

# Review: The Great Reset and the Struggle for Liberty

Harrison Koehli writes at [Substack](#):



Michael Rectenwald's new book, [The Great Reset and the Struggle for Liberty: Unraveling the Global Agenda 1](#) isn't just his best book yet. It's one of the most important books of this generation.

Part of this has to do with Rectenwald's own [tonic intersectionality](#)—what makes him the man for the job. He's a true scholar—the type that mostly used to exist, back when the word really meant something. He knows how to think, and he knows how to write: clearly, effectively, and comprehensively. He reads the primary sources, draws out the connections that aren't clear when they're read in isolation, and thus provides us with a key to the jargon and misleading doublespeak. He was a Marxist academic, so he's intimately aware of the philosophical foundations of the ideologies in question. He

ties together all the threads. He's also intellectually fearless, which, when combined with critical thought, packs a powerful punch. In Rectenwald's hands, writing about semi-open conspiracies like the Great Reset leaves the domain of crazy people and enters a realm of smart sophistication. And, of course, he wrote the foreword to the new edition of *Political Ponerology*, so he knows what's really going on.

The other part has to do with his subject matter. The Great Reset isn't just a "conspiracy theory," or a current political fad of ineffectual elites. It is a century-long program tying together a handful of the biggest political programs and cultural trends of our times: climate change catastrophism, emerging economic systems, global governance, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, transhumanism, Woke ideology (or as we Neo-Gonzos cheekily like to call it, [Marxcissism](#)). It involves national and economic leaders, international organizations, big corporations, and activists. And this has all come together in the last three years of the covid crisis, which Klaus Schwab and his associates saw as an "opportunity" to further implement their already pre-ordained plans for "a fairer, greener future." These are big ideas, relevant to everyone.

I want you to buy the book and read it, so my summary will be relatively brief. [2](#)

After distilling down the content of each section, I'll draw out some of the points of particular relevance for my Substack's main theme: political ponerology.

## The Summary

**Part I** (6 chapters) covers the economics of the Great Reset. Schwab's "stakeholder capitalism"[3](#) reveals itself to be better categorized by the following descriptors: "capitalism with Chinese characteristics," neo-feudalism or corporate socialism, and "Woke corporatism" or economic fascism. All

stakeholders are equal, but some stakeholders are more equal than others. The goal is essentially a global monopolization of industry, finance, and government—a corporate-state cartel—using Woke-inspired ESG (environmental, social, governance) metrics as the means to snuff out dissident competition.

*The Great Reset amounts to a state-corporate-woke-cartel hybrid administering the economy through the recommendations and decisions of technocrats like those at the WEF, the UN, the World Bank, and, by extension, the World Health Organization—as well as by top corporate decision-makers like BlackRock’s Larry Fink ... This elite colludes with the state to control and regulate production, while private owners retain nominative legal ownership. However, private property is subjected to breaches in property rights—to intrusive oversight and control, and further, to demands of compliance. **The compliant class rises in power and prestige, while non-compliant dissidents are eventually cancelled and relegated to the underclass.** [4](#) (p. 85)*

The purpose of Woke ideology in this process is to “rehabilitate” the majority in developed nations, to habituate them “to the reduced expectations of the Great Reset” (p. 121). It does this primarily through the induction of guilt over one’s privilege.

**Part II** (3 chapters) covers the Great Reset’s long history, tracing its roots and branches from the Rhodes Society (1903) and Milner’s Round Table groups, through Chatham House (1920), the CFR (1921), the Bilderberg Group (1954), the Club of Rome (1968), the WEF née “European Management Forum” (1971), the Trilateral Commission (1973), and various UN groups and conferences. All these groups are incestuously connected, cross-pollinating and spawning new demented progeny every two or three decades, which then continue to breed with the previous generations. WEF is just the latest, and it isn’t

just a club: “It is the culmination of decades of elite thinking, activism, and social engineering” (p. 34).

