

From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>

To: undisclosed-recipients;

Bcc: jeevacation@gmail.com

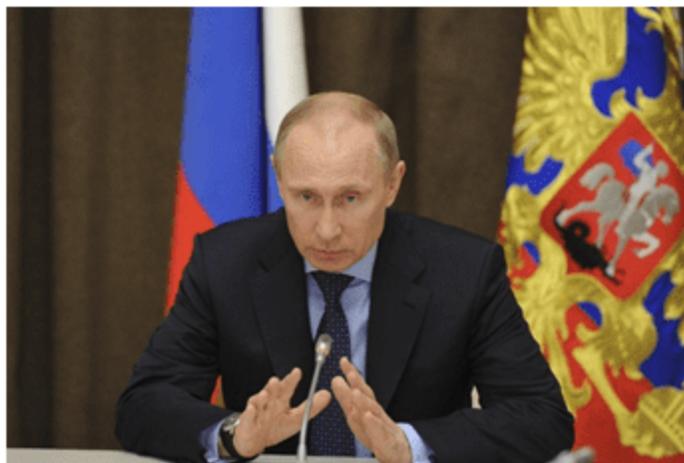
Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 03/23/2014

Date: Sun, 23 Mar 2014 08:34:32 +0000

Attachments: These_9_Maps_Should_Absolutely_Outrage_Southerners_Emily_Cohen_Huff_Post_March_6,_2014.docx;
Two_Charts_That_Will_Enrage_Everyone_Well_Except_Bankers_Maxwell_Strachan_March_13,_2013.docx; The 'Paid-What-You're-Worth' Myth Robert Reich Huff Post 03_14_2014.docx;
Money_Pit_The_Monstrous_Failure_of_US_Aid_to_Afghanistan_Joel_Brinkley_World_Affairs_January.February_2013.docx;
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11_Reasons_We_Can't_Ignore_Alzheimer's_Anymore_The_Fiscal_Times_March_17,_2014.docx; That_Old-Time_Whistle_Paul_Krugman_NYT_03_16_2014.docx;
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Crimea_Scotland...now_Venice_votes_on_breakaway_Katrina_Bishop_March_21,_2014.docx; Chicago_bio.docx

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DEAR FRIEND.....



Final results of the referendum in Crimea showed that more than 97 percent of voters supported leaving Ukraine to join Russia, the head of the referendum election commission said Monday, March 17, 2014. Mikhail Malyshev told a televised news conference that the final tally from Sunday's vote was more than 9 percent in favor of splitting from Ukraine. He also said that the commission has not registered a single complaint about the vote. The referendum was widely condemned by Western leaders who discuss economic sanctions to punish Russia throughout the week. Ukraine's new government in Kiev called the referendum a "circus" directed at gunpoint by Moscow. After the referendum the Crimean parliament declared that all Ukrainian state property on the peninsula will be

nationalized and become the property of the Crimean Republic. Lawmakers then asked the United Nations and other nations to recognize it and began work on setting up a central bank with \$30 million in support from Russia and Putin formally recognized Crimea as an independent state.

Moscow, meanwhile, called on Ukraine to become a federal state as a way of resolving the polarization between Ukraine's western regions — which favor closer ties with the 28-nation EU — and its eastern areas, which have long ties to Russia. In a statement Monday, Russia's Foreign Ministry urged Ukraine's parliament to call a constitutional assembly that could draft a new constitution to make the country federal, handing more power to its regions. It also said country should adopt a "*neutral political and military status*," a demand reflecting Moscow's concern about the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO and possibly integrating closer politically and economically with the EU. Russia is also pushing for Russian to become one of Ukraine's state languages alongside Ukrainian. In Kiev, Ukraine's new government dismissed Russia's proposal Monday as unacceptable, saying it "*looks like an ultimatum*."

Immediately, Western leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prime Minister, David Cameron and President Obama raged against both the election and its results, threatening to place sanctions on Russia and freeze assets of its Oligarchs, as well as promising that there would be "*a price to pay*." In the most comprehensive sanctions against Russia since the end of the Cold War, President Barack Obama on Monday froze the U.S. assets of seven Russian officials, including top advisers to President Vladimir Putin, for their support of Crimea's vote to secede from Ukraine. The U.S., EU and Ukraine's new government immediately said that they would not recognize the referendum held Sunday in Crimea, which was called hastily as Ukraine's political crisis deepened with the ouster of pro-Russia President Viktor Yanukovich following months of protests and sporadic bloodshed. In addition to calling the vote itself illegal, the Obama administration said there were "massive anomalies" in balloting that returned a 97 percent "*yes*" vote for joining Russia.

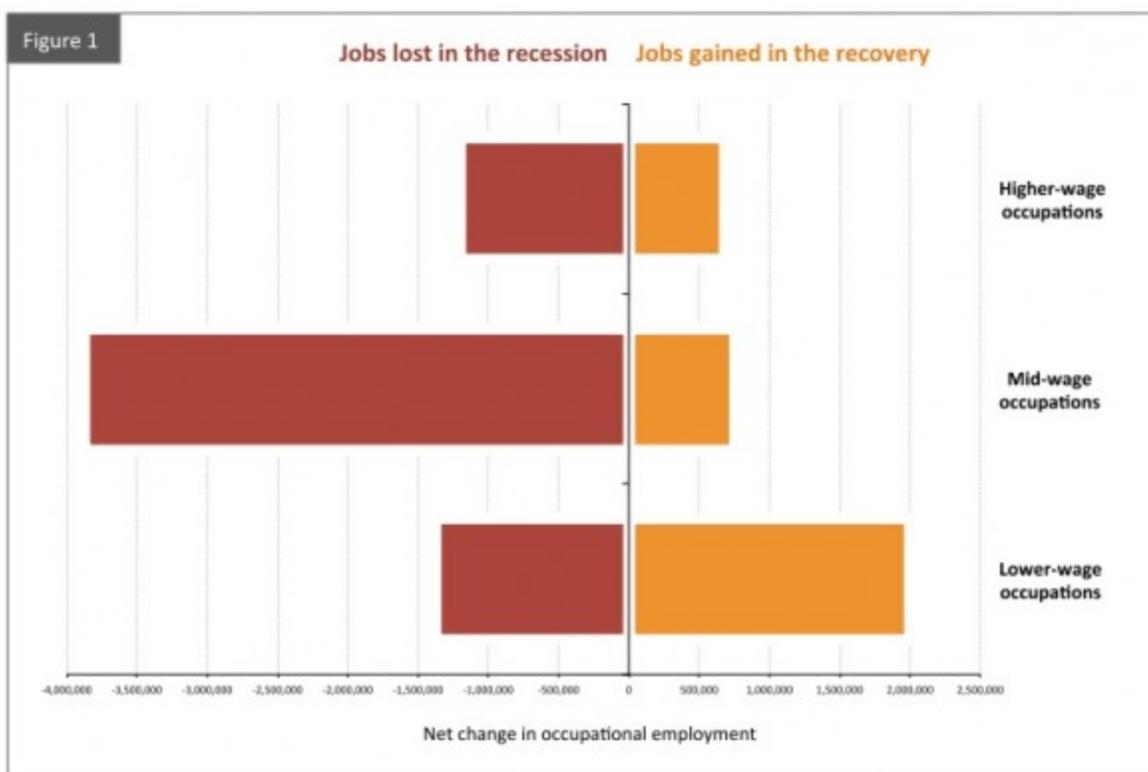
The problem is that we forget how things started. In 2010 Viktor Yanukovich (who was Ukraine's most popular politician at the time), soundly defeated Yulia Tymoshenko to win the Presidency.

During his first several years as President, Mr Yanukovich steered Ukraine towards a closer relationship with the EU making Brussels his first foreign visit as President instead of Moscow. But then, days before it was due to be signed, he rejected an association agreement with the EU in November 2013. To counter attempts by Western powers to woo Ukraine away from the Russian orbit with billions of dollars in financial assistance and the possibility of its entry into NATO and the EU, Putin was forced to offer the Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich almost \$14 billion in financial assistance. And when Yanukovich signed an agreement with Putin in January Ukrainians went into the streets in protest which continued for months, reaching a bloody climax between 18-22 February.

Lets remember that until Yanukovich re-embraced Putin late last year, Western powers said little about the rampant corruption in Ukraine and its President's opulent lifestyle. But the moment that he refused to accept the EU's terms and instead signed a new trade-pack (*financing*) with Putin, he was demonized by the West for the culprit that he is. We then encouraged protesters to overthrow Yanukovich and when they did, we rubbed it into the face of Putin. At least Putin had the people in Crimea vote for the referendum, (*no matter how coerced*). Whereas, we celebrated the overthrow of a democratically elected President. There is a bit of hypocrisy there, that even our constitutionally legally trained President seems to have ignored. It is not like the United States hasn't used shaky premises to invade other countries, without ever apologizing. So if you want to see where Vladimir Putin got his playbook, you need to look no further than Washington, D.C. Ukraine is not our problem and Putin would have gotten positive referendum results in Crimea, even if Russian tanks and troops had not crossed the border. So let's stop being hypocritical and let the Ukrainians and Crimeans sort out their own problems.

Last week I read a review in **The Economist** on Thomas Piketty's new book – **Capital in the Twenty-First Century**, which they describe as “*excellent and extremely thought-provoking*” and “*might turn out to be one of the most significant economics books that have been produced since 2000.*” And if that sounds like hocus pocus, for now specialist and laymen like me, it is a study of the correlation between population growth and economic growth; in particular the links between demography, growth and inequality. The consensus among economist is that growth comes from two sources; having more workers and making those workers more efficient (productivity), with roughly speaking, these two forces have been equally important from 0AD – 1700 (0.1 World Output to 0.1 Population) and 1700 – 1700 – 2012 (1.6 to 0.8) and 1913 – 2012 (3.0 to 1.4).

This data in the abstract is completely confusing but Piketty's premise is that in periods of stagnation, “*in a quasi-stagnant society, wealth accumulated in the past will inevitably acquire disproportionate importance. The return to a structurally high capital/income ratio in the twenty-first century, close to the levels observed in the eighteenth century, can therefore be explained by a the return to a slow-growth regime. Decreased growth - especially demographic growth - is thus responsible for capital's comeback.*” But why I was interested in the article is that the writer suggested that Piketty's thesis fit into Tyler Cowen and Thomas Freeman's “**Average is Over**” argument about how a tech-savvy elite will inevitably dominate the low-skilled masses (and the associated argument that inequality is down to skill-biased technological change). So again let's get away from the boring data and examine *Average if Over*.



Source: NELP analysis of Current Population Survey. Recession is 2008 Q1 to 2010 Q1; recovery is 2010 Q1 to 2012 Q1.

A key claim made by economist Tyler Cowen is that the US middle class is thinning out due to job polarization and that the trend will continue in the coming decades as routine middle-wage jobs are automated. Cowen: Of the jobs lost during the recession about 60 percent of them were in what are called “mid-wage” occupations. What about the jobs added since the end of the recession? Seventy-three percent of them have been in lower-wage occupations defined at \$13.52 or less. This general trend, namely more rapid job growth in low-paying jobs, can be seen in the numbers from 1999-2007 so we can't blame it on the financial crisis or the particular problems of today.

