

NATIONAL REVIEW



HOPE 1.0

**HOW WE AVOIDED EUROSOCIALISM IN THE 1970s,
AND WHY WE WILL AGAIN by James C. Bennett**





I was born in New Orleans. My family still lives here. We have to restore the Gulf communities for the shrimpers, fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners who live and work here.

- Iris Cross, BP Community Outreach

Making This Right

Beaches

Claims

Cleanup

Economic Investment

**Environmental
Restoration**

Health and Safety

Wildlife

No oil has flowed into the Gulf for weeks. But we know this is just the beginning of our work. BP has taken full responsibility for the cleanup in the Gulf and that includes keeping you informed.

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We can't undo this tragedy. But we can help people get back on their feet. We have been working with impacted communities since day one.

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The Great U-Turn

For decades, America had been on a course toward a more centralized society. But 1980—with the arrival of Reagan and the departure of Carter—marked the point at which the nation reversed course. Thenceforth it would be headed in the opposite direction, toward a new vision of individualism and decentralism. *James C. Bennett*



COVER: LUBA KOLOMYTSEVA

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Letters



Ayn Rand, **Christian Soldier?**

"The Greatly Ghastly Rand" (August 30), by Jason Lee Steorts, analyzes Ayn Rand and her writings accurately and not altogether without sympathy. Allow me to add my own sympathetic note.

At age 16, when I ran across *Atlas Shrugged*, I was always trying to stretch myself. I fell in love with Rand immediately. I wouldn't put the book down, and had soon plowed through the rest of her novels, convinced that her "Objectivist" philosophy was perfectly rational and declaring myself an atheist on its recommendation.

It didn't last. Rand's belief in absolutism defeated her in me, for it became clear that no "objective" standard could be the product of an individual's mind. Of course, it didn't help that a Lutheran pastor had given me a copy of *Mere Christianity*, by C. S. Lewis.

It took five years for me to become a Christian, and my experience was not too unlike Lewis's own, as he described it: I was not at all happy to find that the "absolute" Rand referred to was really found only in God.

Still, I have much to thank Rand for. In a very real sense, she set me on the right course, though not at all one of which she would have approved. She wouldn't have admitted it, but the one issue where she is in complete agreement with the Almighty is the value of the individual.

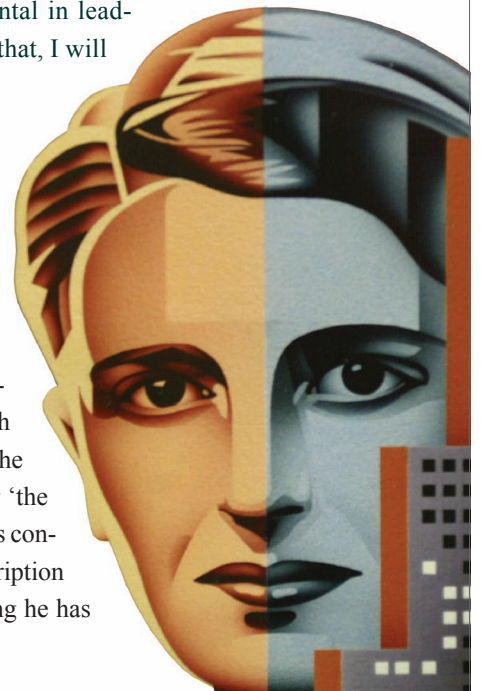
One night, many years ago, I heard her in Sacramento on a 50,000-watt clear-channel Los Angeles AM station. Rand could tolerate no challenge to any of her views. I smiled at that then and do so now, while hoping George MacDonald was right in his apparent belief in the ultimate redemption of everyone.

After all, Ayn Rand was instrumental in leading at least one person to Christ. For that, I will always be grateful.

Paul Hubert
Via e-mail

Correction

"The Greatly Ghastly Rand" contains the following sentence: "There is a passage [in *The Fountainhead*] in which Roark does not know that something he has said has given a passing character 'the courage to face a lifetime.'" Roark does converse with the character, but the description would be more accurate as: "something he has done."



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The Week

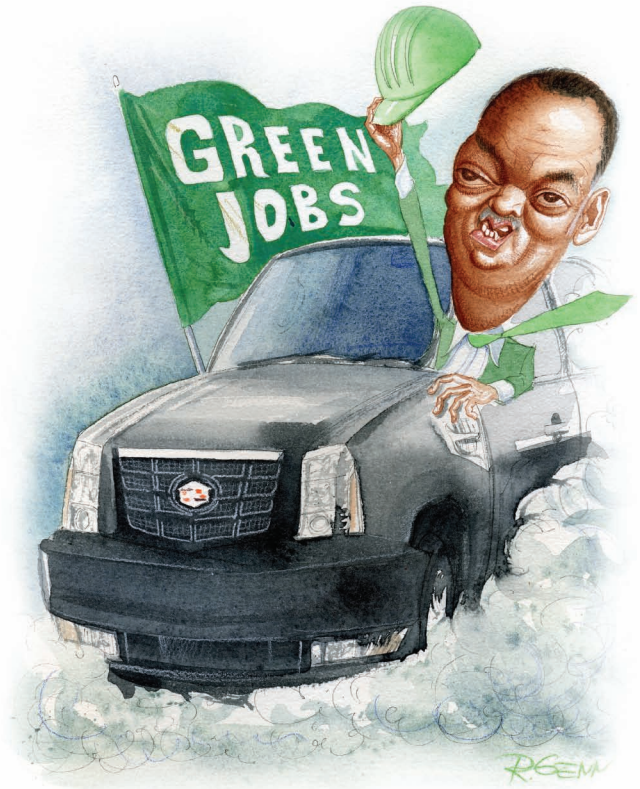
■ Soon the Republicans may be able to claim the first nonwhite Speaker of the House.

■ President Obama's long-stated view is that his predecessor's tax cuts for the middle class should be extended while his tax cuts for high earners should be allowed to lapse. Notwithstanding Obama's huge majorities in Congress, he has done, literally, nothing to extend the middle-class tax cuts, and as a result we are now a few months away from a major tax increase on nearly everyone who pays income taxes. Naturally the Democrats' new tactic is to accuse the Republicans of holding up middle-class tax relief in order to get upper-income tax cuts. The tactic has not worked: More and more Democrats are calling for an extension of all the tax cuts. Even a fumble by House Republican leader John Boehner, who said on *Face the Nation* that he would vote for extending the middle-class tax cuts alone if he had no other choice, does not seem to have changed the dynamic. (Boehner has since reiterated that he favors extending all the tax cuts.) If middle-class taxes go up, the public is going to blame liberals—and an increasing number of Democrats grasp this point even if not all Republicans do.

■ Conservatives in Delaware have decided that they would rather have yet another Democratic senator than a moderate Republican. Unfortunately, that is the practical effect of their voting for marketing consultant Christine O'Donnell over Rep. Mike Castle in the primary—unless Delaware, which last voted for a Republican president 22 years ago, is aching to elect a senator who is well to the right of any senator from Tennessee or Alabama and who has a history of shady ethics. The distaste for Castle among conservative primary voters was understandable. He's a northeastern moderate out of central casting. But he voted against Obamacare and against federal funding of abortion, favored extending the Bush tax cuts, and would have been more likely than not to support a conservative Supreme Court nominee. Those positions put him, on balance, to the right of every Senate Democrat. The tea parties have been a vast force for good in American life, but their support for O'Donnell was an error.

■ President Obama, responding to a report about how his health-care law will add to costs, said that we knew all along that covering additional people would not be free. Funny, we don't recall hearing that in his speeches. We do recall his promising a \$2,500 reduction in premiums for the typical family. Instead insurers are explaining that premiums are going up as a result of Obamacare. Kathleen Sebelius, head of the Health and Human Services Department, has written a letter demanding that insurers stop saying that—and strongly implying that insurers who keep talking will be excluded from the new health exchanges that Obamacare sets up. (There will be “zero tolerance” for disagreement with the administration's favored experts, she warned.) Meanwhile, Congress took up legislation to eliminate

See page 12.



or weaken the bill's onerous reporting requirements on small businesses. We guess everyone always knew Obamacare would have to be amended a few months after passing, too. Here's hoping that in a few years all the smartest Democrats are explaining that everyone always knew that the law was going to be repealed.

■ Newt Gingrich, having read a *Forbes* cover story by Dinesh D'Souza, told NRO that President Obama's policies can be explained by reference to the “Kenyan, anti-colonialist” mindset Obama adopted in homage to his absent father. D'Souza has a new book on the subject. The article is not persuasive. Obama's family drama is all very interesting—he got a bestseller out of it, after all. But Obama's policies are no more mysterious than the voting preferences in a faculty lounge. Before the search for explanations there must be something to explain.

■ After losing to Joe Miller in the Republican Senate primary in Alaska, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, as of press time, was considering an independent run. Unlike Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, who ran as an independent in 2006 after his staunch support for the Iraq War cost him the Democratic primary, Murkowski does not appear to be fighting for any worthwhile principle. Her inability to accept her defeat is extreme: She first considered

running as a Libertarian (a move the state party ultimately rejected—a wise decision, since Murkowski’s voting record indicates no libertarian leanings, latent or otherwise) and is still contemplating a write-in candidacy, which could deliver the seat to Democratic candidate Scott McAdams. Both Murkowski and the Senate, we trust, will be able to find a way to thrive without each other.

■ Obama has asked for \$50 billion to fund a new “infrastructure bank” that would make loans for transportation projects. Keep in mind that the government can’t pay for the transportation projects it already has. The Highway Trust Fund is insolvent, and the Democrats are not willing to raise the gas tax that funds it, even though they have tried every other way they can think of to make fossil fuels more expensive. It isn’t clear where the administration would get the money to fund the government’s share in this new bank, nor is it clear how the bank would attract private capital. Toll roads and other revenue-generating projects might be attractive to investors, but these kinds of projects aren’t exactly political winners. The worst-case scenario, which we can easily imagine, would involve giving private investors an incentive to bring their money to the table by insuring them against losses and letting them keep most of the profits—an arrangement that would require taxpayers to shoulder all of the risk. Haven’t we seen this movie before? Remind us: How did it end when the main characters were named Fannie and Freddie?

■ Senate Democrats (plus Republican George Voinovich) looked ready at press time to pass a bill that would push

another TARP-like infusion of capital into the banking system, on the theory that the banks do not have enough money to lend, or, if they do have enough, that they are not making enough loans to small businesses and need to be given better incentives to do so. To that end, the Small Business Lending Fund would allow the Treasury Department to make up to \$30 billion in credit available to small community banks at varying rates of interest: The more politically conforming loans the banks make, the less interest they pay. Banks that “plan to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach” would receive special consideration, of course. The fund is a bad idea. Those community banks that are most eager to borrow from the fund are more interested in political protection than in making sound loans, while those community banks that have responded to the weak economy with an appropriate and measured reluctance to lend are unlikely to take the money anyway. There is the administration’s economic policy in a nutshell: reckless borrowing to finance reckless lending.

■ In a renewed effort to promote homeownership, the Home Affordable Modification Program now instructs mortgage servicers to identify all applicants by race, even if they balk. The program’s new guidebook stipulates that if the borrower declines to provide a racial affiliation, “the servicer should . . . provide the information based on visual observation, information learned from the borrower or surname.” It gets creepier. Servicers are advised to provide employees with “training and job aids (e.g. desk references)” to help them racially inspect

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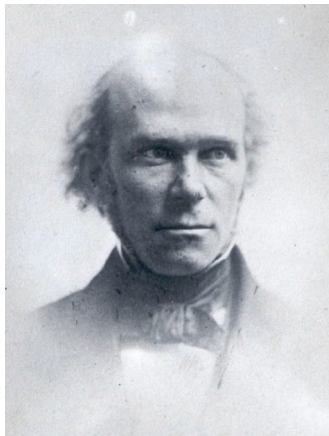
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clients with clinical expertise and up-to-date stereotypes. The purpose, naturally, is to fight racial bias.



■ The Oval Office had a makeover while the Obamas were away on vacation in August. The modal color is taupe—“a brownish gray” (*Webster’s Third*). There’s a new rug, too—oval, of course, with the presidential seal at center and, woven around the perimeter, five quotes described in the White House pool report as being “of meaning” to Obama. Four of the quotes are from former presidents; the fifth, the White House tells us, is from Martin Luther King: “The arc of the moral universe is long,

but it bends towards justice.” The nation was barely through admiring all this tastefulness when an impertinent reporter, Jamie Stiehm of the *Washington Post*, pointed out that while King did indeed use those words, he was quoting Theodore Parker, a 19th-century reformer. Stiehm further noted that Lincoln’s famous description of democracy as “government of the people, by the people, for the people” was also cribbed from Parker. We presume there were red faces—though not, we hope, taupe ones—in the White House press office. By way of making amends, perhaps they could start calling it the Parker rug.

■ Virginia A. Phillips, a federal judge in California, struck down the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, ruling that it has a “direct and deleterious effect” on the armed services. How would she know? The president is commander-in-chief, and Congress raises and regulates armies. They, and their relevant subordinates, take into account the good of the state, public opinion, and their own judgment of military matters. Barack Obama campaigned against “don’t ask, don’t tell,” but clearly hopes the courts will relieve him of the responsibility of acting (the Justice Department, as Judge Phillips noted, called no witnesses and made no affirmative case in support of the law). Time and change may make gays invisible and fungible in the services. It is up to the political branches to make that call.

■ The *Washington Post* recently reported that about 4 percent of Capitol Hill staffers owe back taxes—\$9.3 million in total. Among the more unconcerned are White House staffers, whose average owed per delinquent (\$20,270) is higher than that of their Senate and House counterparts (\$12,787 and \$15,498). Best able to separate work from personal life are the three employees at the Office of Government Ethics who collectively racked up a \$75,304 bill. Looking for a change of culture? Don’t hold your breath. After earlier revelations that federal employees owe nearly \$1 billion to the IRS, Utah GOP congressman Jason Chaffetz proposed legislation that would mandate that all delinquent federal employees either pay back taxes on an arranged schedule or be fired. The bill has gained a handful of Republican sponsors and no interest from the other side of the aisle. It’s Washington’s version of the division of labor: They raise the taxes and you pay them.

■ Every few years, some enterprising journalist decides to write an exposé of the Koch brothers and the libertarian network they help finance and guide. Jane Mayer of *The New Yorker* is the most recent chronicler of what must be the best-publicized secret cabal since the Illuminati. NATIONAL REVIEW knows something about this journalistic genre, having established it in 1979 under the headline “Strange Alliance: Anarchists, Backed by Corporate Big Money, Infiltrate the Freedom Movement.” Our Carter-era report described the establishment of a shadowy new enterprise “rapturous about the free-enterprise and limited-government ideas of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek.” What could be more respectable—or more boring? “Too dull?” our writer asked. “Then change the name of the outfit from something ponderous like the Charles Koch Foundation of Wichita, Kansas, to something cerebral-sounding like the Cato Institute.” This was back in the day when Murray Rothbard and the libertarians had unilateral U.S. disarmament at the top of their wish list. The movement has since moved on to more fruitful pursuits, like defending what remains of free-market capitalism—which is sure to annoy *The New Yorker*. Mayer hits all the familiar notes—the “Kochtopus,” environmental regulation, “the Standard Oil of our times”—and suggests that the Kochs are somehow behind the tea-party phenomenon. What she gets wrong—what most people get wrong about Charles and David Koch—is that she thinks this is all a front for narrow financial self-interest. But the Kochs are true believers, putting their considerable fortunes behind the idea that freedom is not only worth fighting for, but also worth investing in.