*Of these organizations, the WEF represents the most public face of globalism to date. Unlike its forebears, it exhibits a relative openness. As an organization, **the WEF outstrips its ancestors in terms of reach, penetration, and “success.”*** (p. 128)

Just as the Rhodes groups switched from promoting primarily Anglo imperialism to multicultural, multilateral globalism, the WEF rebranded in 1987, shifting from a focus on European concerns to an elite-centered globalism. Rectenwald traces the overlapping memberships of these groups, and while many of the names won't be familiar to most, others definitely will be: Gates, Brzezinski, Kissinger, Clintons, Rockefellers, among a motley crew of monarchists, fascists, socialists/communists, corporatists, and capitalists.

**Part III** (4 chapters) delves into climate catastrophism and the various global climate initiatives underlying the Great Reset. After demolishing most of the fake anthropogenic global warming talking points, Rectenwald concludes that this catastrophism can't be about the climate. The policies are too contradictory to such premises. The goal isn't to stop climate change, it's to reverse economic development.

*Climate change catastrophism boils down to **renouncing and eliminating cheap and reliable energy** and enriching climate alarmists like Al Gore—all in the interest of **furthering a globalist political agenda**. Most importantly, climate change catastrophism has to do with the vaunted “solidarity,” “inclusivity,” and “international cooperation” that the WEF, the UN, favored corporations, and their proxies in government deem necessary to mitigate the supposed crisis. **These are code words that stand for a totalitarian regime** under which a newly refurbished collectivism abrogates individual rights,*

*curtails human freedom, and dismantles the engines of the economy. Because “the science” of climate change catastrophism is so obviously contrived and borderline fraudulent, one is forced to conclude that the means for “reversing climate change” must be the ends sought by climate change catastrophists, whether all the catastrophists know it or not. (pp. 226-227)*

The only consistent principle underlying all these groups and goals (including birth control, abortion, and gender equality) is a neo-Malthusian drive to reduce the population and economy to “equitable” levels. This is the true meaning of “sustainability,” and it entails undoing the developed world and stalling the developing world.

*Sustainable development therefore defines a system of managing resource production and consumption **relative to population size** while all three must be calibrated in terms of the environment (climate change, etc.) and equity. (p. 183)*

*Without environmental and social justice policies in place, **development becomes inequitable and unsustainable.** (p. 184)*

*[“Sustainability” and “sustainable development”] do not mean, as the words seem to suggest, the ability to withstand shocks of various kinds—economic crises, natural disasters, etc. **They mean development constrained by utopian, unscientific environmentalist imperatives, inclusive of reduced production and consumption in the developed world and the thwarting of development in the developing world that would result in the production of additional [greenhouse gases]. (p. 273)***

**Part IV** (3 chapters) looks at the fourth industrial revolution

(4-IR), including “a ubiquitous Internet, smart cities, central bank digital currency (CBDC), digital identities, the Internet of Things (IoT) and the Internet of Bodies (IoB), smart implants, nanorobotic brain-cloud interfaces, algorithms undertaking governmental tasks, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR), the metaverse, and transhumanism” (p. 288). This is basically the *Black Mirror* section of the book, and it’s where Rectenwald’s deep familiarity with the postmodernists shines through.

**Part V** (2 chapters) provides the best history and analysis of the phrase “conspiracy theory” you’ll find, tracing its philosophical roots from Karl Popper to the present and applying it to the Great Reset.

*When obscurity and mendacity prevail at the highest levels of society, as has been the case with the covid crisis, for example, we should expect a greater frequency of conspiracy theories. (p. 356)*

*... if the Great Reset is a conspiracy, it must be that the project is **not what the conspirators say it is**. Likewise, all the talk about “equity,” “fairness,” “sustainability,” “shared destiny,” and so on, **must mean something other than what Schwab and company suggest**. These must be euphemistic stand-ins for what they really intend. “You’ll own nothing, and you’ll be happy” must mean that only the majority will be without property. The elite will continue their ownership and, in fact, will make ownership exclusive to themselves. **You will own nothing means they will own everything**. (p. 359)*

In short, Rectenwald makes the case that the Great Reset—as the totality of goals, groups, and policies tied to the WEF directly or indirectly—is the new totalitarianism. I would argue that this makes it the new pathocracy, by definition. It involves a vast consolidation of wealth in the hands of the

elite, global governance (the fancy new word for world government), mass surveillance and control, and the convergence and totalizing of all spheres of life, from the economic and technological to the biological and environmental, military and government.