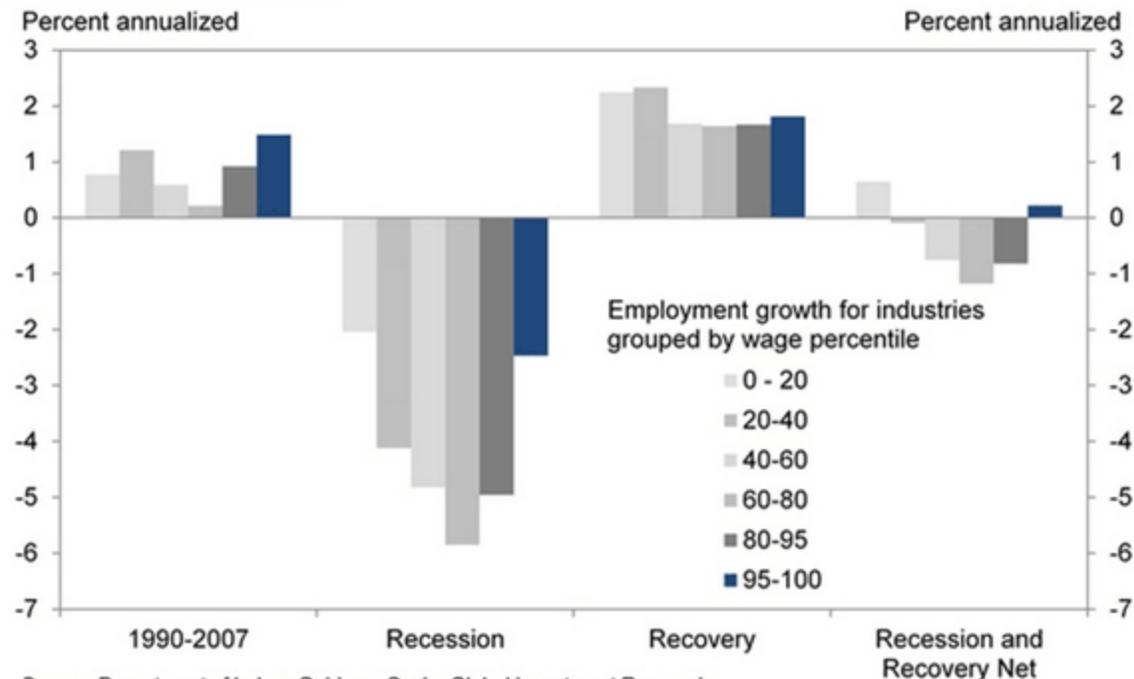
In another article the writer says that Cowen used 2011 data from the **National Employment Law Project**. The **NELP** has since updated its numbers through the first quarter of last year, finding that things have improved a bit with lower third of jobs now accounting for 58% of the new jobs versus 73% in Cowen's book. While, middle-wage occupations — which, again, constituted 60% of the recession losses — accounted for just 22% of the recovery job gains. More recent numbers from a new research note from Goldman Sachs also support Cowen. Using Department of Labor data, the bank first ranked 100 industries by their prerecession wages and then divided them by fifths. GS finds that although the *"hollowing out in the middle is real, it is not unique to the post-crisis period."* Each recession has sharp drops in the middle with no accompanying sharp rebound during the recovery. GS:

First, the decline in employment during the recession was sharpest in middle-wage industries.

Second, employment growth has been considerably more even during the recovery, with slightly faster growth in low-wage industries.

Third, the net effect since the recession began—a moderately greater decline in employment in middle-wage industries than in low- and high-wage industries—is quite similar to the longer-term trend prior to the recession (that is, the group of bars on the left follow the same pattern as the group of bars on the right).

Exhibit 1: Employment Gains in Middle-Wage Industries Have Been Weaker Since the Recession Began, but the Trend is Long-Standing



Looked at occupation-level trends, (a) ranking occupations based on median weekly earnings, and then (b) calculating employment growth. GS: This occupation-level view sends a similar but slightly stronger message. Once again, growth at the extremes—service employment at the low end of the wage distribution, professional and management employment at the upper end—outpaced growth in the middle in the decades prior to the recession.

As I read more and found that there are many skeptics of Piketty's thesis. Philip Delves Broughton wrote in the **Wall Street Journal** – *"As a parent of two young boys, who will, I dearly hope, step into the workforce in the next two decades, I read Tyler Cowen's latest book, "Average Is Over," with a deepening sense of dread. With every page, my knuckles whitened, my shoulders sagged and my blood pressure rose. This is what economists can do to you. They gaze down on the world from way up there, caress their crystal balls, tell you you're doomed and retire for lunch. To sum up, Mr. Cowen believes that America is dividing itself in two. At the top will be 10% to 15% of high achievers, the "Tiger Mother" kids if you like, whose self-motivation and mastery of technology will allow them to roar away into the future. Then there will be everyone else, slouching into an underfunded future of lower economic expectations, shantytowns and an endless diet of beans. I'm not kidding about the beans."*

Poor Americans, writes Mr. Cowen, will have to *"reshape their tastes"* and live more like Mexicans. *"Don't scoff at the beans,"* he says. *"With an income above the national average, I receive more pleasure from the beans, which I cook with freshly ground cumin and rehydrated, pureed chilies. Good tacos and quesadillas and tamales are cheap too, and that is one reason why they are eaten so frequently in low-income countries."* So what am I to do to save my sons from this bean-filled future? The first thing, it seems, is to have them play more chess. Mr. Cowen is an avid player, and the first half of his book is taken up with an argument for how freestyle chess, in which humans play alongside machines, rather than against them, is a model for the economy. His point, and it is a good one, is that the future belongs to those of us able to work best with machines. The author roves broadly and interestingly to make his case, outlining the radical economic transformations that lie in store for us, predicting the rise and fall of cities depending on their capacity to adapt to this machine-driven world and offering policy prescriptions for preserving American prosperity.

But as **New York Times** columnist, Thomas L. Friedman, recently wrote about three recent advances in technology -- self-driving cars, robotic factories and artificial intelligence. The (present and near future) result of these incredible advances has been (will be) the replacement of human labor with *"machines."* He then added another recent development -- the internationalization of the labor market, meaning that Americans are now competing for jobs, manufacturing as well as software development, with people throughout the world.

This column interested me to the point that I did a piece on it earlier this year in my Weekend Readings because of three words in Thomas L. Friedman's column were *"average is over."* These words reflect the state of global competition for jobs as well as the new age of smart technologies that permit only the best educated to have well-paying jobs. The message for American education can't be clearer: Either we step up to the plate, or much of our population will lead unproductive lives with terribly paying jobs. Business and national government leaders understand this, and so do many educators. But too many parents refuse to accept that their children must demand more of themselves. And too many workers don't understand that the landscape is drastically changing. Most of all, average is not enough and you don't need to be Thomas Piketty to figure this out however the data is framed.



One of my new favorite television shows in **HBO** documentary series **VICE** which like one of my other favorite television series **PBS/WGBH's FRONTLINE** focuses on the underbelly of issues often glossed over after the fickle public has move onto the next headline. This week's show – **Afghan Money Pit** – the title tells it all – The U.S. has spent \$93 billion on reconstruction projects in Afghanistan since invading the country in 2001. It is the most costly rebuilding of a single country in history. It is also the most wasteful and most fraudulent use of American tax dollars of all time. John Sopko is the man responsible for investigating this clusterfuck, a job that entails pissing off everyone from the president of Afghanistan to American four-star generals. **VICE** traveled to Kabul and beyond to expose American money going down the drain -- from the comical to the deadly -- with the *Special Investigator for Afghanistan Reconstruction*.

Web link: <http://www.frequency.com/video/vice-editor-america-is-spending-money/155772990/-/5-2499> and <http://www.hbo.com/vice#/vice/episodes/02/11-afghan-money-pit/video/debrief-afghan-money-pit>

As the war in Afghanistan is transitioning to its endgame the drawdown hasn't stopped the billions in U.S. aid flowing into the country, and after 12 years of spending on this scale, we're still losing money—hundreds of millions (if not billions) unaccounted for—almost as fast as we can write the next check. The spotty oversight of U.S. aid to Afghan forces is now set to get even worse as the main auditing group is in the country is about to have its presence dramatically reduced. The majority of the Department of Defense money spent in Afghanistan that doesn't pay for U.S troops goes into projects for infrastructure and funding the Afghan security forces. The U.S. legacy in Afghanistan will be defined in large part by the success of those institutions, the Afghan army most of all, where we have focused our funding and resources.

A series of recent reports detailing the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars spent on the U.S. cornerstone efforts—some of it gone to waste, corruption, and misallocation, the rest simply missing and unaccounted for—offer a troubling picture of the return on U.S. investments and underscore how deeply the key Afghan institutions still rely on U.S. funding for daily operations. **The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)**, an independent agency created by Congress to monitor U.S. spending in Afghanistan, has detailed the money wasted in the Afghan supply process in a series of audits focused on procurement of fuel and vehicle parts for Afghan security forces. As of March 2013, the U.S. has spent about \$54 billion funding security forces in Afghanistan and \$92 billion on reconstruction, agriculture, and other development projects, according to a SIGAR report.

Two October reports on funding and supply of the Afghan National Security Forces highlight the severity of the oversight problems in transactions in Afghanistan. In Afghan bases funded by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), SIGAR counted about \$370 million in unaccounted spare vehicle parts for the Afghan army and found that fuel purchases and budget needs had been overestimated by nearly a third. Since 2010, America's mission in Afghanistan had moved away from unilateral military operations. The first shift was to training and developing Afghan forces. Now, in the war's final stage, the focus is on supporting those forces as the Afghans take the lead in security operations and building up the civic and economic institutions that were neglected when the country was too violent for them to take root.

The DOD's own funding request for 2014) lays out the realignment of U.S. priorities in Afghanistan: *"The campaign in Afghanistan has shifted, with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) taking over the primary responsibility for fighting insurgents and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) moving into a supporting role. Although the ANSF is already leading over 80% of operations they remain dependent on ISAF for many support functions."* *"The U.S. government is giving hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan government without even knowing if they're in the right ballpark of what they actually need."* *"The strength and success of the [Afghan National Security Forces] is critical to the overall success of the reconstruction effort, so they want to make sure they have the supplies they need,"* said Elizabeth Field, the assistant inspector general for audits and inspections for SIGAR who played a key role in both the fuel purchases audit as well as the spare parts audit.

The problem of money disappearing into Afghan projects without anyone being held accountable for the loss is not new, but the widespread acknowledgement of past losses has not prevented the same funding processes from being repeated throughout the course of the war. According to Todd Harrison, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, the problem is ingrained in the U.S. approach to funding in Afghanistan. *"A lot of the money is spent with little regard for the effectiveness of it,"* Harrison said. *"We don't actually try to do small-scale experiments to figure out what type of programs are effective at achieving our objectives before rolling out large programs."* In one case, the U.S. purchased \$138 million worth of spare parts for the ANA despite not being able to account for \$200 million worth of parts that had already been purchased. According to Field, the SIGAR auditor, the disappearing funds stem from U.S. forces' heavy reliance on Afghan record-keeping without measures to ensure that the money appropriated is being spent as originally intended.

