

study the Crow language; to Arizona to explore Navajo; to South Carolina to trace Gullah; and to North Dakota to reconnect with the Norwegian speakers from whom her own family is descended. Everywhere she goes, she discovers rich seams of language glinting like rare minerals in the rocks of America. Her account of these languages and the communities that use them is beguiling.

I was fascinated, for example, by her description of Navajo, which is part of a vast family of Native-American languages that has relatives as far apart as Mescalero in the Southwest and Eskimo in Alaska. Navajo has a verbal matrix of such sophistication and precision that it would delight a computer programmer. Verbs in Navajo consist of stems, modified by a long series of possible prefixes. They can tell us not only when an action was performed and whether the perpetrator was singular or plural, but, with great clarity and specificity, what happened—did the chickens fly the coop all at once, or one by one?—and what the perpetrator was like.

The physical properties of objects affect verb stems: Rock, paper, and scissors would have their different morphologies embedded in the verbs used to describe how they act. Many Native-American languages contain calibrations of equal subtlety.

It is sobering to find, through Little's travels, that most of these remarkable and intricate languages are under threat of extinction. Linguist Michael Krauss has estimated that of the 175 indigenous languages still spoken in the United States, 90 percent are at risk. Although the 19th-century decree, reflected in early 20th-century educational policy, that "the Indian tongue must be put to silence and nothing but the English allowed in all social intercourse" is now discredited, the damage done by decades of negativism and neglect will be difficult to undo. Little reveals that Harvard teaches courses in Old Norse and Sanskrit but none in any Native-American language.

Everywhere in her tour of America, Little encounters vibrant language clusters: groups which cherish rich, mixed linguistic heritages. But, equally, she

meets with many people who, for various reasons (race, class, politics), have been forcibly made to abandon their linguistic heritage. This is heartbreaking, and one leaves this book with a strong conviction that it must stop.

Languages matter, not just because they are beautiful in themselves, but because they express a unique way of thinking and being in the world. Making a person ashamed of his or her birth language is akin to making that person ashamed of his or her birth family: It is a process of self-alienation that produces deep and lasting harm. Better than any tribal headdress or slave-sewn quilt (objects which American museums rightly treasure), a language can take us into a culture, as it has developed and been passed down over centuries,

and offer us a chance to engage with its living form, color, subjectivity, and creativity. A language is a time machine: When we lose it, we lose the chance to speak with our ancestors.

As Little points out, many of the words that seem most American originate in other languages. "Yankee" may derive from "Jan Kees" (John Cheese), an affectionate Dutch dig at New Englanders. Many American state names have Native-American roots. Languages other than English are much closer to "home" than many American citizens who think they speak only English realize. Both *Speaking American* and *Trip of the Tongue* are gentle and eloquent pleas for America to recognize and celebrate its linguistic diversity as a key strength. ♦



# Recycling to Nowhere

*The green economy meets the facts.*

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

**D**iana Furchtgott-Roth, former chief economist at the Department of Labor and now a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute (as well as a former colleague of mine at the Hudson Institute), likes to tilt at windmills, and in her latest book she has an opportunity to do so—and at actual windmills, no less.

In this year's revised edition of her earlier work, *Women's Figures*, Furchtgott-Roth marshals reams of data in an effort to debunk "the myth of women as victims"—an undertaking hardly for the faint of heart. *Regulating to Disaster* demonstrates equal courage: She attempts, successfully, to show that the concept of "green jobs" is

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## Regulating to Disaster

*How Green Jobs Policies Are Damaging America's Economy*  
by Diana Furchtgott-Roth  
Encounter, 168 pp., \$23.99

a fiction, that the 3.1 million such jobs the Obama administration claims to have created include a reclassification of employees at bicycle shops, drivers of hybrid buses, and manufacturers of paper cups with a "Save Energy" logo (but not of those without that imprint).

By simply "relabeling existing jobs as 'green,'" the administration has sought to justify massive subsidies to wind, solar, and other "green" ventures, subsidies that are labeled as loans but are, in fact, venture capital allocated by bureaucrats convinced they can pick winners. That these subsidies often end up in the hands of contributors to President Obama's campaigns is no coincidence, as the hearings following

the bankruptcy of Solyndra demonstrated. But this is not a purely partisan attack: Furchtgott-Roth points out that legislation to promote green jobs began with George W. Bush. There is blame enough to go around.

Furchtgott-Roth is blessed with opponents who have no understanding of cost/benefit analyses. They see only benefits, so desirable that to measure costs would be substituting bean-counting for policymaking. For them, the inefficiency with which bureaucrats allocate capital to favored green enterprises is not a problem worth considering, and they ignore studies showing that the Clean Air Act “inhibited net [economic] growth because it shifted investment into less dynamic industries at the expense of successful industries, which were penalized by higher energy costs,” resulting in a 3 percent reduction in GDP when the amendments to the act were fully implemented.

Furchtgott-Roth doesn't just tilt at windmills and deflate politicians' absurd claims about the job-creating potential of subsidies to “green” enterprises that waste scarce resources. She takes on what she characterizes as a theology that provides its advocates with a feeling of moral superiority, akin to that felt by Jimmy Carter when he advised us to confront oil embargoes by turning down our thermostats in winter and donning sweaters, his version of the ever-comforting hair shirt. The theological nature of the support for green policies (most greens typically capitalize “Earth”) places a huge burden on anyone who wishes to do more than preach to the choir.

Furchtgott-Roth meets that burden. And it is no easy thing, given the high moral standing of the green machine among those who feel good when recycling (despite the fact that its costs often exceed its benefits), who can afford hybrid and electric-powered vehicles (after reaping substantial taxpayer-funded benefits), and who genuinely believe they are inhibiting what, to them, is the impending catastrophe of global warming.

