

PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

August 18, 2020

As if climate change, a cratering economy, coronavirus, and Donald Trump aren't enough, here comes yet *another* apocalypse (page 3). But first we put the Orange Menace in a-historical perspective (below), then answer the questions: what the hell is QAnon? and how is conservative media responsible for it? Herein, too, we review the week in stupidity and offer *anniversario* wishes to a great good friend, while Jon Engel instructs the *Times*, Lewis Black critiques the God the Jews seem to have invented, and we ask you what you want to do ... when you can do what you want. — JR

THE "AMERICAN CENTURY" ENDS WITH TRUMP

Max Boot

(Excerpted from "Trump refuses to learn the lessons of World War II", *washingtonpost.com*, 8/14/2020)

"JAPAN SURRENDERS, END OF WAR!" So screamed the front page of the normally sedate *New York Times* on Aug. 15, 1945 — 75 years ago this Saturday. When the news had flashed on the moving electric sign in Times Square the night before, the newspaper reported, half a million revelers (Ed: including me) let out a "victory roar" that "beat upon the eardrums until it numbed the senses. For twenty minutes wave after wave of that joyous roar surged forth."

The elation on V-J Day was understandable. World War II had been the costliest conflict in history, claiming some 60 million lives, 418,500 Americans among them. But the war's end simply marked a new phase of the struggle to establish a peaceful world order. While Allied leaders were far more successful in peacemaking than they had been after World War I, their failures were costly and haunt us to this day.

It is worth remembering what the United States got right and wrong after 1945, because today we labor under a uniquely ignorant president who thinks that the 1918 influenza broke out in 1917 and that it "probably ended the Second World War". Not knowing much about history (or anything else, other than self-promotion), President Trump seems eager to fritter away the best decisions of the Greatest Generation while repeating its worst mistakes.

We tend to remember what the United States got right after 1945 — and there was a great deal of it. Enlightened American proconsuls — Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Japan and Gen. Lucius D. Clay in Germany — helped to transform illiberal enemies into democratic friends. The United States helped midwife a series of international institutions — the United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, the International

Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) — to shape a more liberal world order. All of these organizations were flawed, but they would prove far more durable than post-World War I creations such as the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

Their success owed a great deal to the willingness of the Greatest Generation to ignore the siren song of isolationism. The United States was generous with reconstruction aid (the Marshall Plan alone distributed \$13 billion, or \$135 billion in today's money), and, instead of bringing the "boys" home, we kept hundreds of thousands of troops in Asia and Europe.

Those were farsighted decisions, but the postwar order was also deeply flawed. ... It could have been much worse; at least we avoided having the Cold War turn into a nuclear war. But the post-1945 experience confirms what *Foreign Affairs* editor Gideon Rose wrote in *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle*: "Ending a war successfully involves establishing durable political arrangements for the territories in question ... [but] American leaders have repeatedly botched this challenge by making a variety of unforced errors."

Our unforced errors continue to this day. Trump appears determined to withdraw the remaining U.S. forces from Afghanistan, even though no political concord with the Taliban has been forged. He is launching a new "cold war" with China and ramping up hostilities with Iran, with no end in sight. And he is heedlessly sabotaging the post-1945 world order by pulling a third of the U.S. troops out of Germany, belittling U.S. allies, and undermining institutions such as NATO and the World Trade Organization (successor to GATT). He even repeats the "America First" slogan used by isolationists of the 1930s.

Some people never learn.

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OKAY, JUST WHAT THE HELL IS “QAnon”?

Adam Lee

(Excerpted from “The Strange and Curious Cult of QAnon” on daylight atheism at patheos.com, 8/12/2020)

Of all the strange things that have spawned in the muck of the Trump era, none is stranger than QAnon ... a conspiracy-theory/cult that emerged around the beginning of Trump’s presidency. For a few years, it was confined to the fringe of the fringe, but it’s gained adherents and prominence and now threatens to engulf the entire right wing. The United States has a long and colorful history of conspiracy theorizing, but this one may be the most outlandish one that’s ever emerged – not to mention the one that’s gained the most currency in the halls of power.

As with many religions, the details of QAnon vary with the teller. But in its loose outlines, it posits that Donald Trump is actually a heroic crusader waging war on a vast and sinister cabal of Satan-worshipping child molesters whose members include deep-state bureaucrats, Democratic politicians, Hollywood liberals and international financiers.