In an October 10 letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, SIGAR inspector general John Sopko said auditors' access to U.S. construction projects, some totaling more than \$72 million, is dwindling to an

all-time low for SIGAR investigators. *"It is clear that everyone working in Afghanistan, including SIGAR, will struggle to continue providing the direct U.S. civilian oversight that is needed in Afghanistan,"* Sopko wrote in his letter, projecting that oversight will fall to 21 percent of Afghanistan territory post-2014. Of the chances that U.S. would be able to stem the continuing loss of aid in the war's final year, Todd Harrison, the defense budget expert, said: *"We're on our way out of Afghanistan now, so it's too late to fundamentally reform the way we do things there."*

With a history of warlords and tribal leaders ruling almost autonomously in their regions no matter what we do most experts believe that the Taliban will take over. The Taliban is just the last reiteration of this form of leadership. And with the rampant corruption of the Karzai government, which really only controls the capital city and is supported by the US military, few people believe that it will be able to survive after US troops depart. And when this happens, whatever we build and leave will be taken over by the Taliban. For more information please feel free to read attached Joel Brinkley article from **WORLD AFFAIRS – Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of US Aid to Afghanistan.**

We have to ask ourselves first of all why we really went into Afghanistan. Secondly why didn't we use a proportional response? Experts say that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will ultimately cost between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion, with medical care and disability benefits weighing heavily for decades to come, according to a new analysis. The bill to taxpayers so far has been \$2 trillion, plus \$260 billion in interest on the resulting debt. If we can't afford to upgrade our public schools in the United States, can we really afford wars of choice in Afghanistan, Syria or in the Ukraine? Remember that the reason that the Bush/Cheney administration used to justify invading Afghanistan was because the Taliban had refused to turnover Osama bin Laden. Obviously there had to be a cheaper way to make our point and continuing pouring money into this sinkhole as we leave is just adding insult to injury.

 Bill Maher God Mass Murderer

This May Be Bill Maher's Most Intense Rant Against Religions – All Of Them - Yet

Web Link: 

You're probably going to be hearing a lot about Bill Maher's latest **"New Rule"** in the coming days. Mostly because in it, he not only takes aim at almost every religion (Bahá'í, you got lucky) but also because he calls God a *"psychotic mass murderer."* The rant kicks off with Maher explaining that he's sick of seeing ads for Darren Aronofsky's *"floating piece of giraffe crap"* *"Noah."* While he allows that the film *"must be doing something right,"* since it's already angering both Christians and Muslims, the fact that 60% of adult Americans believe that the story of Noah is literally true is proof enough for Maher that *"this is a stupid country."* But more important than the implausibility of the tale, Maher says it's immoral. *"It's about a psychotic mass murderer who gets away with it, and his name is God."*

And the sure-to-offend-Christians zingers keep coming from there:

- "What kind of tyrant punishes everyone just to get back at the few he's mad at? I mean, besides Chris Christie."
- "Hey, God, you know you're kind of a dick when you're in a movie with Russell Crowe and you're the one with anger issues."
- "You know conservatives are always going on about how Americans are losing their values and their morality, well maybe it's because you worship a guy who drowns babies."
- "If we were a dog and God owned us, the cops would come and take us away."

Lamenting that anyone would take their moral marching orders from the Bible, Maher wraps things up by hammering almost every religion as irrational, especially in light of conservative political ideology:

- "I'm reminded as we've just started Lent, that conservatives are always complaining about too much restraining regulation and how they love freedom, but they're the religious ones who voluntarily invent restrictions for themselves. On a hot summer day, Orthodox Jews wear black wool, on a cold winter night Mormons can't drink a hot chocolate... isn't life hard enough without making shit up out of thin air to fuck with yourself?"

I grew up in the Seventh Day Adventist church and I loved the religion but long before I read Darwin, in my young mind I questioned the vitality of the Noah's Ark story, as well as Adam and Eve, especially when no one could explain to the satisfaction of a nine year old what happened after Cain killed Able? Did Adam and Eve have girl children? And if not how did their family procreate? There are many good parables and lessons in the Bible, but to take it literally is as ridiculous as believing that Noah and his family could build a boat large enough to accommodate two of every species of animals and somehow the lions didn't eat the cows. I say this because American Christians needs to understand that religion should be based on good, evil and tolerance and not on fables that even a nine-year-old can see through.

I started out my weekly readings last Sunday with the issue of **RACE** because it is one of the **Big Uglies** in America. My piece was inspired by a by a two-part interview on **Moyers & Company**, whereby Bill and Ian Haney López discussed how "**dog-whistle**" politics uses race to influence vote through coded stereotypes. I was inspired again this week by an op-ed in the **New York Times** by Thomas Friedman – **That Old-Time Whistle** – who seized on Paul Ryan, Chairman of the House Budget Committee and the G.O.P.'s de facto intellectual leader recent remarks in which he attributed persistent poverty to a "*culture, in our inner cities in particular, of men not working and just generations of men not even thinking about working.*" When later challenged, he said that he was simply being "*inarticulate.*" To this I say **BULSHIT**.

Just to be clear, there's no evidence that Mr. Ryan is personally a racist, and he can legitimately claim that his dog-whistle was not deliberate. But it doesn't matter. He said what he said because that's the kind of thing conservatives say to each other all the time. And why do they say such things? Because American conservatism is still, after all these years, largely driven by claims that liberals are taking away your hard-earned money and giving it to Those People. As Friedman said, "*race is the Rosetta Stone that makes sense of many otherwise incomprehensible aspects of U.S. politics.*"

We are told, for example, that conservatives are against big government and high spending. Yet even as Republican governors and state legislatures block the expansion of Medicaid, the G.O.P. angrily denounces modest cost-saving measures for Medicare. How can this contradiction be explained? Well, what do many Medicaid recipients look like – and I'm talking about the color of their skin, not

the content of their character — and how does that compare with the typical Medicare beneficiary? Mystery solved according to Paul Ryan and other conservative dog whistlers.

Or we're told that conservatives, the Tea Party in particular, oppose handouts because they believe in personal responsibility, in a society in which people must bear the consequences of their actions. Yet it's hard to find angry Tea Party denunciations of huge Wall Street bailouts, of huge bonuses paid to executives who were saved from disaster by government backing and guarantees. Instead, all the movement's passion, starting with Rick Santelli's famous rant on **CNBC**, has been directed against any hint of financial relief for low-income borrowers. And what is it about these borrowers that makes them such targets of ire? You know the answer.

One odd consequence of our still-racialized politics is that conservatives are still, in effect, mobilizing against the bums on welfare even though both the bums and the welfare are long gone or few existed. Mr. Santelli's fury was directed against mortgage relief that never actually happened. Right-wingers rage against tales of food stamp abuse that almost always turn out to be false or at least greatly exaggerated. And Mr. Ryan's black-men-don't-want-to-work theory of poverty is decades out of date. Let's realize that the average entry level drug dealer spend 8 to 12 hours slinging dope on their assigned street corners/territory, and does it in all types of weather, hiding from the police and in consent fear of reprisals from rivals outside and within their gang -- it isn't an easy vocation. And for the average underclass African American who toils as a dead-end job as a janitor, loading dock jockey, manual laborer at minimum wage, often working two or more jobs trying to feed their family -- they are ignored by Mr. Ryan and his conservative friends. So having started working full time at 14 years old, in a factory on the grave-yard shift, doing double and triple shifts on the weekend making minimum wage, I speak from experience.

In the 1970s it was still possible to claim in good faith that there was plenty of opportunity in America, and that poverty persisted only because of cultural breakdown among African-Americans. Back then, after all, blue-collar jobs still paid well, and unemployment was low. The reality was that opportunity was much more limited than affluent Americans imagined; as the sociologist William Julius Wilson has documented, the flight of industry from urban centers meant that minority workers literally couldn't get to those good jobs, and the supposed cultural causes of poverty were actually effects of that lack of opportunity. Still, you could understand why many observers failed to see this. But over the past 40 years good jobs for ordinary workers have disappeared, not just from inner cities but everywhere: adjusted for inflation, wages have fallen for 60 percent of working American men. And as economic opportunity has shriveled for half the population, many behaviors that used to be held up as demonstrations of black cultural breakdown — the breakdown of marriage, drug abuse, and so on — have spread among working-class whites too.

These awkward facts have not, however, penetrated the world of conservative ideology. Earlier this month the House Budget Committee, under Mr. Ryan's direction, released a 205-page report on the alleged failure of the **War on Poverty**. What does the report have to say about the impact of falling real wages? It never mentions the subject at all. And since conservatives can't bring themselves to acknowledge the reality of what's happening to opportunity in America, they're left with nothing but that old-time dog whistle. Mr. Ryan wasn't being inarticulate — he said what he said because it's all that he's got. And I am glad that Mr. Friedman called Ryan on his racist code/dog whistling because this type of behavior should not be tolerated. And the **War on Poverty** was working well until it was undermined and gutted by Republicans under Reagan, Bush and Bill Clinton.

WEEK'S READINGS

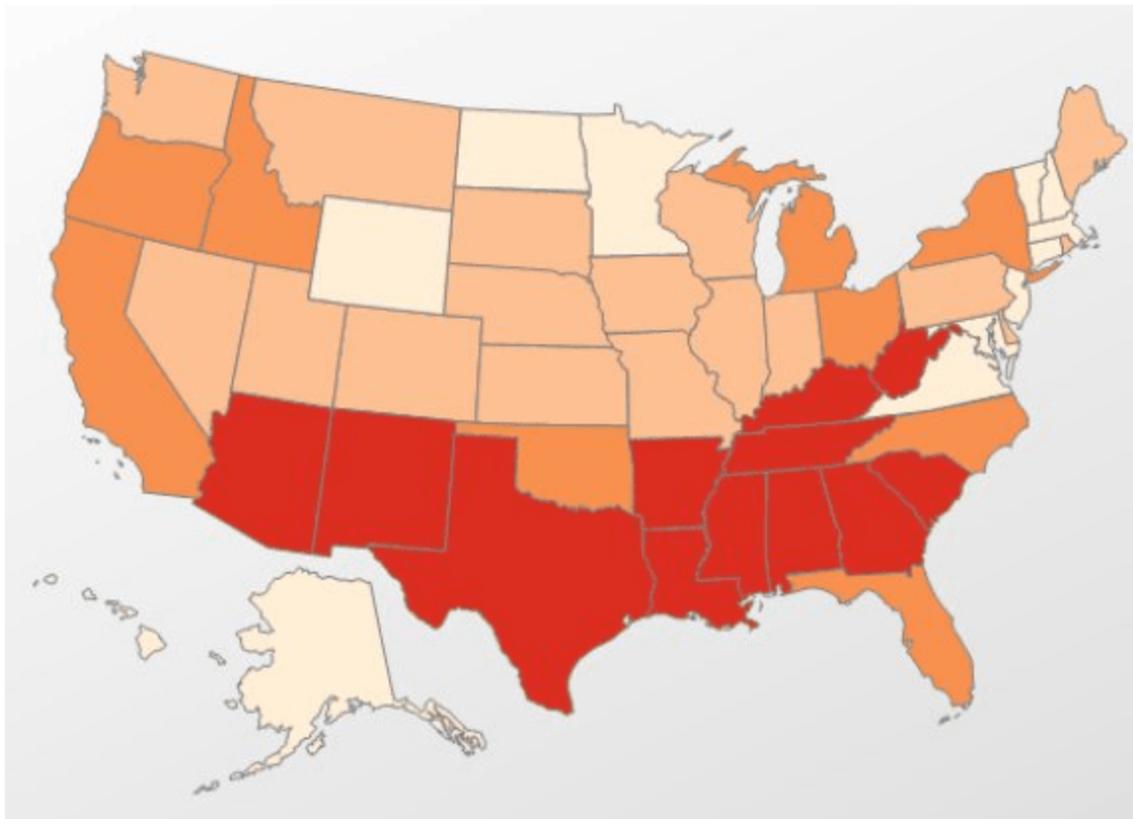
These 9 Maps Should Absolutely Outrage Southerners

Last week in the **Huffington Post** journalist Emily Cohn wrote an interesting article – ***These 9 Maps Should Absolutely Outrage Southerners*** – that brings to light the reality that the South is suffering disproportionately compared to the rest of the country, and a lot may have to do with economic policies that are not in the interest of people living in those states such as absence of a minimum wage, rejection of the Affordable Healthcare Act and cutting social policies that are the safety net of the poor.

