

PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

December 8, 2020

We're back from our holiday staycation, and that word isn't the only neologism you'll encounter herein: try *Dolchstosslegende* on for size. Still on words, this week we consider the Word of the Year (or maybe not), while we compare bullying and racism and salute Sky Daddy. We measure and mourn anew America's and SCOTUS's loss of RBG, enumerate the do-nothing pandemic record of the Oaf in the Oval, take seriously his *Dolchstosslegende*, and embrace the coming return to decency on January 21. Stay well, stay strong, and now ... please pay your dues. — JR

OUR YEAR-END APPEAL

1. Pay your 2021 dues or subscription
2. Make a tax-deductible contribution

As I am sure you have noticed, you have not been asked to renew your SHSNY membership (or your subscription to PIQUE) in almost a year. The reason, of course, is that our whole membership renewal and distribution system was upended by the Covid-19 pandemic. The printer of our monthly newsletter shut down, social distancing rules made our mailing parties a no-no, and we had no social events to announce or report on anyway.

We have made do with a 6-page online weekly (mostly) version of PIQUE, and with informative and entertaining (we hope) Zoom gatherings and conversations every week of the month. Now it's time to move on.

A New Renewals Policy

1. Scrub 2020 – you don't owe anything.
2. Pay your 2021 membership or subscriber renewal now, in Dec. 2020, by check or via PayPal, and ...
3. Pay your renewals each year in December: e.g., pay in Dec. 2021 for 2022, etc.

Individual membership: \$40 per year (tax-deductible)

Family membership: \$65 (tax-deductible)

PIQUE subscription only: \$30 (sorry, no)

Make a Tax-Deductible Contribution to SHSNY

If you're thinking of donating to charity before the Dec. 31 deductibility deadline, please think of SHSNY.

The Secular Humanist Society of New York is a 501(c)3 educational non-profit, so every penny of any donation you make to this great organization is tax-deductible.

Make your check out to SHSNY and mail it to:

P.O. Box 7661, FDR Station, New York, NY 10150-7661

Or renew via PayPal at:

shsnny.org/membership.html

WELCOME TO AMERICAN THEOCRACY

Jonathan Engel

Is that title hyperbole? Perhaps for now, but the signs for the future are ominous. The night before Thanksgiving, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the cases of *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo* and *Agudath Israel of America v. Cuomo*. The cases were brought by the plaintiffs in response to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's order restricting in-person religious services to fight the Covid virus. It was also the first major case decided since Amy Covid Barrett (snark intended) was named to the Court, and what do you know, the Court held (5-4) that Cuomo's order violated the 1st Amendment's Free Exercise clause, thereby freeing the plaintiffs to spread the deadly virus throughout our fair city.

As a society it has always been our understanding that in a conflict between religious practice and civil law, civil law rules. If you don't believe me, just ask any Rastafarian who has been imprisoned for marijuana possession. Earlier this year, when Ruth Bader Ginsburg was still with us, the Court in a similar case held that religious rights could not overrule public safety. But that was then. (By the way, do you remember when Sen. Susan Collins told us that she was supporting Bret Kavanaugh for the Court because he would respect precedent? Looks like Kavanaugh doesn't remember it either).

Just how far will this extremely pious Supreme Court go to allow religious believers to impinge on the rights of everyone else? The outlook is perilous. In this case they have elevated the right to sing hymns in unison over the right for the rest of us to survive a plague. They might overturn *Roe v. Wade* because faith-heads don't like the fact that *other people* might choose to have an abortion. They could get rid of *Obergefell* because true believers don't like the idea

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SHSNY is a Charter Chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA), an Affiliate Member of Atheist Alliance International (AAI), an Affiliated Local Group of the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH) program of the Center for Inquiry (CFI), and an Endorsing Group in the Secular Coalition for New York (SCNY).

that *other people* might want to marry someone of the same sex. They could overturn the organized school prayer prohibition (*Engel v. Vitale*) to compel all children to pray in public school because religious believers want our kids to pray whether we want them to or not. The religious right in this country think that their rights include the ability to impose their beliefs on everyone else and, quite ominously, this Court seems prepared to accommodate them.

Can Democrats hold the line against the creeping theocracy? If they manage to take control of the Senate they could conceivably add two more seats to the Supreme Court and fill them with young liberals, who would help to balance out the two seats stolen by Republicans. Will they have the guts to do this while Republican hypocrites scream about “norms”? Hard to say. Just as importantly, do Democrats have the will to protect secular values, including the separation of church and state? Sure, they’ll speak up for women if *Roe* is endangered, and they’ll speak up for gay people if *Obergefell* is threatened. But in matters of religion Democrats seem more inclined to trumpet how pious they are personally than to stand up for the right of everyone to be secular if they so choose.

