



## **The Ten Ideologies of America: As Donald Trump Overthrows the Old Order, a Look at the New**

Virgil

March 20, 2016

We all know that the old ideological labels, such as “conservative” and “liberal,” are worn out. Okay, so what are the new labels? What are the new ideologies?

Let’s get right to it: These, below, are the belief systems of most Americans. We will examine them in alphabetical order. But first, for reference, here’s the full list:

1. Cosmopolitanism
2. Establishmentism
3. Green Malthusianism
4. Leftism
5. Libertarianism
6. Libertinism
7. Nationalism
8. Neoconservatism
9. Paleoconservatism
10. Populism

### **1. Cosmopolitanism**

Cosmopolitanism is the view that we are all, everywhere, a part of a single world community, and that such things as nation-states, including the United States, only slow down the fulfillment of our true destiny— coming together in a global harmonic convergence. As John Lennon sang,

“Imagine there’s no countries.” Most ordinary citizens probably like the country that they live in, but for many in the globetrotting elite, that’s not good enough; they want to be citizens of the world.

We might further note a division within this category: There’s a *Left Cosmopolitanism* and a *Right Cosmopolitanism*.

*Left* Cosmopolitanism means support for open borders, of course, and also for multiculturalism. As might be said, “Celebrate diversity—or else!”

In addition, Left Cosmos love international organizations, such as the United Nations; to them, that’s the future—one big New World Order.

*Right* Cosmopolitans also support open borders. In addition, being good capitalists, they support free trade and anything else that multinational corporations might wish for. And since they are private-sector-loving corporatists, they avidly embrace pro-business international combines, such as the World Trade Organization.

And it’s not just the WTO: When British Prime Minister David Cameron announced, for example, that he supported his country’s staying within the increasingly hulking European Union—that is, opposing “Brexit”—he was expressing the Right Cosmopolite view, namely, that the EU matters more than any country, even his own home country.

So then we might ask: Who are some leading Cosmopolitans? Well, in addition to Cameron, we could cite Germany’s Angela Merkel, as well as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, both of whom have hungered, or still hunger, to be Secretary General of the UN. In their minds, America is just a place to hang one’s hat—nestled in between Algeria and Andorra in the roster of the General Assembly.

On the Republican side, former Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana counts as a first-rate Cosmopolitan. In fact, he was too much of a Cosmopolitan for Hoosier tastes; that’s why he lost his bid to be renominated by the GOP in 2012. But today, freed from ever again having to go back to Indiana, the internationalist ex-solon regularly holds court at the Lugar Center at Georgetown University.

In addition to Lugar, most big corporate CEOs are also Republican Cosmopolites. Sure, they yearn for more H-1B visas at home and new tax havens abroad, but they still admire the GOP for its commitment to lower taxes on wealth.

## **2. Establishmentism**

Some people just like the status quo. They identify with power; they instinctively take the go-along-get-along position. One might call them “stand-patters,” or “sticks-in-the-mud,” or “kneejerk moderates.”

It could be argued that Establishmentism is more of an *approach*, more of an attitude than an ideology, and that might be the case. Still, whole political parties, and many political careers, are based on the idea of dutifully propping up the Establishment.

In the medieval past, such deference was described as the Great Chain of Being; that is, there was supposedly a divinely ordained hierarchy of things. In this vision, God had put the master in the castle, and the servant at the gate. The English Tory Party, before it went Cosmopolitan under Cameron, was mostly dedicated to the idea of “God Save the King” (or Queen); everything else flowed from that vision of dignified obedience.

Yet Establishmentism is by no means limited to the political right: The Soviet Communists of the '70s and '80s, under the doddering leadership of Brezhnev and others, were as blindly devoted to Keeping Things The Same as any Colonel Blimp.

Returning to the U.S., we can see that leading Establishmentists have been fully bipartisan, including Mike Mansfield, Gerald Ford, George H.W. Bush, Bob Michel, Jay Rockefeller, and John Boehner.