■ Richard M. Daley was first elected mayor of Chicago in 1989; his father, Richard J. Daley, was first elected mayor in 1955. Both of them were repeatedly reelected. And now the junior Daley is stepping down, after these two decades-plus. Conservatives in Chicago are divided over Daley’s tenure. Some say he has done a good job: He has kept crime down; he has kept the streets clean; he has been competent, reliable, and non-ideological. Others say baloney: He has been a massive overspender, a friend of corruption, and a patsy for the unions. We say, let’s hope Chicago does as well, or no worse, in its next mayor—whether it is President Obama’s chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, or someone else. Incidentally, it’s been since the Hoover administration that Chicago had a Republican mayor. Maybe the city could try one.



■ Why did President Obama adopt a deadline for the Afghan surge? He feared the political effects of an open-ended commitment, according to a former adviser quoted in the *New York Times*: “Our Afghan policy was focused as much as anything on domestic politics. He would not risk losing the moderate to centrist Democrats in the middle of health-insurance reform and he viewed that legislation as the make-or-break legislation for his administration.” Another aide says Obama sees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as “problems that need managing” while he



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concentrates on transforming America at home. If only the War in Afghanistan were about socializing medicine in the Hindu Kush, it might command President Obama's passion and full attention.

■ Afghanistan is now the second-most-corrupt country in the world, according to Transparency International. The Karzai government has been working hard to secure the No. 1 spot, but was edged out by Somalia, which in all fairness probably should not even be counted as a country. No doubt there are dark whispermings in Kabul that the fix was in.

■ Intelligence reports have long been making it clear that Iran provides weapons, training, and hospital treatment to the Taliban. Whatever the ethnic, religious, or political differences

between the two, hatred of the United States brings them together. The *Sunday Times* of London has uncovered startling first-hand evidence that Iran is directly financing the Taliban. It is all carried out with brilliant craftiness under cover of Iranian companies set up in Kabul to obtain construction contracts from foreign investors. That money comes in legitimately, and the investors have no idea that it is then laundered across the country. There is a whole team of Taliban runners and bagmen, and the *Sunday Times* reporter had an interview with one of them. He described how he picks up cash from one or another of these companies, puts it in a sack, and goes into the field to distribute it in his particular district. In the last six months this man has received around \$75,000 and paid something like \$200 a month for expenses and family support to each of the 200 Taliban in his district. This is a sum larger than an Afghan soldier or policeman

Blazing Suras

IMMEDIATELY after Sept. 11, 2001, Bill Maher said something stupid. I know it's sort of silly to put a timestamp on that. It'd be much more of a man-bites-dog story if I could give you the date and time when Maher said something that wasn't stupid.

What distinguished this nugget of Maherian stupidity was a response from Ari Fleischer, then the press secretary for President Bush. Actually, Fleischer responded to two statements. The first was from Rep. John Cooksey, who said, "If I see someone come in and he's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt around that diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over and checked."

The second comment, from Maher, was that American armed forces who fired missiles instead of personally hijacking planes were the real "cowards" in the then-embryonic War on Terror.

Funny how the congressman was actually funnier than the comedian.

After tendentious goading from the press, Fleischer said in response: "Assuming the press reports are right, it's a terrible thing to say, and it's unfortunate. And that's why—there was an earlier question about has the president said anything to people in his own party—they're reminders to all Americans that they need to watch what they say, watch what they do. This is not a time for remarks like that; there never is."

For nearly the next seven years, this was the day America lost its soul. The in-house tribune of lost liberties, Frank Rich, invoked this dark moment numerous times over the years. In 2006, he wrote: "Fear itself—the fear that 'paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance,' as FDR had it—was already being wielded as a weapon against Americans by their own government." A year earlier, Rich claimed that Fleischer's statement was as

significant an event as 9/11 itself in terms of our cultural freedom. "Even as we're constantly told we're in a war for 'freedom' abroad, freedom in our culture at home has been under attack ever since."

Now you can argue that Fleischer chose his words poorly, though I've never been able to take much offense at them. But if you do take the Rich position that Fleischer delivered a mortal wound to freedom of expression in America, what are you supposed to make of the Obama administration's all-out war on Koran-burning?

Don't get me wrong, I think Koran-burning is stupid and offensive (I also think building an Islamic Epcot Center near Ground Zero is stupid and offensive). But if Fleischer's

entirely off-the-cuff comments, made while corpses were still being pulled from the rubble, were inexcusable, why is it okay for Gen. David Petraeus, Defense Secretary Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the president of the United States to come down like a ton of bricks on Reverend Jones—or any other Koran burner?

Indeed, if you think burning the American flag is a treasured right of free expression, why isn't Koran-burning too? The

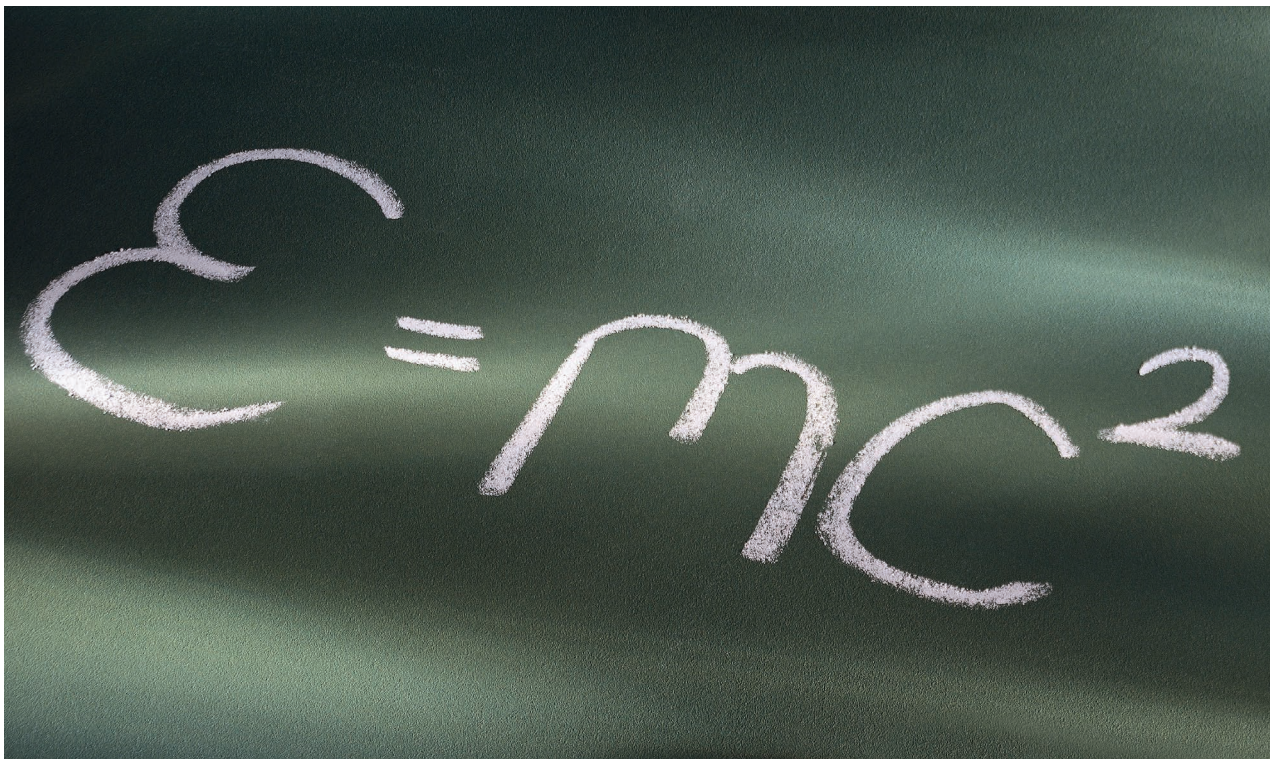
FBI visited Jones at his church and, allegedly, tried to get him to call off his stunt. Imagine if the FBI did that with some post-modern performance artist who wanted to burn, say, the Christian Bible? Oh, the gnashing of teeth and rending of garments that would ensue among the lovers of liberty.

Not being a regular reader of Frank Rich, I hurried to his column archives to find a stirring defense of the "right to offend" he spent so much time eulogizing during the Bush years.

Strangely, I found nothing.

—JONAH GOLDBERG





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earns. According to this source, Iran is also paying a bonus of \$1,000 for killing an American soldier and \$6,000 for destroying a military vehicle. The money is clean, he likes to think, because this is jihad.

■ Human Rights Watch used to do good work drawing attention to abuses practiced in non-democratic countries. More recently its thrust has been instead to use “human rights” to promote anti-Israel agitprop. Senior HRW personnel have been attacking Zionism and American “imperialism” and promoting the very undemocratic Palestinians of the PLO and Hamas. In the gathering scandal, Richard Bernstein, HRW’s founder but since retired, warned in the *New York Times* that the group had to return to its original mission. Donors have fallen away. George Soros, commonly described as a billionaire investor and philanthropist, has stepped in with a gift of \$100 million. Soros’s motivation? “I’m afraid the United States has lost the moral high ground under the Bush administration.” HRW, he thinks, “has to be seen as more international, less an American organization.” He’s someone who takes advantage of capitalist speculation to promote radical-chic ideology. Billionaire investor, yes; philanthropist, no.

■ Each time the dying embers of the peace process with the Palestinians rekindle, some Israelis are sure to lose their lives. So while Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Washington doing his best to dance to President Obama’s tune and reach some accord with Mahmoud Abbas for the Palestinians,

■ Tony Blair’s memoir, *A Journey: My Political Life*, went on sale in Britain early this month and sold over 90,000 copies in four days, but there were no cries of “Author! Author!” A book signing in Dublin was disrupted by 200 protesters throwing bottles and shoes, and a launch party at the Tate Modern in London was canceled. “It shows he is running scared,” one protest organizer crowed. Britain will suffer from some aspects of Blair’s rule—a welfare class entrenched by the tax receipts of a bubble of prosperity—for years. It may suffer from others—Scottish devolution, Euro-drift, turning the House of Lords into a hack refuge—forever. But these are not drawing protests. Blair earned his odium for his two greatest accomplishments—supporting the United States after 9/11, and deciding to take Britain into Iraq. These are anathema to the Left; and these anathemas have become the lazy thought crutches of *biens pensants* across the spectrum, from Blair’s own Labour party to (shamefully) many Tories. Cross the ocean, Mr. Blair, and sign your books in peace.

■ The media everywhere are well-known practitioners of the adversarial stance to society, and few, even none, have practiced it more smoothly and senatorially than the British Broadcasting Corporation. These many years, Conservatives have been pointing out that the BBC is really a closed left-wing party. Everyone from director general down to the humblest broadcaster has always repudiated the charge, gravely preaching about dedication to objectivity, balance, impartiality, both-sides-of-the-question, etc., etc. Mark Thompson, today’s director general, suddenly confesses that the BBC has been guilty of “massive”

Each time the dying embers of the peace process with the Palestinians rekindle, some Israelis are sure to lose their lives.

gunmen on a highway in the West Bank were ready to ambush Israelis. They shot and killed Talia and Yitzhak Ames, parents of six children with a seventh near to term, and two people they were giving a lift to: Kochava Even-Haim, a nursery-school teacher, and Avishai Schindler, a student. Hamas claimed responsibility, but who knows, other Palestinian factions may have done it, including those nominally loyal to Abbas. The gunmen have got a lock on the situation. If they force Netanyahu to break off negotiations, they have achieved what they want, and if he plows on regardless, he looks desperately weak. And either way, there’s another reason for them to celebrate more dead Israelis.

■ Cubans have had many complaints for the last 50 years, because a totalitarian dictatorship will give a person many things to complain about—at least privately. One of those complaints is quite small, but still significant: People in the Free World have the habit of referring to the dictator as “Fidel.” They would never refer to Pinochet as “Augusto,” or “Gus.” They didn’t call Ceausescu “Nicolae,” or “Nick.” They don’t even call President Obama “Barack.” But Castro gets that affectionate, pop-star-like “Fidel.” Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic* just had an interview with him, and wrote him up as “Fidel.” If you would like to distinguish him from his brother, the junior dictator, there are other ways of doing it. As for us, we’ll call him Castro—or worse.

left-wing bias, which nowadays has about the same quotient of surprise as saying that the pope is Catholic. Staff, for instance, “were quite mystified by the early years of Thatcher.” He reassures the country that there’s now “an honourable tradition of journalists from the right,” but nobody knows who these might be or on what wavelengths they can be found.

■ A recent *Time* magazine had a shocking cover. It showed the Star of David, formed with flowers, and said, “Why Israel Doesn’t Care About Peace.” Actually, its history largely consists of offering peace and being spurned. In 1947, the U.N. proposed a partition of British Palestine: a homeland for the Jews, a homeland for the Arabs. The Jews said hooray, the Arabs said no way: and launched a war of annihilation against the Jews. There would be three more wars. After the fourth one, Egypt offered peace: which Israel accepted with alacrity and jubilation. Since then, the late ’70s, only one other Arab nation has offered peace: That was Jordan, in 1994. In the following years, the Palestinians, represented by Yasser Arafat and the PLO, refused to come to terms with Israel; they instead waged an “intifada,” killing over a thousand. Now Israel is facing a nuclearizing Iran whose president has vowed to wipe Israel off the map. Contrary to *Time*, Israel cares very much about peace: wants it, and needs it, as much as any nation. What about its neighbors? That is the pertinent question.



■ You certainly know who Lady Gaga is. (Tribesmen in Papua New Guinea wearing penis sheaths know; in fact, they are probably her wardrobe consultants.) Now Camille Paglia, roving cultural critic, has taken her on in the London *Sunday Times*. “Corporate,” “calculated and artificial,” “diva of déjà vu,” and “asexual” are just some of the items of her indictment. Paglia is a true contrarian, and a feisty pop journalist, and what she says might almost make sense if the true god she was defending from Lady Gaga’s blasphemous competition were not . . . Madonna. Her again? Hadn’t we escaped the huckster with the chipmunk voice? N.B.: All three ladies are

Italian-American (Germanotta, Ciccone, Paglia), though only the last uses her surname. Perhaps this is some dark in-group takedown, like a feud in the ’Ndrangheta. Lady Gaga, like Madonna before her, will sell a billion records. But Paglia knows her *Faerie Queen*. Place your bets.

■ For the first time since the Vietnam War, the Medal of Honor has been awarded to a serviceman who did not die while earning it. Army Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, of Hiawatha, Iowa,

achieved the nation’s highest military honor with his actions during an enemy ambush of his company in Afghanistan in October 2007. As the official citation states, first “he exposed himself to enemy fire to pull a comrade back to cover,” then later he “noticed two insurgents carrying away a fellow soldier [and] immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other, and provided medical aid to his wounded comrade.” Sergeant Giunta’s reaction has been subdued, since unfortunately the men he rescued later died of their wounds. Yet his bravery—like that of the seven Medal of Honor recipients in the War on Terror who received their awards posthumously—needs no elaboration, and speaks eloquently of the qualities with which courageous men going above and beyond the call of duty have kept America safe and secure since George Washington’s day.

