ANALYSES OF US POLITICAL PARTIES
NEWSLETTER #1.

Contents
GOP IN GENERAL
Parry, Save the GOP
TomDispatch/Goulka, Reality-Based
Lofgren, Crazy and Useless
Catholic News, Jesus’ Social Gospel
Right Wing v. Liberal
Reich, Bush Admin. Never Happened
Rather, Ornstein and Mann on Extremism
Perlstein, Repubs and Dems
Brennan, Right Turn 1950s
DiMaggio, Rise of Tea Party
Mooney, GOP vs. Science
Krugman, GOP vs. Science
MONEY
Moyers, Campaign Money
Weinger, Koch Money
Fang, Koch Money in Florida
Raman, Follow the Money
Henschell, GOP vs. Jobs
Krugman, GOP Economics
Benen/Calmes, GOP Economics
Robert Parry, “How to Save the GOP” by Robert Parry, Consortium News, September 21, 2012, RSN

Parry writes: "The only practical way to get the U.S. back on track economically is to raise taxes on the rich and use the money to rebuild the country. But anti-government extremists have taken over the Republican Party and won't let go. So, what can be done to save the GOP from itself?"

READ MORE  http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/13601-how-to-save-the-gop

Tomgram: Jeremiah Goulka, Confessions of a Former Republican September 9, 2012

Here, to my mind, was one strange aspect of the political convention season just past: since the great meltdown of 2008, brilliantly engineered by various giant financial institutions gone wild, we’ve seen a collapse in the wealth of middle-class African Americans and Hispanics, and a significant drop in the wealth of middle-class whites. Only the rich have benefitted.

Though the draining of wealth from the middle and its fortification at the top have been a long time coming, the near collapse of the economy four years ago was a disaster whether you look at the rise in unemployment figures, poverty, the use of food stamps, gauges of upward mobility, or just about any other grim measure you’d care to employ.

All this suggests that the twenty-first century has largely been an American riches-to-rags story. It was this that gave both political conventions an almost fairy-tale-like quality, since the single life trajectory featured prominently at each of them by just about every speaker you’d want to cite was the opposite. Everybody, even Mitt Romney (“My dad never made it through college and apprenticed as a lath and plaster carpenter...”), was obliged to offer a wrenching, heartwarming tale of rags (or relative rags) to riches (no relative about it). The theme, heavily emphasized at the Republican convention and an undercurrent at the Democratic one, wasn’t I feel your pain, but I celebrate my gain.

There are, in our world, so many journeys of every sort. It’s strange to see only one of them emphasized and celebrated, the one that, at the moment, is perhaps the least likely to speak to
the actual experience of most Americans. With this in mind, TomDispatch today offers quite a
different journey -- not economic, but political, and of a sort no one usually thinks to write
about. It's Jeremiah Goulka's trip out of a particular kind of fantasy world and into what, in
2004, Karl Rove (then an unnamed source for journalist Ron Suskind) pejoratively called
"the reality-based community' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge
from your judicious study of discernible reality." Rove added -- that moment being the
highpoint of Bush-era imperial self-celebration -- "We're an empire now, and when we act, we
create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll
act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort
out. We're history's actors... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'"

Goulka's is a tale of how one man left a party that, in recent years, has had, in Jonathan
Schell's pungent phrase, "a will to fantasy," and embarked on a hard-won trip into reality.
There are so many more such stories in our country. Maybe someday some political
convention will have the nerve to celebrate some of them. (To catch Timothy MacBain's latest
Tomcast audio interview in which Goulka discusses his political journey, click here or
download it to your iPod here.) Tom

**Joining the Reality-Based Community**

**Or How I Learned to Stop Loving the Bombs and Start Worrying**

**By Jeremiah Goulka**

I used to be a serious Republican, moderate and business-oriented, who planned for a public-
service career in Republican politics. But I am a Republican no longer.
There's an old joke we Republicans used to tell that goes something like this: "If you're young
and not a Democrat, you're heartless. If you grow up and you're not a Republican, you're
stupid." These days, my old friends and associates no doubt consider me the butt of that joke.
But I look on my "stupidity" somewhat differently. After all, my real education only began
when I was 30 years old.