And, among those currently in office, such elected officials as

**Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)**

14%

,

**Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)**

0%

,

**Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)**

6%

, and

**Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)**

19%

all wear the Establishment label—and proudly so. None of these incumbents, in either party, are boat-rockers; they are not likely to get excited about any idea in politics, except, maybe, deficit reduction—carefully balanced, of course, between tax increases and spending cuts.

Most recently, we can also observe that

**Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)**

79%

, the Tea Partier-turned-Gang-of-Eight-dealmaker, made the mistake of “outing” himself as an Establishmentist a little bit too soon. For his sake, he should have waited till after the GOP presidential primaries were over before showing off his “Scarlet E.”

And so, as things worked out for the Floridian, it was simply too easy for his critics to portray him as the wannabe leader of the Bush-Romney Restoration. And that was a big dud.

Not surprisingly, we can detect no small degree of willful smugness in Establishmentists. That is, if they are on top, well, that must be the way it was meant to be.

We can add that for those who entered into the upper classes at birth, there's the strong feeling, nevertheless, that they did it or on their own, that they hit a triple—not that they were born on third base.

And among those who worked their way up—perhaps because they chose tax- and trade-favored careers in such favored sectors as media and finance—there's also the inescapable feeling that they are the Anointed Ones.

In the unsparing commentary of lefty social critic Thomas Frank: “For successful professionals, meritocracy is a beautifully self-serving doctrine, entitling them to all manner of rewards and status, because they are smarter than other people.”

In this reckoning, the victory of certain connected classes is not an inside job. No, not at all, it's the natural order of things; we can call it the modern American version of the Great Chain of Being.

Of course, Frank continues, there's a cruel flip-side to such self-congratulation: “For those who have just lost their home, for example, or who are having trouble surviving on the minimum wage, the implications of meritocracy are equally unambiguous. To them this ideology says, forget it. You have no one to blame for your problems but yourself.”

Yes, in the Establishmentist vision, if you aren't a member of the well-rewarded “creative class,” then you're a loser—and there must be something wrong with you.

Not surprisingly, this harsh view spills over into politics. Just a few days ago, one Jonathan Bernstein, opining for Bloomberg View—surely the leading citadel of self-satisfied this-is-the-way-things-have-to-be-ism—argued that Trump supporters had, precisely, *nothing* to complain about:

My view is that Trump is doing well precisely because things aren't particularly bad for the U.S. right now. In difficult times, voters take their responsibilities more seriously, and wouldn't embrace the buffoonery of a reality-television star. People can indulge in Trump's fantasies in a period of (more or less) peace and (sort of) prosperity.

If such clueless condescension is a key part of Establishmentist thinking, we can also note a more brutal aspect: the process of bludgeoning the lower orders into submission.

Yes, this is an old story: the Establishment hiring courtiers and henchmen, tasking them with keeping the peasants quiescent.

We might dub these henchmen—and, to be fair, henchwomen—as *Compradores*. That's a Portuguese word for middleman, which historians have used to lump together all the in-country agents of old colonialism. That is, the *Compradores* were the overseers, foremen, policemen, etc., assigned to manage the colonial enterprise and, of course, crush any unrest.

We can quickly see that the *Compradores* had a rough life: In the plantations and mines across the world, they were the hired bullies, the hired guns, working for their masters—those aristocrats who enjoyed the resulting profits in some faraway European capital.

We can further note that one of the perverse consolations of this system was that the *Compradores* had the satisfaction of knowing that those they were tyrannizing had it even rougher.

Thus the system was often a downward spiral of violence and brutality. That is, the *Compradores* worked out their bad feelings about themselves by treating the locals ever more badly.

Here in America today, we can observe a variant on the *Compradore* system. As we have seen, smug journalists are happy to tell the “yokels” that they should be more grateful for all the good things they have.

And yet for some *Compradores* today, there’s a further cruel edge: They don’t seek to soothe the masses with oily bromides; instead, they attack them with rhetorical viciousness.

Outright suppressive violence in America has been, happily, extremely rare, and so American *Compradores*, instead, have relied on propaganda. They hope that through adroit use of language, they can connive the consent of the governed. And if conniving doesn’t work, well, they’ll try clobbering.