■ James Jay Lee was shot dead by a police sniper while waving a handgun at hostages he’d taken at the Discovery Channel’s headquarters building, which is in Silver Spring, Md. Lee left behind an online manifesto expressing a crazed mix of environmentalism, pacifism, and extreme misanthropy—“The planet does not need humans”—and demanding that Discovery broadcast daily programs based on his favorite novel, which concerns a telepathic gorilla. Extreme restraint is appropriate when drawing large conclusions from the ravings of a lunatic. (Recall that Charles Manson was inspired by a Beatles song about a fair-ground attraction.) Thus conservatives largely refrained from linking Lee to the sane Left. Would it be too much to hope for the same forbearance when someone loosely affiliated with the Right commits an outrage? Yes, it would be.

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■ After all those years promoting rainbows, Jesse Jackson has settled on a color he really likes: green. The green, that is, of environmental faddism, as in “green jobs.” Writing on CNN.com recently, Jackson expressed the hope that America will “get serious about energy savings and independence from oil. . . . A green economy is not an abstract concept.” A few days later he took this message to a jobs rally in Detroit organized by Bob King, militant president of the United Auto Workers union. Alas, the day after the rally Jackson’s vehicle went missing from a parking lot near his hotel. It was a 2009 Cadillac Escalade SUV—twelve miles per gallon in city driving. So much for the Rev’s dedication to greenery. Police later found the vehicle abandoned and stripped—as Detroit itself has been by decades of solidly Democratic government, and as the domestic auto industry has been by the ever-escalating demands of the UAW.

■ The incandescent light bulb may be America’s greatest invention: laboriously refined by Thomas Edison; not much changed since early last century, when it embodied the notion of progress for rural dwellers; and still instantly recognizable as the graphic symbol of a good idea. But now the nation’s last major incandescent-light-bulb factory, in Winchester, Va., has shut down, a victim of the enforced switch to more efficient twisted fluorescent bulbs. It’s bad enough that Congress is telling Americans what to light their houses with, but compounding the indignity it is also sending jobs overseas: Manufacture of the new bulbs cannot be automated as easily as that of the old kind, so production has moved to China, where hand labor is cheap. So much for green jobs. Perhaps future cartoonists will use a twisted light bulb to symbolize a poorly thought-out idea with unintended consequences.

■ When in the past we have criticized college courses for catering to students’ tastes, we were speaking metaphorically. Not anymore. Earlier this month, 600 students crammed into a 350-seat lecture hall at Harvard University for a new class, “Science and Cooking: From Haute Cuisine to Soft Matter Science.” The course, which fulfills a core-curriculum requirement, promises to “discuss concepts from the physical sciences that underpin . . . everyday cooking.” It will feature guest lectures by world-famous chefs, such as Enric Rovira on “his chocolate delicacies.” Here’s a sampling of the required reading: *On Food and Cooking*, *Kitchen Mysteries*, and *The Science of Ice Cream*. When asked by the *Harvard Crimson* why he was taking the class, one knowledge-hungry student responded: “I think the fact that you can eat your lab is pretty much the coolest thing ever.” Given tuition, it had better be five-star.

CULTURE WATCH

Bonfires and Vanities

TERRY JONES, pastor of the Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Fla., called off his plan to commemorate 9/11 by burning Korans. Imam Feisal Rauf, returning from a two-week junket to the Gulf, announced that he would continue to raise money for his mosque and cultural center two blocks from Ground Zero. So the Christian clerical self-promoter called off his stunt; the Muslim clerical self-promoter is going full speed ahead.

Burning a book hardly rises to the level of criticism. The doughtiest public scourges of Islam, from Ibn Warraq to Christopher Hitchens, parse the texts they dispute; they attempt to destroy its ideas, not the paper on which those ideas appear. Pastor Jones wanted a spotlight on himself and his 50-member operation; having gotten it, he decided to skip the combustion.

But look at the pile-up that occurred before he gave in. Gen. David Petraeus, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, and President Obama called Jones or criticized him publicly. The job should have been Obama’s alone. He nicely invoked Lincoln, urging Jones to heed the “better angels” of his nature. He might also have said that a free country allows its citizens to do any number of stupid things, and made a double point about liberty and prudence.

The Jones affair played into the self-defense of the shiftless Imam Rauf. Returning to America, in part to answer charges brought by Union City, N.J., that he is a negligent slumlord, Rauf took to the media to defend his \$100 million megamosque. The “good” Imam wrote in the *New York Times* and spoke on CNN about sensitivity and peace. His double game keeps biting him, however. He warned Soledad O’Brien that if his mosque is moved, “anger will explode in the Muslim world. . . . This crisis could become much bigger than the Danish-cartoon crisis.” Americans are familiar with race hustlers, real (Al Sharpton) and fictional (Tom Wolfe’s Reverend Bacon), who threaten violence if they don’t get what they want. The Muslim mob is a versatile thing. Yesterday, it rioted over Danish cartoons. Today, it stood ready to riot over Pastor Jones’s cook-out. Tomorrow, it will riot if Imam Rauf does not get his pleasure dome.

Americans should do the right thing because we respect law, justice, decency, and common sense. That Jones’s prospective stunt inspired fears of widespread violence is a more stinging indictment of the Islamic world than anything he could have done.



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To Level a Mountain With a Shovel

Apparently that is the GOP approach to deficit reduction

BY RAMESH PONNURU

LESS than two years after facing the terrible possibility of seeing their party go extinct, congressional Republicans are beginning to face the even more terrifying possibility that they may take control of the House and even the Senate in the upcoming elections. Both the public and, even more intensely, Republican voters are alarmed by rising federal spending and the swelling federal debt. So perhaps the biggest challenge for the victorious Republicans will be enacting a budget that addresses their concerns.

What makes the task so daunting isn't just the size of the gap between the federal government's projected revenues and spending over the next decade. It's that the largest and fastest-growing programs are popular. There is not much support for reining in Social Security and Medicare, even among those voters who tell pollsters they sympathize with the tea parties. One of the most successful Republican gambits of the last two years has been to oppose the Medicare cuts included in Obamacare. Because of the constraints of public opinion, even the boldest entitlement reformers favor gradual change that saves trillions in the long run but does not save much in the next few years.

Those same constraints lead Democrats and centrist commentators to insist that the budget cannot be balanced—the deficit

cannot even be brought to a sustainable level—through spending cuts alone. Tax increases, and not only on the rich, are also said to be necessary. The mostly unspoken theory seems to be that budget balancing requires a kind of bipartisan conspiracy to couple unpopular cuts to middle-class entitlements with unpopular middle-class tax hikes.

A few Republicans are trying to disprove this theory. Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, the top Republican on the House Budget Committee and thus the likely chairman of the committee should his party take control, has gotten a lot of ink for his “roadmap” to reform the welfare state. He has also outlined a plan, cobbled together from other Republicans’ legislation, to save \$1.3 trillion over the next ten years.

Ryan’s plan would keep the unspent stimulus funds from being spent, reduce support for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, freeze federal pay, and reduce spending in many other ways. Most of the savings, though, comes from one step: cutting spending to 2008 levels on all programs other than the big entitlements and then freezing it there. Over ten years that would lower federal spending by \$925 billion.

The idea of a freeze, which would allow individual programs to grow or shrink so long as the overall target was reached, comes from Republican senator George

LeMieux of Florida. Last year the senator suggested that the budget be rolled back to 2007 levels. His theory: Most people are making do with less in the recession; why not the government?

The Republican Study Committee, a group of conservatives in the House led by Rep. Tom Price of Georgia, takes this idea further than Ryan. The RSC plan keeps the Bush tax cuts and halts the growth of the Alternative Minimum Tax. But it also claims to generate \$6.4 trillion less in federal debt than President Obama’s projected budgets, and even to produce surpluses in 2019 and 2020. It too freezes non-entitlement spending at 2008 levels; non-defense spending would take the brunt of the required cuts. And it implements a grab bag of other reforms to save money. Enacting medical-malpractice reform at the federal level would, according to the Congressional Budget Office, save the feds \$54 billion over ten years. Ending Davis-Bacon, the law that requires the federal government to pay union scale on construction projects, would save money as well. The RSC plan would slash rail subsidies. Corporate welfare would also face the knife.

The House Republican leadership is trying to build a consensus for spending cuts among its membership. So far, the cuts on which they have built a consensus are modest. John Boehner, the House minority leader, is calling for a freeze on the non-security, non-entitlement parts of the budget. Eric Cantor, the second-ranking House Republican, is running an online project called “YouCut.” Every week visitors to his website vote on which of several spending cuts the Republicans should put to a vote on the House floor. After nine weeks, Republicans have voted for around \$120 billion in savings.

Some supporters of small government think that the Republicans are only paying lip service to spending cuts. Brian Riedl, budget analyst at the Heritage Foundation, is one of them. “The stuff they’re putting out is way too vague and non-specific. Even the thing Boehner put out applies to only one-eighth of the budget,” he says. “Republicans have offered nothing but platitudes, with the exception of Paul Ryan.” Riedl believes that Washington should freeze all government spending, excluding interest on the debt—which would require starting to phase in entitlement reform. Compared with current policies, that would yield \$7 trillion in savings.

DARREN GIVGI

Congressman Ryan himself is more encouraged by the growth of interest in spending cuts among his colleagues. He was surprised at how many votes his relatively lean budgets have gotten. “The handwringers nervous about spending cuts won’t be the problem” if the Republicans take over the House, he says. A lot of the new Republican congressmen will be “people more interested in the cause than in a career.”

But nobody thinks that these spending-cutters will have veto-proof majorities. That’s why one thing the new congressmen, and their friends in the tea parties, might be wise to do is to change the way Congress enacts spending legislation. It passes 13 big appropriations bills that fund all of the government except for the entitlement programs. This method of budgeting arguably works in favor of pro-spending interests.

For one thing, each spending program does not need to command majority support in the legislature to receive funding; it just has to be included in a bill that has majority support. And if the president wants more funds for one of his priorities, he can veto the entire bill—shutting down a portion of the government, including programs that most congressmen favor. The example of the Gingrich–Clinton standoff over the budget in 1995 and 1996 suggests that the political reaction to a shutdown works in the president’s favor.

If Congress broke up these big spending bills into many smaller ones, the balance of power would change. Congressmen would have less incentive to support bloated spending on one program to secure funding for their own programs. A fiscally conservative House majority could identify the lowest funding level that could attract 218 votes for each small spending bill. Or it could simply fail to include some programs in any appropriations bill, leaving Obama with no money to spend on those programs and nothing to veto. It might be possible to defund—or, rather, not fund in the first place—parts of Obamacare in this way.

Any such change to the budget rules would require overcoming the entrenched members of the appropriations committees, who tend to like the power to spend money that the current set-up gives them. It would also require wrenching change in the Senate, where considering more spending bills would, on present rules, take a lot of time. But 2011 might be the right time to

move forward with such a reform—if, that is, Congress really is filled with new legislators who are not immersed in the old ways of doing business and are committed to the cause of cutting government.

Both the optimists and the pessimists among conservatives agree that the debate over fiscal policy needs to keep historical averages in mind. Over the last 50 years, federal spending has made up about 20 percent of the economy on average; federal revenues have run at about 18 percent. As Riedl points out, federal revenue as a share of the economy is expected to be higher than its 18 percent historical average by the end of the decade even if all the Bush tax cuts are extended. Features of the tax code such as “real-income bracket creep” are responsible for that growth: As the economy grows, more people move into higher tax brackets and thus the average tax rate rises. Spending will, however, reach 26.5 percent of national economic output on current policies. (Those are Riedl’s calculations, based on Congressional Budget Office numbers.)

Conservatives use that historical record to argue that the deficit is entirely the result of excessive spending and not at all the result of insufficient taxation. It’s a fair point, and a useful corrective to such inanities as you will find in *Newsweek* (where Andrew Romano writes, “There isn’t much left to cut” in the federal budget). But the argument can take conservatives only so far. The per capita cost of health care is also growing far beyond its historical average, as is the median age of Americans. We can keep the level of taxation we have had for the last few decades, or close to it, only if we change the way we have run our programs for the elderly for the last few decades. But even many of the tea partiers who say they don’t trust Republicans on spending would balk at changes to Social Security and Medicare.

“Republicans should be talking more about entitlements going into the election even though there’s a risk,” says Chris Papagianis of e21, a new conservative economic think tank, although he concedes that Republicans may want to seek immediate savings in other parts of the budget before shooting for long-term savings. But eventually we will have to reform entitlements, raise taxes, or both. “I’ve been in so many fights with the appropriators,” says Representative Ryan. “But it’s entitlements that are going to kill us.” **NR**

Bank of America

Obama’s \$50 billion infrastructure folly is not without precedent

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

NORMAL countries have governments. The United States has a bank, and it is in the business of making the oddest assortment of loans you’d find outside of the secret Enron archives. Would you like to take out a loan against 94 percent of the cash value of a life-insurance policy you’ve had for only one year? There’s a federal loan for that. Building a dormitory to house the transient laborers who bring in your peach crop in the summer? *¡Sí, se puede!* There’s a federal loan for that, too, with excellent terms: 33 years at 1 percent interest. Perhaps you would like to secure financing through an “extramural clinical research loan repayment program for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.” Bank of America—the *real* Bank of America, Barack Obama, CEO—can hook you up.

So when President Obama announced that his next Big Idea for the economy was to take \$50 billion of your hard-earned assets and use part of it to finance an “infrastructure bank”—not just a new infrastructure program, but an infrastructure *bank*—it was hardly an exercise in financial radicalism. Banking is what Washington does. With the exception of the actual central bank, the Fed—which is more of a hedge fund (an upside-down, Bizarro World hedge fund, whose managers pay the very highest prices for the very worst assets)—the entire federal apparatus, from the Pentagon to the USDA to the hive of haplessness that is the Department of Education, is in the banking racket. The government’s toothless loan-sharking is especially prodigious when it comes to so-called infrastructure programs, which are more accurately described as *transportation* programs (which are really more accurately described as *highway* programs).

Usually, this taxpayer-subsidized usury-lite happens under the rubric of economic development. Say you find a nice cheap little piece of land on which

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you'd like to build a factory, and it's perfect in every way except one: no direct access to the highway. Maybe there's another piece of land with good highway access, but it costs more (which it probably does, precisely because it has good highway access). If you know the right people and pull the right strings, then a combination of federal, state, and local authorities will either build you an on-ramp or see to it that somebody loans you the money to build one at concessionary rates and on generous terms. It probably would be cheaper, easier, and morally cleaner for the state and local governments just to write a check to businesses that create jobs in their jurisdictions, but that's too obvious, and it looks sort of bad to the yokels. So instead of bribing businesses with direct

and food-services industry—to take the two poles of the services economy—and several times the size of the education sector. U.S. factories, as Cato Institute scholar Daniel Ikenson has reported, produce 21.4 percent of the world's manufacturing value added, 60 percent more than China's (without a billion semi-indentured workers earning Third World wages or a for-profit police state—take *that*, Tom Friedman!). We're making a lot of stuff and moving it around.

