

American Apocalypse: The Six Far-Right Groups Waging War on Democracy

Rena Steinzor

Stanford University Press (Jul 9, 2024)

Hardcover \$32.00 (356pp)

978-1-5036-3459-6

Powerful and informative, Rena Steinzor's *American Apocalypse* examines the history, motives, and momentum of six powerful groups aligned with the far right: corporations, the Tea Party, the Federalist Society, Fox News, white evangelicals, and militias.

The groups at the center of this inquiry are accused of “waging war” on the US government. Although each group has its own motivations and agenda, they share an alliance with Donald Trump and his “extreme” policies, including a concern about the size and power of the administrative state. While Steinzor notes that there’s no evidence that these groups are colluding, their cumulative impact has the potential to destabilize democracy; taken together, they are “a deconstructive force of awesome power...a constellation of armies fighting along parallel paths.”

The book’s chapter on corporations examines the erosion of regulatory controls, citing as a historical turning point a fiery 1971 memo by Lewis Powell, issued just before he joined the Supreme Court, that claimed “seditious, left-wing forces” had “infiltrated” vital institutions and were undermining free enterprise. The antiregulatory sentiments in that pivotal document were manifested in the Trump administration’s weakening of the government’s environmental and economic regulatory power. Similarly, the discussion of the Tea Party considers how a 2008 grassroots protest of government spending evolved into the Freedom Caucus, an extreme right-wing faction with a disproportionate ability to disrupt the power of Congress.

Steinzor’s discussions of each special interest group are insightful and revealing, and the collective threat they represent is convincingly argued. Perhaps inevitably, the book covers so much territory that it risks oversimplifying its analysis; the proposed election and campaign funding reforms seem inadequate to confront the threats it names.

American Apocalypse is a provocative, startling exposé of the special interest groups working to challenge democracy in an age of political turmoil and division.

KRISTEN RABE (July / August 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.