Can secularists do anything about this state of affairs? Well, we can start by reminding Democrats that we exist, we’re an important voting/donor block for the party, and that we expect our rights to be protected too. I don’t mind if individual Democrats are religious so long as they protect my right not to be.

SHSNY EX-PRESIDENT SCHOOLS DAILY NEWS “VOICE OF THE PEOPLE” READERS ON NON-CHRISTIAN AMERICA

To the Editor: Voicer Andrew Ginsburg believes that only a “Jesus Loves Masks” national campaign would induce Americans to wear masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Apparently, he is unaware of the fact that 35 percent of Americans, more than 100 million citizens, do not identify as Christians. A majority of these people say they are atheists, agnostics or “unaffiliated”, but large numbers of Jews, Muslims, Pagans, Hindus and Buddhists are also included in that figure. It is unlikely they would be persuaded by the campaign Ginsburg recommends, any more than he would be motivated by a “Buddha Loves Masks” campaign.

– Dennis Middlebrooks, Brooklyn

TO ELOHIM, ADONAI, YAHWEH, JEHOVA, AND THOUSANDS MORE, WE CAN ADD ...

John Rafferty

It’s not as if “God” doesn’t have as many names as a bail-jumper or a deadbeat dad, but now there’s a TikTok video gone viral in which abortion-clinic escort Wendy Shannon (in Charlotte, SC, I think) shouted down an anti-choice protester who was harassing clinic patients ...

“So fuck off, Jennifer. Is that the validation you want from sky daddy? Calling people a coward?”
“Sky Daddy”? I love it.

DOLCHSTOSSLEGENDE

Bret Stephens

(Reprinted from “Trump Contrives His Stab-in-the-Back Myth”, Nytimes.com, 11/24/2020)

The word *Dolchstosslegende* is hard to pronounce but important to understand. It translates as “stab-in-the-back myth” and was a key element in the revival of German militarism in the Weimar years. Even modestly educated Germans know exactly what it denotes and the evil it entails.

Donald Trump and his legal team are now contriving their own *Dolchstosslegende*. That’s true even as Trump’s effort to overturn the results of the election seems to descend from fantasy to farce. The main point of the exercise is no longer (if it ever seriously was) to find a judge, governor or other pliable instrument to deny Joe Biden the presidency. It is to deny the legitimacy of the Biden presidency, of the electoral system that gave him the office and of the federal and judicial systems that turned Trump’s legal challenges aside.

The point of the farce is farce. It is to make an obscene joke of the Biden administration and our constitutional system of government. This was also the point of the *Dolchstosslegende*, which claimed that the German Army, though in retreat in the fall of 1918, could have kept up the fight had it not been betrayed by defeatist and scheming politicians who agreed to an armistice that November.

This was, of course, a self-serving lie: Germany’s armies were being routed, its strategic situation was hopeless, its sailors were mutinying, its people were approaching starvation and only the armistice (which the kaiser’s generals asked for) spared it from a more painful defeat.

But the nature of the myth wasn’t that it should be believable. It’s that it should be believed.

There’s a difference. The success of the first rests on a plausible interpretation of facts. The success of the second requires a psychologically astute understanding of the people to whom the lie is peddled. The *Dolchstosslegende* may have been a transparent falsehood, but it had the double advantage of bucking up a humiliated nation’s pride and playing to its gut prejudices. Translated into the bigoted vernacular, “defeatist” and “scheming” almost always meant socialists, communists and Jews.

In this sense, it doesn’t matter that Rudy Giuliani’s legal case is being laughed out of court. What matters is that the district judge who did so is an Obama appointee (despite being a conservative Republican), and therefore can be dismissed as part of the deep-state conspiracy seeking to bring Trump down.

Nor does it matter that the lawyer Sidney Powell painted an anti-Trump conspiracy so vast that it seems to have embarrassed Giuliani and would have made the ghost of Joe McCarthy proud. What matters is that Powell’s list of enemies – from the director of the C.I.A. to the former Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez – hit all the right notes for the president’s die-hards.

And there are a lot of them: 52 percent of Republicans

think the president “rightfully won” re-election, at least according to a Reuters Ipsos poll from last week. In other words, a majority of Republicans will believe literally anything Trump says.

