumented migrants in the state?"<sup>3</sup> While the deeper causes of environmental crisis—suburban sprawl and overconsumption—remain unaddressed, repression, surveillance, and violence are emerging as the preferred forms of adaptation. Never mind emissions mitigation as a response to immigration.

Already much of the 1,969-mile US-Mexico border resembles the front lines of a quiet war. One side is defined by the misery of the slums packed along the fence in the great border cities like Tijuana, Mexicali, Nogales, Matamoros, and Juarez. Here, people like Tanila Garcia struggle to feed themselves, while a rising tide of violence swamps and incapacitates society. To the north, 700 miles of steel fencing, military-surplus motion sensors, infrared cameras, and a sky patrolled by unmanned aerial drones and National Guard helicopters characterize the line.<sup>4</sup>

The 1990s were radical growth years for border militarization and all manner of beating up on immigrants. The Department of Justice saw its budget more than double between 1991 and 2002. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the creation of the DHS, funding for anti-immigrant enforcement has only risen. As border scholar Peter Andres explained, "Law enforcement has been the fastest area of federal government expansion since the end of the Cold War, and its biggest components have been immigration control, drug enforcement, and counterterrorism"—all categories that feed parasitically upon "the border" as political project, militarized space, and xenophobic notion.<sup>5</sup>

Our current style of anti-immigrant policing—of which climate change will surely bring more—is eroding civil liberties and thus fundamentally transforming America, returning the nation to its more primitive condition: a herrenvolk democracy based on segregation and routine violence, in which race and nationality mask raw class power. Border militarization and interior enforcement are the legal gray zone where the US Bill of Rights is most radically curtailed. Immigrants are the canaries in the political coal mine, and immigration is the vehicle by which the logic of the “state of emergency” is smuggled into everyday life, law, and politics.

### *Spirit of War*

The idea of emergency, or the state of exception, is crucial in the political theory of authoritarian states. Carl Schmitt famously theorized the legal basis of dictatorship in Nazi Germany by resort to this notion. In this tradition, emergencies are the means by which democracies smuggle in authoritarian, or absolutist, politics and law enforcement. Political theorist Giorgio Agamben argues that “the voluntary creation of a permanent state of emergency (though perhaps not declared in the technical sense) has become one of the essential practices of contemporary states, including so-called democratic ones.”<sup>6</sup> In the United States, the drift toward authoritarianism has so far been driven less by genuine emergencies and more by the crass political theater of posturing candidates and elected officials. Witness, for example, the 2005 declaration of a “border emergency” by then governors Bill Richardson and Janet Napolitano, of New Mexico and Arizona, respectively, both Democrats.<sup>7</sup>

Anti-immigrant policing involves a weird alchemy in which the tools of war and a lack of due process at the border are insinuating themselves into the duties of regular law enforcement and reshaping the everyday practices of state power. Border enforcement involves new equipment, expanded police powers, and unprecedented interagency cooperation. The immigration cops of the Department of Homeland Security—the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and CBP—work in joint task

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forces with the FBI, DEA, local police, and elements of the armed forces. The whole border region now exists in a legal twilight where the US Constitution no longer necessarily applies.

Consider this: "The border" as a legal space is now a 100-mile wide strip that wraps around the entire land and sea boundary of the United States and thus encompasses two-thirds of the US population—or 197.4 million people and 9 of the nation's top 10 largest metropolitan areas.

Normally, the Fourth Amendment prohibits random and arbitrary searches. However, when you cross the international line, different rules apply—even citizens do not have full Fourth Amendment rights. To enter the country, one must show identification and allow one's belongings to be searched. Authorities do not need probable cause or reasonable suspicion. Thanks to post-9/11 administrative changes, similar rules extend to the whole "border region," though in practice these laws are only used regularly in the Southwest.

Yet, even on the Canadian border, the Border Patrol now stops buses, runs checkpoints on highways, and questions drivers on noninternational ferries in Washington State and on Lake Champlain, between Vermont and New York. Legally speaking, these are "administrative stops" in which the Border Patrol is only allowed to ask for proof of citizenship. But the stops frequently go beyond that. A search that begins as administrative can easily escalate as officials find this or that detail suspicious. And when the CBP partners with other police forces, its special border-oriented powers are essentially transferred to their "assisting agencies."