The conspiracy states that Trump’s tweets and other public communications contain coded messages to the faithful, which are interpreted by the prophet of the movement: an anonymous poster known as “Q” who first appeared on the message board 4chan. “Q” is supposedly a high-ranking government official, and in some interpretations, even Donald Trump himself.

Like all doomsday cults, QAnon looks forward to the apocalypse: a day called “The Storm” when Trump will go public, smash the conspiracy, imprison the child traffickers and vindicate the true believers. The exact date when this is supposed to occur keeps changing—Q himself has made numerous false predictions—but that hasn’t dissuaded the faithful in the slightest. They continue to believe the reckoning will arrive Real Soon Now.

Written out like this, it sounds too bizarre to believe. It seems like either the distilled ramblings of paranoid schizophrenia or an elaborate practical joke. But to those who are enmeshed in it, QAnon is deadly serious. ... People have lost parents, partners and loved ones who’ve fallen under the sway of the cult. In the throes of their toxic obsession, they cut off everyone who won’t affirm their beliefs, or even accuse skeptics of being part of the conspiracy too. ...

According to U.S. military and law-enforcement officials, QAnon poses a real threat. Although the cult has no overarching organization or unified set of demands, its extreme rhetoric has already inspired some of its most radical and unstable followers to commit or plan acts of violence.

The most infamous case is Edgar Maddison Welch, a believer in “Pizzagate”—an early, smaller-scale version of QAnon which claimed that a Washington, D.C. pizza place was a hub of child sex trafficking—who stormed into the restaurant firing an assault rifle, in an attempt to rescue these non-existent children. In July, a Canadian QAnon believer rammed his truck into the gates of Rideau Hall, the

residence of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Another QAnon follower was arrested in April on charges of plotting to kill Joe Biden.

All this would be bad enough, but QAnon is bigger than a mob of tinfoil-hatted cranks posting their late-night ravings on the internet. These beliefs have filtered up to high levels of the Republican party – which shouldn’t come as a surprise, considering the feverish atmosphere of paranoia and anti-intellectualism that prevails among them.

As of July 2020, at least 75 current or former Republican candidates for Congress embrace QAnon. Eric Trump has promoted it. Trump’s former national security adviser Michael Flynn posted a video of himself taking a QAnon loyalty oath. The head of New York’s police union has given interviews with QAnon symbolism in the background.

Nor have high-ranking Republicans gone on the record to reject QAnon. On the contrary, they’ve remained silent at best, endorsed or quietly supported some of the fringe candidates at worst. It’s the same awkward shuffle that less-fanatical Republicans have had to practice throughout the Trump years, trying to keep the unsavory elements of their party at arm’s length, but not disavowing them outright because these people are part of their voting base and they can’t afford to go without their support.

Something else that outside observers have noticed is that belief in QAnon and similar conspiracy theories correlates with evangelical Christian beliefs. ...

The symbiosis between evangelical Christianity and QAnon is the most explicable part of this story, and it’s not just because “Q”’s messages are sprinkled with quotes from the Bible. It’s because evangelicals already belong to a belief system which discourages critical thinking and primes them to believe exactly this kind of fantasy about invisible enemies and secret cosmic struggles of good versus evil. They’re already accustomed to trawling through the Bible for “prophecies” concealed in vague or metaphorical language.

The only slight difference is that they believe this conflict is playing out in the real world, with real people, rather than in unverifiable supernatural realms. But other than that, QAnon slots neatly into a part of their brains that they’ve spent a long time preparing. It’s a bigger and more convoluted version of the Satanic ritual abuse hysteria that Christians have long preoccupied themselves with.

Although the true believers would never admit it, it’s likely that QAnon came into existence because they know Trump’s presidency isn’t going well. However fervently they praise him, however they stick their fingers in their ears and yell about fake news, they can’t drown out their own awareness that America is in the throes of a pandemic and slumping into deep economic depression, that we’ve become a pariah nation and the laughingstock of the world. They believed Trump would usher in an age of greatness, but instead he’s turned out to be the pathological liar and incompetent failure his critics always said he was.

This cognitive dissonance causes them psychic pain and discomfort, and like an oyster coating a piece of grit

to turn it into a pearl, they've coped by smothering it in impenetrable layers of delusion. They've concocted a self-contained alternate reality where Trump is a hero and everything is going according to plan. In a perfectly circular argument, the lack of evidence for this conspiracy is just further proof of how sinister and powerful the conspiracy is.