When it comes to shale gas, however, her lack of experience with

private-sector energy operations shows. Shale gas is produced by hydrofracturing (fracking), which some say might contaminate water supplies. “Some of these worries,” says Furchtgott-Roth, “while conscientious, are misguided.” While the “some” is generous—there might be others among the conscientious who are not misguided—it doesn't



*Diana Furchtgott-Roth*

go far enough, for she fails to apply to the private sector the standards she rightly applies to error-prone bureaucrats.

The rare but well-publicized cases of water-table contamination occurred due to poor casing jobs or improper drilling techniques and were immediately prosecuted by the government authorities. . . . Hydrofracturing itself is not the villain. Sloppy drilling and casing are problems, but such problems are neither inevitable nor pervasive.

Besides ascribing a legitimate role to the regulators for which she has little use in most other connections, Furchtgott-Roth here ignores the fact that, like governments, large private-sector companies can screw up. Think of BP. Of course, private-sector players bear the cost of their incompetence (at least sometimes), while government bureaucrats rarely do. But in appraising the environmental impact of something like fracking, it is not enough to say, in the absence of private-sector errors, worry not about the environment. I have been around the energy

industries for more decades than I care to remember and can assure the author that there will be errors. They may not be frequent, but these are industries in which one error—be it by BP in the Gulf of Mexico, or by the utility companies during the blackouts of 1965 and 2003, or by the officials responsible for the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989—can have rather high costs.

Given the complicated nature of the energy sector, the not-always-perfect performance of the industry's managers, and plain bad luck, these possibilities must be considered and weighed against the more serious costs of refusing to add to our energy supply sufficiently in advance of demand growth. Shale oil will, as Furchtgott-Roth notes, prove to be an economic game-changer for an energy-hungry America, but its risks must be recognized and managed.

But this is a quibble, required of all reviewers of economic tracts. My main quarrel stems from a desire for more from an author surely capable of providing it. It would have added to the large contribution this book makes to the debate about regulatory policy if she had shared with us her suggestions for the criteria to be used in setting policy capable of avoiding the errors she criticizes. From her other writings we know that she is unenthusiastic about the carbon taxes that so many economists feel would create a level playing field for all energy sources and eliminate the (non-theological) justification for subsidies to uneconomic wind, solar, and other renewables, and allow markets rather than regulations to determine the level and pattern of energy consumption. She is, after all, more than a little skeptical about those who believe there is such a thing as “green jobs” to be wished into existence by lavishing taxpayer cash on worthy recipients. How would she reduce their role?

In the end, it would be churlish to argue that Diana Furchtgott-Roth has not made her case. By piling fact upon fact, example upon example, carefully analyzing the relevant data relating to the costs of green-jobs policies, and reminding us of the fallibility and partisan nature of politicians' glowing forecasts of the job-creating potential

of subsidies and regulations, she has shown that these programs, more often than not, make “people feel good about themselves” only by placing a huge burden on the economy.

They might not quite be the “disaster” the title suggests, but they surely are “expensive, inefficient . . . counter to economic growth and . . . a wasteful way of meeting our objectives.” ♦

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# Bloody Inquiries

*Separating truth from fiction in Ulster.*

BY ANDREW ROBERTS



*Tending to a shooting victim, Londonderry, January 30, 1972*

Whenever discussion turns to the causes of the Irish “Troubles,” the decades-long terrorist campaign of the Irish Republican Army to force the British government to relinquish Ulster as part of the United Kingdom, it inevitably focuses on the terrible events of January 30, 1972, known to both sides of the conflict as “Bloody Sunday.” For that was the day

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**Bloody Sunday**  
*Truth, Lies and the Saville Inquiry*  
by Douglas Murray  
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on which a political demonstration in what used to be called Londonderry (but is now called “Derry,” its de-anglicized name, by most Roman Catholics) turned into a massacre. British paratroopers fired upon the crowd, killing 13 people and wounding another 15, and what had until then been a campaign of

mass civil disobedience turned into a full-scale terrorist war which was to cost the lives of over 3,500 people during the next quarter-century.

What precisely happened during those tense, dramatic, lethal hours was the subject of speculation, assertion, counterassertion, and, above all, of Irish Republican myth-making for 26 years until, in 1998, as part of the British government’s peace deal with the IRA, a full-scale government inquiry was instituted under Lord Justice Saville. Astonishingly, the inquiry then took half as long to investigate Bloody Sunday and report upon it as the entire Troubles themselves had taken.

The statistics are still staggering. The Saville Inquiry took a full 12 years, heard the testimonies of thousands of people, filling 10 huge volumes, and cost the British taxpayer no less than \$305 million in lawyers’ fees and other expenses. All that, over something that happened 40 years ago, in which 108 rounds were fired in a few minutes. And the equally extraordinary thing is that, despite it all, we still cannot be certain about precisely what happened that day. (Nor was it even the first inquiry into the events of that calamitous day: Lord Chief Justice Widgery had already undertaken one back in the 1970s.)

Douglas Murray, an award-winning British political journalist and associate director of the Henry Jackson Society, attended hundreds of sittings of the inquiry and has read all 10 volumes of the Saville Report, and much else besides. As well as, of course, wanting to understand what really happened that day, he was interested in the wider question of, as he puts it, “how any truth can be uncovered after such a long time—what people remember and what they forget. And what happens when things turn up from the past that might have been easier left undiscovered.”

One thing that the Saville Inquiry made very clear was that, by the 1990s, British intelligence had thoroughly infiltrated even the highest levels of the IRA. Stakeknife was the code name given to Freddie Scappaticci, who rose to be deputy head of the IRA’s “nutting” (i.e., execution) squad, yet also

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