So, build a bunch of roads, railways, runways, and bridges, right? After a bipartisan stimulus campaign that now has cost the country more than the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined, what's another \$50 billion?

In truth, we're already probably

New York. And the beloved Packard wasn't even the most retro form of get-up-and-go the bill lavished federal dollars upon: Millions were spent on horse trails in High Knob, Va., sidewalk landscaping in rural Georgia, and bicycle paths in Hattiesburg, Miss. When the tab topped \$300 billion, Pres. George W. Bush suddenly remembered that he was a Republican and threatened to veto it; when the cost was trimmed to a lean and mean \$286.4 billion, he remembered that he was a politician and signed it.

Funds allegedly dedicated to national transportation priorities find their way into all sorts of tangential-at-best programs, including the dodgy economic-development projects mentioned above. The earmarks don't just come in the highway bills—they're built right into

After a bipartisan stimulus campaign that now has cost the country more than the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined, what's **another \$50 billion**?

handouts, we bribe them with indirect handouts, and we call it an economic-development policy. If your business is an industrial or manufacturing concern, politicians will line up around the block to pave whatever needs paving and asphalt whatever needs asphalt for you to create those jobs.

And there's a lot more of that going on than you might expect. Even though the extraordinarily productive service sectors of the U.S. economy create a lot of output that can be delivered by e-mail rather than by truck or train, manufacturing remains the second-largest single sector, trailing only wholesale trade. In fact, the idea that the United States has entered a "post-industrial" phase is largely a myth. Measured by output, the U.S. economy is much more industrial-looking than Washington's scary bedtime stories about McJobs and outsourcing would suggest: After wholesaling and manufacturing, the biggest sectors are indeed those service-oriented industries—retailing, finance, and health care—but these are followed by a massive construction industry that is nearly as large as the health-care sector. In terms of economic output, the warehousing and transportation of goods bigger than the software industry or the accommodations

spending way too much on infrastructure—a fact that is not exactly blisteringly apparent from the crumbling state of many of our country's roads, bridges, and airports. It's not how much you spend, it's what you spend it on. We've wasted so much money on transportation spending, in an appropriations process that is so nakedly self-serving and corrupt, that the stench of the last major highway bill was enough to awaken even the constitutionally slumberous caucus of appropriations-happy congressional Republicans—eight of them, anyway.

The 2005 highway bill (which bore the nauseatingly cutesy name SAFETEA-LU, the last syllable of which was a nod to Lu Young, the wife of Rep. Don Young—R., Arctic Porkistan—who was at the time the chairman of the transportation committee) was a disgrace, a \$286.4 billion bacon bomb that became infamous for the Alaskan "Bridge to Nowhere" it funded. But that bridge was only one of the 6,300 or so earmarks inserted into the legislation, which also funded such critical national transportation priorities as a children's museum in Indianapolis, a museum in Warren, Ohio, dedicated to the Packard motorcar, a Henry Ford museum in Dearborn, Mich., and an Erie Canal museum in upstate

the U.S. Department of Transportation's regular appropriations, too. The 1996 DOT budget contained 167 earmarks; by 2005 there were more than 2,000. The more time the enabling legislation simmers in Congress, the fatter it gets: For FY2006, the original text of the DOT's appropriations bill contained 66 earmarks, but by the time it was out of conference, it had 1,516. At the request of Sen. Tom Coburn (R., Okla.), the Office of the Inspector General conducted a 2007 review of transportation earmarks. In its own circumspect words:

Our review of 7,760 earmarked projects valued at \$8.05 billion within Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Aviation Administration—which accounted for 99 percent of these earmarked projects—disclosed that 7,724 of the 7,760 projects either were not subject to the agencies' review and selection processes or bypassed the states' normal planning and programming processes. There were earmarked projects we reviewed that were evaluated as "highest" priority projects and would have been fully funded regardless of being earmarked. However, many earmarked projects considered by the agencies as low priority are being funded over higher priority, non-earmarked projects; and

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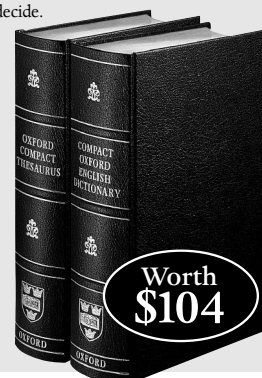
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other earmarks are providing funds for projects that would otherwise be ineligible.

In the Age of Obama, that \$8.05 billion is not even chickenfeed, Washington's chickens having grown far too fat to subsist on such measly morsels. We're not going to balance the budget by getting rid of earmarks, but those billions in targeted spending for political favorites bring a lot of power with them, and that's what this "infrastructure bank" is all about: The White House has earmark envy, and it wants to get in on Congress's action. The "infrastructure bank" would include a panel of experts (has any administration since Woodrow Wilson's been so in love with panels of experts, or so eager to entrust vast swathes of the U.S. economy to their unaccountable ministrations?) to determine what gets funded and what doesn't. "Instead of funneling infrastructure money to those states and districts represented by members of Congress with the most political clout, this plan would create a panel of experts to approve projects on the basis of merit," the *Miami Herald* editorialized, earning itself a Pulitzer nomination for naïveté. "Experts say this would spur innovation and provide the biggest bang for the buck. It would put money where it makes the most economic sense, not where political influence dictates." Translation: Experts say we should give them billions of dollars to play with. Somebody in Miami missed follow-the-money day in journalism school.

Said panel of experts would naturally consist of only the finest minds and the most disinterested better angels of our national nature—though skeptics might offer a reminder that this administration has manned its deficit-reduction committee with the likes of SEIU kingpin Andy Stern ("Workers of the world unite! It's not just a slogan anymore!") found room for crypto-Marxist 9/11 conspiracy kook Van Jones at the head of one of its czardoms, and installed Donald Berwick, sworn archenemy of "the darkness of private enterprise" and noted medical-rationing enthusiast, to oversee the incremental nationalization of American health care.

It's not a bank. It's Obamacare for bridges to nowhere, death panels for highways.

NR

The Source Of Their Rage

It isn't kooks like Pastor Jones

BY NINA SHEA &
PAUL MARSHALL

THE news that Terry Jones, a Gainesville, Fla., pastor with a flock of all of 50 souls, might stage a ceremonial Koran burning during prime time on September 11 roiled the nation and much of the world. The U.S. commanding general in Afghanistan, the secretaries of defense and state, the attorney general, and the president himself each personally and publicly weighed in against Jones. Protests came from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia, as well as from Al-Azhar University, the Saudi-based Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Muslim World League, the Egyptian and Jordanian Muslim Brotherhoods, and the famous Islamic scholar Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. It also spawned copycat Koran desecrators, who seized on this easy route to the front pages.

Jones's shenanigans, from which he eventually backed down, would have had little interest—the media give scant coverage to Bible burnings, even those done by the U.S. government (see below), or to Holy Communion wafer desecrations—except for the threat of violence in response.

International incidents triggered by private acts seen as blasphemous to Islam—ranging from theological debate to, in Jones's case, acts of outright bigotry—have become regular occurrences in Europe and elsewhere. The Jones case was the first American example of its kind, but it surely will not be the last, and it is important to see such events in a global context.

The first thing to be noted is that Muslim attempts to control actions in the West deemed insulting to Islam are

comparatively new. As Bernard Lewis has pointed out: "At no time, until very recently, did any Muslim authority ever suggest that Shari'a law should be enforced on non-Muslims in non-Muslim countries." The first major episode was the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1989 fatwa against Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, which triggered the assassination of the novel's Japanese translator, the stabbing of its Italian translator, the shooting of its Norwegian publisher, the burning to death of 35 guests at a Turkish hotel hosting its Turkish publisher, and the lifelong need for security for Rushdie. This fatwa inaugurated a worldwide movement to curb freedoms of religion and speech by exporting blasphemy rules that were already suppressing minorities and dissenters in Muslim-majority countries.

Now violence and intimidation in retaliation against Western "defamation" of Islam are occurring with increasing frequency. The last five years have seen eruptions of violence in reaction to the Theo van Gogh film *Submission*, the Danish and Swedish cartoons, the pope's Regensburg speech, Geert Wilders's film *Fitna*, and the false *Newsweek* story on Koran desecration, among many lesser-known examples. This has led to widespread self-censorship in the Western media regarding criticisms of the Koran, depictions of Islam's prophet Mohammed, and even human-rights abuses such as honor killings.

While the insult felt by Muslims is often very real, much of the outrage is fomented and fanned by governments. For example, the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons were published in September 2005 to comparatively little outcry, and some were even republished in Muslim countries. It was only after the December 2005 OIC summit in Saudi Arabia (initially convened to discuss sectarian violence and terrorism) committed members to make an issue of the cartoons that things really erupted. In February 2006, five months after the caricatures appeared, thousands of Muslims across Africa, Asia, and the Mideast set out from Friday prayers for often violent demonstrations, leading to the murder of over 200 people, particularly Christians in Nigeria.

By the time the crisis subsided, an astonishing 99 percent of Jordanians and 98 percent of Egyptians had heard

*Nina Shea and Paul Marshall are senior fellows with the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom and co-authors of the forthcoming book *Silenced* (Oxford University Press) on contemporary blasphemy rules.*

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of the Danish cartoons. Given that these countries' media outlets are tightly controlled, their publics tend to hear only what their governments want them to hear. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, irate about the Bush administration's Mideast-democratization effort, pushed for boycotts against Denmark and inflamed passions in the street. Iran and Syria were implicated in violence, which was itself at least in part an attempt to deflect attention from Iran's nuclear project. Turkey later used the cartoons as a bargaining chip to gain strategic, high-ranking NATO appointments for itself.

That it's not the insult alone, but also its subsequent magnification and manipulation through government propaganda, that causes the rage, should become clear from the following fact: Lars Vilks's far more offensive 2007 Swedish cartoons and Geert Wilders's deliberately provocative 2008 film *Fitna* led to less outcry from the Muslim world than the Danish cartoons of 2005 had.

What we need to emphasize most is that the responsibility for violence lies with those who order, organize, and commit the violence. A sacrilegious book burning by Jones or his imitators, with enough publicity and direction by Muslim political and religious leaders, could lead to attacks on Americans and on the 100 million-plus Christians who live in Muslim-majority settings. But to compare Jones's religious extremism, as bad as it is, to bin Laden's terror and mayhem, as many commentators have done, is a false moral equivalency. The terrorists and vigilantes and mobs, and the leaders who spur them on, often by distorting and exaggerating what has occurred, are the ones responsible for the suffering and death they cause, and it is they who should be called to account.

Finally, no government of a free society can or should protect from private insult religious sensibilities—especially those of Muslim extremists, who usually regard any disagreement with their dogmas and agenda, including by other Muslims, as grounds for violence. The definition of blasphemy is open-ended in the Muslim world, and those targeted by accusations include unorthodox and reform-minded Muslims as well as Christians, Ahmadiyas, and other minorities. Some recent Koran-related incidents in Afghanistan and Pakistan illustrate the point:

- In Kabul in 2008, Ghaus Zalmi and Mushtaq Ahmad were each sentenced to 20 years in prison for publishing a Dari translation of the Koran (the translator was U.S. resident Qudratullah Bakhtiarinejad). The minister for the hajj and religious affairs pronounced the work “a conspiracy by international Zionism,” and Sher Ali Zarifi, chair of an investigating commission on the translation, maintained that “the contents of this book show that its writers and editors are members of a religious pluralism movement in the West.”

- Other Afghans have been threatened by Afghan authorities with execution for blasphemy for liberal views, particularly on women's rights. Those who try to challenge laws covering blasphemy may themselves be charged with blasphemy.

- Last January, 2,000 rioters protested an alleged Koran desecration by American troops, and six demonstrators were killed when Afghan police opened fire on them.

- In 2007, Afghans angrily protested after soldiers gave local children soccer balls decorated with flags—including Saudi Arabia's, which carries a Koranic reference. The Afghan parliament demanded a formal apology. (In contrast, in May 2008, after an American church sent Pashto- and Dari-language Bibles to a soldier in Afghanistan, the U.S. military burned the Scriptures, to avoid charges of “proselytizing.” For this incident, there was no apology to anyone, nor any official reprimand from any government.)

- In 2003, after a stone he threw hit a sign bearing Koranic verses, a Christian, Ranjha Masih, was sentenced by Pakistan's judiciary to life imprisonment for blasphemy.

- On Aug. 1, 2009, after allegations that a Koran had been torn, a 1,000-strong mob, believed to be connected to the Taliban-linked Sipah-e-Sahaba, rampaged through Christian neighborhoods in Punjab. Over 40 homes were razed and at least seven Christians were killed, six of whom (including two children) were burned alive. Pakistani police did not intervene. (There have been a number of incidents similar to this one.)

Such controls would be unconstitutional under the U.S. First Amendment. Moreover, trying to satisfy Afghan and Pakistani expectations through hate-speech laws, as much of the rest of the West is doing, will never work, though it will erode fundamental freedoms.

The Obama administration's heavy involvement in the Jones case backfired: It fanned a media frenzy that gave Jones the publicity he craved, encouraged copycats, and amplified the event abroad with each high-level official's intervention. It also reinforced the perception in much of the Muslim world that the U.S. government can and should control religious expression and can therefore be held responsible for its citizens' speech. Invoking the Jones case by name, the OIC issued a full-throated cry for United Nations bans against “all forms of offense against religions under any circumstances.”

Rather than the government, America's robust civil society—and especially its religious institutions—should be relied on to speak to, condemn, and ostracize Jones and his ilk, while publicly affirming respect for Muslims. In fact, the great body of U.S. Christian churches did just that.

Our government officials should instead direct their diplomatic efforts toward the governments that manipulate outrage in the Muslim world. It is likely not a coincidence that Riyadh and Cairo have been comparatively quiet while hundreds of young men in Badakhshan, Afghanistan, and Multan, Pakistan, have been burning American flags and effigies—nor that the latter has been happening just when the U.S. is squeezing those governments to end both corruption and back-door support for the Taliban. Riots, linked to Reverend Jones, that left some 20 dead in Kashmir in fact continue a political uprising that began last June.

We should also listen to Muslim leaders fighting against such demagoguery. In response to the Malaysian government's attempts to criminalize the use of the word “Allah” by non-Muslims on the grounds that it offends Muslims, Marina Mahathir, daughter of Malaysia's former longtime prime minister Mahathir Mohamad and a social-reform activist in her own right, noted that furor over religious language feeds on itself: At first, only a few are inflamed, “but if you keep stoking . . . , sooner or later more and more people will think, ‘Oh, maybe we should be upset as well.’” Former Malaysian finance minister Tengku Razaleigh agreed: “‘Sensitivities’ is the favored resort of the gutter politician. With it he raises a mob, fans its resentment, and helps it discover a growing list of other sensitivities. This is a road to ruin.”