Click here to read more [http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175590/tomgram
%3A_jeremiah_goulka%2C_confessions_of_a_former_republican/?
utm_source=TomDispatch&utm_campaign=1f99d4f755-

Later on the show, Bill talks with Mike Lofgren, a long-time Republican who describes
modern corruption and dysfunction in both the Republican and Democratic parties. Lofgren's
new book is *The Party is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless...*

*Romney and Ryan’s Phony Deficit-Reduction Plan*

by Mike Lofgren Aug 14, 2012 4:45 AM EDT

Forget all of the hoopla about deficit reduction, Romney and running mate Paul Ryan’s plan hides their real objective to slash taxes for the rich and push the burden onto the middle class, says Mike Lofgren, author of the new book *The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*.

By picking Paul Ryan as his running mate, Mitt Romney has doubled down on a public-relations strategy of phony deficit reduction. Despite what you may have heard to the contrary, Republicans’ caterwauling about deficits and debt is eyewash to gull the public into believing they are serious fiscal stewards. Their rhetoric is intended to camouflage their real objective, which is to slash taxes for their wealthy contributors.

Mitt Romney talks to the crowd at the Absolute Style furniture factory in North Carolina as Republican vice-presidential candidate, U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) listens on. (Sara D. Davis / Getty Images)

As most people ought to know by now but probably don’t—the print media have felled entire forests to analyze Romney’s comments about the Olympics, but have been far less talkative about his budget—the presumptive GOP nominee has proposed a tax-cut scheme that adds over $6 trillion to the deficit over the next 10 years. He claims he will offset those cuts by
eliminating inefficient tax loopholes, which he conveniently does not specify. But there aren’t enough loopholes to do that. Most middle-class people do not consider the mortgage-interest deduction to be a loophole, and removing it would risk further weakening the housing market. Congressional Republicans recently refused to repeal the egregious tax deductibility of corporate jets, so it isn’t clear they’ll be willing to close even gaping holes. The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center analyzed Romney’s tax plan, employing the most favorable economic assumptions, and they found—surprise!—that it could not be made revenue neutral without raising taxes on the middle class, even as it reduced taxes on the wealthy.

So is Ryan any better? Everyone knows by now that Ryan’s budget would replace Medicare with a voucher whose value declines over time. His cuts to Medicare and other health care programs would total $2.4 trillion over the next ten years. But despite that, and despite all the domestic spending cuts in his plan, Ryan still doesn’t get anywhere close to balancing his own budget. That is because even by his own estimate, he reduces revenue by $2 trillion over the same period. His budget relies on optimistic economic assumptions about the stimulative effects of tax cuts, and many of his rate reductions are similarly supposedly offset by unspecified loophole closings, so the real revenue loss would be much greater.

It is not just that he cuts taxes, it is how Ryan cuts taxes that gives us a clue as to the Republican agenda. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that under his plan, those making less than the princely sum of $20,000 a year would have an average tax increase of $193 annually, while those earning more than $1 million would reap an average tax cut of $265,000. When, under the Bush administration, the capital gains rate was lowered to 15 percent, it not only exacerbated the growing income disparity in America (many of the rich earn most if not all of their wealth from capital gains: that is why Romney pays an effective rate of less than 14 percent). The capital-gains rate cut also helped fuel the asset bubble that led to the greatest financial collapse in 80 years. Ryan’s budget would eliminate the capital-gains tax altogether. But, since we must all tighten our belts, he proposes to help offset the revenue loss by eliminating the child tax credit!

Ryan, like all Republicans, regularly votes for balanced-budget amendments. They are cheap and easy votes, because they command the government to balance the budget without bothering with the messy details of how one would do that. But his own budget does not come close to balancing within the next 10 years, despite optimistic assumptions and magic asterisks. When he was a member of the Simpson-Bowles Commission, he voted against the commission’s plan to cut the deficit by $4 trillion, despite the fact that it employed the tax policy that Republicans say they favor: lowering the rates, broadening the base, and removing tax loopholes. (Full disclosure: in 2010 I had a minor role as an ad hoc Senate Budget Committee adviser to the Simpson-Bowles Commission staff). In the GOP’s eyes the cardinal sin of the commission’s plan was that it treated the income of a hedge-fund billionaire the same as it treated the earnings of a school teacher or ditch digger. The iron rule of Republican fiscal policy is that the rich must be favored, and deficits be damned.

Should GOP tax policies be implemented, we will have come some distance in this country toward the state of affairs in prerevolutionary France: wealthy aristocrats were exempt from taxes, while the poor were crushed with levies and fees.