Web Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/06/maps-of-the-south-bad-place_n_4855191.html

Look, there are lots of things to love about the South. It's clean and quiet. There's delicious food, good people and often amazing weather. But that's exactly why it makes us so sad to think about all the ways in which the region is struggling today.

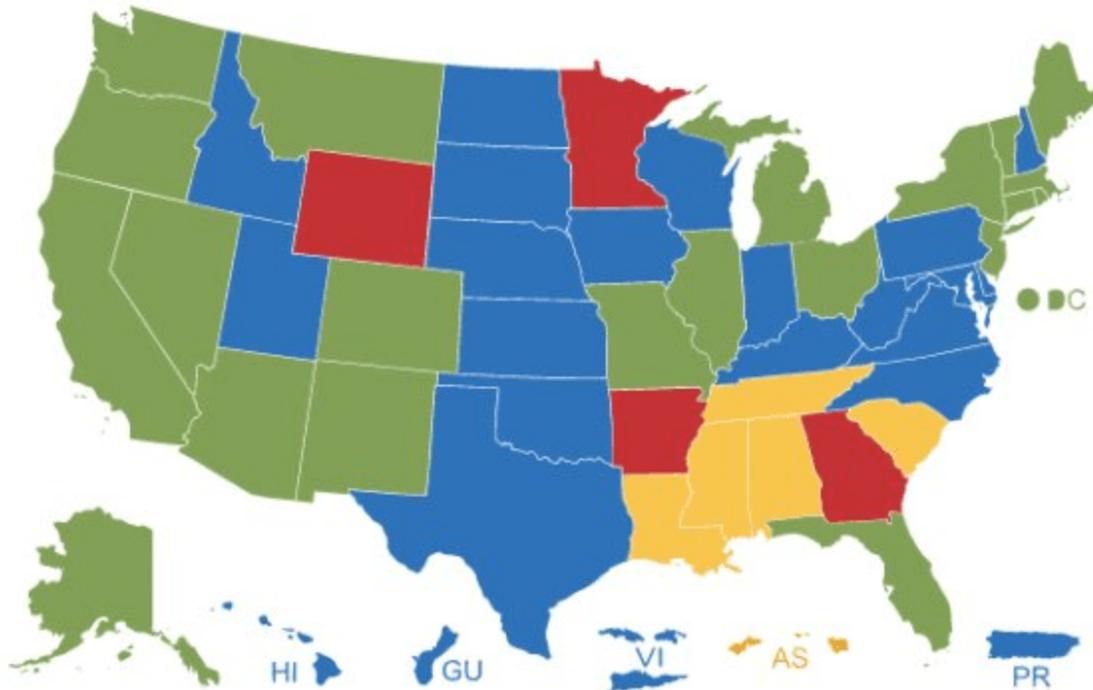
First off, poverty rates are a lot higher in the South.



Source: [USDA](#)

In fact, [as many as](#) one in four southern kids lives in poverty, compared to the national average of [one in five](#). In the map above, red shading indicates a poverty rates between 17.9 and 22.8 percent. Orange indicates 15.9 to 17.8 percent; light orange, 12.2-15.8 percent; pale yellow, 9 to 12.1 percent. As you can see, there's a lot of high-poverty red in the south.

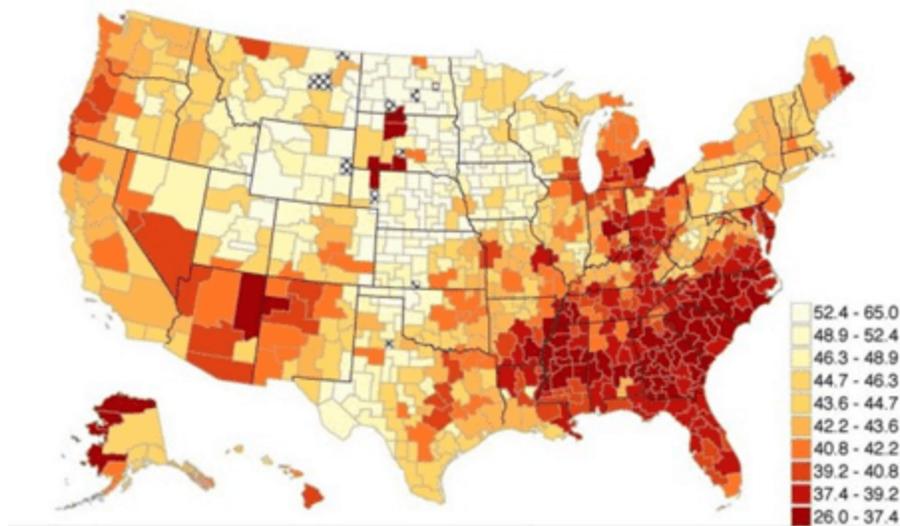
And minimum wages are much lower.



Source: [Department Of Labor](#)

Virtually no southern states, with the exception of Florida, have a minimum wage higher than the federal floor of \$7.25 an hour. Many southern states do have relatively [low living costs](#). But they are not dramatically lower than costs of living in other states, such as Ohio and Missouri that have set minimum wages at least slightly higher than the national limit. The southern states are doing the absolute minimum for their poorest citizens by keeping the minimum wage at the lowest levels possible.

And people living in the South are a lot less likely to move up the economic ladder.



If you want to achieve the American Dream, don't move to the South. That's because states in the South have extremely low levels of economic mobility. In the map above, pale yellow represents places with higher mobility, while red indicates low mobility. *For more information please see all of the graphs, see the attached **Huffington Post** article or download it via the above weblink.*



This week Robert Reich wrote an interesting article in **The Huffington Post** – *The 'Paid-What-You're-Worth' Myth* – which he calls a dangerous myth. Based on the often assumed that people are paid what they're worth. According to this logic, minimum wage workers aren't worth more than the \$7.25 an hour they now receive. If they were worth more, they'd earn more. Any attempt to force employers to pay them more will only kill jobs. While according to this same logic, CEOs of big companies are worth their giant compensation packages, now averaging 300 times pay of the typical American worker. They must be worth it or they wouldn't be paid this much. Any attempt to limit their pay is fruitless because their pay will only take some other form.

Fifty years ago, when General Motors was the largest employer in America, the typical GM worker got paid \$35 an hour in today's dollars. Today, America's largest employer is Walmart, and the typical Walmart worker earns \$8.80 an hour. Reich: Does this mean the typical GM employee a half-century ago was worth four times what today's typical Walmart employee is worth? Not at all. That GM worker wasn't much better educated or productive. He often hadn't graduated from high school. And today's Walmart worker is surrounded by digital gadgets -- mobile inventory controls, instant checkout devices, retail search engines -- making him or her highly productive.

Reich believes that the real difference is the GM worker a half-century ago had a strong union behind him that summoned the collective bargaining power of all autoworkers to get a substantial share of company revenues for its members. And because more than a third of workers across America belonged to a labor union, the bargains those unions struck with employers raised the wages and benefits of non-unionized workers as well. Non-union firms knew they'd be unionized if they didn't come close to matching the union contracts. Today's Walmart workers don't have a union to negotiate a better deal. They're on their own. And because fewer than 7 percent of today's private-sector workers are unionized, non-union employees across America don't have to match union contracts. This puts unionized firms at a competitive disadvantage. The result has been a race to the bottom.

By the same token, today's CEOs don't rake in 300 times the pay of average workers because they're "worth" it. They get these humongous pay packages because they appoint the compensation committees on their boards that decide executive pay. Or their boards don't want to be seen by investors as having hired a "second-string" CEO who's paid less than the CEOs of their major competitors. Either way, the result has been a race to the top. If you still believe people are paid what they're worth, take a look at Wall Street bonuses. Last year's average bonus was up 15 percent over the year before, to more than \$164,000. It was the largest average Wall Street bonus since the 2008 financial crisis and the third highest on record, according to New York's state comptroller. Remember, we're talking bonuses, above and beyond salaries.

All told, the Street paid out a whopping \$26.7 billion in bonuses last year. Are Wall Street bankers really worth it? Not if you figure in the hidden subsidy flowing to the big Wall Street banks that ever since the bailout of 2008 have been considered too big to fail. People who park their savings in these banks accept a lower interest rate on deposits or loans than they require from America's smaller banks. That's because smaller banks are riskier places to park money. Unlike the big banks, the smaller ones won't be bailed out if they get into trouble.

This hidden subsidy gives Wall Street banks a competitive advantage over the smaller banks, which means Wall Street makes more money. And as their profits grow, the big banks keep getting bigger. How large is this hidden subsidy? Two researchers, Kenichi Ueda of the International Monetary Fund and Beatrice Weder di Mauro of the University of Mainz, have calculated it's about eight tenths of a percentage point. This may not sound like much but multiply it by the total amount of money parked in the ten biggest Wall Street banks and you get a huge amount -- roughly \$83 billion a year. Recall that the Street paid out \$26.7 billion in bonuses last year. You don't have to be a rocket scientist or even a Wall Street banker to see that the hidden subsidy the Wall Street banks enjoy because they're too big to fail is about three times what Wall Street paid out in bonuses. Without the subsidy, no bonus pool.

By the way, the lion's share of that subsidy (\$64 billion a year) goes to the top five banks -- JPMorgan, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, and Goldman Sachs. This amount just about equals these banks' typical annual profits. In other words, take away the subsidy and not only does the bonus pool disappear, but so do all the profits. The reason Wall Street bankers got fat paychecks plus a total of \$26.7 billion in bonuses last year wasn't because they worked so much harder or were so much more clever or insightful than most other Americans. They cleaned up because they happen to work in institutions -- big Wall Street banks -- that hold a privileged place in the American political economy.