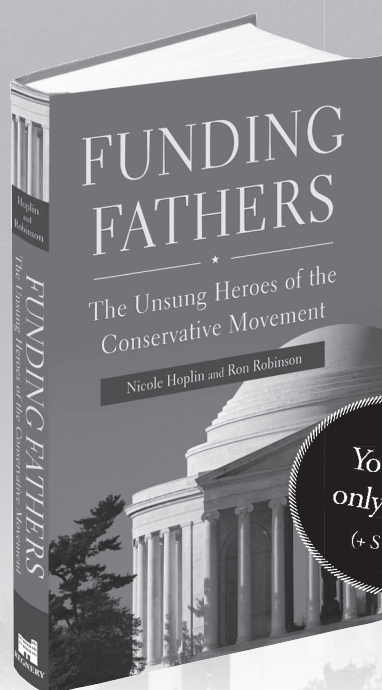
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Beyond Sanctions

Multiple lines of pressure must be brought to bear on Iran

BY JUAN C. ZARATE

THE U.S.-led financial-sanctions campaign currently under way against Iran is biting, but it isn't enough. To change the Iranian regime's nuclear calculus, the administration and the international community need to act urgently to pressure Tehran along multiple lines.

To be sure, the latest escalation of sanctions and financial isolation is hurting the regime. Legitimate banks, insurance and shipping companies, and energy firms are abandoning business with Iran for fear of sanctions and risk to their reputations. The most recent round of sanctions—those set in motion by the United States along with the European Union's most severe measures against Iran to date after the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which in turn built on prior efforts starting in 2006—increased the pressure on Iran's economy by targeting its dependence on refined-petroleum imports and closing correspondent relationships between Iranian banks and those in other countries. And more nations are adding their voices to this chorus. Significantly, Japan and South Korea, two of Iran's largest trading partners, just announced that they would impose harsh sanctions and target designated Iranian entities.

The U.S. Congress recently passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which has created fear of secondary sanctions against non-American companies still doing business with Iran. Lloyd's of London has announced it will stop insuring or reinsuring refined-petroleum shipments into Iran. European insurance giants Allianz, Munich Re, and Hannover Re have committed to ending business ties with Iran.

Mr. Zarate is a former deputy national security adviser for combating terrorism and a former assistant secretary of the Treasury for terrorist financing and financial crimes. He is now a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the senior national-security analyst for CBS News.

Multinational firms including Total, Repsol, Royal Dutch Shell, BP, Eni, Petronas, Reliance, Glencore, Trafigura, and Vitol have all ended their refined-petroleum trade or energy investments in Iran. In July, Iran's gasoline imports were down 50 percent from May, according to the International Energy Agency, and according to Reuters they were down 90 percent in August from the previous year. The State Department estimates that \$50 to \$60 billion in upstream energy-development projects (i.e., exploration and production) have been terminated or put on hold over the last several years.

These sanctions work because they are triggered by Iranian activity, which is growing less transparent and more suspicious, thus causing further reluctance by the private sector to do business with Iran. As Iran's financial isolation grows, Iranian ventures—especially those controlled directly by the regime—will seek to hide their activities in order to evade scrutiny and sanctions, causing the private sector to worry further about business with Iranian entities. In June, the Treasury Department issued a financial advisory for precisely this reason.

Another factor is the growing and visible role of the harsh and repressive Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Iran's economy. The sanctions target IRGC leaders and front companies, which may account for the withdrawal from the South Pars gas-field development (the world's largest, and shared between Iran and Qatar) of Khatam al-Anbia, the IRGC's engineering company. All this fuels the suspicion of the legitimate financial and commercial worlds and is amplified by the Iranian regime's electoral illegitimacy and human-rights violations, along with the growing evidence of duplicity regarding its nuclear program. This pressure will increase stress on an Iranian economy already battered by profound mismanagement, years of growing isolation, and the global economic downturn. It also appears to be exacerbating tensions within the regime, which were already serious enough to threaten its stability.

Unfortunately, the sanctions campaign alone won't be enough to stop Iran's march toward nuclear-weapons capability. Though Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have described sanctions as a tool to change the Iranian regime's thinking about

its weapons program, CIA director Leon Panetta has admitted that they will not achieve this goal, and that the emergence of a nuclear-weapons-capable Iran is possible within two years. Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran expert from the Carnegie Endowment, has emphasized this point, noting that Tehran's hardliners are hard-wired to oppose the United States and to resist compromise in the face of direct pressure. Time is running out, the threat of an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities is increasing, and the administration is at a loss to decide what's next.

It has hamstrung itself by talking about the utility of sanctions in maximalist terms. Secretary Gates explained that the point of sanctions is to "persuade the Iranians that they . . . will undermine their security by pursuit of nuclear weapons, not enhance it." Biting sanctions can achieve important objectives, though those objectives may sometimes be peripheral to the Iranian regime's nuclear calculus. As stated above, they can exacerbate internal regime fissures and increase the isolation of the regime; they can also buy time by delaying supplies Iran needs for its nuclear program, interrupt flows of funds sent to terrorist proxies, and serve as a diplomatic chip if the regime ever comes to the table. But we need to use this pressure as a starting point, and use multiple lines of pressure at once against Tehran.

The administration has framed its engagement with Iran as a step-by-step diplomatic dance, with an ascending scale of confrontation. Sanctions and financial pressure come in the middle of that dance—after engagement and before other options (presumably military). Aside from giving Iran more time by dismissing the diplomatic engagement that occurred before January 2009, this framework constrains the administration's ability to think about financial pressure as one part of a much broader campaign, with multiple approaches pursued simultaneously, to build leverage against the regime. Such leverage could help at the negotiating table or could lead to regime change. But the mullahs know the steps to this dance, and their diplomatic maneuvers (such as making insincere offers of negotiations, with unrealistic conditions attached, that the administration will have to follow up on) can buy them more time. The strategic ambiguity of "all options on the table" is undermined by the tactical predictability of the Obama administration's strategy.

Most troubling, the administration has seen a potential dialogue with the regime as a goal in and of itself. This way of thinking has foreclosed opportunities to build multiple sources of leverage. A case in point: the administration's muted response to the Green Movement opposing last year's fraudulent election. Obama's temporizing made clear that he saw the movement as a complication to be avoided rather than a strategic opportunity.

We should pursue our Iran policy on three separate tracks simultaneously. Our approach should attempt to (a) slow the Iranian nuclear clock, (b) create and exacerbate fissures within the Iranian regime and Iranian society, and (c) build other forms of leverage that could affect the regime's decision-making and enhance our credibility with allies. Here's how:

- Build on the momentum of our financial-pressure campaign, highlighting Iran's deceptive business practices, and anything the IRGC does to control the Iranian economy, by all available means, including Treasury advisories suggesting

caution when dealing with certain entities, designations of firms as terrorist-affiliated, public hearings in Congress or other bodies, and private meetings with commercial actors still doing business with Iran. The Treasury should threaten and enforce sanctions on any entity doing business with the IRGC or the 16 designated Iranian banks. This could be followed by the designation of Iran and its central bank as "primary money laundering concerns" under section 311 of the Patriot Act, signaling to the international financial community not to trust any Iranian commercial activity. The United States does not need the U.N. to do this. Indeed, the U.S. Treasury added German-based European-Iranian Trade Bank AG to its blacklist just last week. The continued disengagement by international companies, the growing role of the IRGC in Iran's economy, and growing dread of potential military conflict will feed private-sector flight from Iran. A similar approach was quite effective in choking off North Korea's illicit global business activities in 2005.

- Bolster the flagging Green Movement with a full-throated human-rights campaign against the Iranian regime—ideally led by human-rights NGOs. Such a campaign could be a means to protect and empower dissidents. Perhaps with breathing space enabled by international scrutiny, the movement can regain its footing, thus forcing the regime to defend itself on another front.

- Promote digital dissidents by providing the technology necessary to circumvent Iran's Internet controls and its attempts to undercut the opposition's communications. The administration has started on this path by allowing general licenses for the export of some technology to Iran, but the campaign must be more active—a 21st-century Berlin airlift to facilitate the movement of information in both directions across Iran's borders. The United States should generously fund the Falun Gong's Global Internet Freedom Consortium, which has provided dissidents around the world with technologies to circumvent state controls, and creatively enlist the participation of the

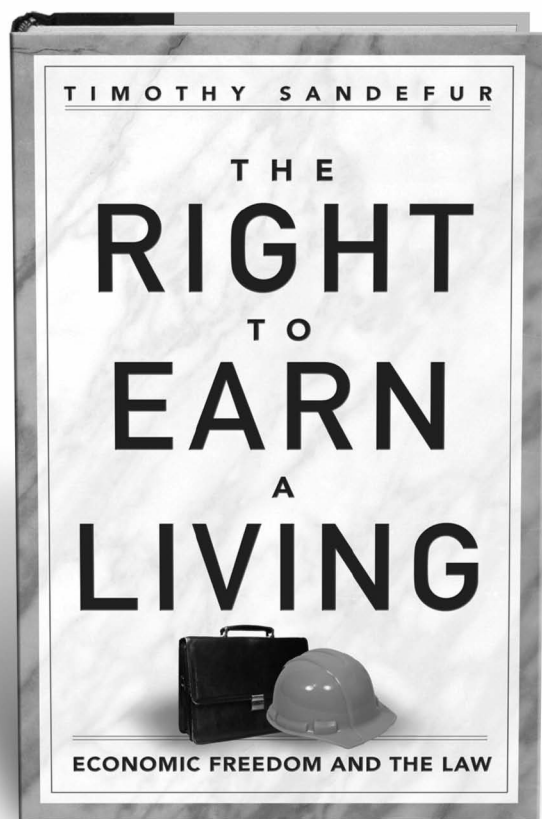
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Iranian-American community. This would give real meaning to Secretary Clinton's Internet-freedom agenda and momentum to the democracy activists in and out of Iran.

- In concert with interested international partners, threaten the mullahs and the IRGC with an international hunt for assets owned by regime leaders, as a complement to existing sanctions on those leaders. The Iranian regime and security establishment have made fortunes off the people of Iran. A focus on assets held outside of Iran by the regime's key leaders, and the accompanying exposure of corruption and kleptocracy, would threaten both those leaders' legitimacy and their finances. It could also make certain regime members more willing to cut deals with us and influence decisions internally in the direction of de-escalation.

- Promote international scrutiny on Iran's support for terrorist proxies and militias, despite international disagreement about labeling groups like Hezbollah and Hamas terrorists. The United States should request that the U.N. committees responsible for dealing with terrorism—in particular the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267 al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee—report on Iranian support for the Taliban and explain what the Iranians are doing with senior al-Qaeda leadership in Iran. Highlighting Iran's terrorist sponsorship will make it harder for the regime to continue that support and underscore the danger of nuclear terrorism and proliferation should Iran acquire atomic weapons.

- Maintain a credible military option, as the Bipartisan Policy Center has recently recommended. This will keep the possibility of force in the mind of the Iranian regime and reassure our allies. Credible demonstrations of U.S. military reach, such as naval exercises, become important as we push the international community to take more difficult steps—and perhaps ask the Israelis not to attack Iranian nuclear sites.

Engagement with Iran works only when we are dealing from a position of strength. With the clock ticking and concerns over an Israeli strike rising, we must deploy a multidimensional strategy. The financial-pressure campaign is a strong cornerstone for those efforts, but it's only a start. To stop Iran from building nuclear weapons, we must use every weapon at our disposal.

NR

Dim Idea

*Why must officialdom declare war
on my bathroom?*

BY ROB LONG

ARRIVING late one night into Tokyo, I checked into my hotel room to discover the world's most complicated toilet.

There were hoses and nozzles where hoses and nozzles probably shouldn't be, and along the side there was an alarming set of button and switches, which made the entire contraption look like a neat freak's electric chair.

But, you know, when in Rome, right?

It's difficult to convey, in a magazine dedicated to the higher pursuits of political philosophy and national renewal, just how fantastic the Japanese toilet was. It's impossible, especially, within the civilized parameters set by the editors and their assistants, to describe what a revelation it was—after a few eye-popping mishaps with the electric controls and one of the smaller nozzles—to discover that there were still things to perfect about an act we've all come to take for granted, still improvements to be made on the entire system, and that the Japanese had done it.

On the other hand, it uses an awful lot of water, at least the way I adjusted the settings. In addition to the water in the toilet itself, there's the additional water for all of those clever nozzles—you can set the pressure for each of them, but I learned the hard way that it's best not to be a hero.

By the end of my trip to Japan, I had already located an American dealer. It's an expensive unit, but I like to think I'm worth it. Also, it took me the entire week to make it through the user's manual, and once I've put in that kind of time on a gadget, I like to get my money's worth.

So, my beloved Japanese toilet now finds itself ensconced in my bathroom—look, this is going to get personal, okay?—near my shower, which sports a sunflower-sized showerhead, which rains buckets and buckets of soothing water onto the bather, the entire room lit by hot-burning incandescent bulbs with 100 watts apiece of wake-up brightness.

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My bathroom, in other words—which to me represents the pinnacle of easy livin', the perfect intersection of raw technological innovation and empathetic human understanding—is an environmentalist's nightmare. My dazzling and profuse showerhead, which turns a morning ritual into a moment of Zen, and my complex, computer-chipped, nozzled toilet, and the bright bulbs that give it all a clarity and visual snap—all of them are in the crosshairs of the eco-police. All of them are doomed.

The light bulbs are the first to go. The last major incandescent-light-bulb factory in America, in Winchester, Va., is closing. When you remember that light bulbs are also the symbol of great ideas, sudden inspiration, entrepreneurial *Aha!* moments, the fact that the country of Thomas Edison no longer produces light bulbs is a sad metaphor. Maybe we no longer produce light-bulb moments, either. A compact-fluorescent bulb flickering to life above the head of a cartoon character doesn't feel the same.

By 2014, according to an absurd and indefensible act of Congress—and this one passed in 2007, so it's not Obama's fault for once—the kind of light bulbs that we all prefer—you know, the bright ones, the ones that actually illuminate rooms and objects—will be essentially banned and replaced by those awful Dairy Queen-looking things, the compact-fluorescent bulbs that bathe the world in a gauzy, dirty, yellow haze. It's sick-room lighting, state-mental-hospital illumination—the kind of lights they used in East Germany to keep everyone sad and downcast.

The compact fluorescents are harder to manufacture—something about all of those twisty tubes—and if something is hard to make, it ends up getting made in China, which is where all of our light bulbs will come from by 2014.

And that's how the Chinese will win, of course. We'll all be squinting into the sick gray light

while they sneak in and take everything.

The only time I ever really lost my temper in a business setting—and there's no point in working in Hollywood if you don't throw a huge tantrum every now and then; exploders and fit-pitchers are not only tolerated out here, they're positively celebrated—was when the studio decided to install those awful light bulbs in some kind of ludicrous “green” initiative.

Working late became impossible—you couldn't actually see the script you were supposed to be rewriting. The minute the sun went down, it was as if we were working in an emergency zone, with flickering generator lamps lighting our job site.

I sent a polite memo to the studio facilities crew asking for the incandescents to be reinstalled. They sent a polite memo in reply denying that request—“The studio is committed to creating a green workplace”—and suggested that I just needed to let my “eyes adjust.”

I'd like to say that I handled this in a firm and civilized way, but I didn't. I went nuts. I marched over to the studio president's office and demanded that he spend the next evening in my office in the cold yellow haze and try to read a script printed in a twelve-point font. I yelled and threatened and shouted and screamed, which people do in Hollywood all the time for more money or a bigger trailer or a helicopter taxi, but rarely for better light bulbs.

In the end, they gave me back my light. But I knew the days of the incandescent were numbered. Workplaces all over America are going to get darker and even more depressing.