### *Urban Border*

Urban sectors of the border are now locked down with a penal infrastructure of guard towers, 18-foot-high walls topped in some spots with triple coils of razor wire, infrared TV cameras, hypersensitive microphones, thousands of high-tech motion sensors, and scores of new, mobile, stadium-style klieg floodlights. Patrolling the line are 20,000 Border Patrol agents, supported by more than 37,000 civilian staff and customs inspectors. The CBP has more than 500 pilots and 250 aircraft, making it the world's

largest nonmilitary law enforcement air force.<sup>8</sup> Varying numbers of DEA and Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents are in the border region at any given time searching for immigrant lawbreakers. So, too, are 6,000 military personnel and their equipment: machine guns, Humvees, Stryker vehicles, and aircraft.<sup>9</sup> Marine and National Guard engineers build access roads and run surveillance operations, while regular National Guard units use border operations as training for overseas deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> Away from the immediate border—in the barrios of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas—multiagency operations often involve heavily armed tactical raiding parties backed up by helicopters and dogs and result in mass arrests.

In early 2006, ICE ordered all of its seven-member fugitive operation teams (FOTs), which are meant to be investigation driven and precise in their methods, to boost their annual arrest quotas from 125 to 1,000 per year! Overnight, they were expected to become eight times more productive.<sup>11</sup> There soon followed a wave of mass raids. Among other locations, the FOTs hit six meatpacking plants in Texas, Colorado, Minnesota, Iowa, Utah, and Nebraska. During one Nebraska raid, 12,000 workers were herded together at gunpoint and denied access to phones, bathrooms, families, and legal counsel while ICE agents interrogated them one by one. In this operation, ICE had a warrant identifying 133 workers who were using stolen identities. As a report by the United Food and Commercial Workers later explained, “The federal agents could have—as they did a week earlier at a Swift plant in Louisville, Kentucky—gone to the Human Resources office and asked that the identified suspects be pulled from the production line, so they could question and, if necessary, apprehend them. But the ICE warrant on December 12, 2006, was used less as an effective law enforcement tool and more as a way to grab headlines and stir hysteria around immigration and immigrants.”<sup>12</sup>

Among those detained was Michael Graves, an African American born in the United States. Graves told the House Judiciary Committee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, “They just held me there for eight hours. No reason. No probable cause. It was like our plant was transformed into a prison or a

detention center. I am a U.S. citizen. I was born and raised in this country. And I was treated as a criminal on a normal day where I just got up and went to work." Another detainee testified, "I was held for six hours. No water, no food."<sup>13</sup>

Latino citizens were told they needed to show either passports or citizenship certificates. Those who could not were transported to a military base 300 miles away in Johnston, Iowa. The new ICE quotas led to a spike in the number of deportations, from 69,226 in fiscal 1996 to almost 400,000 in 2009.<sup>14</sup>

That is what the political theorists' "state of exception" looks like in practice. It has the potential to define everyday life in a world that fails to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and chooses, late in the game, a form of military adaptation.

### *Detention*

Many people caught at the border are quickly dumped on the other side. However, illegal entry is now a punishable offense, and ICE detains many undocumented immigrants before deporting them. ICE holds about 29,000 detainees on any given day; that is almost 50 percent more than in just 2005.<sup>15</sup> According to the DHS more than 80 percent of these detainees have committed no crime other than illegal entry.<sup>16</sup> As civil—not criminal—prisoners, they have no right to government-funded attorneys, and most are too poor to hire private ones. When the Associated Press analyzed an official ICE database, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, it found a detainee population of 32,000 on the evening of January 25, 2009. A shocking 18,690 of those detainees had absolutely *no criminal conviction*—not even for previous illegal entry. Over 400 of those totally innocent prisoners had been locked up for a year or more.<sup>17</sup>

ICE operates a network of more than five hundred detention facilities that cost \$1.7 billion and are scattered across the country. Many of these are run-down but fortified motels or converted suburban office parks; all are infamous for their wretched conditions, overcrowding, and violence.<sup>18</sup> The majority of these facilities are managed by state and local

governments and specialized private firms, like Corrections Corporation of America, which runs sixty lockups of various types. Abuse in these prisons and detention centers is widespread, though the inmates, all poor and headed for deportation, have a difficult time bringing complaints or lawsuits against their jailers. So, it is hard to know what is really happening inside the ICE gulag.