Finally, the conclusion presents Rectenwald's recommendations for how to combat the Great Reset: "The Great Refusal." This entails rejecting and refusing those projects that are central to its plans: CBDCs, the IoB, digital identity, ESG stocks and banks; and creating and fostering those things it hates, like parallel economies and social networks, actual national sovereignty, and elite defection. As Rectenwald states, this is not a utopian scheme; it is basic sanity.

## **The Ponerology**

Regular readers of this Substack will be familiar with a few basic points of ponerology: clandestine organizations and their role in pathocratic "artificial infection," psychopathic doublespeak, schizo-autistic theorists and their destructive ideologies, and "negative selection." Rectenwald's book provides perfect examples of each.

Lobaczewski describes three means by which pathocracies develop: homegrown revolution, foreign imposition by force, and artificial infection (revolutionary/political warfare). These can overlap. Revolutions can have foreign involvement (like with the Bolsheviks), and a hostile takeover can make use of political warfare. What is common to all three is the presence of a pathocratic nucleus, which takes the form of a clandestine (or semi-clandestine) organization. Familiar examples include: secret societies, terrorist organizations, revolutionary groups.

Artificial infection involves seeding compatible revolutionary ideologies and puppet leaders into the target population (e.g. so-called color revolutions). The main idea being that such

groups and ideologies are Trojan horses; the ideology is a mask covering over a ponerogenic movement using the ideology as an instrument to gain power. The WEF is following this model:

*... the Great Reset is but a coordinated propaganda campaign, shrouded under a cloak of inevitability. It is the wrapping on a giant package of plans and policies delivered to the world at large by various governments, international governance bodies, non-governmental organizations, and corporations. This package is not sold wholesale as "the Great Reset" but rather is **distributed under various retail names, depending on the destination**. It can only "succeed" if these parties adopt and administer the package and only if it is accepted by those it means to administer. Unfortunately, to a significant extent, the bills of sale have been signed by many world leaders, including corporate heads, and the Great Reset project is already well underway. (p. 29)*

The WEF has also seeded governments around the world directly with members of its Young Global Leaders program. Schwab famously bragged about "penetrating" the Cabinets of Canada and Argentina, for instance. Through such means, the WEF manages to bypass the legislation of target nations, obviating the need for actual revolutionary warfare or forced takeovers. Ideology serves as "the mental programming necessary for domination and control short of the use of force" (p. 117). World populations are therefore forced to come to terms with "the prospect of invisible handlers, invisible rulers, and invisible overlords":

*A collectivist worldview, an incessant emphasis on "equality," climate catastrophism, and most recently, health emergencies have been marshaled by nation states and their agencies to pave the way for popular acceptance of these new overlords and their policies and plans. (p. 190)*



“The so-called long-march through the institutions” was never a bottom-up project. Rather, it “was a stampede within them,” undertaken by elites (p. 33). Given the WEF’s status as a semi-secret organization with semi-hidden motivations, Lobaczewski’s warnings about such groups bears repeating:

*American democracy, like everywhere else, has become a façade system, behind which other forces are already hiding to exercise real power. ...*

*In every democracy there are organized minorities that take advantage of its described weaknesses to try to secure power for themselves. **Their activities are in fact semi-secret, because they are shielded by official programs and propaganda,** and it is very difficult for citizens to find out what their motives really are. Different interpretations of these important motives cause disputes and contribute to public irritation. **The moral quality of these motives and the degree to which they are made public will determine whether democracy can survive and thrive or whether it is in danger of collapse.** ([Logocracy, ch. 5](#))*