And now they're coming into my bathroom.

The Department of Energy regulates showerheads. Some of them, apparently, are too wasteful. My sunflower-sized rainmaker is on the list to be banned, as are the kinds that squirt water in all directions (those seem nice) and the kind that emit a steamy fog. In other words, if it somehow leavens the act of bathing, raising it up

from dull routine to a tiny glimpse of the spa lifestyle, well, the DoE is against it.

Manufacturers of such showerheads are being fined—this spring, the federal government fined four such companies a total of about \$150,000, just for making a showerhead that people want—and stern warnings are being sent out on Department of Energy letterhead.

To an environmental bureaucrat, the world looks better when it's dingier. Bright lights are too festive. Powerful showerheads are too luxurious. To maintain the proper downcast attitude, they want to make sure we're all a little less comfortable.

It's all about *less* with them. As far as the environmental movement is concerned, we're running out of everything—polar icecaps, sea turtles, crude oil—and the trick is to cut our appetites down to size, to stop wanting to stand under a gushing showerhead in a bright morning bathroom and think, *I can handle what's coming at me today.*

It's not about showerheads and wastage. It's about optimism. Either you think a more prosperous world is a good thing—that prosperity and ingenuity can solve most of our pressing problems—or you don't. Either you think that being able to afford an expensive showerhead is a component of a complicated web of incentives designed to inspire the next Thomas Edison to invent something useful—like, say, a battery-powered car or a brighter energy-saving light bulb—or you think that we're done, we've invented everything already and we need to divvy up a shrinking pie. For the Left, there are no light-bulb moments in the future.

In the Battle of the Bathroom, the environmental bureaucrats have the optimistic hedonists on the run. They've taken our bulbs and our rain-showers, so it's just a matter of time before they focus their regulatory powers on my toilet, with its delightfully surprising—but water-wasteful—nozzles and jets. This, perhaps, is where we need to take our (seated) stand. This is the line they must not cross. When they come to me with their regulations and federal guidelines, I will take a page from the National Rifle Association and say, “From my cold, dead . . .”

Well, you get the idea.

NR



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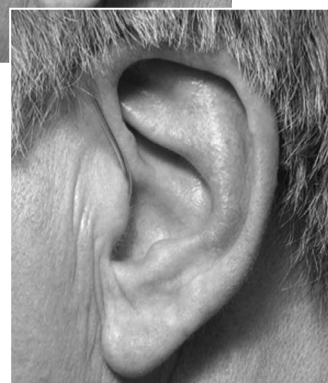
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Neutronic Ear	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes



The Great U-Turn

How demographic shifts and regulatory arbitrage turned the United States away from European socialism

BY JAMES C. BENNETT

ADMIRERS and detractors of the United States agree on one point: This country is unusually resistant to the social consensus and set of structures broadly known as “social democracy” or “progressivism.” (Social democracy leans more toward state ownership, progressivism toward state regulation.) Various versions of such schemes have prevailed in Western Europe and Japan, and to a lesser degree in Britain, Canada, and Australia. The characteristics include a wider scope and role for the state, centralization of decision-making in a national bureaucracy, monopolization of power by a set of large institutions, including state-champion corporations and labor unions, and a wide variety of social entitlements for all citizens. This was the classic progressive economic program; since the 1960s, it has also included certain social characteristics, such as official multiculturalism.

Most of these measures were characteristic of some parts of Continental Western Europe from the late 19th century onward, and became generally prevalent there after the Second World War. The English-speaking countries lagged well behind; Britain began to adopt welfarist policies and admit labor unions to the domestic power system before the First World War, but moved to full entitlement systems and substantial state control of the economy only after 1945. Australia and New Zealand adopted entitlement systems early, using their agricultural and mineral export earnings

as petro-states now use oil wealth, but remained socially conservative in many other ways. Canada was essentially similar to the U.S. in its domestic systems (despite some greater public ownership, mostly in transportation) until the 1960s. But by the end of the 1970s, America stood virtually alone in a world of seemingly universal consensus for a strong managerial state.

Optimistic progressives pointed to the accomplishments of the New Deal and the Great Society as evidence that the U.S. could and eventually would achieve their full agenda. Social Security was, after all, a universal welfare entitlement, even if it had to be disguised as insurance; Medicare was the seed of a socialized medical system. Many of the eastern and West Coast states had gone farther with the progressive agenda than the country at large. They were the richer and better-educated parts of the country, and were therefore beacons of the future.

Such a picture was credible through the end of the Great Society, and even through the Nixon administration. In fact, it was possible to see Nixon as the conservative rationalizer of the welfare state, the man who said, “We are all Keynesians now,” who imposed wage and price controls, and who created the regulation-extending Environmental Protection Agency. Any non-progressive features of his administration could be dismissed as electoral pandering to the rednecks, to be undone when genuine progressives returned to power.

And in 1976 it did appear that such an administration was at hand, with the election of James Earl Carter. When Carter gained the presidency over a wounded Republican party, he mistook his

Mr. Bennett is the author of The Anglosphere Challenge (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

ROMAN GENN

narrow victory for a mandate to continue moving along the track toward a European-style social democracy, building on Johnson's and Nixon's enhancements of centralized power. In this he was basically following the trajectory of Britain and Canada. Carter envisioned moving toward fully government-controlled medicine, a government-dominated energy sector enforcing strict rationing, and a federally dominated school system promoting governing-class values. In order to carry out his agenda, he created and entrenched two new cabinet bureaucracies, the Departments of Energy and of Education, and a wide variety of new pork and entitlement programs, such as the Comprehensive Education and Training Act and an expansion of the scandal-plagued Community Development Corporations.

Yet by the (unexpectedly hastened) end of his administration, these plans were in ruins. Most of the expansions of power he had envisioned had been forestalled or greatly circumscribed; the nation was engaging in widespread civil disobedience against measures such as the 55-mph national speed limit; and, to the surprise and horror of those who followed the prevailing intellectual consensus, Ronald Reagan had been chosen to take Carter's place. Although it wasn't fully appreciated at the time, Reagan's replacement of Carter marked a critical point (not the first, in fact, but the first generally noticed) of a great U-turn in American politics and society.

FOR decades—at a minimum, since the beginning of the Progressive Era, and arguably earlier—America had been on a course toward a more centralized society, one in which individualism as it had been understood since before the Founding—a society built on independent families living on their own properties, most of them farms—was being replaced by a different vision. The progressive vision was one of citizens as employees whose existence was mediated by negotiations among large corporations, unions, and government agencies. For such subjects, “rights” were to be a designated set of entitlements granted by those organizations.

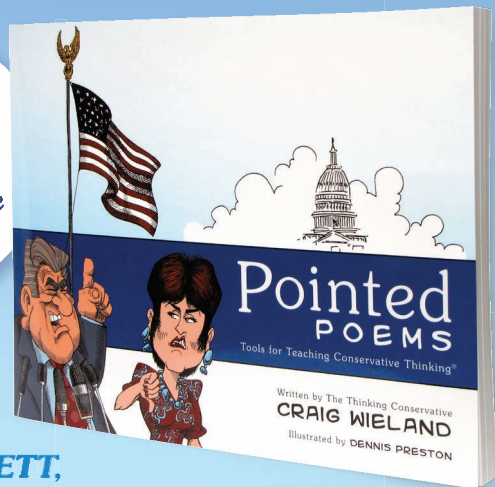
America had gone some distance down this road by 1980, although not as far as Canada or Britain, and nowhere near as far as Germany or France, which had never been all that laissez-faire in the first place. But 1980 marked the point at which the nation reversed course. Thenceforth it would be headed in the opposite direction, toward a new vision of individualism and decentralism, driven by the computer rather than the plow.

It was the defeat and frustration of the Carter administration's plans that made the U-turn, which would be long in unfolding, visible to perceptive observers. By objective standards, Reagan's domestic program was quite moderate and constrained, not really dismantling any major parts of the federal machine but merely slowing the rate of increase of federal non-defense spending. Reagan devoted the bulk of his attention to foreign affairs and to implementing his principal insight: He understood that one period of sustained pressure would be sufficient to cause the Soviet empire to collapse without a shot being fired, and he applied that pressure with the intended result.

In parallel, a set of explicitly deregulating and decentralizing developments had emerged, including the privatization of COMSAT (begun under Nixon), the legislative deregulation of the air-transport and freight-rail industries (done under Carter), and the court-ordered demise of the regulated telephone monopoly. The resulting drastic reductions in the price of rail

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freight, flying, and phone service made it substantially easier to do business nationwide, and indeed worldwide, independent of location. This was an often overlooked factor in the entrepreneurial takeoff and continuing decentralization of the Reagan years.

During World War II, Americans had accepted a great deal of regimentation for the sake of victory, but they made it clear that with the coming of peace they wanted something different. The Democratic party had controlled both houses of Congress from 1933 through 1946, voting reliably for the centralizing policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The first post-war election, in 1946, returned the Republicans to power in both houses.

The new Congress proceeded to undo most of the wartime controls and return the country to a more market-oriented economy, while keeping popular New Deal measures such as Social Security. Most important, in 1947 the 80th Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act over Truman's veto. This outlawed a number of abusive union practices, and in particular allowed states to forbid the practice of requiring employees to join unions.

Subsequently, the Eisenhower administration consolidated the social gains of the 80th Congress, meeting the defense, infrastructure, and economic challenges of the Cold War and restabilizing the country after decades of wrenching and traumatic experiences. Eisenhower also launched a series of initiatives that turned America from what had been, in effect, a continental empire, with a metropole and a quasi-colonial periphery, into a genuinely continental nation. Previously, the Northeastern–Great Lakes metropolitan core had dominated politics, finance, and manufacturing, while the western and southern states were primarily semi-colonial farming and mining regions. The interstate highway system and other advances, particularly the completion of transcontinental coaxial-cable networks (which permitted simultaneous distribution of television programs), direct-dial telephone networks, and expanded air transportation, allowed national activities to take place on a genuinely national scale and pace. A good marker for this transition can be seen in the timing and geography of the expansion of the major-league sports teams.

The final significant development was cheap air conditioning for homes, cars, and commercial buildings. Together with the transportation and communications improvements, air conditioning turned great reaches of the South, Southwest, and West into much easier places to live and work in, and integrated them more tightly into the national economy. As this happened, many western and southern states, where unions had always been weaker, began to pass right-to-work laws as permitted by Taft-Hartley. This created a virtuous circle whereby smaller and newer companies located or relocated in the right-to-work states, reinforcing the pressure for deregulatory and low-tax policies in those states and making them yet more attractive to companies and employees. It could almost be viewed as the last act of America's transcontinental settlement, in which the interior spaces of the Sunbelt were settled a second time upon the discovery of a new type of gold, this time an intangible one of policy advantage.

The effect of this pattern was to set up a national movement from the Northeast to the Sunbelt, a trend that had profound long-term electoral implications. The migration began to affect the distribution of congressional seats and electoral votes as early as the 1960 census, or even the 1950 census, given the substantial

movement of population to the West during and after the Second World War. Voters who chose to move to right-to-work states were generally more conservative than those who remained; thus, the shift in electoral votes and House seats to Sunbelt states began to give Republican candidates an edge over Democrats, and, within the Republican party, to give conservative candidates an edge over centrist and liberal ones.

Barry Goldwater's 1952 election as a Republican senator in historically Democratic-leaning Arizona was one of the first fruits of this shift, as was his nomination for president in 1964. Neither would have been likely to happen under the population distributions of 1940. Similarly, northern transplants to the Deep South were one factor in its transition from a predominantly Democratic region to a predominantly Republican one.

THIS suggests that the Great American U-Turn was due not so much to an inherent or essentialist explanation of American exceptionalism, but a circumstantial one. It was due to some specific characteristics of the American situation in the late 20th century, primarily geographical and technological, that permitted a large-scale inter-regional population shift. This in turn permitted the prescient work of the Founders, in their devotion to federalist principles, to set in motion a process of regulatory arbitrage that created a virtuous circle of deregulation and entrepreneurial vigor. These factors combined with the fortunate political developments of the 80th Congress, particularly the Taft-Hartley Act.

To apply the comparative method, it's worth examining the "socialism gap" between the United States and our closest cousins, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The last three are particularly useful examples, since all three shared the frontier and colonial experience that is so often cited as a principal source of our exceptionalism. To the extent we consider that these experiences shaped America's Founders, we must ask what the equivalent influence on the Canadian and Australian founders as well.

A snapshot of the English-speaking world in, say, 1945 would not have revealed any major gaps, political or practical, between its members in the matters of centralization, state control, and public acceptance of a directive state. Rather, there would have been a clear pattern of a slight lead in adoption of such mechanisms by Britain, with their adoption in the U.S. and Canada coming a decade or two later.

At the end of the 19th century, populist politicians in Australia and New Zealand had conducted a series of experiments in state-driven social-welfare and economic interventions. Both countries had small, homogeneous populations with a very limited set of prosperous industries in farming and natural-resource extraction, exporting mostly back to Britain. Their socialism was not the systematic socialism of latter-day German social democrats or the apocalyptic totalitarianism of Slavic Communists. Rather, it was a series of pragmatic experiments by a collection of somewhat dotty and colorful labor leaders and populist politicians, more Methodist than Marxist, wrapped up in "fair go" rhetoric.

Volatile international price swings, and the lack of effective market mechanisms to cope with them, inspired the establishment of commodity marketing boards; underdeveloped banking and housing sectors led to state provision of single-family houses in New Zealand; and again, the lack of effective capital markets

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The Unrelenting and Virulent Hatred of the Arabs

Will peace ever be possible under those conditions?

After more than sixty years of statehood, Israel is a lone outpost of Western civilization and its values. It is the staunchest ally of the United States in that part of the world – a bulwark of democracy. The Arab nations surrounding it are a swamp of terrorism, corruption, dictatorship, and human enslavement. But the hatred of the Arabs against Israel and against all Jews is so abiding and so virulent that peace, at least for the foreseeable future, seems unattainable and most unlikely.

What are the facts?

No **"sacrifice" will overcome the hatred.** There are those who still believe that the never-ending conflict between the Arabs and the Jews could be settled if the Israelis were willing to bring greater "sacrifices for peace." Such "sacrifices" would include relinquishing ever-larger portions of their tiny country (less than half the size of San Bernardino County in California) to the Palestinians, dismantling the "settlements" in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), handing the Golan Heights to Syria, and allowing the "return of the refugees," a group that has grown miraculously from about 500,000 to somewhere around 5 million. The absorption of even a substantial fraction of them would signify the demographic end of the Jewish states.

Israel, ill-advisedly, vacated Gaza. It was rewarded with daily barrages of Qassam rockets. In the north, after Israel had abandoned its southern Lebanon buffer zone, Hizbollah (the "Army of God") launched the second "Lebanon War." It must now be clear to even the most confirmed "doves" that nothing that Israel could do, any further "sacrifice" that Israel would be prepared to bring, would satisfy the Arabs. The sad but irrefutable conclusion is that only the complete disappearance of Israel, the excision of this "cancer" could satisfy the Arabs and most of the Muslim world.