Should GOP tax policies be implemented, we will have come some distance in this country toward the state of affairs in prerevolutionary France: wealthy aristocrats were exempt from taxes, while the poor were crushed with levies and fees. In case anyone has not noticed, that isn’t the most stable basis for running a country.
Mike Lofgren retired in 2011 after 28 years as a congressional staff member, 16 of them with the House and Senate budget committees. His new book, *The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*, was released on August 6, 2012.

For inquiries, please contact The Daily Beast at editorial@thedailybeast.com
What if Jesus had been a Republican?

to jbennet  8-25-12

Editor's Note: This was sent to Tikkun on email from Cath News and a column called "The Not-So-Social-Gospel." It is a powerful reminder both of how far sections of the Christian world have strayed from the teachings of Jesus, and also a reminder of the tens of millions of Catholics who are deeply dedicated to social justice, peace, generosity and love (even though unfortunately they are stuck in a church whose leadership is more interested in demonizing gays and abortions and attacking American Nuns who take Jesus' teachings seriously than in carrying on the progressive elements in Jesus' gospel). It saddens us at Tikkun to see how twisted that Church leadership has become, just as we have been saddened by how twisted the Jewish leadership has become to give blind support to the oppressive policies of Israel toward Palestinians, and reminds us to once again invite all Christians who do feel connected to the social justice, peace and love oriented Jesus to join our INTERFATIH Network of Spiritual Progressives at www.spiritualprogressives.org so that we can work together to amplify these voices and provide comfort and support to those who are being "dissed" in their own religious communities for taking seriously the highest teachings of their God.--Rabbi Michael Lerner Editor, Tikkun magazine and Chair, the interfaith Network of Spiritual Progressives.

The Lazy Paralytic
1. When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at his home. 2. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5. When Jesus saw this he grew angry, “Why did you wreck my roof? Do you have any idea how much that cost to install? Do you know how many tables and chairs I had to make in my carpentry shop to pay for that roof? The reeds alone cost five talents. I had them carted in from Bethany.” 6. The disciples had never seen Jesus so angry about his possessions. He continued, “This house is my life. And the roof is the best part.” The disciples fell silent. 7. “It’s bad enough that you trash my private property, now you want me to heal you?” said Jesus, “And did you not see the stone walls around this house?” “Yes,” said the man’s friends. “Are these not the stone walls common to the towns and villages of Galilee?” 8. “No,” Jesus answered. “This is a gated community. How did you get in?” The man’s friends grew silent. 9. Then Jesus turned and said to the paralytic, “Besides, can’t you take care of your own health problems? I’m sure that your family can care for you, or maybe the synagogue can help out.” 10. “No, Lord,” answered the man’s friends. “There is no one. His injuries are too severe. To whom else can we go?” 11. “Well, not me,” said Jesus. “What would happen if I provided access to free health care for everyone? That would mean that people would not only get lazy and entitled, but they would take advantage of the system. 12. Besides, look at me: I’m healthy. And you know why? Because I worked hard for my money, and took care of myself.” The paralyzed man then grew sad and he addressed Jesus. “But I did work, Lord,” said the paralytic. “Until an accident rendered me paralyzed.” “Yes,” said the man’s friends. “He worked very hard.” 13. “Well,” said Jesus, “That’s just part of life, isn’t it?” “Then what am I to do, Lord?” said the paralytic. “I don’t know. Why don’t you sell your mat?” 14. All in the crowd then grew sad. “Actually, you know what you can do?” said Jesus. “You can reimburse me for my roof. Or I’ll sue you.” And all were amazed. 15. “We have never seen anything like this,” said the crowd.
1. The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve apostles came to Jesus and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” 2 But Jesus said to them, “Why not give them something to eat?” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” 3 For there were about five thousand men. And Jesus said to his disciples, “You know what? You’re right. Don’t waste your time and shekels. It would be positively immoral for you to spend any of your hard-earned money for these people. They knew full well that they were coming to a deserted place, and should have relied on themselves and brought more food. As far as I’m concerned, it’s every five thousand men for themselves.” 4. The disciples were astonished by this teaching. “But Lord,” said Thomas. “The crowd will surely go hungry.” Jesus was amazed at his hard-headedness. “That’s not my problem, Thomas. Better that their stomachs are empty than they become overly dependent on someone in authority to provide loaves and fishes for them on a regular basis. Where will it end? Will I have to feed them everyday?” “No, Lord,” said Thomas, “Just today. When they are without food. After they have eaten their fill, they will be healthy, and so better able to listen to your word and learn from you.” Jesus was grieved at Thomas’s answer. Jesus answered, “It is written: There’s no such thing as a free lunch.” So taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and took one loaf and one fish for himself, and gave the rest to the twelve, based on their previously agreed-upon contractual per diem. But he distributed none to the crowd, because they needed to be taught a lesson. So Jesus ate and he was satisfied. The disciples somewhat less so. “Delicious,” said Jesus. What was left over was gathered up and saved for Jesus, should he grow hungry in a few hours. The very poorly prepared crowd soon dispersed.