As an example of the above propaganda, in chapter 12 Rectenwald translates the stated goals of Agenda 2030 from the WEF’s doublespeak into plain language. Underlying all the propaganda is an environmentalism rooted in anti-capitalist, anti-human, neo-Malthusian attitudes. He describes how this is achieved:

*With its apparent concern for the universal “common good,” **leftist ideology provides the best cover for disguising totalitarian ambitions.***

*Leftist totalitarians attempt to exert control over the world **for the supposed welfare of the masses, the community, the disadvantaged, the developing world, women, children, the economy, and “the planet.”** ... Leftist totalitarianism [in contrast to the right] **poses as benign and clearly***

*beneficial, as the de facto no-fault ideology whose moral probity is deemed unassailable. A supposed universal concern for “the common good” not only hides its totalitarian ambitions from the masses but also, perhaps, from the elites themselves. (TGR, pp. 232-233)*

Concerning the WEF specifically:

*To sell this package, the WEF mobilizes the warmed-over rhetoric of “economic equality,” “equity,” “fairness,” “inclusion,” and “a shared destiny,” among other euphemisms and doublespeak. Together, such phrases represent the collectivist, socialist, or “woke” political and ideological component of the envisioned corporate-and-state-run socialism. (p. 30)*

ESG is a perfect example. It’s a total scam (see pp. 105-110). Its biggest participants are the biggest polluters, for instance, and it doesn’t actually measure the environmental impacts of cooperating companies. However, what ESG achieves is the creation and implementation of an [artificial selection mechanism](#) for inclusion in the corporate-state cartel.

*While weakening the investment positions of non-ESG-compliant companies in the U.S. and elsewhere, ESG-minded investors have strengthened the financial positions of companies in authoritarian countries. This is particularly the case in China, where top-down governmental controls over corporate behavior **either force Chinese companies to abide by ESG standards, or else to misrepresent their compliance.** (p. 113)*

The Great Reset ideology itself stems from a collection of [schizo-autistic minds](#), whether it be the “practical” postmodernism of the Marxcissists, or the neo-Malthusian catastrophism of guys like Eliot Slater:

*“As human birth takes on a negative value for society, human*

*death takes on a positive one.” (p. 167)*

... Paul Ehrlich:

*“Abortion is a highly effective weapon in the armory of population control.” (p. 168)*

... and Maurice Strong:

*“We may get to the point where the only way of saving the world will be for industrialized civilization to collapse.” (p. 215)*

Rectenwald notes:

***Misanthropy and control freakishness underlie all enviro-neo-Malthusian discourse, although it is usually more muted in rhetoric and tone. Misanthropy is typically expressed in terms that sound humanitarian on their face. Population must be controlled for human well-being, human rights, and for preserving the environment on which humans depend. (Controlling one’s reproduction is considered a “human right,” while reproduction itself is not.) (p. 170)***

Schwab himself (engineer and economist) and Yuval Harari (historian and futurologist) are in “good” company. Recall what Lobaczewski wrote about such types:

*Low emotional pressure enables them to develop efficient speculative reasoning, a kind of objectivity which is useful in non-humanistic spheres of activity like economics or for exploiting the emotionalism of others. However, their one-sidedness makes them prone to consider themselves intellectually superior to “ordinary” people who, in their opinion, are mainly guided by their emotions. (PP, p. 106)*

Here's how Rectenwald characterizes Harari:

*Harari's pronouncements may amount to intentional hyperbole to make a point, but his statements are **remarkable for the cynicism and disdain for humanity they betray**. They are revelatory of the unmitigated gall of believers in the transhuman future. Coupled with the neo-Malthusian impulses of the elite, centered around the UN and the WEF, **a picture emerges of an elite whose objective is to reduce the population of "useless eaters,"** while keeping the remainder in their thrall. (p. 329)*

Through doublespeak, negative selection, and ideology, the WEF has artificially infected governments, corporations, activists, and general populations the world world over. This is ponerogenesis on a global scale, outdoing even what communist pathocracy managed to achieve in the twentieth century.