Yet, there are hints. We know of two dim-witted Mexican men who languished in detention for years for no reason except their mental disabilities. Their deportation cases were completed in 2005 and 2006, respectively, yet both—having only the mental abilities of little children—did not know when they were due for release, did not pester their jailers, and thus got lost, “shuttled through a network of jails, psychiatric hospitals and detention centers.”<sup>19</sup>

Women in Maricopa County, Arizona, describe physical abuse, including being shackled during childbirth.<sup>20</sup> In March 2008, Jarrod Hankins, a bailiff for the Washington County Sheriff’s Department, locked an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, named Adriana Torres-Flores, in a small courthouse holding cell. Hankins then forgot about his prisoner as she suffered without food or water for four days. Sleeping on the floor, she drank her own urine to survive.<sup>21</sup> Until at least 2008, ICE officers would regularly inject deportees with psychotropic sedatives before their deportation flights. The “preflight cocktail” was sometimes so heavy that ICE agents had to use wheelchairs to get the slumped deportees on board.<sup>22</sup>

Desperation among detainees sometimes boils over. On December 12, 2008, a riot broke out at a private facility in Pecos, Texas, run by the GEO Group. The immigrant detainees were protesting the death of Jesus Manuel Galindo due to lack of medical care. Billed as the world’s “largest detention/correctional facility under private management,” the sprawling complex is ringed by razor wire and has cells for thirty-seven hundred undocumented immigrants but no infirmary or clinic. On February 2, 2010, journalist Tom Barry went to investigate, and by chance the detainees rioted a second time, burning a whole housing unit.<sup>23</sup> Barry described the immigration detention network as “the new face of imprisonment in America. . . . Because they rely

on project revenue instead of tax revenue, these prisons do not need voter approval. Instead they are marketed by prison consultants to municipal and county governments as economic-development tools promising job creation and new revenue without new taxes."<sup>24</sup>

Another feature of the ICE detention network is the constant transfer of prisoners. Though usually detained at the border or near their homes, in the cities of the Northeast and California, captured immigrants are routinely transferred to remote, rural detention facilities in Arizona, Louisiana, or Texas, hundreds or thousands of miles away from families and sympathetic lawyers. Human Rights Watch found that from 1999 to 2008, at least 1.4 million detainee transfers occurred.<sup>25</sup> Whether by political design or bureaucratic habit, the transfer policy is a sadistic mechanism of control and demoralization.

This is the face of climate change. Drought and flood in Mexico and Central America are expressed, later and elsewhere, as the ICE detention gulag. As the planet warms, the political tumors of American authoritarianism, our current repression of immigrants, will metastasize. A similar illness infects Europe, and climate change will intensify even if necessary mitigation finally begins. Already we see the forms that adaptation in the developed world will take. The de facto authoritarian, cryptoracist state hardening, encapsulated by the war on immigrants, will accelerate as climate-change-driven migration become an ever more pressing issue.

### *Land of Violent Talk*

Border militarization, the paramilitary immigrant roundups, the largely privatized ICE detention network—it is all a human rights abomination. But it is also policy as ideological spectacle. When the government treats innocent brown people as criminals, it lends respectability to racism. Native-born people, particularly white people, get the message and feel invited to catharsis via tribal solidarity, especially during hard times.

The flow of people from south to north—people deracinated by the structural violence of neoliberal economics, Cold War militarism, and



now climate change—is met not only with walls, armed patrols, and cells but also with the calumny, hatred, and ideological spittle of rightwing demagogues. Nowhere is this more evident than on American talk radio. All day and night, up and down the dial, one can hear raw, uncut hate speech. Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Mike Savage are only the most well-known of those who talk hate for a living. Every day tens of millions of people listen to the hard-right messages that vomit out across the airwaves. While they drive, work, tinker in the basement, or lie awake at night rehearsing personal worries, Americans are kept company by talk radio's constant rhythm of fear, resentment, exaggeration, and free market fundamentalism.

