

founders of America at the time of the Constitution against the charge that they were defenders of slavery. Williams quotes several, including Thomas Jefferson, James Otis, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton. Typical was the statement of Madison that slavery was "a barbarous policy."

Dr. Williams brings to his analysis of contemporary issues the keen insights of a sound economist. He explains why businesses are in favor of regulations (it's to keep down competition), why the self-esteem movement is so pernicious (it stifles effort and achievement), why a balanced budget is not enough (taxes and spending at today's levels are legalized theft). There is hardly a significant and contemporary topic that Williams doesn't discuss in this book. It is well worth reading, and Dr. Williams is well worth listening to. □

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War on the West: Government Tyranny on America's Great Frontier

by William Perry Pendley

Regnery Publishing, Inc. • 1995 • 301 pages • \$24.95

Reviewed by Jane S. Shaw

If the federal government has declared war on the West, as William Perry Pendley contends, we had better pay attention, since the federal government owns so much of it. As Pendley points out, Washington, D.C., manages more than 80 percent of Nevada, almost two-thirds of Utah and Idaho, and half of Oregon, Wyoming, Arizona, and California.

Pendley, a lawyer and political appointee in the Reagan Administration who now heads the Mountain States Legal Foundation, makes a convincing case that the government is on the attack. Planning the strategy are environmentalists, from blue-suited lobbyists in Washington, D.C., to

urban dwellers in the West's growing cities like Seattle and Portland. These environmentalists (whom Pendley routinely calls "environmental extremists") hold sway over the federal agencies that manage the West. They are imbued with a romantic view of what the West should be—a vast "buffalo commons" interspersed with parks and wilderness areas that have reverted to "presettlement" conditions.

To make their notion a reality, they are using every tool at their disposal, from the Endangered Species Act to the activism of their political ally, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Their specific goal is to halt traditional western activities such as ranching, logging, and energy production. And they are succeeding.

Anyone who has been following the conflict between environmentalists and commodity users will agree that Pendley's contention is largely correct. He supports his arguments with examples, especially legal cases, sometimes in lengthy detail.

The chief problem with the book is that for Pendley bringing peace to the West means returning to the *status quo ante*. He doesn't champion freedom for the West. Instead, he defends the West as it has been—a federal fiefdom. Until recently, the government nominally controlled vast stretches of land but managed it in close association with ranchers, loggers, and mining companies. Not only was this inefficient (compared with private property); it was often costly to taxpayers.

But that doesn't bother Pendley. What bothers him is the failure to continue this arrangement. He is outraged at Secretary Babbitt's opposition to water projects such as the Animas-La Plata water project in the Four Corners area where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet. The project, he says, will "inject more than \$20 million" into the area and total annual benefits will "exceed \$31 million."

But dams in the West are heavily subsidized by taxpayers. The "injections" of funds from taxpayers are a major portion of the benefits that Pendley tallies. As happens so often in politics, the *cost* of a program

looks like a *benefit* to those on the receiving end. But the costs are real.

Similarly, Pendley defends the current system of grazing when he should at least question it. The federal government owns millions of acres of land leased to ranchers, and controversy has swirled around whether the leasing fee is too low. Pendley says the fee is fair, but he ignores the more fundamental issue. That is the question of who should own this land.

In the late nineteenth century, the federal government reversed its past policy of turning territory over to private owners. It did so largely under the influence of the Progressives, an ideological movement committed to the idea that a government bureaucracy could manage natural resources better than private owners. As a result of this reversal, large parts of the West stayed in federal hands. So we have 80 percent of Nevada in federal hands, and only 2 percent of Maine. For a long time, many Westerners liked it that way because, in spite of federal ownership, local ranchers and logging and mining companies were effectively in charge. Now that has changed, as Pendley points out.

It is possible that the growing property rights movement will mount a successful challenge to the environmentalists. But as long as the federal government owns the West, special interest groups will control it. So, the fundamental problem is not "environmental extremists," as Pendley contends. It is government ownership. □

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The New Color Line: How Quotas and Privilege Destroy Democracy

by Paul Craig Roberts and
Lawrence M. Stratton

Regnery Publishing • 1995 • 254 pages • \$24.95

Reviewed by William H. Peterson

Item: The O. J. Simpson criminal trial verdict brings gasps and cheers. Polls show whites believe "O. J." to be guilty by

about 75 percent while blacks concur with the verdict of "not guilty" by about 75 percent.

Item: The Million Man March on Washington puts the spotlight on its promoter, Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, who declares President Clinton, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole to be part of an overall "white supremacist mindset," adding: "We must be prepared to punish them if they are against us."

Add race riots from Detroit in 1968 to Los Angeles in 1992, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act's affirmative action program seems to confirm what I call Peterson's Law—government intervention boomerangs and makes things worse. All of which makes the Roberts-Stratton book a timely tool to unlock the riddle of the upsurge of racism and polarization in America.

Paul Craig Roberts, the John M. Olin fellow of the Washington-based Institute for Political Economy, and Lawrence M. Stratton, an Institute research fellow and member of the Virginia and D.C. bars, see that the 1964 civil rights law soon deteriorated into statistical race and gender quotas (which its sponsor Senator Hubert Humphrey promised would never happen), that merit loses out to preferment, that many white males have experienced "reverse discrimination," that the law breaks with Thomas Jefferson's Golden Rule for domestic tranquility of "equal rights for all, special privileges for none."

Today the vast majority of Americans, including many blacks, think affirmative action is for the birds. Ditto forced busing to achieve "racial balance" in public schools, and a host of other interventions governing racial "proportionality" for such things as bank credit and government contracts. State-decreed "fairness" becomes, manifestly, state-decreed unfairness supported by dollars from very frequently unwilling taxpayers. Worse, it's a threat to the ability of Americans to live peacefully together.

No question that racism is a deep social problem but the larger question is its origin—who or what is responsible? Racism,