Thus we come to a remarkable group of American *Compradores*, avowedly conservatives, who happily pull out their verbal truncheons to beat down the people. They might well have come from the working- or middle-classes themselves, but by now, having moved to the bright lights of the big city, they have totally absorbed the value-system of their paymasters, and this inward propagandizing, in turn, leads them to hate their “inferiors”—that is, to hate their former selves.

Yes, we are talking about such agent-propagandists/beatdown artists as *National Review*’s Kevin Williamson and David French, and also *The Weekly Standard*’s Matt Labash.

The nasty vituperation of such self-haters as Williamson and French is well known to Breitbart readers. But just on March 18, Williamson and French were joined by Labash, who published this ferocious, if familiar, assault on Middle America:

We buy cut-rate Chinese goods at Walmart, or better still, on Amazon Prime, so we don’t have to put down the Doritos bag and budge from our easy-chair rage-stations as our passions get serially inflamed by Sean Hannity telling us how great we are and how hard we have it. Our consumption of everything seems to be increasing— of carbs, meth, anger-stoking shoutfests— even as our producers seem to be disappearing.

Okay, that’s standard-issue Archie Bunker-bashing. But then Labash piled it on further, blaming the misprisions of the political class, too, on the poor voters: “Maybe we have unimpressive politicians because they’re our representatives, and we’ve become grossly unimpressive ourselves.”

So that's Establishmentism: both in its clueless-aristocratic form, and also in its conscious-attack-dog form.

### 3. Green Malthusianism

The Greens, in the fullness of their state-enforced elitism, are a familiar target for Virgil. Back in 2014, for example, he noted that the U.S. government was sitting on \$128 trillion in oil and natural gas, all locked up because the Greens didn't want it to be used. And the mineral wealth under those same federal lands and federal waters is perhaps even greater. More recently, he observed that old tactics are being revived to achieve a new objective—namely, driving residents, American citizens, off their land.

What is it that drives the Greens? Some say they are fulfilling some pagan religious ritual. Others insist that they just like to enjoy a lake- or ocean-front view without any ruffraff cluttering things up. Both views, of course, could be true.

In addition, we can note a further incentive for rich Greens to do what they do: getting ever richer, by *shorting the market*—that is, betting that the price of something goes down. And so, in 2015, if a rich Green were to know that Exxon was about to be sued, as were the tobacco companies were 20 years ago, well, that Green could make a lot of money shorting Exxon stock. And sure enough, Exxon's stock is down by a fifth in the last 18 months, even as the Dow Jones average has gone up.

For context on this shorting phenomenon, we can add that leading hedge funders, such as George Soros, have regularly been accused of seeking to profit by crashing currencies, even whole economies. So why couldn't a billionaire Green such as San Francisco's Tom Steyer play the same cynical-but-profitable game? In the minds of the Greens, financial manipulation is just another way of doing Gaia's work.

### 4. Leftism

Everybody knows the Left, and everybody knows that Leftism has never recovered from the collapse of communism.

Yet still, something interesting is happening here in the US: Even though Republicans control most of the important political offices at the federal and state level, the country is moving in a liberal, progressive direction. That's what untrammled corporate power will do—it will provoke a backlash. That is, a workforce of outsourced employees, now becoming Uber drivers, is not a conservative voting bloc.

Indeed, we can observe that most Americans hold left-wing positions on many key issues. As tallied by the left-wingers at Counterpunch:

Support for raising the minimum wage: 70 percent.

Support for free public college: 55 percent.

Support for addressing “now” the rich-poor gap: 65 percent.

Support for raising taxes on people earning more than \$1 million per year: 68 percent.

Support for Medicare-for-all universal healthcare: 58 percent.

And we might further ask: How about this new legislation, the Brokaw Act, put forth by two Democratic senators, aimed at thwarting corporate takeovers and shutdowns? The Chamber of Commerce aside, would most rank-and-file Republicans oppose, or support, this bill if they knew about it?

Yet not only are Democrats in the minority today, they are also likely to stay in the minority tomorrow. And why is that? Why can we on the right be so confident?

Because these days, left-leaning economics—New Deal-style, as opposed to socialist or communist—is but a small portion of the Democrats’ agenda.