A central trope in this embittered carnival is the specter of immigration. Xenophobia and smug nationalism are old American traditions. Tocqueville found it back in 1835: "Nothing is more annoying in the ordinary intercourse of life than this irritable patriotism of the Americans. A foreigner will gladly agree to praise much in their country, but he would like to be allowed to criticize something, and that he is absolutely refused."<sup>26</sup> Today's version of this irritable patriotism takes place in a warming world where populations are increasingly on the move. The rate, intensity, and desperation of migration is guaranteed to increase precipitously throughout this century. Thus, the hate in American politics is becoming an expression of the catastrophic convergence. It is sobering to listen to talk radio with an eye toward the future and an understanding of climate science. It is also important to remember that the rightist xenophobes, though repulsive, nonetheless play upon real issues: The political economy of the world *is* unfair, and immigration *is* an increasingly challenging social issue that requires new policy—that is to say, climate adaptation based on social justice.

Consider again the words of the former intelligence officers, military men, and politicians who wrote that Pentagon-oriented report on climate change, *Age of Consequences*. Here is James Woolsey, former head of the CIA, writing in a chapter addressing the worst-case scenario of unmitigated growth of greenhouse gas emissions:

If Americans have difficulty reaching a reasonable compromise on immigration legislation today, consider what such a debate would be like if we were struggling to resettle millions of our own citizens—driven by high water from the Gulf of Mexico, South Florida, and much of the East Coast reaching nearly to New England—even as we witnessed the northward migration of large populations from Latin America and the Caribbean. Such migration will likely be one of the Western Hemisphere's early social consequences of climate change and sea level rise of these orders of magnitude. Issues deriving from inundation of a large amount of our own territory, together with migration toward our borders by millions of our hungry and thirsty southern neighbors, are likely to dominate U.S. security and humanitarian concerns. Globally as well, populations will migrate from increasingly hot and dry climates to more temperate ones.<sup>27</sup>

Adaptation as the armed lifeboat is only possible if Americans think in certain ways, and not in others. This raises the question, How are the media educating adult Americans? It is instructive to survey the messages that spill forth across the nation, for this is the political context in which immigration and climate change are being understood. When immigration reform came up for debate in 2006, much of the American media worked itself into a hate-filled lather. In 2010, immigration again came up, and the controversy erupted anew. Those episodes offer a glimpse of how opinion makers will frame a future immigration crisis.

### *Ideological Parapets*

You can hear the bad future of the armed lifeboat in the words of self-described Northern Californian, environmentalist, and feminist Brenda Walker. A radical Malthusian, Walker is a green racist who was inspired to politics after reading Paul Erlich's *The Population Bomb*. Speaking on the *Peter Boyles Show*, a Denver-based talk radio program, Walker said, "If there's one thing that the Mexicans are good at, it's establishing smuggling infrastructures. They can get through, you know, obviously, millions of illegal aliens and WMDs as well."<sup>28</sup>

Or consider the comments of William Gheen, president of Americans for Legal Immigration on the same program: "Oh, look, I'll take it further than that, Peter. Let me say something about these brown Nazis. . . . Get out of my country—now. Take a hint. Vamoose. I don't got to say, 'Don't let the border gate hit you on the backside on the way out.' And I mean it. I'm very serious about it. Americans are the Jews."<sup>29</sup>

Here is another canard from radio host Jay Severin (formerly Jay Severino): "So now, in addition to venereal disease and the other leading exports of Mexico—women with mustaches and VD—now we have swine flu." On another occasion, he put it this way: "When we are the magnet for primitives around the world—and it's not the primitives' fault by the way, I'm not blaming them for being primitives—I'm merely observing they're primitive. . . . It's millions of leeches from a primitive country come here to leech off you and, with it, they are ruining the schools, the hospitals, and a lot of life in America."<sup>30</sup> Always the position of the nativist is aggrieved, put-upon, outnumbered, abandoned, almost overrun. Increasingly the nativists see themselves as nature's staunch defender, its last bulwark against the human locusts.