Mortal hatred and the "Big Lie." The "Big Lie," invented by the notorious Joseph Goebbels of Nazi infamy, is a mainstay of Arab hatred and propaganda. In Egypt and Jordan (the two Arab countries technically at peace with Israel), government-controlled news sources published that Israel had distributed drug-laced chewing gum and candy to kill children and to make

"Israel's only course...is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence...and not to be inhibited...to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country."

women sexually corrupt. The Jews (Israelis) are being accused of having introduced foot-and-mouth disease in the Middle East. The age-old calumny of Jews using the blood of Christian and Muslim children in order to bake their Passover matzos is alive and well in Arab publications. Translations of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" are steady best-sellers in all Arab countries. Among other malevolent fabrications, it accuses "international Jewry" of "limitless ambition, inexhaustible greed, and hatred beyond imagination." Schools, streets and plazas are named after notorious murderers of Jews.

In the controlled Arab press, Holocaust denial and accusation of the Zionists having been in cahoots with the German Nazis are regular features. Egypt's government-sponsored *Al Akhbar* newspaper has expressed fervent thanks to Adolf Hitler for having taken advance revenge on the "vilest criminals on the face of the earth." Still, it berated him for not having been thorough enough in his task of extermination. The Arabs do not consider Israel a normal country, but a creation of the devil, an excrescence, a malignant force of aggressors, murderers, infidels and barbarians. It should be destroyed, for the glory of God, no matter what sacrifices that might entail.

Mortal hatred against Israel and against the Jews is taught to Arab children from the very first grade. Children are encouraged to sacrifice themselves as martyrs and to become suicide bombers and human missiles, with promises that Paradise with unimaginable pleasures awaits those who sacrifice themselves in the holy cause of killing Jews.

This bottomless hatred, a hatred that pervades the Arab world in all strata of society and is incessantly fomented by Arab governments, including those supposed to be "at peace" with Israel, cannot be assuaged by negotiation or by making any further "sacrifices for peace." Nothing will suffice, except the destruction of Israel. The Arab states, having been unable in over sixty years and in many wars to defeat and exterminate the Jews, are now feverishly arming themselves with "conventional weapons" (easily purchased from the West, including, sad to say, from the United States), and are ardently pursuing the development of weapons of mass annihilation. Just as the suicide bombers do not vacillate to sacrifice themselves, one can safely expect that, once in possession of such weapons, the Arabs will not hesitate to sacrifice millions of their own people in order to destroy Israel. Israel's only course in the face of this almost certain prospect is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence and, as it once did in the destruction of the Iraqi atomic reactor at Osirak in 1981, not to be inhibited by "international opinion" to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country.

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encouraged state entrepreneurship in railway construction. Social- and medical-insurance schemes and old-age pensions pyramided on high childbirth rates, and employers could pass their costs along to their British customers under the wing of Imperial tariff preferences.

Of course, Marxist intellectuals such as those in the Fabian Society were happy to use the results, real or imagined, as an argument for their kind of comprehensive, ideological socialism. However, for many more in Britain, they just sounded like a set of commonsense measures that delivered results. The experience of the First World War seemed to validate this perception. The divisions of robust, healthy Australian and New Zealand troops that had come to their rescue in the grim middle years of trench warfare stood in contrast to the high percentage of conscripts from Britain's industrial slums who were rejected as physically unfit. All those family allowances, free daily rations of milk for schoolchildren, and state-provided cricket fields seemed a plausible explanation.

"One-Nation Conservatives" as well as liberals and leftists were moved to accept a broader degree of state intervention as a result. This came on the heels of the Victorian reformation of mores, which had included a social conscience that led to amelioration of the Dickensian misery of the slums. These trends were also present in the U.S., but less universally.

were undone in the Thatcher revolution a few decades later. Of all the post-war nationalizations, only that of the health-care system proved to be an enduring political success, and it was the one most ardently envied by the American Left. British socialism was, overall, more Bismarckian than Leninist.

In 1945, it was quite possible that America would soon follow Britain in many of its key social initiatives. Harry Truman is today remembered primarily for his assertive foreign policy. Many forget or ignore that in economics he was a hard-core New Dealer who was firmly in favor of regulation, mandatory union membership, and nationalized health care. It was only after the 80th Congress turned America back onto a more private and decentralized path, while the Labour government put Britain on the path of centralization and welfarism, that a substantial divergence appeared. Even then, the United States's lag was seen by progressives as merely temporary, to be corrected as soon as progressive government was restored.

In 1962, the Canadian province of Saskatchewan created a mandatory, universal government-run medical-insurance scheme, although only after a bitter battle that included a 23-day doctors' strike. Other provinces quickly followed suit, and by 1966 Canada had formally established by federal action a comprehensive, state-controlled medical system. Meanwhile, with his huge congressional majorities elected in 1964, Lyndon Johnson enacted

The vociferous and widespread opposition to the Obama agenda suggests that the U-turn is part of a long-term transition.

The Second World War placed Britain under extreme pressure in terms of food and fuel resources, finance, and manpower, both military and industrial. Its response was an extremely high degree of mobilization, including conscription, rationing, and tight planning and control of all economic and industrial matters. This control was generally accepted in the name of wartime necessity, accompanied by a sense that the privation and intrusion were more acceptable because they were shared equally. At the end of the war, this translated into support for the Labour party and its program of a welfare state and state ownership or control of major industries.

The post-war Labour government undertook one of the most sweeping institutional and structural changes ever imposed by peaceful electoral politics in the English-speaking world, particularly in the creation of the welfare state. Yet for all the atmospherics, the actual amount of nationalization was limited to the commanding heights of the old "first industrial revolution" sector, plus health care. The railway companies were acquired, but the railways had been so debilitated by wartime damage and deferred maintenance that massive capitalization was needed to modernize them. It's likely that such rebuilding would have been state-financed, and therefore state-controlled, under a Conservative government as well.

The coal industry was nationalized as a payoff to the miners' union. The steel industry was quasi-nationalized through a coordinating entity that eventually came to be called British Steel. Steel nationalization was undone quickly by Churchill's returning Conservatives in the early 1950s; rail and steel nationalization

Medicare. Many on the left thought this would soon be expanded to a general state-funded medical system. Yet no significant movement was made in that direction until the Obama administration's legislation of this year, which still falls well short of either the British or the Canadian model. For a brief moment after the electoral triumph of the Left in 2008, it seemed as if the U-turn might be turned again. But the vociferous and widespread opposition to the Obama agenda suggests that the U-turn is part of a long-term transition and is not likely to be reversed by short-term politics.

Had Truman or Lyndon Johnson been able to push through a similar British- or Canadian-style agenda in their times, the new institutions and arrangements would have immediately appealed to a substantial bloc of the electorate, particularly unionized employees of large corporations, who would have constituted a substantial lobby for the entrenchment, protection, and expansion of those institutions and benefits. By 2009, this bloc was substantially smaller and weaker, and it has had to expend substantial amounts of its political capital merely to stay alive. The entrepreneurial companies, the self-employed, and small businesses that do not benefit from, but rather are penalized by, this agenda are conversely stronger.

ONE way to think about the U-turn is to look at an alternative history that was proposed and advocated, but never came to pass. By the 1880s, Britain had seen its share of world manufacturing decline significantly from its mid-century high-water mark of half the world's output. A great deal of the



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difference was a result of the rapidly growing output of the U.S. and Germany. At this time Germany was barely a decade old as a state, having united only in 1871, while the U.S. had preserved and deepened its unity just six years before that. It seemed as if the prevailing worldwide trend was the merger of smaller entities into large ones. Little Britain seemed destined to be permanently surpassed by the newer, larger, more vigorous unions.

Yet an alternative beckoned alluringly. While the world's attention had been fixed on the Americans' sprint to populate their part of the continent, their fellow onetime British subjects to the north had achieved an equally remarkable feat. From being in 1783 a dumping ground for dispossessed American loyalists, Canada had achieved its own coast-to-coast settlement, becoming a self-governing dominion in 1867 and completing a transcontinental railroad by 1885. Australia began in an even more inauspicious fashion as a penal colony in 1788, but grew to a self-governing continental federation by 1901. New Zealand quickly followed suit, while on yet another continent the gold-rush crowds of the 1890s seemed to be in the process of rapidly outnumbering the Dutch settlers of South Africa with restless Britons.

With this background, a group of Victorians, both British and colonial, began to dream of a globe-spanning Imperial Federation under the Crown, uniting Britain and all of its colonies of settlement into a global federal state, governed by a single Imperial Parliament, and able to operate on the same scale as the U.S., Germany, and Russia. Taken singly, Britain and its colonies amounted to, respectively, no more than a small island with a shrinking share of the global economy and a collection of scattered deserts and forests sparsely populated by a handful of settlers. Taken together, they might be a functionally equivalent (if more widely scattered) version of the U.S. (Britain equaling the Northeast, Canada the Midwest and Northwest, Australia the Southwest and California), wanting only a set of American-style federal institutions to keep pace with America and Germany. It just needed some Founding Fathers to bring it into existence.

Historian Duncan Bell has called this "one of the most audacious political projects of modern times." It was the political equivalent of the visionary engineering of Isambard Brunel and the other great Victorian engineers. In a world of crawling stagecoaches, painfully constructed stone-arch bridges, and wooden ships at the mercy of the winds, Brunel saw broad-gauge trains steaming at a mile a minute, iron spans crossing wide estuaries, and steamships that amounted to vast floating cities bridging the oceans and linking continents in safety and comfort. Brunel turned his visions into reality, but the Victorian political visionaries saw only a shadow of their dreams come to pass, in the form of what came to be known as the British Commonwealth.

The reasons their dream never became real are varied. While the voluntary Commonwealth worked well, it seemed unnecessary, and when the voluntary system became inadequate, it was too late to build a federal solution. Other options became more attractive, such as working out separate national deals with the United States. Finally, Britain itself was beguiled by the alternative of European unification. Its 1961 application to join the European Economic Community, which signaled a willingness to disrupt trade ties with its Commonwealth partners, came as a shattering blow. Gradually, the existing ties—particularly the common citizenship and ease of personal movement between dominions—were extinguished.

Ironically, then, just as the United States was knitting together

its quasi-colonial outlying regions into a true nation by means of jet aviation, simultaneous national broadcasting, direct dialing, the interstate highway system, and air conditioning, the Commonwealth was shrinking its horizons by terminating common citizenship and restricting freedom of movement. Jet aviation, television broadcasting, and geosynchronous satellites (again ironically, all invented or co-invented by Britons) were finally promising the technical means to realize the premature vision of the old Imperial Federationists, just as the last few political ties that remained from that dream were being severed.

Had the full federalist vision been realized, an Imperial Federation would have been subject to the same decentralist pressures as was the United States. It would have been difficult at best to apply a single, centralized administration in such a polity to the extent needed for progressive planned economies, and cheap, unrestricted movement between its components would have undercut extremes of taxation by those units. Perhaps the most important effect would have been psychological: the sense, always present, of broad lands overseas that were there as a potential, whether you chose to exercise the option of migrating or not. Kipling, a fan of Greater Britain, wrote lovingly in the 1890s of "the far-flung fenceless prairie / Where the quick cloud-shadows trail." Even in 1953, Nevil Shute's futurist novel *In the Wet* pictured a Commonwealth in 1980 linked by jet aviation and common citizenship, to the consternation of British socialist politicians.

TODAY, a wave of privatization and deregulation throughout the English-speaking world and beyond has narrowed the socialism gap between the U.S. and its Anglosphere cousins, with the primary exception of health care. Canada and Britain have privatized their state-owned railways and many other industries. In some areas, such as air-traffic control and airport operation, it is the U.S. that is the socialist relic. Conservative governments in Britain and Canada have announced intentions to reduce the size of the state. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is seeking to close the socialism gap by expanding the American state, having already made a start in health care and, supposedly temporarily, auto manufacturing.

Yet no sooner had Obama and his supporters started down this road than the decentralized nature of post-U-turn America threw roadblocks in their path. Diverse "new media" prevented the administration from flooding the discussion zone with a uniform message and provided a channel for organizing protests, leading to the tea-party movement. Resurgent state governments have filed suit to overturn Obamacare, and perhaps shrink the scope of the Commerce Clause in the process. If successful, these suits could be as momentous a development as the Taft-Hartley Act.

The American U-turn, despite Obama, seems well established, in contrast to the tentative movement to shrink the British state and revisit the increasingly problematic decision to join the European Union. Obama came to office hoping to found the New New Deal, but America is no longer the America of FDR. A combination of the Founders' gift of a fundamentally decentralist Constitution and the sheer elbow room of the American continent appears to be pointing us to a third era in American history, taking the technological and civil-rights gains of the second, centralized, industrial era, but returning to the decentralized and diverse community vision of the Founding.

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Obama's U.N. RECORD

Surprise: It's not what it was supposed to be

BY JOHN BOLTON

BARACK OBAMA will make his second address as president to the opening of the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, and engage in the customary ceremonies, social events, and consultations with other heads of government. Twenty months into the tenure of our most multilateral president, what has he accomplished at the U.N.? The short answer: not much.

As with so much of the Obama administration, this U.N. thing isn't turning out like it was supposed to. Initially, of course, the anticipation in New York was little short of euphoric. The General Assembly's president, Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, a Marxist priest from Nicaragua, opined: "I didn't think I would live to see the day when you had such a really reasonable and constructive attitude on the part of [America's] leadership." Anticipating the arrival of Susan Rice as Obama's U.N. ambassador, former deputy secretary general Mark Malloch-Brown said in February 2009: "I detect there is huge excitement about Susan's arrival, and you know some of the most difficult countries are quite willing to lie on their backs and have their tummies tickled."

Obama's September 2009 speeches at the U.N. were certainly full of tummy-tickling. Addressing a General Assembly presided over by former Libyan foreign minister Ali Abdessalam Triki, Obama said, "It is my deeply held belief that in the year 2009—more than at any point in human history—the interests of nations and peoples are shared. . . . We must embrace a new era of engagement." He went on: "In an era when our destiny is shared, power is no longer a zero-sum game. No one nation can or should try to control another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. No balance of power among nations will hold."

Beyond the speech's boundless egotism ("For those who question the character and cause of my nation, I ask you to look at the concrete actions we have taken in just nine months"), the real message for Turtle Bay was: "We've also reengaged the United Nations. . . . And we address our priorities here, in this institution—for instance, through the Security Council meeting that I will chair tomorrow on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament." Of course, that Security Council get-together was a meaningless charade, as French president Nicholas Sarkozy rightly complained, but Obama's penchant for theater over action is basic to his governance.

On and on Obama's speech went, but, from the U.N. perspective, he had already made his main point: "We address

our priorities here, in this institution." And with what result?

In matters most directly threatening to America and its allies—the nuclear-weapons programs of Iran and North Korea—the U.N. has performed no better than it did during the Bush administration. Indeed, Obama's U.N. strategy regarding Iran and North Korea has not been much different from Bush's in his last two years. Neither has been successful. Under Obama, Security Council sanctions against North Korea were ratcheted up marginally after its second nuclear test in 2009, but the Council has otherwise been invisible on this issue. After a two-year-plus hiatus on Iran, it imposed a fourth round of sanctions in June 2010, but there is no evidence they have materially impeded Iran's ongoing weapons program.