And why, exactly, do these institutions continue to have such privileges? Why hasn't Congress used the antitrust laws to cut them down to size so they're not too big to fail, or at least taxed away their

hidden subsidy (which, after all, results from their taxpayer-financed bailout)? Perhaps it's because Wall Street also accounts for a large proportion of campaign donations to major candidates for Congress and the presidency of both parties.

America's low-wage workers don't have privileged positions . They work very hard -- many holding down two or more jobs. But they can't afford to make major campaign contributions and they have no political clout. According to the Institute for Policy Studies, the \$26.7 billion of bonuses Wall Street banks paid out last year would be enough to more than double the pay of every one of America's 1,085,000 full-time minimum wage workers.

The remainder of the \$83 billion of hidden subsidy going to those same banks would almost be enough to double what the government now provides low-wage workers in the form of wage subsidies under the Earned Income Tax Credit. But I don't expect Congress to make these sorts of adjustments any time soon. The "*paid-what-you're-worth*" argument is fundamentally misleading because it ignores power, overlooks institutions, and disregards politics. As such, it lures the unsuspecting into thinking nothing whatever should be done to change what people are paid, because nothing can be done.

Two Charts That Will Enrage Everyone (Well, Except Bankers)

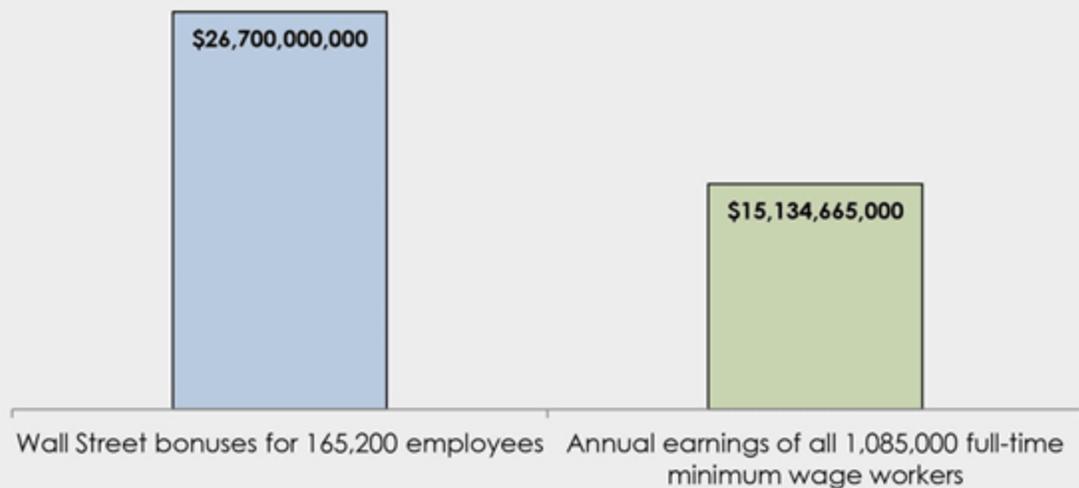
Huffington Post – Maxwell Strachan

Take every single dollar made by full-time workers earning the federal minimum wage last year. Now double that pile of cash. OK, now we're in Wall Street bonus territory.

Wall Street pulled in \$26.7 billion in cash bonuses last year, according to estimates revealed Wednesday by the New York state comptroller. That's up about 15 percent from the previous year, and amounts to \$164,530 per person when split up among the industry's 165,200 employees in New York.

In a new report the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive think-tank that advocates for pay fairness, paints those bonuses in a rather startling way: Wall Street's cash pile is now nearly double what the country's 1.085 million full-time minimum wage workers made all of last year.

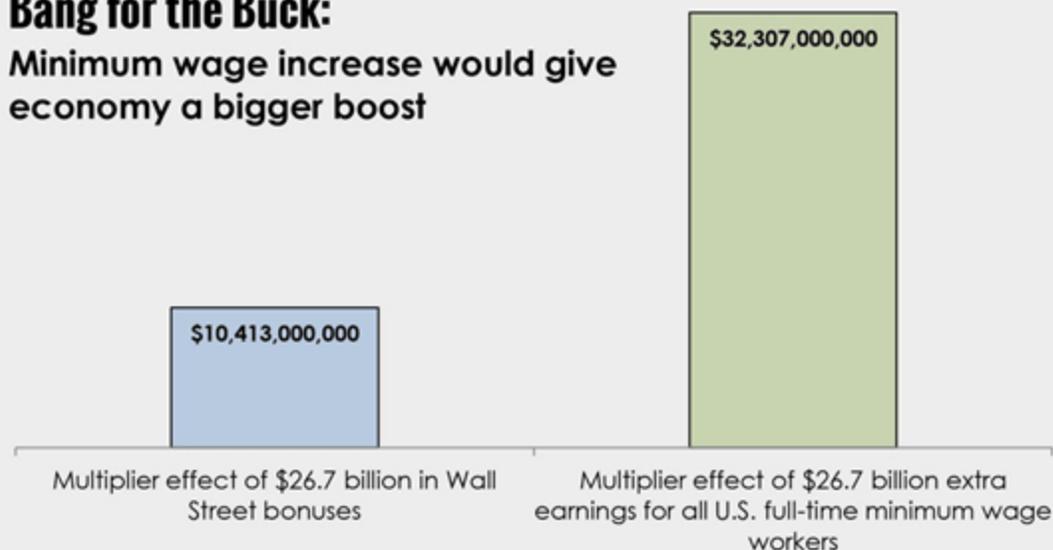
Wall Street Bonuses Far Exceed Earnings of All Full-time Minimum Wage Workers



Source: Institute for Policy Studies analysis of New York State Comptroller and BLS data.

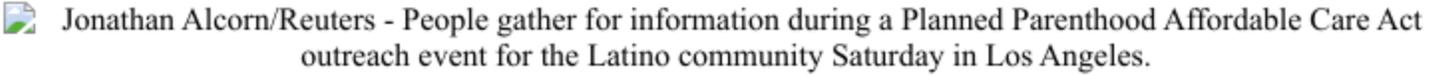
That's sad of course. But it's also bad for the economy. The Institute estimates that if Wall Street's bonuses instead went to the federal minimum wage workforce, the economy would have benefited more than three times as much:

Bang for the Buck: Minimum wage increase would give economy a bigger boost



Source: Institute for Policy Studies analysis of New York State Comptroller and BLS data, using Moody's Analytics multipliers.

Why's that? Because people living at the bottom of the income ladder often need and spend nearly every dollar they get, especially when they have children. And as the Economic Policy Institute, another think tank that is pushing for a higher minimum wage, noted Wednesday, around one-fifth of all children in America have a mom or dad who would benefit if the federal minimum wage increased.

 Jonathan Alcorn/Reuters - People gather for information during a Planned Parenthood Affordable Care Act outreach event for the Latino community Saturday in Los Angeles.

The Obama administration announced Monday that more than 5 million people have signed up for new insurance plans under the health-care law, suggesting new momentum for the program as the deadline to get covered this year approaches. About 800,000 people selected health plans on the state and federal insurance marketplaces in the beginning of March, officials said in a blog post -- almost as many as signed up during the entire month of February. The figure brings the administration closer to Congressional Budget Office projections that 6 million people would enroll by the end of March. Officials had predicted that the pace of enrollments would pick up this month, because March 31 is the last day to sign up for a marketplace plan and avoid a fine. The health law requires most Americans to have health insurance or incur a penalty of \$95 or 1 percent of their income this year, whichever is higher.

The Congressional Budget Office had initially projected that 7 million people would sign up for new health plans by the end of March. Analysts revised that estimate last month, after it became clear that enrollment would be depressed by the technical difficulties on HealthCare.gov and a number of state-based insurance Web sites. *"The last several days have been the busiest since December,"* Marilyn Tavenner, administrator of the Medicare office, said in the blog post, noting that the federal hotline took 198,000 calls on last Thursday alone. More than 4 million people visited HealthCare.gov last week, and another million logged on over the weekend. *"With only two weeks to go, we're continuing to work hard to ensure that every American who wants to enroll in affordable coverage by the deadline of March 31st is able to do so,"* Tavenner wrote.

With 5 million Americans signed up and an estimated million more by April 1st, Obamacare is here to stay. As such if Republicans were serious, instead of demonizing it, they should try to come up with ideas to make it better. But this is not going to happen as long as Republicans feel that as a wedge issue they will benefit during the mid-term elections. That reality is sad but true and another reason why the U.S. Congress is the laughing stock around the world. With this said, congratulations Obamacare, because one day in the future like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, it too will be appreciated by a majority of Americans.

By now you have heard that Russian President Vladimir Putin, defying Ukrainian protests and Western sanctions, signed a treaty on Tuesday making Crimea part of Russia saying that he has no plans to seize any other regions of Ukraine. Putin said Crimea's disputed referendum vote on Sunday, held under Russian military occupation, had shown the overwhelming will of the people to be reunited with Russia. The speech drew immediate hostile reaction in Kiev and the West. Ukraine's foreign ministry said it did not recognize the pact, which showed how Russia posed a threat to international security.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, on a visit to Poland, called Moscow's action a land grab and stressed Washington's commitment to defending the security of NATO allies on Russian borders. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Russia's move on Crimea was unacceptable to the international community, while British Foreign Secretary William Hague said London had suspended military cooperation with

Russia. In his speech, Putin lambasted Western nations for what he called hypocrisy, saying they had endorsed Kosovo's independence from Serbia but now denied Crimeans the same right, he said. *"You cannot call the same thing black today and white tomorrow,"* he declared to stormy applause, saying that while he did not seek conflict with the West, Western partners had *"crossed the line"* over Ukraine and behaved *"irresponsibly"*.

Putin thanked China for what he called its support, even though Beijing abstained on a U.N. resolution on Crimea that Moscow had to veto on its own. He said he was sure Germans would support the Russian people's quest for reunification, just as Russia had supported German reunification in 1990. And he sought to reassure Ukrainians that Moscow did not seek any further division of their country. Fears have been expressed in Kiev that Russia might move on the Russian-speaking eastern parts of Ukraine, where there has been tension between some Russian-speakers and the new authorities. *"Don't believe those who try to frighten you with Russia and who scream that other regions will follow after Crimea,"* Putin said. *"We do not want a partition of Ukraine."*

Crimea (Ukrainian is in the southwestern region of Ukraine, located on the Crimean Peninsula on the north shore of the Black Sea with a predominantly Russian ethnic majority (58%). Today's Crimea includes nearly all of the Crimean Peninsula, with the small exception of Sevastopol. But before we follow John McCain and other hawks into a new Cold War because of the recent events in the Ukraine and Crimea we should all realize that changing borders in Europe is nothing new. Here's an interesting clip showing 1000 years of changes.

Web Link: <http://loiter.co/v/watch-as-1000years-of-european-boarders-change/>



Look no further than the time-lapse map in the video above, which has boiled down the continent's history into just three-and-a-half minutes. The map traces changes in Europe's borders from 1000 AD until 2003, and was created using software from the **Centennia Historical Atlas**. Watch the Byzantine Empire fall apart, follow the victories of the Mongols, and watch national borders shift, all accompanied by a fittingly dramatic soundtrack by Hans Zimmer from the Inception score.