Consider the ravings of another nationally syndicated DJ, Michael Alan Weiner, now known by the rather more Teutonic sounding name Mike Savage: "Burn a Mexican flag for America, burn a Mexican flag for those who died that you should have a nationality and a sovereignty, go out in the street and show you're a man, burn 10 Mexican flags, if I could recommend it. Put one in the window upside down and tell them to go back where they came from!"<sup>31</sup> This self-appointed tribune of real Americans traffics under the website tagline "borders, language, culture." In a different context, that slippery triptych could pass for a postmodern academic subtitle, but here it recalls fin de siècle Anglo-Saxonism in the style of Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race*.<sup>32</sup> Savage describes himself as "an ardent conservationist" and claims to have 100 million listeners per week. More objective sources, like *Talkers* magazine, put his audience at 8 million—still very large.

What do the xenophobes suggest be done? Here is Neal Boortz, one of the top talk radio hosts in the country: "They are not going to be shipped

back. I mean, Royal [his off-air producer], think about it—Mexico doesn't want 'em back, first of all. Think what happens if we round—first of all, where do we store 11 million Hispanics just waiting to ship 'em back to Nicaragua, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico. Where do we store 'em? . . . The Superdome! Exactly. And the Astrodome in Houston. That's where we'll put 'em."<sup>33</sup> During a 2006 broadcast, he addressed the same theme: "When we defeat this illegal alien amnesty bill and when we yank out the welcome mat and they all start going back to Mexico, as a going-away gift let's all give them a box of nuclear waste. Give 'em all a little nuclear waste and let 'em take it on down there to Mexico. Tell 'em it can—it'll heat tortillas. Or something like that."<sup>34</sup>

More mainstream characters are almost as bad. Here is Lou Dobbs, formerly of CNN, now a Fox business news host: "There are some Mexican citizens and some Mexican-Americans who want to see California, New Mexico and other parts of the Southwestern United States given over to Mexico. These groups call it the *reconquista*, Spanish for reconquest. And they view the millions of Mexican illegal aliens in particular entering the United States as potentially an army of invaders to achieve that takeover."<sup>35</sup> Dobbs—echoing nineteenth-century concerns about hookworm among Chinese immigrants on the West Coast—likes to equate immigration with infectious disease: "The invasion of illegal aliens is threatening the health of many Americans. Highly-contagious diseases are now crossing our borders decades after those diseases had been eradicated in this country."<sup>36</sup>

Glenn Beck is another respectable mainstream fanatic. Here he is on Muslims: "All right. Here it is. Tonight's exclusive: In 10 years, Muslims and Arabs will be looking through a razor wire fence at the West. . . . The Muslim community better find a spokesman who isn't a 'yes, but' Muslim. They shouldn't even understand the word 'but,' because if they don't, when things heat up, the profiling will only get worse, and the razor wire will be coming."<sup>37</sup>

Like Dobbs, Bill O'Reilly—who is more respectable than the baby-faced, conspiracy-theorizing, ranting, dry-drunk Beck—dabbles in *reconquista* paranoia. On May 1, 2006, while Latinos were marching for their

rights in California, O'Reilly warned some of his 3.25 million weekly viewers, "And then there's the hardcore militant agenda of 'You stole our land, you bad gringos.' This is the organizers of these demonstrations: 'The border—we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us.' That is their slogan. That you stole our land, and now, we're going to take it back by massive, massive migration into the Southwest. And we're going to control those places, because you stole it from us, and that's the agenda underneath."<sup>38</sup> At times his war rhetoric gets more explicit: "You have no policy unless you have border security. . . . So now, it's becoming a race war. That's what it's becoming—a race war. You see half a million people show up in L.A. and they were waving Mexican flags. And they're saying, 'Hey, we have a right to be here.' No, you don't. If you're illegal, you don't have a right to be here."<sup>39</sup>

### *Season of Hate, Again*

In 2010, immigration politics heated up again with the passage of Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, which ordered all police officers to stop and interrogate anyone they suspected of being undocumented. Furthermore, it allowed citizens to sue if they felt an officer was negligent in these anti-immigrant efforts.<sup>40</sup> SB 1070 embodied the lifeboat politics of armed adaptation. Internationally, the face of the bill was Governor Jan Brewer, whose bleached-blond hair, spray-on tan, and perpetual, unblinking, grimace-like smile gave her a robotic affect. The backdrop to all this was Arizona's economic crisis: it had the third-highest foreclosure rate in the United States and an unemployment rate that reached 10 percent in July 2010.