*Woke ideology, I contend, has tilled the soil and planted the seeds for the harvest that the Great Reset represents to the ruling elite. Was wokeness intentionally crafted for this purpose? Not necessarily, but it nevertheless can and is being appropriated for these ends, just as other ideological formations have been used for other ends. The ruling elite appropriates the available means at its disposal to effect its plans, including available ideologies. (p. 122)*

## **Apocalypse Mao**

In [a recent post](#) alluding to the Great Reset plans, I wrote: "At least Mao had some real goals in mind, even if his proposed methods made them impossible to achieve. Our very *goals* are dumb." Rectenwald makes the same point in chapter 13, where he relates the history [5](#) of perhaps history's greatest pathocrat and his Great Leap Forward (sic).[6](#)

Before bringing out the similarities between the two “Great” projects, Rectenwald concedes the differences, noting that “even these differences do not weigh in favor of the Great Reset”:

*Whereas the Great Leap Forward was a misguided attempt to increase crop yields dramatically and industrialize the countryside, the Great Reset aims deliberately at deindustrialization and will effect a reduction in agricultural output. (p. 261)*

Both, however, share this: “the arbitrary imposition of a collectivist unscientific ideology on all human activity and nature” (p. 262). The Great Reset’s “demands are as delusional as anything advocated by Chairman Mao” (p. 263). Or, if you prefer somewhat obscure internet analogies, I’d say they’re as self-delusive as the characters in a [Nikki Howard skit.7](#)

*The world over, we see a concerted, coordinated campaign to dismantle the productive capabilities in energy, manufacturing, and farming. This project, driven by elites and accruing to their benefit, is amounting to the largest Great Leap Backward in recorded history. If it is not stopped and reversed, it will lead to economic disaster, including dramatically reduced consumption and living standards. And it will almost certainly result in increased levels of hunger in the developed world and famines in the developing world. WEF Chairman Schwab may outdo Chairman Mao. If we let him. (p. 280)*

In sum, Michael Rectenwald’s *The Great Reset and the Struggle for Liberty* is the essential book on the subject. It lays out the players, the plan, the history, and the solutions. It peels back the propaganda, revealing the necrotic tissue beneath, kept alive only by the power it’s able to suck from the subject body politic.

The Great Reset is part of a long-running pathocratic project to change the world: 1) economically/politically, via a transformation of our current systems, 2) psychologically, through the propagation of a pathological ideology and the selection of leaders who are either spineless or corrupt, or both, and 3) spiritually, through an attempt to change what it means to be human. Like all such projects, it will ultimately fail. The question is just how long its undead corpse will continue the thrash on, and how many people it will take with it before it's finally destroyed.

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1

Nashville, TN: New English Review Press, 2023. [Amazon link](#).

2

I.e. not a practically book-length, multi-part summary, as I did with Desmet's [Psychology of Totalitarianism](#).

3

Stakeholders are “anyone or any group that stands to benefit or lose from corporate behavior—other than competitors, we may suppose” (p. 55).

4

This “effectively creates three classes: the elite; the downtrodden majority, or those without special abilities surviving on Universal Basic Income; and those with special entrepreneurial, professional, or scientific ability, who may choose to join the elite by being compliant so as not to suffer cancellation and relegation to the status of the downtrodden” (p. 85). This tripartite division roughly parallels Lobaczewski's description of the three classes which emerge in a developed pathocracy: the psychopathic “new nobility” (6%), the society of normal people (82%), the “new

bourgeoisie" who act as managers and middle-men between the masses and the elites.

[5](#)

While typing this, I accidentally wrote "shitstory," which is probably more accurate.

[6](#)

Including background on Mao and the surprising amount of foreign, *Western* influence on the early Chinese Communist Party.

[7](#)

Or [this one](#).