The Rich and Therefore Blessed Young Man

1. As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him, and asked, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 2. And Jesus said to him, “What have you done so far?” 3. And he said to Him, “Well I was born into a wealthy family, got into a good school in Galilee because my parents donated a few thousand talents for a building with a nice reed roof, and now I have a high-paying job in the Roman treasury managing risk.” 4. Looking at him, Jesus felt an admiration for him, and said to him, “Blessed are you! For you are not far from being independently wealthy.” And the man was happy. Then Jesus said, “But there is one thing you lack: A bigger house in a gated community in Tiberias. Buy that and you will have a treasure indeed. And make sure you get a stone countertop for the kitchen. Those are really nice.” The disciples were amazed. 5. Peter asked him, “Lord, shouldn’t he sell all his possessions and give it to the poor?” Jesus grew angry. “Get behind me, Satan! He has earned it!” Peter protested: “Lord,” he said, “Did this man not have an unjust advantage? What about those who are not born into wealthy families, or who do not have the benefit of a good education, or who, despite all their toil, live in the poorer areas of Galilee, like Nazareth, your own home town?” 6. “Well,” said Jesus, “first of all, that’s why I left Nazareth. There were too many poor people always asking me for charity. They were as numerous as the stars in the sky, and they annoyed me. Second, once people start spending again, like this rich young man, the Galilean economy will inevitably rebound, and eventually some of it will trickle down to the poor. Blessed are the patient! But giving the money away, especially if he can’t write it off, is a big fat waste.” The disciples’ amazement knew no bounds. “But Lord,” they said, “what about the passages in both the Law and the Prophets that tell us to care for widows and orphans, for the poor, for the sick, for the refugee? What about the many passages in the Scriptures about justice?” 7. “Those are just metaphors,” said Jesus. “Don’t take everything so literally.”

SOURCE
Alternet has an article called "The Conservative Psyche" which I found helpful in explaining the difference between RW and liberal thinking.


Robert Reich, Erasing W

Op-Ed, NationofChange, August 11, 2012: “Republicans want to obliterate any trace of the administration that told America there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and led us into a devastating war; turned a $5 trillion projected budget surplus into a $6 trillion deficit; gave the largest tax cut in a generation to the richest Americans in history; handed out a mountain of corporate welfare to the oil and gas industry, pharmaceutical companies, and military contractors like Halliburton.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/erasing-w-1344692189

Dan Rather  Host, 'Dan Rather Reports'

Has the Press Lost Its Guts... Or Is It Just Being "Fair"?
Posted: 06/05/2012 12:57 pm
This was a question I put to congressional scholars Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann, co-authors of the book It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism.
Both Ornstein and Mann, self-described independents, are well respected in their field and frequently sought out for their observations on politics and Congress. In their four decades watch-dogging D.C. politics, they've been critical to both sides of the political aisle, yet they have never been accused of being unfair. But the content of their latest book is so controversial that Ornstein, a good friend whom I have known since my days broadcasting political coverage for CBS News, told me the response from the press has been to look the other way.

The reason? Mann says it's because they write that much of the blame for the dysfunction in Congress lies squarely with the Republican Party. It's their view that the GOP is a party that has become "ideologically extreme," "scornful of compromise," "unpersuaded by conventional understandings of facts, evidence and science," and "dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition." In short, they say, the GOP is an "insurgent outlier."

Sounds like fighting words to me, but somehow much of the traditional press doesn't seem to want any part of this showdown, despite the not-so-subtle Washington Post Outlook article penned by the authors, which went viral on line. They say the traditional media's defense has been to evade the appearance of being biased by simply ignoring them, and the topic.

They wrote the book because, they say, they couldn't ignore the actions of Republican extremists, which threatened to undermine democracy. One example they cite is in 2010 when a bipartisan resolution to create a deficit reduction task force, which would have forced the country to get debt and spending under control, was effectively killed in Congress. This was a resolution that was initially supported by Republican leaders like Senators John McCain and Mitch McConnell. Both sides agreed it would bring sweeping reform to the U.S.'s debt problem.