Like other conspiracy theories, QAnon is rife with contradictions and logical gaps. For example: if secrecy is essential and Heroic-Pedophile-Fighter-Trump can't show his hand until the moment of victory, why is he sending messages telling everyone what's going on? Surely an international ring of Satanic child traffickers could read Q's posts for themselves and realize that he's on to them.

But neither these gaps in logic nor the lack of evidence ultimately matter to QAnon faithful, because they're not in it out of sincere concern for the truth. The conspiracy attracts them for baser emotional reasons: it gives them a sense of control in a chaotic world, the thrill of being among the privileged few who understand what's really going on, and the comfort of believing that everything will work out for them in the end. And, like many true believers, defeat only gives them a sense of martyrdom and prods them to cling even harder to their delusions. Whether the good guys win or lose in November, the Republican party, and therefore the United States, will be dealing with the repercussions for a long time to come.

THE FEAR-BASED FEEDBACK LOOP OF "CONSERVATIVE" MEDIA

John Avlon

(Transcribed from "CNN Reality Check", 7/29/2020)

I keep a souvenir coin from a long-gone Republican convention. It shows Lincoln, Eisenhower, and Nixon, over the word "Integrity". Add Donald Trump and you've got a political version of "The Descent of Man".

But the same decline applies to conservative media. From William F. Buckley to Rush Limbaugh to Fox News to a cornucopia of cranks and just these, from the past few days: a Breitbart video that's taken down for spreading misinformation, unproven cures for covid-19, but not before being amplified by the First Family ... while Russian-backed sites are also spreading covid dis-info ... Sinclair backs off a baseless theory about Doctor Fauci, who was also facing an attack from the Trump White House ... and, of course, QAnon conspiracy theory. ...

While his team was doling out opposition research on Doctor Fauci, Trump has been retweeting doctors who believe in, get this: alien DNA, "demon sperm", and hydroxychloroquine. This is a descent into disinformation in the cause of confirmation bias.

And it wasn't always this bad. Conservatives long aimed to correct implicit liberal bias with explicit bias, a Faustian bargain, to be sure, but William F. Buckley* felt an obligation to keep the crazies out of the conservative movement, condemning the theories of the John Birch Society, for example. But once *National Review* tried to stand

up to Donald Trump, they found themselves steamrolled by the RNC. A lot of principled conservatives were purged in the pages of new outlets like *The Bulwark* and *The Dispatch*. What's left is the inmates running the asylum: the President listening to those on Fox News more closely than to his own intelligence briefings. But it's an extension of the same problem: polarization for profit, keeping people addicted to anger and fear and anxiety, pulling toward the extremes and away from shared reality.

Meanwhile, Fox's own lawyers have argued in court that it's viewers don't expect the facts from prime time opinion shows like Tucker Carlson's, offering a variation of the same excuse Alex Jones' lawyers used during his trial. But their viewers believe this stuff. For conservative media, it's a cynical business model; in politics, it's dividing to conquer. This isn't a matter of left versus right anymore, it's fact versus fiction. As Eric Hoffer once wrote, "Every great cause begins as a movement, becomes a business, and eventually degenerates into a racket."

And that's your reality check.

**Before we get all gushy about Bill Buckley, let's remember that he kick-started his contrarian conservative career as a states-rights segregationist and flat-out racist. - JR*

THIS JUST IN: ONE MORE DAMN APOCALYPSE

Greta Moran

(Excerpted from "Predicted "information catastrophe" may be caused by the fifth state of matter" on Inverse Daily, 8/12/2020)

It's no secret we spend a lot of time on our devices — and probably now more than ever — but Melvin Vopson, a physicist from the UK, says in a new study that this information overload may actually lead to an "information catastrophe". We generate over 7 sextillion bits of information every year, and Vopson claims this information could soon eclipse the number of atoms on Earth if left unabated.

And, perhaps of more concern, Vopson predicts it might be possible for these bits of information to actually contain mass themselves, which could result in the weight of pure information equaling half the Earth's weight by the year 2245. This information-as-mass theory hasn't been experimentally confirmed, but Vopson says it does align with previously confirmed information theories.

So are we doomed? Maybe not, but Vopson says this information crisis could change how our society functions. He predicts it may represent our evolution from a physical society to a trans-humanist, simulated one.

FELICE ANNIVERSARIO, MASSIMO!