For example, just on March 15, Chelsea Clinton told an audience that as president, her mother, Hillary, would support extending Obamacare to illegal aliens. Such a promise might be a vote-getter inside the diversitarian wing of the Democratic Party, but it’s a vote-shedder with the nation as a whole.

The old Democrats of FDR’s time were happy enough with capitalism; they just wanted to extend solidaristic job-protections, and basic social-insurance plans, to all Americans.

By contrast, today’s Democrats, filled with Cosmopolitan dreams, want to extend government benefits to the world—and that’s not just a budget-buster, it’s also a political loser.

In truth, today’s Democrats aren’t much interested in the well-being of working stiffs. Instead, they are enraptured with new plans to advance identity politics, co-ed bathrooms, and #BlackLivesMatter. All the while, of course, keeping the border open and suppressing energy production and economic activity.

We can sum it up: #Losing.

## 5. Libertarianism

Libertarianism is as strong as red garlic among the intelligentsia.

Indeed, Libertarianism has such intellectual abundance that one must divide it into a flowchart of sub-categories, from anarchists on the left to anarcho-capitalists on the right. Also, there are the “orthodox” Libertarians of the Koch Brothers’ Cato Institute, and the “rebels” associated with the late Murray Rothbard or LewRockwell.com. And then, in their own little world, are the followers of the famed author Ayn Rand, who have subdivided themselves into various feuding Objectivist factions.

Yet for all this neural proliferation, what can *not* be said about Libertarians is that they are numerous in the country at large. We can prove this statement by examining the performance of Libertarian Party (LP) presidential candidates, who have run in every national election since 1972. In those 11 elections, their average percentage of the vote has been a mere .37 percent; they have never won more than 1.06 percent—and that was back in 1980.

We can further observe that in the last quarter century, the LP has run some seemingly credible candidates: Its nominees have included a former Congressman, a former Governor, and even a sitting Congressman—that would be Ron Paul, the LP candidate in 1988. (All these elected officials, we might note, won as Republicans before switching).

Yet it's important to emphasize, once again, that Libertarians loom large in the wonk-chattering class. It's hard to find a Republican economist, for instance, who is not a "classical liberal."

And that reality is full of implications for Republican office-holders, present and future. Wise old Washington hands have a saying: "Personnel is policy." That is, a Republican might win office—maybe even win the White House—and discover that "his" people are the same free-market ideologues who ran the Bush 43 administration over a cliff.

## 6. Libertinism

If Libertarians are scarce as hen's teeth nationwide, *Libertines* are as plentiful as grains of sand on the beach.

As such, Libertinism poses a challenge to the American social fabric. In our history, the Founding Fathers strongly believed in personal freedom, but they also strongly believed in personal morality. "Liberty," John Adams wrote, "can no more exist without virtue and independence than the body can live and move without a soul."

Thus was born the American Experiment: The government would be small, but institutionalized personal probity would be large. That is, the churches and other civic institutions would gladly provide the personal and patriotic instruction for the benefit of the populace, at no expense to the taxpayer. As we can see, the old system was sort of a free lunch—and on the menu was virtue.

Yet in the minds of most Americans, the idea of an ordained structure that determined personal behavior started dying in the 19th century; as Herman Melville explained to his fellow novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1851, "The Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and we are the pieces."

For the intellectuals, this breaking up of the old faith-based codes was mostly the result of Darwinism; for the masses, later, it was mostly the result of consumerism.

Either way, these days, the values of "Do your own thing" and "Live and let live" are now pre-eminent.

Some might ask: Isn't this Libertine trend really Libertarianism by the backdoor? And the answer is, *not really*.

For some, Libertinism is a gateway to rugged individualism, which is to say, it's a recapitulation of ancient Stoicism. And while most ordinary folks, over the ages, have never heard of the philosophers Zeno, Epictetus, or Seneca, they have known innately that the values of restraint and delayed gratification are not only keys to happiness, but also the keys to health and even survival.

Yet for most, Libertinism seems to offer no political lessons; it's just an appetite: Do whatever you want, and someone—maybe parents, maybe the welfare system, maybe the Federal Reserve—will pay for it.