So what happened? Mann and Ornstein say it died simply because President Obama supported it. They say passing it would have given the president political clout, something the current GOP outright refuses to let happen. The result, a year and a half later, was a down-to-the-wire, "hostage-taking" debacle of the debt ceiling crisis which threatened to throw the country into default and shutdown the government.

Say what you want, but Mann and Ornstein believe Republicans were largely to blame. It's their view that the current GOP will happily put hyper-partisan ideologies ahead of the country's best interests. It was the debt crisis which led to the downgrading of U.S. debt by rating agency Standard and Poors. Scholars Mann and Ornstein believe that it's all part of a methodical plan that goes back to the late 1960s to move the GOP to the far-right extreme; a movement that since has gained momentum with the election of Barack Obama.

Today, they say, instead of a Congress created by the people, for the people, we now have a GOP that is so adversarial that there is no room for compromise. This inability to negotiate makes it virtually impossible for new policies and laws to be created, which in turn frustrates many Americans, who ideologically fall in between the two political extremes. In the end, they say, it creates an anti-politician sentiment of "throw the bums out" and provides a toehold for non-politicians to be elected, who then become even more ineffective and obstructive than their predecessors.

The book also points the finger at the press. They ask: Where is the accountability? Corporate interests and mergers, something I have been increasingly concerned about, usurp reporting. They say, in order to appear objective and balanced, and to please the corporate bosses and sponsors, news operations are
engulfed in attempting to appear unbiased. It's become a televised see-saw of sorts. One side pitted against the other, going up and down or back and forth, but not really telling the audience what's actually going on.

Their is just one of several books focusing on Congress that have come out in recent months. And as much as they want to sell their book, Mann and Ornstein say it's more about jump starting a serious conversation in this country about what they believe is really happening. But apparently giving airtime to well-respected scholars who have written about what they say is an extremist strategy to undermine the Constitution has less chance of happening than an elephant wearing skinny jeans. They claim that journalists of today are thin-skinned and succumb to pressure from the right, keeping them off TV because right-wing groups will come down on them like "a ton of bricks."

Maybe it really is even worse than it looks. Mann and Ornstein certainly didn't pull any punches, and they know people will either agree or disagree with their analysis of our dysfunctional government.

The shame is that is no one has the guts to have the conversation.


Perlstein writes: "The answer is not for Democrats to cheat. But it begins with the Democratic establishment doing business in a way that doesn't make their most devoted partisans feel like slapping them upside the head."


**UNDERSTANDING PRESENT THROUGH THE PAST**


*The Rise of the Tea Party*

*Political Discontent and Corporate Media in the Age of Obama*


We're Sorry
What to make of the Tea Party? To some, it is a grassroots movement aiming to reclaim an out-of-touch government for the people. To others, it is a proto-fascist organization of the misinformed and manipulated lower middle class. Either way, it is surely one of the most significant forms of reaction in the age of Obama.

In this definitive socio-political analysis of the Tea Party, Anthony DiMaggio examines the Tea Party phenomenon, using a vast array of primary and secondary sources as well as first-hand observation. He traces the history of the Tea Party and analyzes its organizational structure, membership, ideological coherence, and relationship to the mass media. And, perhaps most importantly, he asks: is it really a movement or just a form of “manufactured dissent” engineered by capital? DiMaggio’s conclusions are thoroughly documented, surprising, and bring much needed clarity to a highly controversial subject.

Read an interview with Anthony DiMaggio [here](#).

This acute and highly informed analysis of the Tea Party phenomenon brings to light the reality that lies behind excited media portrayals, crucially distinguishing the ‘movement’ itself from the far larger and more significant popular sectors that are misled into believing that it responds to their authentic grievances, which are unaddressed in the mainstream political system. It is a dangerous mix, as history reveals. This lucid and careful study could hardly be more timely.

—Noam Chomsky

This is the definitive book on the Tea Party phenomenon, its fake populism, and its impact on the public sphere. This book offers an important analysis of how right wing forces are able to hijack the economic insecurity felt by the vast majority and divert it towards elite driven agendas. A must read.

—Deepa Kumar, associate professor of Media Studies at Rutgers University; author, *Outside the Box: Corporate Media, Globalization, and the UPS Strike* and *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*

The authoritative must-read on the subject. With a combination of painstaking research and analytical force, DiMaggio pulls back the curtain to show the Tea Party for what it is: a PR front group for billionaires and corporations. This is the one book everyone concerned about American politics needs to read, and fast.