Thirty years ago August 17, Doctor Massimo Pigliucci emigrated to the United States. Professor of Philosophy at CCNY, podcaster, proselytizer, pseudoscience debunker and teacher of Stoicism, he has for two decades been an Honorary Member and stalwart supporter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York. Thank you for all that, Massimo, and thank you just for coming to America. - JR

HOW THE JEWS INVENTED GOD

Part 1

Ariel David

(Excerpted from "How the Jews Invented God, and Made Him Great" on *haaretz.com*, 6/13/2016)

Jews, Christians and Muslims all believe in a single, omnipotent deity that created the heavens and earth. But if he was the only god, why would God need a name?

The Bible explicitly tells us that God has one, which indicates he had to be distinguished from other celestial beings, just like humans use names to identify different people. What that name might be is another matter. The Jewish prohibition on speaking God's name means that its correct pronunciation has been lost. All we know is that the Hebrew Bible spells it out as four consonants known as the Tetragrammaton – from the Greek for "four letters", which are transliterated as Y-H-W-H. The existence of a proper name for God is the first indication that the history of Yhwh and his worship by the Jews is a lot more complicated than many realize.

In gods we trusted

Modern biblical scholarship and archaeological discoveries in and around Israel show that the ancient Israelites did not always believe in a single, universal god. In fact, monotheism is a relatively recent concept, even amongst the People of the Book.

Decades of research into the birth and evolution of the Yhwh cult are summarized in *The Invention of God*, by Thomas Römer, a world-renowned expert in the Hebrew Bible and professor at the College de France and the University of Lausanne. Römer, who held a series of conferences at Tel Aviv University, spoke to *Haaretz* about the subject.

"The main source for investigating the history of God is, of course, the Bible itself. When exactly the Jewish holy text reached its final form is unknown. Many scholars believe this happened sometime between the Babylonian exile, which began after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (some 2600 years ago), and the subsequent periods of Persian and Hellenistic rule. However, the redactors of the Bible were evidently working off older traditions.

"Biblical texts are not direct historical sources. They reflect the ideas, the ideologies of their authors and of course of the historical context in which they were written."

Still, he notes, "You can have memories of a distant past, sometimes in a very confusing way or in a very oriented way. But I think we can, and we must, use the biblical text not just as fictional texts but as texts that can tell us stories about the origins."

What's in God's name

The first clue that the ancient Israelites worshipped gods other than the deity known as Yhwh lies in their very name. "Israel" is a theophoric name going back at least 3200 years, which includes and invokes the name of a protective deity.

Going by the name, the main god of the ancient Israelites was not Yhwh, but El, the chief deity in the Canaanite

pantheon, who was worshipped throughout the Levant. In other words, the name "Israel" is probably older than the veneration of Yhwh by this group called Israel, Römer says.

"The first tutelary deity they were worshipping was El, otherwise their name would have been Israyahu."

The Bible appears to address this early worship of El in Exodus 6:3, when God tells Moses that he "appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as El Shaddai (today translated as 'God Almighty') but was not known to them by my name Yhwh". In fact, it seems that the ancient Israelites weren't even the first to worship Yhwh – they seem to have adopted Him from a mysterious, unknown tribe that lived somewhere in the deserts of the southern Levant and Arabia.

The god of the southern deserts

The first mention of the Israelite tribe itself is a victory stele erected around 1210 BCE by the pharaoh Mernptah (sometimes called "the Israel stele"). These Israelites are described as a people inhabiting Canaan.

So how did this group of Canaanite El-worshippers come in contact with the cult of Yhwh? The Bible is quite explicit about the geographical roots of the Yhwh deity, repeatedly linking his presence to the mountainous wilderness and the deserts of the southern Levant. Judges 5:4 says that Yhwh "went forth from Seir" and "marched out of the field of Edom". Habbakuk 3:3 tells us that "God came from Teman," specifically from Mount Paran. All these regions and locations can be identified with the territory that ranges from the Sinai and Negev to northern Arabia.

Yhwh's penchant for appearing in the biblical narrative on top of mountains and accompanied by dark clouds and thunder, are also typical attributes of a deity originating in the wilderness, possibly a god of storms and fertility.

Support for the theory that Yhwh originated in the deserts of Israel and Arabia can be found in Egyptian texts from the late second millennium, which list different tribes of nomads collectively called "Shasu" that populated this vast desert region.

One of these groups, which inhabits the Negev, is identified as the "Shasu Yhw(h)". This suggests that this group of nomads may have been the first to have the god of the Jews as its tutelary deity.