Here again the comparison to Germany rings loud. In a famous passage of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt noted how “Mass Propaganda discovered that its audience was ready at all times to believe the worst, no matter how absurd, and did not particularly object to being deceived because it held every statement to be a lie anyhow.”

The Dolchstosslegende worked because so many Germans were happy to believe what, at some level, they also knew wasn’t true. But it also worked because it had a clear aim that a growing number of Germans shared, which was to overthrow the struggling Weimar Republic by claiming that it was founded on treason. In other words, it wasn’t just a conspiracy theory. It was a political weapon with the revolutionary aim of destroying democracy itself.

What Trump and his minions are now attempting is of a piece. It is rich that many of the same people who spent years claiming that Robert Mueller’s lawful and constrained investigation was a deep-state coup are now happy to entertain a sitting president’s preposterous claims of electoral fraud.

But the aim is clear: to treat the Biden presidency as a product of treachery by a political order that is so comprehensively corrupt that it will require far tougher means than the ones Trump employed to root out.

In case certain readers think I’m making a comparison between Trump supporters and Nazis, let me emphasize that I am not. What I am saying is that this modern-day Dolchstosslegende, like surf pounding against a bluff, abets future demagogues by eroding public confidence in democratic institutions, until, unprotected, they collapse.

No comparison with the Weimar years is complete without noting that the republic wasn’t just done in. It did a lot to do itself in, too, mostly through economic mismanagement. All the more reason to wish the Biden administration well as it navigates crises that now include some of the most disreputable opponents our own republic has ever known.

THE DONALD J. TRUMP GUIDE TO NOT GETTING FIRED AFTER YOU’VE BEEN FIRED

(Based on “How to be a huge pain in the arse about getting fired, by Donald Trump”, Thedailymash.co.uk, 11/11/2020)

Are you angry and in denial about getting fired? Do you believe your dismissal was caused by a worldwide conspiracy? Then fight back! Ignore reality! You probably can’t let a few nukes fly like I’m going to, but try these tips: *Pretend it hasn’t happened*

If you keep going to work like nothing has changed, what are they going to do? Having security march you out when you’re found by the espresso machine for the fifth week running would be embarrassing. I’m staying president until the Secret Service carry me out.

Damage the company

You know, like delete a few thousand spreadsheets, order 900 new bottles for the water cooler, or abolish democracy. Personally, I’m going to inflame global tensions and let Covid run rampant, but whatever floats your boat.

File a lawsuit

Did you deserve to be fired? Yes? Then file a lawsuit. File a dozen! It’s a colossal waste of time and money and you know you won’t win, but hell, why not?

Ignore reality

Eventually your denial will become so concerning that someone will try to explain that it’s over. Disregard them. There’s always a new sycophant available to agree that you’ve suffered a terrible, historic injustice, even if you were fired for stealing and are on trial next week.

Play golf

Avoid the meeting where they’re going to fire you by playing golf. If they try to reschedule, play golf then too. Whenever something bad is going to happen, play golf. Golf makes all the bad things go away.

BY THE NUMBERS

John Rafferty

Americans are now becoming infected with the Covid-19 virus at the rate of **201,161** every day – far more than were being infected at the height of the late-Spring “peak season”.

Currently, **100,667** of our fellow citizens are in hospitals, victims of the virus, all across the country.

279,000 Americans have already died of the virus, and **2,733** more, on average, are now dying of every day.

All those numbers* are expected to soar as millions who travelled and otherwise broke “social distancing” protocols at Thanksgiving begin to show symptoms.

Even before Thanksgiving, the CDC, the NIH and every reputable scientist and contagious-disease specialist in the country warned that the winter months just ahead were going to produce horrific numbers in terms of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Even the Trump-appointed White House Covid Task Force is now warning Americans to ignore politics, to wear masks, and to stay indoors as much as possible.

“The risk to all Americans is at an all-time high.”

Meanwhile ... Donald Trump has not attended a single meeting of his Covid Task Force in more than **5 months**.

He has, however, **played golf 47 times** since Covid-19 reached pandemic proportions in mid-March.

**All those numbers are as of Dec. 4, when this was written. By the time you read this, they’ll be out of date. – JR*

PREDICTION

(Transcribed from the comic strip “Shoe”, 11/15/2020)

Customer in fortuneteller’s tent: Where do you see America in 25 years?

Madam ZooDoo at her crystal ball: I see a country run by people who were home-schooled by day-drinking parents.