—Robert W. McChesney, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

The Rise of the Tea Party may be one of the most significant books on cultural politics, the media, and social movements published in the last decade. Building on the work of a number of theorists, DiMaggio makes clear that twenty-first century politics cannot be understood outside of the formative culture that shapes it. Taking the Tea Party as an exemplary case study, this fascinating book adds not only to our understanding of the rise and influence of this conservative movement, it also deepens our knowledge of the educational force of a larger culture that is central to any viable notion of politics. This is a must read for anyone concerned about politics, the
cultural apparatuses of public pedagogy, and the emergence of the Tea Party in the United States.

—Henry Giroux, author, Education and the Crisis of Public Values

Understanding the current political climate is the first necessary step toward shaping a realistic political agenda for the next decade. This timely book makes a significant contribution toward our understanding of the current political, social, and political climate in the U.S. Aimed at influencing public opinion and policy, the Tea Party—or better said, the Business Party—has recently dominated the mass media discourse through its well-orchestrated propaganda campaigns. What’s at stake? Why should we care? To learn the answers to these and other questions, I recommend reading this timely, analytical, engaging, thought-provoking, and informative volume. The only way to revitalize the American dream is to replace the outdated political ideologies with fresh and collaborative, not divisive, approaches.

—Yahya R. Kamalipour, Head, Department of Communication and Creative Arts, Director, Center for Global Studies, Purdue University Calumet

Extremely important and timely. The Tea Party’s popularity and media attention is vastly overplayed, and leaves false impressions within the broader social milieu in this country. This book is vital to the immediate future of human rights, civil liberties, and democracy and will serve as a beacon of understanding and theory building both inside the academy and within community activist groups. It is expertly documented and readable for both academics and lay people, and a work of understanding social movements that will permanently contribute to the literature inside social movement studies. Most importantly it offers a new interpretation of the Tea Party as a media mediated top-down phenomenon highly compatible with a neo-liberal agenda.

—Peter Phillips, professor of sociology, Sonoma State University

Anthony DiMaggio is an expert in the study of mass media and public opinion, and the author of numerous books, including Crashing the Tea Party, When Media Goes to War, and Mass Media, Mass Propaganda. He has written for various media outlets, including Counterpunch, Z Magazine, Z Net, MR Zine, Black Agenda Report, Alternet, Common Dreams, and Truthout. He has taught American and Global Politics at several colleges and universities.

REPUBLICANS’ ANTI-SCIENCE
CHRIS MOONEY’S NEW BOOK
From: Chris Mooney moonecc@gmail.com The Republican Brain: The Science of Why They Deny Science and Reality.
April 1, 2012
Dear Colleagues, Friends,
This is my roughly biennial group email. I don’t send one unless I have a new book to
announce. This is one of those times.

It’s called "The Republican Brain: The Science of Why They Deny Science and Reality." The punchline: If you want to understand why we have global warming denial, and evolution denial, and Obama birthplace denial, and false claims that the U.S. is a Christian Nation, and all the rest…well, then you need to follow me into the brain (really, the psychology) of the American political conservative.

At the bottom of this email are links to an excerpt in Mother Jones, and early tie-in articles from Salon and Rolling Stone and Huffington Post. . . .
Thanks so much for your support--and please spread the word!  Chris Mooney

Articles:
Mother Jones excerpt of the first chapter: "Diagnosing the Republican Brain"
http://motherjones.com/politics/2012/03/chris-mooney-republican-brain-science-denial
Rolling Stone: “Can Drinking Make You Conservative?”
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-mooney/the-science-of-truthiness_b_1379472.html
Salon.com: “The Ugly Delusions of the Educated Conservative”
http://www.salon.com/2012/02/24/the_ugly_delusions_of_the_educated_conservative/

MORE ON GOP AS ANTI-SCIENCE PARTY
Paul Krugman, “The Republicans Are Now the Anti-Science Party,”
Guardian UK , Sept. 4, 2011, RSN
Intro: "On climate change and evolution, the party's presidential hopefuls are willfully ignorant."
READ MORE  http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/271-38/7304-the-republicans-are-now-the-anti-science-party

MONEY

Moyers and Winship write: "'Can 46 Rich Dudes Buy an Election?' almost all men, mostly white, 'and so far, the vast majority of their contributions have been made to conservative groups.' They want to own this election. So if there are any of you left out there with millions
to burn, better buy your candidate now, while supplies last."
READ MORE  http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/11938-campaign-cash-is-the-gift-that-keeps-on-giving

Florida Voter Purge Official Linked to Koch-Funded Efforts to Defeat Obama
Lee Fang, Republic Report, RSN, June 8, 2012
Fang reports: "Just before Browning was selected in 2011 by Scott as Secretary of State, Browning led a group called 'Protect Your Vote Inc,' which was set up to oppose fair redistricting. One of the biggest checks to Browning's organization came from the Center to Protect Patients' Rights, which gave $100,000 in 2010."

