

Three Stakes in the Heart of the American Dream

Immigration, outsourcing, and smart machines crush citizen hopes

BY BRENDA WALKER

The American worker, from ditch-digger to rocket scientist, is under assault as never before. Government immigration policies, globalist economics, and the march of technology have combined to create a shrinking employment universe for ordinary Americans, the effects of which have been accumulating over decades.

For years, business elites have directed Washington to lower wages using the strategy of excessive immigration. In addition, the twin tactic of outsourcing entire industries overseas has been accomplished with the encouragement of government in the thrall of the free trade fantasy. The damage done to the economy (and the Americans who occupy it) has been largely ignored by journalists and beltway analysts who believe the globalist economy is an unquestioned good. As it happens, few reporter jobs have been outsourced or taken by immigrants, so the media focuses on cheerful news of low prices for consumers; scribblers are remarkably unconcerned with the systemic loss of employment for the middle class, which is struggling to maintain living standards.

Deindustrialization and mass immigration

Whole industries have been boxed up and sent abroad to cheap labor havens, leaving America with a hugely diminished manufacturing base. In earlier generations, young people graduated from high school and went to work at the local industrial plants, leading to a decent and satisfying family life. That scenario is history, leaving today's youngsters with a drastically reduced selection of career choices.

Detroit is the poster city for deindustrialization. Beautiful buildings constructed during the heyday of the

auto industry are now empty and falling apart. Half a century ago Detroit was successful and wealthy; today it is a bankrupt ruin with a declining population, now shrunk to the 1910 level. Photo books with titles like *The Ruins of Detroit* have been published, showing the heartbreaking decay of a once great city.



Several causes have been complicit in leading to Detroit's appalling wreckage. The big brains of the auto industry were slow to see the appeal to consumers of smaller, more efficient cars with greater reliability, so Japan was able to set a new standard. Auto unions were unwilling to adjust to the new globalized reality. Outsourcing has been going on for decades and continues now: in June 2013, General Motors announced it would invest \$691 million to expand its manufacturing in Mexico to build more efficient cars. Mexico is now the eighth-largest producer of vehicles in the world, due to carmakers from the U.S., Japan, and Europe locating there.

Meatpacking used to be a middle-class job for blue-collar Americans. That fact was illustrated in the

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1990 Academy-Award-winning documentary “American Dream,” which showed Minnesotans fighting to maintain their jobs at Hormel meatpacking plants which had cut the workers despite healthy profits. Domestic companies later discovered that illegal alien foreigners were happy to work for peanuts, and wages were lowered accordingly. However, in the years following, occasional spurts of government immigration enforcement proved troublesome, so the meatpackers turned to refugees, like tribal people from Somalia, to take the jobs, which are now hazardous and poorly paid.

Mass immigration has of course long been used to displace Americans from employment in order for businesses to slash labor costs. The level to which billionaire elites crush citizens to save money is an accurate measure of how far the nation has strayed from policies to benefit the people — and how arrogant the plutocrats have become in their power. Thomas Jefferson observed, “The purpose of government is to enable the people of a nation to live in safety and happiness. Government exists for the interests of the governed, not for the governors.”

We are far removed from that ideal, particularly in the realm of sovereignty and immigration. The further law enforcement is removed from the community affected, the less serious it becomes. We see that outcome in Europe, where Britons are angered at the opening of their country to Romanians and Bulgarians, while the Eurocrat rulers in Brussels remain unconcerned about the effects of their open-borders policies.

In December, former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) remarked, “Our view of the law is that — if somebody is here without sufficient documentation, that is not reason for deportation.”

That declaration is a far cry from the view of the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who testified before Congress in 1995:

Credibility in immigration policy can be summed up in one sentence: those who should get in, get in; those who should be kept out, are kept out; and those who should not be here will be required to leave. The top priorities for detention and removal, of course, are criminal aliens. But for the system to be credible, people actually have to be deported at the end of the process.

Democrats like Pelosi are devolving into race-based lawlessness as a principle of governance, which is just as extreme as the black bloc leftists who wear masks so they can destroy property at will. But Democrat anarchism is only one threat against the traditional social order.