A RETURN TO DECENCY

Roger Cohen

(Excerpted from *nytimes.com*, 12/3/2020)

President Trump is not yet gone, but he's muted, marginalized and moribund. American democracy was challenged by Mr. Trump at its very heart — respect for truth — and resisted. Joe Biden will take office in January as the 46th president of the United States. Decency will return to the White House, a fundamental moral shift. Dictators the world over will no longer have carte blanche to do their worst unchallenged. ...

An American authoritarian lurch posed a real danger. Europe already felt isolated in its defense of the rule of law and human rights. That insidious, wheedling, plaintive voice from the Oval Office, oozing self-obsession, got inside everyone's heads. Mr. Trump's political genius lay in his feel for the dark side of human nature and his ferocious, social media-propelled energy in appealing to it. The volume has dropped as the nightmare recedes. Suddenly there is mental space to think again.

There is plenty to think about. The post-1945 American-led world order is gone; the Biden presidency will not revive it. With the United States AWOL and the United Nations Security Council ineffectual, the pandemic revealed a leaderless world. The barriers the virus has erected will not be quickly dismantled. Nor will the economy based on remote work disappear, accompanied by the potentially devastating psychological impact of loneliness. Western societies face insistent challenges to their democratic model from a rising China, with its repressive surveillance state, and the Russia of President Vladimir V. Putin, for whom liberalism is "obsolete" because it presupposes that "migrants can kill, plunder and rape with impunity".

Mass migration, the disruptions of technology, virus-linked economic hardship and the hollowing-out of the middle class create conditions in which nationalism and the scapegoating it depends on thrive. These conditions will continue to spur illiberal movements of the kind Mr. Trump, Mr. Putin and Viktor Orban, the Hungarian prime minister, have led. The core challenge to liberal democracies is to fashion a response that must involve broader economic and educational opportunities, as well as fiscal equity, as starting points. Impunity for the rich and widening inequality have broken "society", understood as a community with certain shared interests.

In the United States, the cultural chasm between urban elites and the heartland remains stark. Mr. Trump's almost 74 million votes reflected more than "America first" chest-thumping. Barack Obama, in a recent interview with *The Atlantic* magazine, said, "We are entering into an epistemological crisis." The former president observed that Americans are losing the capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood, and in such conditions, democracy fails. ...

Even language itself has broken down between liberals and the other America that thinks differently. Mr. Trump, an artful impostor, saw the political space this opened up for him. His nostalgia is for some unidentified moment of

American greatness, when white male property owners ruled alone, women stayed home and the nation's global dominance was unchallenged. He thrived on the unease and sense of humiliation that rapid demographic change and a shifting economic landscape brought. He is unlikely to go away; and if he does, perhaps to a prison cell, Trumpism will find some other exponent. ...

The American election was a turning point. It illustrated once again that those who write off democracy do so at their peril. Democracies are slow to react, often cumbersome, inherently messy. They are also stubborn and, when provoked, resolute. They know that the diktat of the autocrat is irreconcilable with the quest for human dignity and freedom. They can summon themselves to say to a bully, "You're fired!" — words Mr. Trump still cannot bear to hear.

The result is the rebirth of hope, however tenuous, for the 21st century. Vaccines may be coming. A decent American president certainly is.

BULLIES, RACISTS, AND YOUR DRUNK UNCLE

David Rafferty

(From *Greenwich (CT) Time*, 11/22/2020)

A decade ago, you couldn't throw a stick into a room full of child "experts" and not hit someone with a strong opinion about bullying, the latest Worst Thing you could do to a child. Yet while in no way minimizing the very real and scary trauma that comes from being on the receiving end of a bully, many of those experts were furiously lumping every slight, taunt and sideways glance into an ever-expanding, unwieldy box of perceived bullying behaviors.

It was during this period that I was running my sleep-away camp staff orientation, using these increasingly more draconian rules for defining and responding to bullying. The staff was getting frustrated as it was clear that in the name of wanting to offend no one while protecting everyone, that things were going too far. Previously acceptable behaviors were now deemed completely unacceptable, and the good intentions of good people were cancelled by the stigma of being called out for the unpardonable sin of bullying. Clearly, distinctions had to be made between actual bullying, and just being wrong.

This has relevance for today's topic, systemic racism, something you probably want to read about even less than bullying. But bear with me, as my contention is that while bullying is absolutely a real, dangerous thing, there are varying degrees requiring varying responses ... just like racism. I say this because while racism is real, dangerous and must be addressed, using appropriately measured responses can be more effective tools for educating offenders and getting closer to ultimately ending racism.