With the new law, thousands of terrified undocumented Latinos fled the state. Critics said the bill would, among others things, make Arizona less safe as it would be harder for police to solve crimes if Latinos began avoiding cops. Brewer defended the crackdown by claiming that immigrants were beheading innocent victims. But no such crimes were occurring. Neither she nor anyone else could find *any evidence* to back her claim. Next, Governor Brewer banned ethnic studies in Arizona schools on the grounds, as her spokesperson put it, that "public school students should be

taught to treat and value each other as individuals and not be taught to resent or hate other races or classes of people."<sup>41</sup>

Bill O'Reilly defended anti-immigrant repression by repeating myths about immigrant violence: "Arizona had to do something. In the capital city Phoenix, crime is totally out of control. . . . The recent murder of an Arizona rancher by a suspected illegal alien and the shooting of a deputy sheriff by alleged alien drug dealers have made the situation almost desperate."<sup>42</sup> Later, the story of the wounded deputy, like Brewer's decapitation claims, started to fall apart. Forensic pathologists noted powder burns on the sheriff's skin, indicating that the muzzle of the gun was in contact with his body when it fired and not twenty-five yards away as he claimed.<sup>43</sup>

Even Chris Mathews, while debating Amy Goodman, suggested, "Cultural change is not something any society accepts easily, or even with any kind of positive feelings about."<sup>44</sup> Mathews also promoted Pat Buchanan's *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*. Fittingly, this book's title refers, however cryptically, to the Nazi-justifying legal theory of Carl Schmitt. As the title implies, the book posits that immigration is destroying America.<sup>45</sup> Here, trimming only slightly, is the broad scope of history as seen through the narrow confines of Buchanan's mind:

From the fifteenth to the twentieth century, the West wrote the history of the world. Out of the Christian countries of Europe came the explorers, the missionaries, the conquerors, the colonizers, who, by the twentieth century, ruled virtually the entire world. But the passing of the West had begun.

Spain's empire was the first to fall. . . . By 1918 the German Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires collapsed. World War II bled and broke the British and French. One by one, after war's end, the strategic outposts of empire—Suez, the Canal Zone, Rhodesia, South Africa, Hong Kong—began to fall. Within three decades, Europe's headlong retreat from Asia and Africa was complete.

From 1989–1991, the Soviet Union Empire fell and the Soviet Union split into fifteen pieces, half a dozen of them Muslim nations that have

never before existed. Now, the African, Asian, Islamic and Hispanic peoples that the West once ruled are coming to repopulate the mother countries. . . . The crisis of Western civilization consists of three imminent and mortal perils: dying populations, disintegrating cultures and invasions unresisted . . . as Rome passed away, so, the West is passing away, from the same causes in much the same way. What the Danube and Rhine were to Rome, the Rio Grande and Mediterranean are to America and Europe, the frontiers of a civilization no longer defended.<sup>46</sup>

Elsewhere, the book oozes with more of the same: "We are witnessing how nations perish. We are entered upon the final act of our civilization. The last scene is the deconstruction of the nations. The penultimate scene, now well underway, is the invasion unresisted." And, "Chicano chauvinists and Mexican agents have made clear their intent to take back through demography and culture what their ancestors lost through war. . . . We are in the midst of a savage culture war in which traditionalist values have been losing ground for two generations."<sup>47</sup>

Buchanan is not of the lunatic fringe. Rather, he is a major figure in American life, aide to presidents, force in the Republican Party, and political analyst for MSNBC. His politics are mainstream.