Following the Money on Financial Reform
Radhika Raman, Op-Ed, NationofChange, June 9, 2012: “The fact that the Republican Party is lavishing money on weapons systems that the Pentagon does not want while reducing the necessary funds for the regulation of derivatives, is a textbook example of terrible priorities,” said Frank in a Tuesday statement. Anyone who can use Google can figure out that Wall Street is the only force in our country right now that is above the fray of party politics. READ  DISCUSS  |  SHARE  http://www.nationofchange.org/following-money-financial-reform-1339251096

OP-ED COLUMNIST
This Republican Economy
By PAUL KRUGMAN  Published: June 3, 2012
What should be done about the economy? Republicans claim to have the answer: slash spending and cut taxes. What they hope voters won’t notice is that that’s precisely the policy we’ve been following the past couple of years. Never mind the Democrat in the White House; for all practical purposes, this is already the economic policy of Republican dreams.

Paul Krugman
So the Republican electoral strategy is, in effect, a gigantic con game: it depends on convincing voters that the bad economy is the result of big-spending policies that President Obama hasn’t followed (in large part because the G.O.P. wouldn’t let him), and that our woes can be cured by pursuing more of the same policies that have already failed.

For some reason, however, neither the press nor Mr. Obama’s political team has done a very good job of exposing the con.

What do I mean by saying that this is already a Republican economy? Look first at total government spending — federal, state and local. Adjusted for population growth and inflation, such spending has recently been falling at a rate not seen since the demobilization that followed the Korean War.

How is that possible? Isn’t Mr. Obama a big spender? Actually, no; there was a brief burst of spending in late 2009 and early 2010 as the stimulus kicked in, but that boost is long behind us. Since then it has been all downhill. Cash-strapped state and local governments have laid off teachers, firefighters and police officers; meanwhile, unemployment benefits have been trailing off even though unemployment remains extremely high.

Over all, the picture for America in 2012 bears a stunning resemblance to the great mistake of 1937, when F.D.R. prematurely slashed spending, sending the U.S. economy — which had actually been recovering fairly fast until that point — into the second leg of the Great Depression. In F.D.R.’s case, however, this was an unforced error, since he had a solidly Democratic Congress. In President Obama’s case, much though not all of the responsibility for the policy wrong turn lies with a completely obstructionist Republican majority in the House.

That same obstructionist House majority effectively blackmailed the president into continuing all the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy, so that federal taxes as a share of G.D.P. are near historic lows — much lower, in particular, than at any point during Ronald Reagan’s presidency.

As I said, for all practical purposes this is already a Republican economy.

As an aside, I think it’s worth pointing out that although the economy’s performance has been
disappointing, to say the least, none of the disasters Republicans predicted have come to pass. Remember all those assertions that budget deficits would lead to soaring interest rates? Well, U.S. borrowing costs have just hit a record low. And remember those dire warnings about inflation and the “debasement” of the dollar? Well, inflation remains low, and the dollar has been stronger than it was in the Bush years.

Put it this way: Republicans have been warning that we were about to turn into Greece because President Obama was doing too much to boost the economy; Keynesian economists like myself warned that we were, on the contrary, at risk of turning into Japan because he was doing too little. And Japanification it is, except with a level of misery the Japanese never had to endure.

So why don’t voters know any of this?

Part of the answer is that far too much economic reporting is still of the he-said, she-said variety, with dueling quotes from hired guns on either side. But it’s also true that the Obama team has consistently failed to highlight Republican obstruction, perhaps out of a fear of seeming weak. Instead, the president’s advisers keep turning to happy talk, seizing on a few months’ good economic news as proof that their policies are working — and then ending up looking foolish when the numbers turn down again. Remarkably, they’ve made this mistake three times in a row: in 2010, 2011 and now once again.