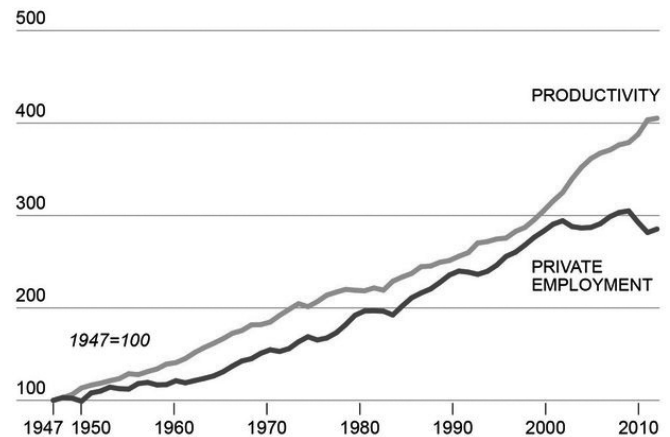
Automation: displacing American workers

Now a third job-killer is growing with alarming speed — robotics/automation. In fact, the job categories

threatened by smart machines reveal a stunningly futuristic level of technology already here. Whole areas one might reasonably assume were human-only zones are being rapidly invaded by brainiac robots. Economists have said the recent recession has had a jobless recovery, and part of the cause of continuing joblessness is the increased use of automation.

In the 2000-2010 decade, 5.7 million U.S. manufacturing jobs disappeared, one-third of the total number. But this devastating loss of production is regarded by official Washington as a triumph of improved efficiency and a sign of strength. Out of touch with voters much?

Productivity and employment in the United States, 1947-2011



Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

In the past decade, smart machines have enabled American productivity to increase without additional employment.

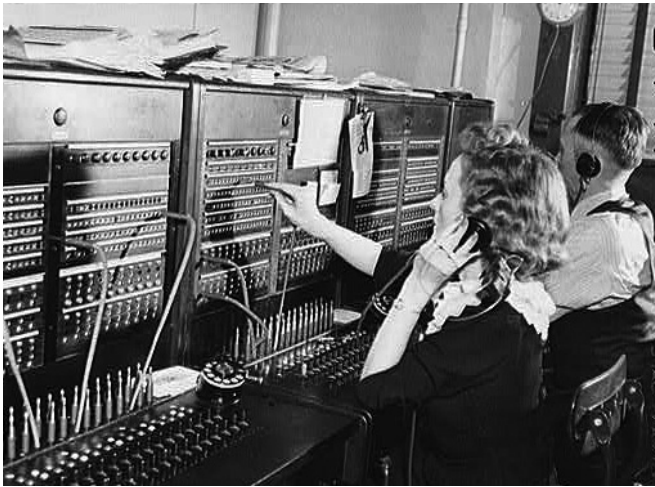
The Associated Press published results of an investigation in January 2013, titled in many outlets as “Can smart machines take your job? Middle class jobs increasingly being replaced by technology.” It found that in the U.S., around half of the 7.5 million jobs lost during the Great Recession paid middle-class wages, in the range of \$38,000 to \$68,000. As the economy slowly crawls back, much of the work is now done by non-humans. During the previous decade, over a million secretaries disappeared from the workforce, due to software allowing executives to do tasks like travel arrangements and call screening more easily. The number of switchboard and telephone operators in America fell in the last decade from 182,000 to 73,000 because of technology advances. Tech booster Moshe Vardi, a computer scientist at Rice University, remarked, “Everything that humans can do a machine can do. Things are happening that look like science fiction.”

Time magazine online recently noted a disturbing interaction with a healthcare telemarketer that started well enough, but the recipient, D.C. Bureau Chief Michael Scherer, became suspicious that a non-person was the caller. When he asked, “What vegetable is found in tomato soup?” the female voice (“Samantha

West”) could not answer the question. Other reporters in the office phoned “Samantha” and found she could not name the previous day or answer other simple questions.

Time’s online article, “Meet the Robot Telemarketer Who Denies She’s A Robot,” has recordings of the interactions, which show the system is not quite good enough to fool a careful listener; in particular, the pause before the telemarketer’s answers to questions is noticeable. Still, “Samantha” is functioning as a human and taking a job that formerly went to a person.

We phone users needing computer help may soon miss the good old days of crappy English speakers in Bangalore!



A large category of life and commerce being eyed for robotic improvements is driving. Google founder Sergey Brin is enamored of the idea of improving highway safety with “self-driving” cars and is investing his considerable wealth into developing the software and machinery. He predicted in 2012 that automated cars would be available in a few years. Google engineers were hard at work on the project, and a confident Brin remarked, “You can count on one hand the number of years until ordinary people can experience this.”

Presumably, it follows that robotic trucks and taxis would soon follow, with a job loss of potentially millions.

In addition, Google has acquired several technology companies that are strong in robotics, indicating a serious move in that direction. The company has suggested it wants more automation in electronics assembly (now largely manual), and it plans expansion into retailing, such as automating the shipment process.

The *New York Times* published a chipper, tech-swoony article about the company’s smart automation, “Google Puts Money on Robots, Using the Man Behind Android” (12/4/13), in which executives called their vision a “moonshot” of advanced robotic innovation. However, quite a number of the online comments

remarked about the job loss involved in the company’s plans for the future.