"It is profoundly difficult to sort through the haze of later layers in the Bible, but insofar as we can, this remains the most plausible hypothesis for the encounter of Israelites with the Yhwh cult," says David Carr, professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. *Ed: Parts 2 and 3 will appear in subsequent editions.*

There is a big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and that is that the New Testament God is really kind of a great guy. He is. Especially if you compare him to the Old Testament God, who is a prick. I don't know what happened to God, you know, over time, how he matured, if he went to an Anger Management class, or maybe just the birth of his son calmed him down. But before he had the kid, Holy F**k, he was outta control.

– Lewis Black

JON ENGEL INSTRUCTS THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

August 10, 2020, To The New York Times Editorial Board:

Greetings to all. My name is Jonathan Engel, and I am the President of the Secular Humanist Society of New York. I am also a *Times* subscriber and have read "The Paper of Record" pretty much every day for the past 50 years. I am writing to submit for your consideration an essay that I recently completed (manuscript is set forth below). But I have an ancillary reason to communicate with the Board. And that is to encourage the *Times* to include secular points of view in its coverage and opinion pieces.

In looking through the paper every morning (I still like real paper; I seem to associate being informed with having a residue of ink on my fingers) I've observed that the *Times* strives to include the perspectives of all the world's major religions, which I think is a good thing. For example, your fine columnist Nicholas Kristoff has written about an ongoing series of interviews he has conducted with leaders from all over the religious spectrum. But you rarely if ever include articles about or opinions from the secular point of view.

Of course, most pieces in the *Times* are "secular" in that they do not involve religion at all. But I'm talking about something different. I'm talking about a secular (or in my particular case, a secular humanist) worldview.

Secular humanists such as myself generally do not believe in supernatural deities. We believe in the importance and centrality of every human being on the planet, and that helping every person to achieve their maximum potential should be a goal of all humanity. We also tend to shun dogma, believing instead that both personal and societal decision making should be based on science, research and evidence, and not on preconceived notions and beliefs.

Research shows that a significant segment of the American public hold secular beliefs, and that this segment is growing. A November 11, 2015 article from the Pew Research Center states "Religious 'nones' are not only growing as a share of the U.S. population, but they are becoming more secular over time by a variety of measures, a fact that is also helping to make the U.S. public overall somewhat less religious, according to surveys done as part of our Religious Landscape Study."

There is also now a Freethought Caucus in Congress, although I've never seen the *Times* write about it. And yet, people such as myself are often discounted or even shunned for having non-theist beliefs. *The New York Times* should not participate in perpetuating this particular form of discrimination by treating atheists and other secularists as if we didn't exist. A good way to start would be to present the secular worldview in some of your articles and opinion pieces.

After all, secularism and secularists are news too, and I for one believe that we are fit to print.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Engel, J.D.

President, Secular Humanist Society of New York

THE WEEK IN FOOT-IN-MOUTH STUPIDITY

John Rafferty

Donald Trump's Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, Peter Navarro, defending his capo's abuse of presidential powers, last week said:

"The Lord and Founding Fathers created executive orders because of partisan bickering and divided government."

Christian evangelist and TV scam artist Kenneth Copeland advised us all that Trump occasionally used "bad language" because he was now too busy to watch Christian broadcasting, but that:

"Until he got elected president, gospel TV is all he [Trump] ever watched."

Rhode Island Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin went sad Remoji frowny face that Joe Biden (who carries a rosary with him always) had chosen Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate. On Twitter he wrote:

"Biden-Harris. First time in awhile [sic] that the Democratic ticket hasn't had a Catholic on it. Sad."

And as the number of Florida children with covid-19 went from 14,000 to 40,000 in four weeks, Governor Ron DeSantis said that opening schools was ...

"... a mission akin to a Navy Seal operation. Just as Seals surmounted obstacles to bring Osama bin Laden to justice, so too will the Martin County school system find a way to provide parents with a meaningful choice of in-person instruction or continued distance learning. All in, all the time."

One cannot help but wonder what color the sky is in these people's worlds.

SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING AFTER THE APOCALYPSE?

John Rafferty

This week *The New Yorker* has a satirical piece on "The First Week of My Post-Pandemic Social Calendar" ("Intentionally get in a packed subway car on the way to work"), and *Inverse Daily* on July 10 got some interesting answers to the question of what readers plan to do after the coronavirus pandemic passes ... like continuing to wear disposable gloves, reading passages from inspiring books before morning coffee, and giving up the supermarket in favor of local shops.