### *The Paranoid Style and Its Rational Uses*

Welcome to the new American *Volksstaat*. Here, hate wears a smile and operates in the name of fairness and freedom. The war on immigrants is very much a war of ideas. Richard Hofstadter dissected the elements of this worldview a generation ago in *Anti-Intellectualism in American History*, then in the famous article that followed from the book, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." Here is Hofstadter in 1964—note how current the critique sounds:

The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of conspiracy in apocalyptic terms—he traffics in the birth and death of whole worlds, whole political orders, whole systems of human values. He is always manning the

barricades of civilization. He constantly lives at a turning point. Like religious millennialists he expresses the anxiety of those who are living through the last days and he is sometimes disposed to set a date for the apocalypse. . . . America has been largely taken away from them and their kind, though they are determined to try to repossess it and to prevent the final destructive act of subversion. The old American virtues have already been eaten away by cosmopolitans and intellectuals; the old competitive capitalism has been gradually undermined by socialistic and communistic schemers; the old national security and independence have been destroyed by treasonous plots, having as their most powerful agents not merely outsiders and foreigners as of old but major statesmen who are at the very centers of American power. Their predecessors had discovered conspiracies; the modern radical right finds conspiracy to be betrayal from on high.<sup>48</sup>

This mentality underwrites the current xenophobia. In 2010, Pew pollsters found that 67 percent of Americans said they “approved of allowing police to detain anyone who cannot verify their legal status,” while 62 percent approved of “allowing police to question people they think may be in the country illegally.” And 59 percent said they approved of Arizona’s profile and arrest law.<sup>49</sup>

Nor is it a coincidence that some of the biggest financial supporters of the xenophobic and “paranoid style” are oil magnates, most famously, the Koch brothers. These two mild-mannered and quiet billionaires started Americans for Prosperity, a free market advocacy shop that passed on at least \$5 million in start-up money to the Tea Party. The Koch family has long followed Hayek’s ultra-antistatist theories and more recently has promoted climate-change denial. The two positions are naturally aligned: to venerate the market and despise the state is to oppose legal limits on greenhouse gas emissions. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Koch brothers spent more than \$100 million to assist a network of thirty-four Far Right political and policy organizations. Among these were the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Independent Women’s Forum, and the American Enterprise Institute.<sup>50</sup> The noise from this network is a



mash-up of free market fanaticism, climate-change denial, and xenophobia. Talk radio and cable TV are the amplifiers.

### *Fortress Europe*

In Europe, the xenophobic Right is also alive and well. The older crypto-fascist leaders, like Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder of France's *Front National*, and Jörg Haider, long-time leader of Austria's Freedom Party, are now fading.<sup>51</sup> But a new generation of leaders is taking the old message mainstream; among them are Dutch politician Geert Wilders and Danish People's Party leader Pia Kjaersgaard.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps more worrying is the adoption of overtly racist policies by center-right governments: witness, for example, President Nicolas Sarkozy's expulsion of eight thousand Roma from France, Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement that Germany's multiculturalism had "utterly failed," and the walling off of Roma communities in the Czech Republic.<sup>53</sup>

### *Romancing the End Times*

Even among good liberals, one finds the temptation to embrace the armed lifeboat. Consider environmental writer and activist Bill McKibben, who has done stellar work bringing the reality of climate science to a mass audience and started the international climate activist group 350.org. In his latest book, when he addressed the question of climate security, his politics faltered:

If you think about the cramped future long enough, for instance, you can end up convinced you'll be standing over your vegetable patch with your shotgun, warding off the marauding gang that's after your carrots. . . . The marines aren't going to be much help there—they're not geared for Mad Max—but your neighbors might be. Imagining local life in a difficult world means imagining taking more responsibility not only for your food but for your defense. (Consider Switzerland, for example, where every adult male is a soldier.) *Militia* is an ugly word to many of us, but

it's worth remembering, at least for those of us with tricorne hats in the closet, that a local militia fought the fight on Lexington Green.<sup>54</sup>

*Example  
1956*

That is an image of America as a failed state. There really must be a better option. Civilization, for all its faults, has much to recommend it, much within it that is worth defending. World civilization, this largely capitalist global economy, for all its exploitation and inequity, has produced phenomenal wealth and technology. Can we really not imagine a way to redeploy and redistribute these assets and capacities?