Take the holidays and the annual visit from your crazy Uncle Chris. The family tolerates Chris and laughs uncomfortably when he starts pontifidinking, going on one of his insensitive, casually racist rants. But he's harmless, right? Until Uncle Chris goes home without ever being told by his loved ones that what he's saying isn't just politically incor-

rect, it's fundamentally wrong. So Monday he goes back to work, and in his modest position of authority, and with no one calling out his bigotry, maybe he denies a promotion or belittles a coworker because he thinks his racist attitudes are okay. Maybe later his unconscious bias keeps a talented child off the Little League team he coaches.

We know this kind of thing happens. It's the kind of racism that's both casual and systemic while having nothing to do with the Confederacy, police brutality, or centuries of oppression. It doesn't make it any less racist, however. Should Chris be called out as a racist? Absolutely. Should he be banned, banished or cancelled? Probably not. What Chris really needs is the support of people he loves, who should be politely yet firmly making it clear that they, and others, don't approve of his behavior.

One of the goals of the anti-bullying movement is to get people to stop being "bystanders" and become "upstanders". Or to put it in a way that resonates in the racism discussion: silence implies consent. Incidents of bullying go down when good people don't laugh, don't join in, and stand up to support the victim, while also informing the bully that their behavior is unacceptable. Racism can and should be called out the same way.

But here's where things get difficult. In order to eradicate racism, it must be called out. But how? Calling someone a bully, even in a public setting, is typically a mild social rebuke. Publicly calling out a racist, however, is fraught with the potential of combustible reactions, and usually carries deeper social consequences for all parties involved. That's where the measured, calibrated response must come into play.

The last several years have made it clear that while we thought/hoped that the vilest forms of systemic racism in America were receding, they really weren't. This nation has a racism problem, which cannot be fixed solely with grand gestures like tearing down statues, fulminating against the police and demanding better textbooks. It has to begin with each of us realizing first that the problem exists, and that we all possess the capacity to inform our friends and family in loving, firm and measured tones, that racism must have no place at the American table. Then, from small things big things one day come.

PANDEMIC: THE WORD OF THE YEAR, OR NOT?

John Rafferty

(The following is a mashup of articles by Leanne Italie on apnews.com, 11/30/2020, and by Jennifer Schuessler, at nytimes.com, 11/22/2020).

On Dec. 31, China reported a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown origin to the World Health Organization. By Jan. 31, WHO declared an outbreak of a novel coronavirus a global health emergency. Come March 11, the world was facing down the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parents sat children down to explain what a pandemic is. Related terms usually restricted to medicine and science stormed into everyday conversation. Over time, we were pandemic baking and pandemic dating and rescuing pan-

demorphic puppies from shelters.

All of which led Dictionary.com on Monday to declare "pandemic" its 2020 word of the year. Senior Research Editor John Kelly said pandemic beat out routine lookups usually intended to sort more mundane matters, such as the differences between "to, two and too".

"That's significant," Kelly emphasized. "It seems maybe a little bit obvious, and that's fair to say, but think about life before the pandemic. Things like 'pandemic fashion' would have made no sense. The pandemic as an event created a new language for a new normal."

The word pandemic has roots in Latin and the Greek *pan*demos, meaning "common, public". Breaking it down further, "*pan*" means "all" and "*demos*" means "people". Pandemic entered English in the 1660s in the medical sense, and a pandemic is defined by Dictionary.com as a disease "prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world; epidemic over a large area". Its broader sense, as evidenced in its roots, can be used thusly: "A pandemic fear of atomic war."

On the other hand ...

This year, Oxford Languages, the publisher of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, has forgone the selection of a single word in favor of highlighting the coronavirus pandemic's swift, sudden linguistic impact on the English language.

Oxford Languages's annual Word of the Year is usually a tribute to the protean creativity of English and the reality of constant linguistic change, throwing a spotlight on zeitgeisty neologisms like "selfie", "vape" and "unfriend."

The 2020 report does highlight some zippy new coinages, like "Blursday" (which captures the way the week blends together), "covidiot" (you know who you are) and "doomscrolling" (who, me?). But mostly, it underlines how the pandemic has utterly dominated public conversation, and given us a new collective vocabulary almost overnight.

FIND YOUR PLACE IN THE VACCINE LINE

John Rafferty

After health care workers and other "essentials", who is going to get whichever vaccine(s) is/are approved, when it/they are approved, and in what order? The answer — since we know the current administration will do nothing (nothing sane, anyway), and the incoming administration has no power to do anything yet — is who the hell knows?

