

ism, and the attraction and the force of a populist nationalism—the cult of the people and of the military power of the nation, the meaning of which Schlesinger cannot comprehend or perhaps even discern. In 1955, William F. Buckley Jr. launched his *National Review*, his “conservative”—much more accurately, his nationalist—weekly on a shoestring. Forty years later it had more subscribers than *The Nation* and *The New Republic* together (and the worldview of the latter had begun to move in a neoconservative direction). As late as 1989, Schlesinger saw the collapse of the Soviet empire as the long overdue triumph of democracy against Communism. He failed to see that the dissolution of the Soviet empire as well as the popularity of, say, Ronald Reagan were due not to the appeal of liberal democracy but to the appeal of nationalism. Until the last pages of his journals and, presumably, till the very end of his life, Schlesinger kept writing and thinking about Democrats and Republicans, liberals versus anti-liberals.

His early book *The Age of Jackson*, published in 1945, was a bestseller, and it made Arthur Schlesinger Jr. famous. That his then hero Andrew Jackson had nothing in common with his later heroes, such as Stevenson or Kennedy (though Jackson had a little more in common with another Southerner, Lyndon Johnson, whom Schlesinger came to loathe), is worth noting, but that is not my argument now. The main problem is that Schlesinger’s view of history was flawed. And why? Because of his view of human nature—and does not any understanding of history rest on some understanding of human nature? In *The Age of Jackson*, the young Arthur Schlesinger Jr., quoting Pascal, wrote this sentence: “Man is neither angel nor brute”—a safe, liberal, gray, centrist view of human nature. To the contrary: Man is both angel and brute. This is something that Schlesinger, whose next book after *The Age of Jackson* bore the title *The Vital Center*, never understood—or perhaps never even thought about. He was a decent man. He had a pleasant career. But his journals are those of a very short-sighted historian. ■

FEAR OF FOLLOWING

The specter of a no-growth world

By Steven Stoll

Discussed in this essay:

The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America’s Politics and Culture, by Brink Lindsey. Collins. 394 pages. \$26.95.

The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth, by Benjamin M. Friedman. Vintage. 570 pages. \$16.95 (paper).

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, by Bill McKibben. Holt. 272 pages. \$14 (paper).



Costco shoppers navigate with carts broad enough to seat two children side by side. The carts had better be big. They need to haul gallon jars of mayonnaise, 117-ounce cans of baked beans, 340-ounce jugs of liquid detergent, and 70-ounce boxes of breakfast cereal. The coolers advertised for summer picnics hold 266 cans. Giant warehouse stores, shelved to the ceiling

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with goods from all the waters and forests of the world, make no excuses for consumption. But although Costco sells its goods in large packages, there is no item here that cannot be found at a corner grocery. So why don't I lighten up and buy a pallet of mango salsa? Because thundering all around me is the scope and scale of American economic growth. Here it is possible to see the enormous throughput of the economy—its capacity to mobilize resources and energy and turn out waste. One store manager, on the floor for fourteen years, tells me he has seen eight pallets of paper towels move out the