HISTORY of CRIMEA: Taurica was the name of Crimea in antiquity. Taurica was inhabited by a variety of peoples. In the 4th century BC the eastern part of Taurica became part of the Bosphoran Kingdom, before being incorporated into the Roman Empire in the 1st century BC. Throughout the later centuries, Crimea was invaded or occupied successively by the Scythians, Sarmatians, Goths (AD 250), the Huns (376), the Bulgars (4th–8th century), the Khazars (8th century), the state of Kievan Rus' (10th–11th centuries), the Byzantine Empire (1016), the Kipchaks (Kumans) (1050), and the Mongols (1237). A number of Turkic peoples, now collectively known as the Crimean Tatars, came to inhabit the peninsula starting with the early Middle Ages.

At times these dominated the peninsula demographically, while at other times their numbers dwindled (1750–1944) or disappeared altogether (1944–91), only to reappear again (1991–present) After the destruction of the Golden Horde by Tamerlane, the Crimean Tatars founded an independent Crimean Khanate in 1441, under Hacı I Giray, a descendant of Genghis Khan. In 1774, the Crimean Khans fell under Russian influence with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca and, in 1783, the entire Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire.

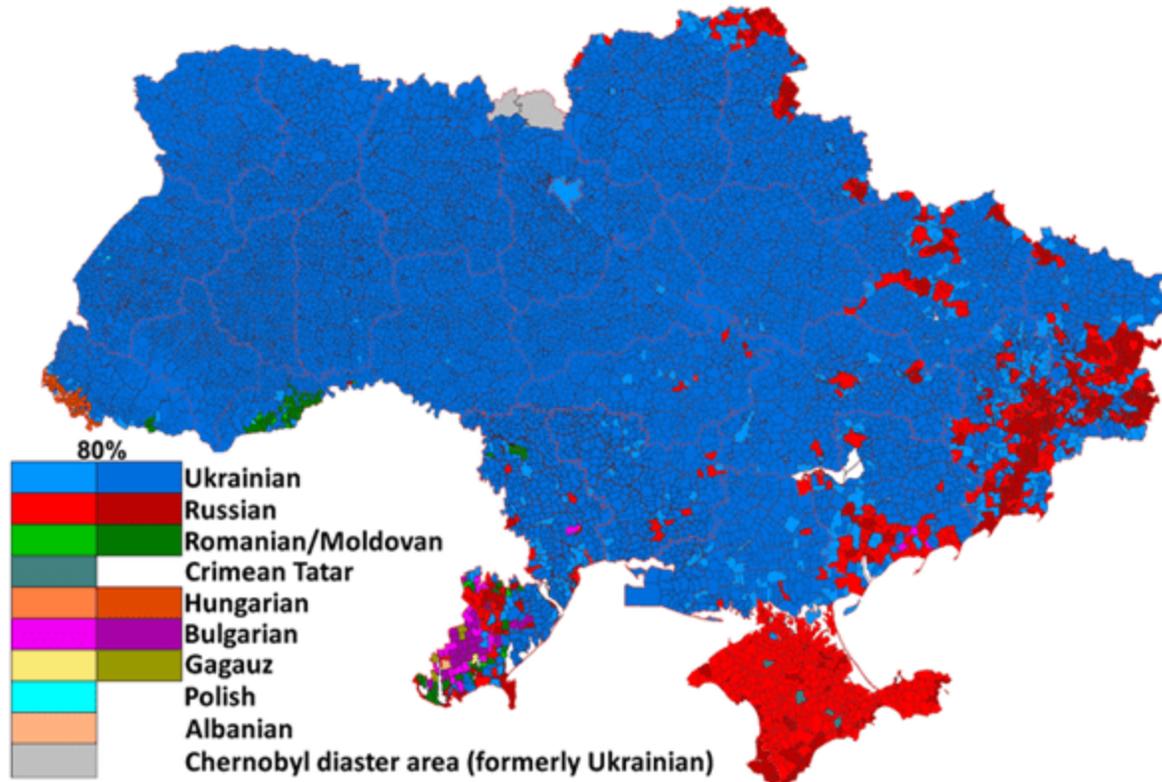
Crimea became part of Russia's Taurida Governorate and was the site of much of the fighting in the Crimean War (1853–1856) between Russia on one side, and France, Britain, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia on the other. Russia and the Ottoman Empire went to war in October 1853 over Russia's rights to protect Orthodox Christians. Russia gained the upper hand after destroying the Ottoman fleet at the Black Sea port of Sinope; to stop Russia's conquest, France and Britain entered in March 1854. Most of the fighting took place for control of the Black Sea, with land battles on the Crimean peninsula in southern Russia. The Russians held their great fortress at Sevastopol for over a year. After it fell, peace was arranged at Paris in March 1856. The religion issue had already been resolved. The main results were that the Black Sea was neutralized—Russia would have no warships there—and the two vassals, Wallachia and Moldavia, became largely independent under nominal Ottoman rule. The war devastated much of the economic and social infrastructure of the peninsula.

During the Russian Civil War following the overthrow of the Russian Empire, Crimea changed hands a number of times and was a stronghold of the anti-Bolshevik White Army. On 18 October 1921, the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was created as part of the Russian SFSR, which then became part of the Soviet Union. Crimea experienced two severe famines in the 20th century, the Famine of 1921–1922 and the Holodomor of 1932–1933.

During World War II, Crimea was the scene of several bloody battles. The Axis forces under the command of Nazi Germany suffered heavy casualties in the summer of 1941 as they tried to advance through the narrow Isthmus of Perekop linking Crimea to the Soviet mainland. On 18 May 1944, the entire population of the Crimean Tatars was forcibly deported in the "*Sürgün*" (Turkish (Crimean Tatar) for exile) to Central Asia by Joseph Stalin's Soviet government as a form of collective punishment, on the grounds that they had collaborated with the Nazi occupation forces and formed anti-Soviet Tatar Legions. An estimated 46% of the deportees died from hunger and disease. On 26 June of the same year, the Armenian, Bulgarian, and Greek population was also deported to Central Asia. By the end of summer of 1944, the ethnic cleansing of Crimea was complete. In 1967, the Crimean Tatars were rehabilitated, but they were banned from legally returning to their homeland until the last days of the Soviet Union. The Crimean ASSR was abolished on 30 June 1945 and transformed into the Crimean Oblast (province) of the Russian SFSR.

Crimea has been an important part of Russia since ***Catherine the Great*** seized it from the **Ottoman Empire** in 1783. Nikita Khrushchev, the one-time party boss of Ukraine had long tried to expand Ukraine's territory and even tried to take Crimea for Ukraine 10 years earlier, in 1944. Behind the scenes, Khrushchev, who did not yet have full power, had to get approval from key party officials. On 19 February 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union issued a decree transferring the Crimean Oblast from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The transfer of the Crimean Oblast to Ukraine has been described as a "*symbolic gesture*," marking the 300th anniversary of Ukraine becoming a part of the Russian Empire. The General Secretary of the Communist Party in Soviet Union was at the time the Ukrainian Nikita Khrushchev.

The majority language by city, town, and village councils
Results from the Ukrainian 2001 Census



At the time of Soviet Union collapse, Russia had an extremely crucial interests at stake — a cache of more than 1,000 strategic nuclear weapons that were on Ukraine's soil when the Soviet Union dissolved. In fact, Ukraine was instantly the world's third biggest nuclear power, with more weapons than Britain, France and China combined. In the **1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances**, Russia, along with the United States and Britain, agreed to *"refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine"* in exchange for Ukraine's joining the nuclear **Non-Proliferation Treaty**. During that same period, Crimea voted on to join Ukraine, though it was approved by a relatively narrow majority (54 percent), compared to other areas of Ukraine.

In post-war years, Crimea thrived as a prime tourist destination, built with new attractions and spas for tourists. Tourists came from all over the Soviet Union and neighboring countries. Crimea's infrastructure and manufacturing was also developed, particularly around the sea ports at Kerch and Sevastopol and in the oblast's landlocked capital of Simferopol. Following a referendum on 20 January 1991, the Crimean Oblast was upgraded to that of an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on 12 February 1991 by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Crimea became part of the newly independent Ukraine, which led to tensions between Russia and Ukraine. And as of Tuesday, Crimea became part of Russia again. So if anyone tells you that it is President Obama and the US government's duty to enforce any boundaries in Europe, refer them to map video in the above link and quote the above history.

 Main Entry Image

There were startling findings this week on the growing threat of Alzheimer's disease starting with the fact that on average every 60 seconds someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's. Researchers say that while 5 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's that number is expected to triple in the coming decades, with an estimated 16 million Americans by 2050. This soaring epidemic is taking a much harder toll on women than it is on men, with more than 3.2 million women currently living with Alzheimer's in America. As a result, researchers say that women are at the epicenter of Alzheimer's disease today. Not only for being the most likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's but also by being the care-giver most of the time as a result of living longer than their spouses and men in general. Finally more than 500,000 Americans die each year from Alzheimer's and there is no known cure for it, so once a person is diagnosed, it is essentially a death sentence as their brains stops telling their bodies what to do. Pharmaceutical companies are racing to come up with various treatments without success and all that people can do today is early intervention with lifestyle changes.

Today's report, 2014 Alzheimer's Facts and Fiction by the **Alzheimer's Association** lays out some sobering numbers. 1 in 6 women over the age of 65 are at risk for developing the disease, compared to 1 in 11 men 65 years of age and older. Researchers say that could be related to biology and genetic differences between the sexes. Women in their 60s are twice more like to get Alzheimer's than breast cancer. While federal funding is 10 times greater for cancer than it is for Alzheimer's. And between 60 – 70% of all care-givers are women, often spending years caring for husbands with Alzheimer's causing a depression and stress among these women struggling to cope with the financial and other challenges as they watch the men that they love slowly disappear. Worse of all, care-giving is lonely as there are not enough nursing homes that are affordable to these middle-class families.

A new study by Harvard scientists points to a possible answer, one that could spark further research that -- ultimately -- could lead to new drugs and treatments for dementia. Researchers have found that a protein active during fetal brain development, called REST, switches back on later in life to protect aging neurons from various stresses, including the toxic effects of abnormal proteins. But in those with Alzheimer's and mild cognitive impairment, the protein -- RE1-Silencing Transcription factor -- is absent from key brain regions. *"Our work raises the possibility that the abnormal protein aggregates associated with Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases may not be sufficient to cause dementia; you may also need a failure of the brain's stress response system,"* said Bruce Yankner, **Harvard Medical School professor** of genetics and leader of the study, in a release. *"If true, this opens up a new area in terms of treatment possibilities for the more than 5 million Americans currently living with Alzheimer's disease,"* said Yankner, who in the 1990s was the first to demonstrate the toxic effects of amyloid beta, the hallmark abnormal protein in Alzheimer's.