The advanced robotic warehouse is already here, created by the firm Kiva. Small wheeled robots scoot around the warehouse filling orders, guided by a main computer tracking the inventory. The robots are wheeled boxy objects about a foot high, and proceed automatically under movable shelving structures to transport the desired items to packing stations. The humans assist with basic manual labor; the machines and computers do the organizational work.

Simple automated farm machines have been around for a while, like weeder and picker contraptions that do the work of stoop labor. Another apparatus in the pipeline is a wine grape pruner. Fresh fruit picking is more challenging, but the techsters are working on that machine also. Agribusiness complaining about a shortage of illegal alien workers can instead turn to mechanization — a fine use of technology in this instance.

Another farmbot is an automated cow milker used by dairy farmers, which has the added attraction of allowing the cows to be milked whenever the animals want. That’s a big plus to farmers who tire of the unbreakable routine of having to milk twice daily, every single day. Because of the constant need to milk the cows, not having to rely on illegal labor is a major relief for farmers. So the robot milkers are much liked by their users.

Restaurants have long offered opportunities for low-skilled workers, but even those businesses are beginning to see automation. An eatery in Harbin, China, has 18 different types of robots with different functions, such as usher, server, also specialty bots for dumplings and noodles. News reports and photos make the place look gimmicky, and the robots appear to require a lot of human help. However, the autumn 2013 protests by U.S. fast-food workers demanding a doubling of wages have brought the response from business that it would institute more automation rather than spend so much on labor.



Indeed, it's not just China that has automated the food process. An Austin-based company has built a coffee and espresso kiosk that takes up around 50 square feet, one model of which is located on the University of Texas campus there. But what will recent liberal arts graduates do for jobs if they can't work as baristas? A recent survey found that a third were working at jobs that don't require a college degree, and that number doesn't include young grads living in their old bedroom at Mom's house.



Robots and automation keep popping up in ordinary places where we have been used to seeing humans. In airports we now use automated ticket kiosks which have replaced agents. ATM at the bank means Automated Teller Machine because a human clerk once cashed our checks. Grocery stores sometimes include do-it-yourself checkout aisles where shoppers can avoid all human contact if they choose. Meter readers are an endangered species, due to smart meters that communicate information to the head office.

Another job being phased out is security guard. William Santana Li said the mass murder of the children at Sandy Hook Elementary School was the inspiration for building his crime-prevention robot, essentially a surveillance camera on wheels that also collects personal data. "You are never going to have an armed officer in every school," he remarked. The machine looks like a taller, slimmer R2-D2, probably so it won't frighten the kiddies in a school setting. But over a million private security jobs are threatened if such machines become widely used.

What sort of brave new unemployed world are we facing in the near and more distant future? Manufacturing costs are being reduced, but who will buy the sparkly new things when human workers have become phased

out? Automation/robotics represents an unprecedented change to society, yet the issue is hardly discussed at all. In fact, politicians are still harping about a coming labor shortage which they cite as a reason for amnesty for illegals and doubling legal immigration.

As budget wonk Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI) said on the Laura Ingraham radio show (June 19, 2013):

Not now, but in the future we're going to have labor shortages. We have 10,000 people retiring each and everyday in America when the Baby Boomers retire. We are not like Europe, we're not like Japan in that our birthrates are really low, but they're not high enough. Immigration, in a decade or so, can help us. That means we need to get an immigration system that works. We need an immigration system that works to bring people to this country who want to contribute.

Ryan is proposing policy based on a wrong idea. The country is unlikely to experience a labor shortage because of the increasing use of automation and robots. Mass hiring is not happening now and probably won't any time in the foreseeable future.

The jobless recovery is the new normal. Business is expanding now, but the jobs aren't returning like in previous recessions. A *Washington Post*-ABC news poll done in December found that 79 percent of Americans believe the country is still in recession because that's how the economy feels to them. The percentage of Americans with jobs is at a 20-year low. Wall Street is booming, but Main Street is stuck in painfully slow growth. Other pressures, like the uncertainty caused by Obamacare, have made businesses even more hesitant to hire and instead look to machinery when possible.

A September 2013 report from Oxford University estimated that 45 percent of U.S. jobs could be lost to computerization in the next 20 years as a result of advances in "big data."

Based on the encroachment of smart machines into every corner of the employment sphere, the correct and prudent number of immigrants from a jobs viewpoint must be *zero*. The larger social and economic effects of robots and automation need a lot more public examination, but all indications show that further mass importation of foreign workers is severely unwise.

Amnesty opponents must work to educate the public about the job-loss threat of robo-workers and connect that issue with robber-baron immigration. Increased protest against the whole globalist enterprise, which harms ordinary citizens enormously, is similarly needed. ■