At this point, however, Mr. Obama and his political team don’t seem to have much choice. They can point with pride to some big economic achievements, above all the successful rescue of the auto industry, which is responsible for a large part of whatever job growth we are managing to get. But they’re not going to be able to sell a narrative of overall economic success. Their best bet, surely, is to do a Harry Truman, to run against the “do-nothing” Republican Congress that has, in reality, blocked proposals — for tax cuts as well as more spending — that would have made 2012 a much better year than it’s turning out to be.

For that, in the end, is the best argument against Republicans’ claims that they can fix the economy. The fact is that we have already seen the Republican economic future — and it doesn’t work.

A version of this op-ed appeared in print on June 4, 2012, on page A25 of the New York edition with the headline: This Republican Economy

GOP ECONOMICS: POLICY
“Republicans Have No Idea What They're Doing
Steve Benen, Washington Monthly, August 13, 2011
Excerpt: "New York Times' Jackie Calmes has a terrific piece in which she comes very close - as close as is possible in our contemporary media construct - to simply drawing the public a picture the country urgently needs to see, but usually doesn't. In a measured tone, the NYT article effectively makes clear that when it comes to economic policy, Republicans plainly have no idea what they're talking about."

READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/72-72/7027-republicans-have-no-idea-what-theyre-doing

“Koch Brothers Million-Dollar Club Revealed”
Mackenzie Weinger, Politico, September 6, 2011, RSN
"The billionaire Koch brothers can count dozens of corporate executives and philanthropists among their million-dollar donor club, according to a new report that revealed the big givers. Charles and David Koch hold retreats twice per year to court donations for their conservative and libertarian causes, and Mother Jones obtained audio recordings from the June retreat near Vail, Colorado."

READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/off-site-news-section/69-69/7329-koch-brothers-million-dollar-club-revealed

ECONOMICS: JOBS
Handy reference for Bush/Republican JOB record
From Darrel Henschell 9-4-11
A five point reference for the amazing Bush/republican job record:

1) Bush lost about 3 million jobs during his last year (the economy needs to create about 1.5 million a year just to break even with population growth). Two million of those were lost in the last four months of 2008. http://tinyurl.com/7z3sss

2) Bush's Great Recession lost more jobs than the previous FOUR recessions combined. http://tinyurl.com/3zfyn7q

3) More jobs were created in 2 years under Obama than under eight years of Bush. http://tinyurl.com/24smpke

4) Bush has the worst job creation record since records began. http://tinyurl.com/9y11uu

5) Over the last 75 years, job creation has always been better under democratic administrations. The worst performing Democratic president beats every republican president. http://tinyurl.com/6cd9uo
INDIVIDUALS

ROMNEY’S MILITARISM
“Is a Vote for Romney a Vote for War?” Just Foreign Policy, 12-29-11
Mitt Romney has promised a more confrontational military policy towards Iran. His
advisers include people who have been cheerleaders for war with Iran, and were
cheerleaders for the Iraq war. He has pledged to increase the military budget. His
advisers include people directly affiliated with military contractors who stand to profit if
there were a new war and the military budget were increased. Furthermore, he opposes
withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, and he opposes the withdrawal of U.S.
troops from Iraq.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-naiman/is-a-vote-for-romney-a-vo_b_1171099.html

Full Show: The Resurrection of Ralph Reed
While Romney, Ryan, Rubio, and Eastwood got the lion’s share of attention during the
Republican Convention this week, three one-time college Republicans who are now the party’s
real power-brokers — Karl Rove, Ralph Reed, and Grover Norquist — were busy doing what
they do best: leveraging their political, religious, and financial resources to back pro-
corporate, anti-government objectives at the core of the conservative agenda.

The true surprise at the Tampa convention was Ralph Reed’s resurrection. When the former
head of the Christian Coalition was discovered to have raked in millions of dollars from the
super lobbyist — and eventually convicted felon — Jack Abramoff, Reed wound up in political
purgatory. But outraged by the election of Barack Obama, and responding to what he
describes as God’s call (via Sean Hannity), Reed returned to start the Faith and Freedom
Coalition with the aim of toppling Barack Obama from the White House. To succeed, Reed
needs to win the allegiance of many of the trusting Christian followers he had duped and
double-crossed while working with Abramoff.

This week, Moyers & Company tracks Reed’s rise, fall, and return: does it signal a new
revolution, or an old racket?

FULL EPISODE
Mike Lofgren on Dysfunction in Our Political Parties
Ralph Reed: From Purgatory to Power

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