The research, published Wednesday in the journal **Nature**, underscores a different way of looking at neurodegenerative diseases. Instead of focusing on the negative changes that cause disease, researchers examined trouble spots in the brain's ability to protect itself over time. Yankner said the study suggests a person may be able to resist the toxic effects of Alzheimer's if REST levels remain high. *"If we could activate this stress-resistance gene network with drugs, it might be possible to intervene in the disease quite early,"* he added in a release. *"Since Alzheimer's strikes late in life, delaying the onset of disease by just a few years could have a very substantial impact."*

In separate, but related research, a new study out of **Temple University's School of Medicine** this week suggests chronic sleep disturbances could speed up the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease in older adults. Yet another recent study found that a simple blood test could detect with 90 percent accuracy whether or not a healthy person will develop Alzheimer's. As dementia rates rise,

researchers believe preventive studies such as this will be critical in finding a cure. Some estimates say the number of people living with dementia will double to nearly 70 million by 2030.

The good news is that lifestyle moderation can help both women and men deter the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's and simply put, generally whatever is good for one's heart is good for one's brain. Exercising, keeping one's blood pressure in check, good sleeping, nutritional and dietary practices along with no-smoking and moderate alcohol intake will help's one's heart and brain stay healthy. And although possibly years away, the discovery of REST's potential role in the aging brain and the idea that the brain may harbor pathways, such as REST, to protect against cognitive decline is one of them, allows researchers to believe that there is potential to develop drugs to address this growing epidemic by pursuing new directions in Alzheimer's research based on the newly published findings.

11 Reasons We Can't Ignore Alzheimer's Anymore

With the near-perfect correlation between Alzheimer's and aging, the longevity miracle of the 20th century is in danger of becoming a health crisis in this century. As they look at the Obama administration's budget projections for 2015, analysts at the **Office of Management and Budget (OMB)** might factor in 11 vital points about Alzheimer's as part of a serious new analysis of what is to come:

- 1.** Alzheimer's is a fiscal nightmare. It already consumes 1 percent of global GDP per year, or roughly \$604 billion. The costs are extraordinary in large part because of the intensive caregiving required for patients with this dementia – and by mid-century, the total number of people requiring care will triple. Private sector innovation in caregiving may help stem the tide.
- 2.** Rates of the illness will quadruple. In the next 35 years, cases of Alzheimer's are going to quadruple, reaching 135 million by mid-century. Right now, if you're over age 65, you stand a one-in-eight chance of getting the disease. After age 85, your odds jump to nearly one in two. The prevalence of Alzheimer's in today's developing and poor countries will skyrocket even more than in the developed world.
- 3.** Alzheimer's is the third deadliest disease in the U.S. Each year, Alzheimer's takes nearly half a million American lives.
- 4.** Alzheimer's is endlessly destructive. Most people think Alzheimer's destroys people's ability to remember. It's far worse than that, unfortunately. The dementia struggles of Dean Smith, the legendary basketball coach at the **University of North Carolina (UNC)**, illustrate the point; an **ESPN** article discusses the icon's deterioration after 36 years of college coaching (he retired in 1997). Incredibly, he no longer enjoys watching basketball; the games are too confusing and the action moves too fast.

5. There may be many kinds of Alzheimer's. When John Wayne had cancer, it was called "*the cancer*"; there are now dozens of kinds of cancer. Some very smart people think that's the situation today with Alzheimer's. We think its one degenerative disease, but there may be countless forms – which will require different treatments, preventions, and care methods.

6. The illness demands new awareness. The UK has started a program that trains citizens in retail, banking, and other customer-focused jobs to be "*dementia friends*." There are still many unpleasant stigmas surrounding those who have Alzheimer's, but the right awareness programs can help.

7. High-tech solutions are in the pipeline. Technologies may rewrite the possibilities of life with dementia. Residential homes are becoming dementia friendly with the help of digital technologies such as floor sensors and "*smart*" reminders. These technologies will drastically extend a person's ability to live independently or even with semi-independence. George Vradenburg, a top advocate, has begun to talk about *Google Glasses* as a prosthetic for those with Alzheimer's.

8. "*Big data*" may lead to solutions. We hear the rallying cry for big data on everything from unsynchronized stoplights to the war on terror. Leading organizations are using "big data" to help unlock Alzheimer's mysteries. The prospects are promising: We may learn to analyze data sets such as the **Framingham Heart Study** or several of the Dutch, UK or German data sets that are increasingly collected on pricing and insurance schemes.

9. New care models are instructive. As private sector models of home care, such as **Home Instead Senior Care**, extend their Alzheimer's care training, we're learning more about the disease than we often did through traditional analytical approaches. The applications are not only for more effective and better care but for the ability to marry technology with private, targeted and personal home care.

10. We need prevention before cure. New studies are teaching us more about the prevention of Alzheimer's even before we learn how to cure or adequately treat the dreaded disease.

11. There's a new advocacy push. The irreverent Hollywood comedian Seth Rogen delivered a passionate plea for greater action against Alzheimer's disease before a U.S. Senate committee last month, noting his wife's mother has suffered cruelly from the illness. In London, **Alzheimer's Disease International** has begun a global petition to put Alzheimer's on the G20 agenda. After seeing significant recognition by the G8 under David Cameron's leadership, Alzheimer's advocates are rightly setting their sights on the **G20** meeting in Australia. Still, even as the star of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up* expresses the same goals as experts in the field, it remains curious how little most of us still know about such a difficult, tragic and costly disease.

What the Western Media Won't Tell You: *Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians Also Voted to Join Russia*



THE outcome of the “*referendum*” last weekend in Crimea was never in doubt. With Russian troops occupying the peninsula, the 97% vote in favor of becoming part of Russia is not a surprise. Crimean Tatars, the native Turkic Muslims of Crimea, who account for 13% of the total population, and many of the ethnic Ukrainians, who make up another 25%, boycotted the referendum. The 83% official turnout was boosted by Russian passport holders and by multiple voting. Neither Ukraine, nor the West and its allies around the world, recognized this referendum as legitimate.

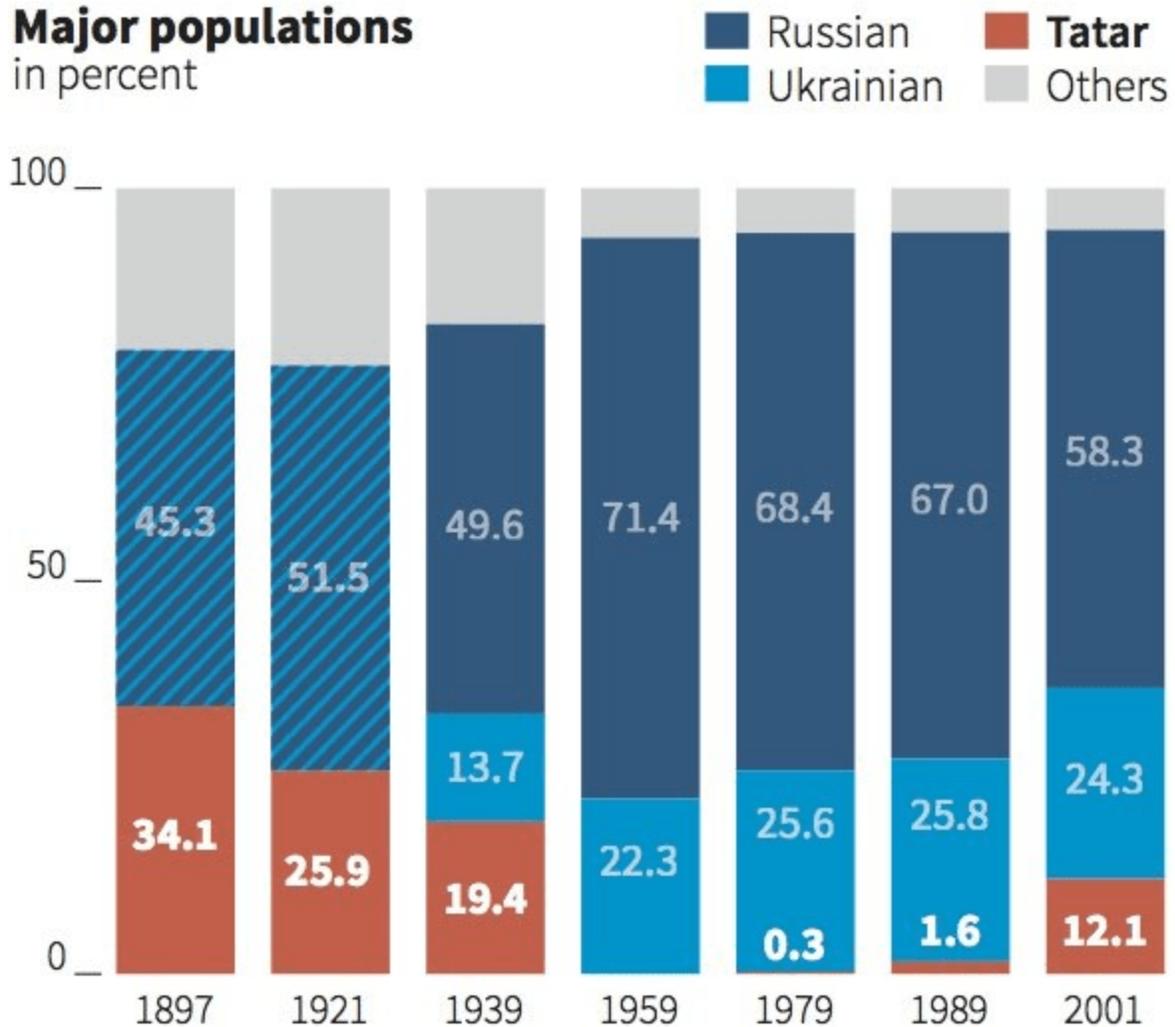
But the post-referendum jubilation in Crimea among those who want to rejoin Russia was and is genuine. People cheered Russia’s military presence in Crimea as a liberation rather than occupation. And the West would like you to believe that this was largely the result of the rabid anti-Ukrainian propaganda which portrayed the government in Kiev which came to power after the revolutionary protests last month as a bunch of crazed fascists hell-bent on exterminating the Russian-speaking population of Crimea. But it was also the result of the neglect which Ukrainians displayed towards Crimea over the years, leaving it to its own devices and failing to integrate it deeper into Ukraine.

Media reports acknowledge that 83.1 percent of eligible Crimean voters cast their ballot in the March 16th referendum. The final tally of the vote was 96.77 percent in favor of joining the Russian Federation, and 2.51 percent against. But the Western media has repeatedly said that both the Crimean Tatars as well as the Ukrainian population of Crimea were against joining the Russian Federation. The Non-Russian population constitutes 41.7 percent of the Crimean population. According to official data, Russians constitute 58.32% of the population of Crimea, 24.32% are Ukrainians and 12.10% are Crimean Tatars.

Crimean population

A look at the historical composition of Crimea's population.