Of course, if one truly wants to give oneself over to Libertinism, it's best to be rich. What do I mean? Only this: It helps to have money handy to pay for all those counselors and clinics.



## 7. Nationalism

For the last 400 years, the nation-state has been the preferred form of political organization—and certainly the most powerful. And the fuel of the nation-state is Nationalism. It's inherently powerful because it derives from the most primal forms of human organization—family, tribe, race.

After the 17th century, when the Reformation had broken the supranational authority of the Catholic Church—even in Catholic countries—individual nation-states rose to fill the vacuum. The Holy Roman Empire, for example, was soon displaced by Austrian, German, and Swiss principalities, and then, eventually, by the nations of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.

Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, Nationalist patriots from Holland to England to America to France fought revolutionary wars to achieve national sovereignty and self-determination.

Meanwhile, wily monarchs, too, got aboard the Nationalism train, because they recognized that they needed some sort of Nationalistic imprimatur. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, bonded to his people by declaring himself to be *der erster Diener des Staates*—"The first servant of the state."

In other words, the nation-state was where the power resided. People would fight, and fight hard, for kith, kin, and patriot graves.

Of course, Nationalism has taken on diseased forms as well: The Nazis leap to mind. And even here in America, it's possible to identify malignant kinds of tribalism, such as the KKK or the Black Panthers. But as the pundit George F. Will has said, the four most important words in the English language are, "Up to a point." That is, anything can be taken to a loathsome extreme.

And yet just because something can be taken to a bad end doesn't necessarily make the thing itself a bad idea. Overeating is a bad thing, to be sure, but that doesn't mean that eating itself is a bad thing.

Yet without question, the residue of Hitlerism has been so noxious that even today, more than seven decades after Hitler's death, "nationalism" is still a pejorative, at least among elites in the West. [Back in 2014, I wrote about Nationalism, defending it against its many critics, here.](#)

However, today, in 2016, Nationalism has made a "yuge" comeback, thanks to Donald Trump. His signature line, "Make America Great Again," clearly plucks Nationalist notes in our mystic chords of memory.

Yet it remains to be seen what, exactly, Trump the Nationalist has in mind. Building a wall along the US-Mexican border and eliminating ISIS are ideas certainly to be applauded, but nations are capable of much more. In the past, the United States has dug canals to connect the oceans, cured dreaded diseases, built infrastructure to empower all regions of the country, and even landed men on the moon. Trump has hinted at such ambitious projects, but we won't know for sure what he has in mind until he wins—if he wins.

## 8. Neoconservatism

In many ways, Neoconservatism resembles Libertarianism: It is an ivory-tower theory, and thus it connects better to theoreticians than to actual voters.

Indeed, if anything, Neoconservatism is even *less* broadly popular than Libertarianism: Not many Republicans, for example, look forward to a return to the days of the Iraq War—the signature project of the Neocons.

We can add that it's perfectly possible to seek to annihilate terrorists and *not* be a Neocon: The politically winning answer is to annihilate the bad guys, preferably with bombs or cruise missiles—and not to invade, liberate, and nation-build, all in an attempt to turn terrorists into small “d” democrats.

Most of today's Neocons would trace their intellectual lineage back to Woodrow Wilson. It was our 28th president who gave us such seductive abstractions as, “teach [other countries] to elect good men,” fight a “war to end war,” and achieve “peace without victory.”

In addition, Wilson also gave us such ivory-tower gems as this, from his “Fourteen Points” speech to Congress in 1918: “Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.”

No private understandings? No secret treaties? That's how the world works? Really?

Yet even though Wilsonianism was crushed at the polls in 1918 and then *really* crushed in 1920, the idea of idealism lingers on; in the last few decades, it has re-emerged as Neoconservatism—on the left, as well as the right.

Here's former UK prime minister Tony Blair, dreaming aloud in 2001:

The starving, the wretched, the dispossessed, the ignorant, those living in want and squalor from the deserts of Northern Africa to the slums of Gaza, to the mountain ranges of Afghanistan: They too are our cause. This is a moment to seize. The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world around us.