Nice ideas. *Boooring.*

Me?

I want to meet a friend (dare we handshake? or both-cheeks air kiss?!) at a white-linen restaurant (maybe Paname on Second Avenue), savor a martini (any London Dry gin, on the rocks, and several olives, please) while I read the menu and the wine list, then enjoy an hour or so of face-to-face conversation and—here's the point—a really good meal prepped, cooked, and served by someone not me, and the remains and cleanup of which are not my concern.

So, gentle readers, what do *you* want to do when you're allowed to do it? Tell us your wish, your fervent hope, your dream day of freedom, at editor@shsnny.org.

SHSNY CALENDAR: AUGUST – OCTOBER 2020

FICTION BOOK CLUB ONLINE

The SHSNY Fiction Book Club meets online via Zoom, and will continue so for the duration of our enforced isolation.

To be included and notified of each meeting's link and password, email your address to Sharon Krutzel at sharonkrutzel@rcn.com

TUESDAY, SEPT 8, 7:00 pm
ALOYSIUS THE GREAT

John Maxwell O'Brien

By Joyce scholar, author of *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy*, and PIQUE subscriber O'Brien, *Aloysius* is now available in paper and e-formats at Amazon.

It's a romp of a novel of sex, ambition, pub crawls and whip-smart dialogue – what the Irish call *craic* (say "crack"), conversation as art, for the sheer fun of it.

TUESDAY, OCT 13, 7:00 pm
AMERICAN DIRT
Jeanine Cummins

Stephen King calls it "extraordinary", and this *NYTimes* best-selling story of a comfortable, middle-class Mexican family caught up in the flight to *el Norte* and away from drug violence has been called "the international story of our times". *Hardcover, Kindle.*

TUESDAY, NOV 10, 7:00 pm
THE THIRST
Jo Nesbo

Harry Hole is one of crime fiction's greatest cops ever, but after promising the woman he loves he's through, something about the killer who targets his victims on Tinder pulls Harry back to the chase in this eleventh novel in the series. *Paperback, Kindle.*

HUMANIST BOOK CLUB ONLINE

We continue online for the duration of our social distancing. Harry French will send the linking codes for the Zoom meetings. Send your address to:

htfrench46@gmail.com
Meanwhile, do the reading ...

THURS, SEPT 3, 7:00 pm
SURVIVING AUTOCRACY
Masha Gessen

As seen on MSNBC Morning Joe and heard on NPR All Things Considered: the bestselling, National Book Award-winning journalist offers an essential guide to understanding, resisting, and recovering from Trump and the ravages of our tumultuous times.

"When Gessen speaks about autocracy, you listen."
– *The New York Times*

THURS, OCTOBER 1, 7:00 pm
TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY:
The Seductive Lure of
Authoritarianism
Anne Applebaum

Thought-provoking and gracefully written, this is the book – by a Pulitzer-Prize winning historian – to read for "insight into what Trump's rise and rule really mean – here and abroad – for democracy in our time".

– *Ron Elving, NPR*

THIRD THURSDAY GROUP
THURS, AUGUST 20, 7:00 pm

Welcome to our Secular Humanist Political Support Group via Zoom ... for lively discussion of whatever is currently of interest to us. To join, send an email with your address to:

htfrench46@gmail.com

HUMANIST HAPPY HOUR ONLINE

SUNDAY, AUG 16, 5:00 pm

Let's get together even when we can't get together, via Zoom. Get comfortable at your computer with your beverage and/or snack of choice – and join 15, 20, or more of your fellow humanists in our Humanist Happy Hour!

Zoom in at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432?pwd=c0NrNUoweDVGWHo2ditvYmJlVjVjVGVz09>

Meeting ID: 980 634 4432

Passcode: SHSny

Join by Skype for Business

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432>

MONDAY MOVIES

MONDAY, AUG 24, 8:00 pm

We'll discuss Stanley Kubrick's

DR. STRANGELOVE

(Or: *How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*)

Yes, *Strangelove* was originally scheduled for August 10, but Zoom confusion and merry mix-ups (don't ask) sunk that.

So let's try again ... to watch Peter Sellers play three roles (hilariously) in 1964's "Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" (\$3.99 rental on Amazon) – then discuss Cold War paranoia and wild black humor.

Zoom in at:

<https://zoom.us/j/91274837859?pwd=MEhINW1rbjlvCFJ3OERZVE5lNzFOQT09>

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