Major populations in percent



Sources: Census data (Simferopol 1989) via "Crimea", by Maria Drohobycky; 1959 Soviet Census; State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2001 census

C. Inton, 14/03/2014

REUTERS

The Guardian, in a slither of media disinformation intimated that the Tatars feared a wave of repression if Crimea were to join the Russian Federation: Now, as Crimea faces a referendum that is likely to seal its fate as a province or satellite of Russia, ethnic tensions are reaching boiling point. In a chilling echo of history, Tatar houses in the Crimean city of Bakhchisarai have been marked with an ominous X, just as they were before the Soviet-era deportations. On Monday two Tatar businesses were firebombed. The prospect of a return to living under Moscow's rule is disturbing. "People are in panic. We are trying to keep people calm but they are scared of the Russian soldiers and Cossacks that come here," he said. (Crimea's Tatars fear the worst as it prepares for referendum | World news | theguardian.com)

Contrary to the reports of 135 international observers from 23 countries, the Western media in chorus has suggested without a shred of evidence that the elections were rigged and that Crimea was under Russian military occupation. The observer mission reports which include members of the European Parliament have been casually ignored by the mainstream Western media: Mateus Piskorkski, the leader of the European observers' mission and Polish MP: *"Our observers have not registered any violations of voting rules."* Ewald Stadler, member of the European Parliament, dispelled the "referendum at gunpoint" myth: *"I haven't seen anything even resembling pressure... People themselves want to have their say."* Pavel Chernev: Bulgarian member of parliament: *"Organization and procedures are 100 percent in line with the European standards,"* he added.

Johann Gudenus, member of the Vienna Municipal Council: *"Our opinion is – if people want to decide their future, they should have the right to do that and the international community should respect that. There is a goal of people in Crimea to vote about their own future. Of course, Kiev is not happy about that, but still they have to accept and to respect the vote of people in Crimea".* Serbian observer Milenko Baborats *"People freely expressed their will in the most democratic way, wherever we were... During the day we didn't see a single serious violation of legitimacy of the process,"*

Srdja Trifkovic, prominent and observer from Serbia: *"The presence of troops on the streets is virtually non-existent and the only thing resembling any such thing is the unarmed middle-aged Cossacks who are positioned outside the parliament building in Simferopol. But if you look at the people both at the voting stations and in the streets, like on Yalta's sea front yesterday afternoon, frankly I think you would feel more tense in south Chicago or in New York's Harlem than anywhere round here,"* he said. (For more details see **Crimean 'Referendum at Gunpoint' is a Myth – International Observers** By **Global Research News**, March 17, 2014)

Yet according to **Time Magazine**, without acknowledging the reports of the international observers, the ballot had to have been rigged and the vote was held under the gun of the Russian military: 95 percent voted in favor of becoming a part of Russia. That may seem like an impossible result, the mark of a rigged election. And in some ways it was. The vote was held during a Russian military occupation of Crimea and the ballot did not offer voters the option of keeping their current status in Ukraine. (**Time**, March 17, 2014)

In chorus, Western media reports have stated that both Ukrainians and Tatars were firmly against seceding from Ukraine. They also intimated that the Tatar community had decided not to vote. According to the **Washington Post**, *"a vote in favor of seceding"* was inevitable because *"ethnic Russians make up 60 percent of Crimea's population"*. But the result was not 60 percent in favor, it was 97 percent in favor, indicating that all major ethnic groups in the Crimea voted in favor of seceding from Ukraine. The figures do not add up: The Russians constitute 58 percent of Crimea's population, yet 97 percent of the vote was in favor of joining Russia. If Ukrainians and Tatars had refused to participate in the referendum, voter participation would have been substantially less than 83.1.

The "**Big Ugly**" is that referendum was also a vote against the US-EU sponsored Coup d'etat. The results confirm that the Tatars and Ukrainians who did cast their ballot, also voted overwhelmingly in favor of joining Russia. As much as the Crimean vote last weekend was coerced by Putin and Russian troops, the thing that Western media refuses to acknowledge is that this 97 percent vote also indicates was also a rejection of the perceived "*illegal*" government in Kiev. **By the way this week**, Venetians voted on breaking away from Italy, albeit in a referendum not recognized by Rome or regional

authorities as this phenomenon appears to be spreading with referendums in both Scotland and Spain's Catalonia planned for later this year. Finally if Americans want to support free and fair elections, start here in the United States where gerrymandering, voter suppression laws are liberally being used to deny millions of other Americans their right to vote. Crimea is the only story because it is a convenient way for the West to contain Putin..... and this is the true story that Western media chooses to ignore and distort.

Crimea, Scotland...now Venice votes on breakaway. See web link: <http://fw.to/GFjAPGf>

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

TEDWeekends

 Maysoon Zayid Ted

WATCH: *This Woman With Cerebral Palsy Wants You To Laugh At Her (No...Seriously)*

Web Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/teetalks/watch-this-woman-with-cer_b_4959970.html

If thinking of cerebral palsy makes you think of someone sad or helpless, then watch this talk and let comedian Maysoon Zayid blow your mind. She's fierce, she's funny, and she refuses to let you feel sorry for her.

GREAT MAGIC TRICK

Magic's Biggest Secrets Finally Revealed- Season 1 Episode 11

Web Site: <http://youtu.be/A2bIM4obBiw>

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC



Last week's music offering was the New York rock band **Blood, Sweat & Tears**, while representing the Midwest at the same time was the band **The Chicago Transit Authority**, later known just as "**Chicago**," which was formed in 1967 in Chicago, Illinois. The self-described "*rock and roll band with horns*" began as a politically charged, sometimes experimental, rock band and later moved to a predominantly softer sound, generating several hit ballads. The group had a steady stream of hits throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Second only to **The Beach Boys** in Billboard singles and albums chart success among American bands, **Chicago** is one of the longest-running and most successful rock groups in history. According to **Billboard**, **Chicago** was the leading US singles charting group during the 1970s. They have sold over 38 million units in the US, with 22 gold, 18 platinum, and 8 multi-platinum albums. Over the course of their career they have had five number-one albums and 21 top-ten singles.

The original band membership consisted of saxophonist Walter Parazaider, guitarist Terry Kath, drummer Danny Seraphine, trombonist James Pankow, trumpet player Lee Loughnane, and keyboardist/singer Robert Lamm. Parazaider, Kath, Seraphine, Pankow and Loughnane met in 1967 while students at **DePaul University**. Lamm was recruited from **Roosevelt University**. The group of six called themselves "**The Big Thing**", and continued playing top 40 hits. Realizing the need for a tenor to complement baritone Lamm and Kath, they added local tenor and bassist Peter Cetera. While gaining some success as a cover band, the group began working on original songs. In June 1968, they moved to Los Angeles, California under the guidance of their manager James William Guercio, and signed with **Columbia Records**. After signing with Guercio, **The Big Thing** changed their name to "**Chicago Transit Authority**". Their first record (April 1969), the eponymous **The Chicago Transit Authority**, was a double album, which is rare for a band's first release. It sold over one million copies by 1970, and was awarded a platinum disc. The album included a number of pop-rock songs – "*Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?*", "*Beginnings*", "*Questions 67 and 68*", and "*I'm a Man*" – which were later released as singles. When the actual Chicago Transit Authority threatened legal action soon after the album's release, the band's name was shortened to Chicago.

Upon being renamed from **Chicago Transit Authority to Chicago**, the band sported a new logo. Its inspiration was found in the design of the Coca-Cola logo, in the attitude of the city of Chicago itself, and in the desire to visually transcend the individual identities of the band's constituent members. It was designed by the Art Director of **Columbia/CBS Records**, John Berg, with each album's graphic art work being done by Nick Fasciano. Berg said, "*The Chicago logo...was fashioned for me by Nick Fasciano from my sketch.*" The logo would serve as the band's chief visual icon from Chicago II, onward. In various artistic forms and visual similes, it has been the subject of every subsequent album cover, except the fifteenth album, **Greatest Hits, Volume II**. For example, it appeared as an American flag on **III**, a piece of wood on **V**, a U.S. dollar bill on **VI**, an embroidered patch on **VIII**, a chocolate bar on **X**, a fingerprint on **XIV**, a computer silicon chip on **16**, a parcel on **17**, and a mosaic on 18. **Chicago IX's** incarnation was a caricature of the band itself, in the shape of the logo.

Current members

- Robert Lamm – *keyboards, guitar, vocals* (1967–present)
- Lee Loughnane – *trumpet, guitar, percussion, vocals* (1967–present)
- James Pankow – *trombone, percussion, keyboards, vocals* (1967–present)

- Walter Parazaider – *woodwinds, backing vocals* (1967–present)
- Jason Scheff – *bass, vocals* (1985–present)
- Tris Imboden – *drums, percussion* (1990–present)
- Keith Howland – *guitar, vocals* (1995–present)
- Lou Pardini – *keyboards, vocals* (2009–present; touring – 1999, 2007)
- Walfredo Reyes, Jr. – *percussion* (2012–present)

Current touring musicians

- Nick Lane – *trombone* (1999–present)
- Larry Klimas – *woodwinds* (2003–present)

The album cover series has endured as a cataloged work of art in its own right, described by Paul Nini of the **American Institute of Graphic Arts** as a "real landmark in record cover design". In 2013, the iconic status of **Chicago's** album art was featured in a New York art museum exhibit, which centered upon ninety-five album covers completely selected from John Berg's career portfolio of hundreds. Having overseen the design of approximately fourteen **Chicago** album covers across more than twenty years, Berg stated that this artistic success resulted from the combination of **Chicago's** "unique situation" and his position in "the best possible job at the best possible time to have that job, at the center of the graphic universe". Today **Chicago** continues to tour on a regular basis and even if you aren't of the age to remember when they came to prominence in the late 60s/early 70s, I assure you a wonderful musical experience. With this said, I invite everyone this week to enjoy the music of the iconic band **CHICAGO.....**

Chicago – **Beginnings** -- http://youtu.be/zs_z_HToSzU

Chicago – **Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?** -- <http://youtu.be/tBuUUBrC9eQ> and <http://youtu.be/hCVhoyEKYt4>

Chicago – **25 or 6 to 4** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXb8ZDuICCs&feature=share&list=RDhCVhoyEKYt4&index=1>

Chicago – **Saturday In The Park** -- <http://youtu.be/EEem7IY6wrSw>

Chicago – **Feeling Stronger Every Day** -- <http://youtu.be/wbpXrMWJt98>

Chicago – **Dialogue** -- http://youtu.be/gje_oOMj4h4

Chicago – **Colour My World** -- <http://youtu.be/EMHemXOO-PU>

Chicago – **I'm a Man** -- <http://youtu.be/IvmeEyVd5w8>

Chicago – **I've Been Searching So Long** -- <http://youtu.be/iA4xQPfVopI>

Chicago – *Hard to say I'm sorry* -- <http://youtu.be/SX58yVXxlJc>

Chicago – *Hard Habit To Break* -- <http://youtu.be/b7MwgByxPs8>

Chicago Transit Authority – *I'm A Man* -- <http://youtu.be/UVLUFl6WO6E>

Chicago & Beach Boys – *Wishing You Were Here* -- <http://youtu.be/gsu4v4HPGNHM>

Chicago and Earth, Wind & Fire – *Live at the Greek Theatre* -- <http://youtu.be/ojLKOcYiHs>

BONUS TRACK

Earth Wind & Fire – *Devotion - Reasons - That's The Way Of The World* --
<http://youtu.be/Scm4y-ND3M>

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and especially the Bonus Track and I wish you and yours a wonderful week.

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

US: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Skype: [REDACTED]