Yes, those are words to remember: *Let us reorder this world around us*. Under Blair, the British joined us in an attempt to reorder Afghanistan and Iraq—how'd that work out for them?

Of course, the all-time champion Neocon is George W. Bush. In his 2005 inaugural address, he declared, in a stunning paean to non-conservative Neoconservatism, “We have lit a fire... a fire in the minds of men... one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world.”

Yes, that's the way Neoconservatives actually talk—about “untamed fires.” In the same ill-fated address, Bush sailed on: “It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”

If such intoxicating talk about “ending tyranny”—that is, fundamentally transforming human nature—is your drink of choice, well, you might be a Neocon. But there aren't many of them in the country these days, as the 2006 and 2008 elections decimated the Bush-ized GOP.

## 9. Paleoconservatism

As noted, Christianity hasn't been a source of much real-world political science since the 17th century; the theocrats were defeated, first by the autocrats and aristocrats, and then, more recently, by the democrats.

Yet of course, many, if not most, Americans think of themselves as religious, so religion-based Paleoconservatism has always had strong appeal. A century ago, Prohibition was written into the Constitution—even if it was soon to be written out.

More recently, in 1938, one Wilbert Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel, a popular country singer, ran for governor of Texas on a simple platform: The Ten Commandments. O’Daniel won the election, although in light of the corruption that shadowed his political career, it’s safe to say that the Decalogue was not advanced during his time in Austin.

Yet we can note that Paleoconservatism survives to this day, mostly in the form of the Right to Life movement. And on that important issue, of course, the Paleocons have solid ground. And so it’s possible that the RTL movement will continue to chip away at *Roe vs. Wade*.

Yet even so, Paleoconservatism is mostly going the way of Holy Roman Empire; most of the time, it just isn’t a politically relevant force. (This observation, of course, applies to America; in other parts of the world, notably the Middle East, religion is still heavily influencing politics.)

And oh yes, there are some mostly secular Paleocons, such as those clustered around *The American Conservative* magazine. Those who prize the old agrarian ways are honorable and even erudite nostalgics, but they are not numerous or influential.

## 10. Populism

The Populist worldview can be expressed simply: *The big boys are out to get you! So get there first and burn it down, or blow it up—whatever it is!*

Lest we be seen as dismissive of Populist concerns, we can immediately observe that, as often as not, the Populists have a legitimate grievance—the little guy is getting the shaft.

Moreover, we can add that Karl Marx was right: The state *is* a tool of the ruling class. Of course, the challenge is to define “ruling class” correctly—to see that it’s not just arch-capitalists and their governmental hirelings, it’s also top dogs in foundations, law firms, media, NGOs, thinktanks, and universities.

So the Populists have a right to be paranoid—they really *do* have enemies, and lots of them.

However, even if the Populists are correct in their diagnosis, they still must prove that they are also correct in their prescription. And here the record of Populism in power is, frankly, pathetic.

Across history, almost without exception, Populists have come into power and found themselves to be totally ineffective—or, sometimes, totally co-opted. Being “mad as hell” is often a good way to win an election, but it’s a terrible way actually to govern.

Okay, but what about Donald Trump, the Great Populist Hope? What are his prospects?

We don't even know, of course, if Trump can win the Republican nomination, let alone the general election. And while he has spelled out some of his policy views, his future is, necessarily, a cipher.

But for now, we can say this: Trump is an atypical Populist. It takes nothing away from him to stipulate that he was not exactly born in a log cabin, and that, unlike most Populists, he has proven himself to be a master of the political game as it exists today.

Moreover, Trump is as much of a Nationalist as he is a Populist. And that, of course, is a good thing; intelligent Populism is, after all, ultimately Nationalism. That is, Populism, to be effective, must be harnessed to big ideas and enduring institutions, such as the nation-state.

Whew! So that's it; that's our Ten Ideologies.

This year, as they have in every election year for a more than a century-and-a-half, Republicans and Democrats will be seeking to assemble the various ideological blocs into a majority-winning coalition. It's a hard task, but one of the two parties has always succeeded—or at least been slightly less of a failure than the other. And even if the politicians are only muddling through, it still helps to have an up-to-date road map.