One sane criterion would be the "at risk" factor, i.e., the younger, healthier, and least-exposed you are, the longer you may have to wait your turn.

The *NYTimes* has a link to an interesting four-question questionnaire to determine where you would stand in any "at-risk" line of your fellow Americans, New Yorkers, or neighbors waiting to get their shot.

I spent about a minute to find out that I'd be in line *after* 118.5 million other Americans, *after* 7.1 million New York Staters, or *after* 616,000 of my fellow Manhattanites.

Good luck to me.

Check your own place in line: <https://www.nytimes.com/.../covid-19-vaccine-timeline.html>

SHSNY CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2020 – FEBRUARY 2021

FICTION BOOK CLUB ONLINE

The SHSNY Fiction Book Club meets online via Zoom for the duration of our enforced isolation. Join the Zoom Meeting at <https://zoom.us/j/97467470190?pwd=dGdEbTkwV0pSRmZRWHYvajFoTXlrZz09>
Meeting ID: 974 6747 0190
Passcode: Read

TUESDAY, DEC 8, 7:30 pm **THE VANISHING HALF** Brit Bennett

From the bestselling author of *The Mothers*, a stunning new novel about twin sisters, inseparable as children, who ultimately choose to live in two very different worlds, one black and one white. Looking well beyond issues of race, *The Vanishing Half* considers the lasting influence of the past as it shapes a person's decisions, desires, and expectations.
– *Paperback & Kindle.*

TUESDAY, JAN 12, 7:30 pm **THE LYING LIFE OF ADULTS** Elena Ferrante

With this new novel about the transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, Ferrante proves once again why she has become one of the world's most read and beloved writers. Another gripping, highly addictive, and totally unforgettable Neapolitan story.
– *Paperback & Kindle.*

TUESDAY, FEB 9, 7:30 pm **DRESSED FOR DEATH** Donna Leon

Commissario Guido Brunetti of the Venice police solves murders while navigating Italian society, politics and family life.

HUMANIST BOOK CLUB

Harry French will send the linking codes for the Zoom meetings. Send your address to: htfrench46@gmail.com
Meanwhile, do the reading ...

THURS, JAN 7, 7:00 pm **A DECENT LIFE:** **Morality for the Rest of Us** Todd May

You don't have to be a saint to live an ethical life. Todd May stands at the forefront of a new wave of practical philosophy that sensibly reframes our morals and redefines what it means to live a decent life.

THURS, FEB 4, 7:00 pm **CASTE: THE ORIGINS OF** **OUR DISCONTENTS** Isabel Wilkerson

Pulitzer-winner Wilkerson's portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America: a hidden caste system, a hierarchy of human rankings. A #1 *NYTimes* bestseller, long-listed for the National Book Award.

THURS, MARCH 4, 7:00 pm **A LOT OF PEOPLE** **ARE SAYING:**

The New Conspiracism and **the Assault on Democracy** Nancy L. Rosenblum and Russell Muirhead

How the new conspiracism differs from the old, how it undermines democracy, and what is to be done about it.

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HUMANIST HAPPY HOUR ONLINE

SUNDAY, DEC 6, 5:00 pm

Pour something, grab a snack, and join 15 or more humanists and rationalists for lively conversation in our SHSNY Happy Hour!

Zoom in at
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432?pwd=c0NrNUoweDVGWWho2ditvYmJlEVjVGdz09>
Meeting ID: 980 634 4432
Passcode: SHSNy
Join by Skype for Business
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432>

MONDAY MOVIES: MUSICALS!

Let's have some fun, screening, talking about, and simply enjoying the best "all-singing, all-dancing" Hollywood (and other) classics. Rent 'em on Amazon (\$3.99), watch, then Zoom in at ...
<https://zoom.us/j/92351454127?pwd=OVg5NnBaUFc4NWtLbHJJNW1vZ1Y1Zz09>
Meeting ID: 923 5145 4127
Passcode: watch

MONDAY, DEC 7, 8:00 pm **ON THE TOWN (1949)**

Sailors on 24-hour shore leave, Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, and Jules Munshin ... a Bernstein score ("*The Bronx is up and the Battery's down, the people ride in a hole in the ground*"), and a Best Musical Oscar.

MONDAY, DEC 21, 8:00 pm **CHICAGO** *(Diamond Edition 2003)*

Winner of 6 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, with Catherine Zeta-Jones, Renee Zellweger, Richard Gere, Queen Latifah ... *and all that jazz.*