The main diplomatic fora dealing with the rogue states still lie outside the Security Council, in the "perm five plus one" for Iran and the "six-party talks" for North Korea. Thus, despite Obama's proclamation about where the United States will address its priorities, the Council gets no more love in the crunch cases from him than it did from Bush's unilateralist cowboys. To be sure, there is blind faith in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its capacity to preclude, say, spent nuclear fuel at Iran's Bushehr reactor from being diverted to weapons purposes, and thus greater risk to the United States. But the IAEA is not a central player, and despite Obama's evident joy at chairing a Security Council meeting, its famous chamber will be dark and empty when the truly important nonproliferation decisions are made.

PERHAPS Obama's most visible embrace of multilateralism was his helter-skelter return to the U.N.'s "human rights" scene. These U.N. activities are much like academic politics, bitter because they mean so little in real-world consequences even though the symbolic stakes are immense. While scientific rigor in international affairs is next to impossible, Obama's U.N. human-rights policy is the Platonic ideal of a knee-jerk reaction, revealing his ideological proclivity toward unfocused engagement, bereft of strategic or even tactical logic.

Obama's first mistake was announcing immediately after his inauguration that the United States would join preparations for the 2009 "World Conference Against Racism," known as "Durban II" after the South African city that hosted its 2001 predecessor. Durban I denounced Israel as racist and was, just below the surface, profoundly anti-American. Then—secretary of state Colin Powell, announcing the withdrawal of the U.S. delegation in protest, rightly stressed that Durban I was "a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism'" that we would not dignify with our presence. In later years, the U.S. walkout was routinely cited as evidence of Bush-administration unilateralism. Durban II, coming just months after Bush left office, was therefore widely seen as an important signal of how his successor would treat multilateral affairs.

Contradicting Powell, Mary Robinson, Durban II's secretary general (and former U.N. high commissioner for human rights), said Durban I's outcome was "remarkably good, including on the issues of the Middle East." Obama soon realized, however, with Canada withdrawing and several EU nations planning to do the same, that he had been too hasty: Durban II's planned endorsement of Durban I's anti-Israel rant wasn't going to change. Accordingly, with obvious regret, Obama cut his losses, announcing in February 2009 that he was pulling out. The

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Susan Rice, U.S. ambassador to the U.N.

reaction was predictable. High commissioner for human rights Navi Pillay said, “I am shocked and deeply disappointed by the United States’ decision not to attend.” U.S. congresswoman Barbara Lee, a California Democrat, said, “This decision is inconsistent with the administration’s policy of engaging with those we agree with and those we disagree with.”

Recognizing it had stubbed its toe, the Obama administration immediately tried to recover by announcing that the United States would seek election to the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC). (In addition, Obama later awarded Mary Robinson the Medal of Freedom.) Created by the General Assembly in March 2006 to replace its utterly discredited predecessor, the HRC in just three years had compiled an odious record fully justifying Bush’s decisions to vote against its creation and then not to join. Ambassador Rice trumpeted: “We believe that working from within, we can make the council a more effective forum to promote and protect human rights,” and in May 2009 Washington won a three-year term.

Obama has subsequently watched Cuba attain the vice chairmanship of the HRC, and Libya become a proud member. Iran has thus far been frustrated in its desire to be elected, but was instead recently rewarded with a seat on the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.

And the anti-Israel bias continues unabated. While Obama was receiving the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, the HRC was voting overwhelmingly to accept the Goldstone Report on Operation Cast Lead, Israel’s 2008–09 Gaza incursion. The report lacerated Israel, concluding chillingly that if Israel and the Palestinian Authority didn’t conduct full investigations, the International Criminal Court should take up the issue. The HRC resolution was even harsher, provoking Goldstone to say he was “saddened” it contained “not a single phrase condemning Hamas as we have done in the report.” Twenty-five of the HRC’s 47 members (including Russia and China) voted in favor of the resolution, and only six (including the United States) voted “No.” Sixteen either abstained or did not vote, including our allies Britain, France, Japan, and South Korea.

The Goldstone pattern was repeated in the wake of the May 31, 2010, Gaza-flotilla confrontation, where the HRC voted two days after the incident to conduct another investigation of Israel. This time the vote was even worse: 32 in favor, three opposed (United States, Italy, Netherlands), and twelve abstaining or not

voting (again including Britain, France, Japan, and South Korea). One can easily imagine what this latest report will say. Moreover, even after the Obama administration browbeat Israel into accepting a separate inquiry by a panel appointed by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the HRC investigation continued. That’s what “fair and balanced” means at the U.N.: two panels, one biased, one supposedly not.

Contemporaneously with the Gaza vote, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty’s pentennial-review conference was wrapping up at U.N. headquarters. Obama’s negotiators agreed to a text that, among other bad ideas, called for a meeting no later than 2012 (i.e., during Obama’s presidency) on eliminating weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East. Innocuous on the surface, the conference’s not-so-hidden agenda will be to demonize Israel for its nuclear-weapons program (long one of the world’s worst-kept secrets). The administration accepted this outcome, but later criticized the anti-Israel passages. Those unfamiliar with arcane U.N. procedures probably missed the point that Obama could have blocked adoption of any language to which he objected. To accept the document but complain about it later is at best hypocritical; “cowardly” would be a more precise description. Of course, standing by Israel, consistently with past administrations Democratic and Republican, would have roiled the review conference’s smooth waters, which explains the ease with which Obama threw our ally to the sharks.

In 2006, one reform being considered was to “audit” candidates for the HRC to help keep known human-rights violators off. That proposal, like many others, disappeared, and was replaced by a requirement that *all* U.N. members’ human-rights records be subject to quadrennial review and that a country under review file a report on itself. As with Obama’s U.N. speeches, the first U.S. report, submitted in August, reads like an advertisement for his administration: Before Jan. 20, 2009, circumstances were grim, but now, “look, the land is bright.” In fact, even filing such a report abases America in a senseless exercise in moral equivalency, but one typical of the U.N., where, above all else, all nations are “equal.” The right approach would have been to refuse to file the report, just as we never should have sought election to the HRC itself.

SOME U.N. events that, at first glance, seem inconsequential or merely silly often mean real trouble ahead. For example, Rice said this April she was “pleased to announce that the United States has decided to review our position” on the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This document could create legal chaos if it were ever translated into binding law, which is why most governments will never take it seriously. But because the United States does take treaties seriously, our risk is far from trivial. Here, we have arduously worked through the rights of Indian tribes and later settlers, and have essentially reached legal certainty. Even if the outcome is unsatisfying, there are democratic ways to debate the issue far superior to feel-good but amorphous treaty phrases that no one fully understands and that could well disadvantage innumerable living Americans no matter who their ancestors. Consider that, a few months later, Secretary Clinton gave approval for members of the Iroquois Confederacy’s “national” lacrosse team to travel to an international playoff in Great Britain using “passports” issued by the Confederacy. Ironically, the team was unable to travel to the

tournament because, saving us from ourselves, the British government had the wit to say it recognized passports only from real countries. Perhaps someone could clue the State Department in as it reconsiders our position on the Declaration.

One of Obama's clearest aims in advancing "global governance" is drawing the United States ever more deeply into the International Criminal Court (ICC). Secretary Clinton lamented last year, as a "great regret," that "we are not yet a signatory" to the treaty creating the ICC. In Rice's first Security Council speech, she said the ICC "looks to be an important and credible instrument for trying to hold accountable the senior leadership responsible for atrocities committed in the Congo, Uganda, and Darfur." More recently, the administration participated in negotiations among ICC members to define the crime of "aggression," and lost on almost every key point. Despite Obama's affection for the ICC, fierce congressional opposition still limits his ambition.

Bureaucratically, the administration argues that Rice's cabinet status indicates its seriousness about the U.N. But having two cabinet officers in the same department is at best a distraction and at times a real problem. There can be confusion within State and the administration generally about the sources of authority, duplicative and perhaps conflicting decision-making channels, and the prospect for confused and divided loyalties. By her own admission, Rice's rank requires her to spend considerable time in Washington, diverting her both from her New York duties and from the time a U.N. ambassador would in any case legitimately spend in Washington on U.N. policy matters. Her priorities in New York have included participating in a U.N. meeting on the issue of texting while driving, not heretofore considered a major international focus for the U.N., and joining with the Russian ambassador to issue a "global call to end distracted driving." However, on U.N. reform, an issue of real importance to Congress and taxpayers, Rice and Obama have been AWOL. During the Clinton administration, one of the five ambassadorial positions in the U.S. mission was assigned exclusively to U.N. management and budget issues, an arrangement continued during the Bush administration. Under Obama, however, no one has been successfully nominated to fill that slot for 20 months and counting. This omission alone tells other U.N. members and the secretariat that good management, sound budgeting, and continuing reform are essentially irrelevant to the administration.

U.S. support for anti-corruption activities within the U.N. has evaporated. Inga-Britt Ahlenius, who in July left her post as head of the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), received no public support from the Obama administration. Nothing was done to save the highly successful task force, created in 2006, that uncovered hundreds of millions of dollars in contract fraud. It was defunded in 2009, its investigators let go and its hard-charging leader denied a position within the OIOS, despite vigorous opposition from Ahlenius. The United States stood by and watched it happen.

Moreover, the Obama administration paid the entire U.S. accumulated arrearages of assessed U.N. contributions, and got exactly nothing in exchange. Congress had created these arrearages to exert leverage for reform over the U.N., by showing that the U.N.'s largest funder would not simply acquiesce in continued poor performance, waste, and outright fraud. All of that leverage is now gone. On March 11, 2009, in a meeting with House Foreign Affairs Committee members, Ban Ki-moon called the United States a "deadbeat," but this caused nary a ripple at the

U.S. mission. In fact, it has been Britain, even under Gordon Brown, not the United States, that has recently led the charge for U.N. budget restraint; and Britain and France that have sought to prevent expensive new U.N. peacekeeping forces without exit strategies, stressing political solutions to the underlying conflicts as an alternative to reflexively launched and open-ended troop deployments. Fraud and inefficiency continue, as well as widespread concerns about sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers of the very populations they are sent to protect.

GIVEN this dismal record, what can we expect from Obama's upcoming U.N. speech, and what lies ahead in the remainder of his presidency?

Obama will undoubtedly trumpet his "New START" arms-control treaty with Russia as a major step toward his "nuclear zero" goal, and repeat his 2009 pledges to negotiate further multilateral arms-control treaties in the U.N. Conference on Disarmament and have the Senate ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. New START, of course, is facing rising Senate opposition, and the other objectives look increasingly remote. Where Obama may try something new is to emphasize his support for an "Arms Trade Treaty," currently in the initial stages of negotiation, that could dramatically restrict the private ownership of firearms worldwide, despite the clear constitutional protections of our Second Amendment.

Numerous other questions remain. How will Obama try to recover on climate change from the wreckage of last year's Copenhagen Summit, a failure he in part precipitated by his unrealistic assurances that Congress would pass cap-and-trade legislation beforehand? This proposal is certainly dead for the remainder of 2010, and unlikely to be resurrected thereafter, as is the Law of the Sea Treaty, once an administration priority for Senate ratification this year, and a potential back-door way to justify climate-change regulation. In short, Obama has achieved little to satisfy those seeking massive government intervention and control over the economy on the basis of global warming.

One question consuming Turtle Bay is whether Ban Ki-moon will win a second term as secretary general next year. Although Ban has been rapped for being insufficiently assertive (meaning, in U.N.-speak, insufficiently challenging of Washington), no alternative candidates have emerged. Moreover, there is no sign of the sort of antipathy to Ban that characterized Madeleine Albright's view of Boutros Boutros-Ghali and resulted in his 1996 ouster by Kofi Annan after one term.

Perhaps the most surprising conclusion about Obama's U.N. record is how anemic it is. On the other hand, this is consistent with his minimal overall involvement in foreign and national-security policy, except when circumstances such as Iraq and Afghanistan present him with no seemingly alternative other than to engage. Whether this pattern of near-disdain for foreign affairs continues could largely depend on the outcome of November's elections. If Republicans prosper, Obama's domestic agenda will suffer considerably, at least where new legislation is required. As with many earlier presidents, gridlock at home may motivate him to concentrate on international matters, where he is far less constrained by opposition in Congress. Then, perhaps, we may well see the full-throated U.N. support so many of Obama's top aides advocate, and that our first post-American president still longs for.

NR

'Blood Was Every Color'

Tribal morality, Tuesdays at 10 P.M.

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

IN an early episode of *Sons of Anarchy*, a television series on FX entering its third season this month, Jackson "Jax" Teller reads a passage from his dead father's unpublished memoir. It's narrated in his father's voice: "First time I read Emma Goldman wasn't in a book. I was sixteen, hiking near the Nevada border. The quote was painted on a wall in red. When I saw those words it was like someone ripped them from the inside of my head."

The son finds the passage on a wall under a dilapidated bridge in the California desert. It reads: "Anarchism . . . stands for liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from shackles and restraint of government. It stands for social order based on the free grouping of individuals." The father's voice returns: "The concept was pure, simple, true. It inspired me, lit a rebellious fire. But ultimately I learned the lesson that Goldman, Proudhon, and the others learned: that true freedom requires sacrifice and pain. Most human beings only think they want freedom. In truth, they yearn for the bondage of social order, rigid laws, materialism. The only freedom man really wants is the freedom to become comfortable."

That's some heady stuff for a show that spends most of its time running from gun fights, bar fights, and fist fights to prison fights, porn studios, and strip clubs. But such are the mainstays of cable television these days. Everyone ooh'd and ah'd over the quasi-iambic pentameter in HBO's brilliant but short-lived *Deadwood*, but the series would never have been made without the whoring and gunslinging. *The Sopranos* didn't need the Bada Bing Club, but no doubt the flesh on display there helped sell the show in the first place. The hardest trick for good TV writers isn't plumbing the human condition or meditating on the eternal verities—some might say that's the easy part—it's finding a plausible reason to punctuate such rarefied fare with women spinning dervishly on chrome poles. (Get ready for some changes next season, Miss Marple!)

And that's where *Sons of Anarchy* comes in. It's not the best show on television. In my book, that title goes to AMC's *Breaking Bad*, though the critics would choose that *Pilgrim's Progress* of bourgeois materialism, *Mad Men*. But funny, prurient, violent, and rocket-paced, *Sons of Anarchy* is, in its own way, a contender.

The show has been widely described as "*Hamlet* on Harleys," and Kurt Sutter, its creator, has been upfront from the beginning that Shakespeare's tale of Danish royal intrigue provides the superstructure for the series. Charlie Hunnam—another one of those seemingly unlimited brilliant British actors no one realizes

is faking an American accent—plays Jax Teller, vice president of the club, son of the late John Teller and Gemma Teller (sublimely played by Katey Sagal, best known as Mrs. Al Bundy from *Married with Children*). Gemma is remarried to Clay Morrow (Ron Perlman, in easily his best human-faced role), the current president of the gang, which often goes by SAMCRO (Sons of Anarchy Motorcycle Club, Redwood Original Chapter). Perlman clearly enjoys the show's mix of high- and lowbrow. "It should be interesting as we move forward," he told an interviewer. "When you look at the fifth act of *Hamlet*, nobody gets out of that mother alive." The ghost of Jax/Hamlet's father is cleverly played by the manuscript he left behind, which chronicles how the club "lost its way."

FROM that premise, the cast spills out in all directions. There's Jax's love interest, a childhood sweetheart turned surgeon, played by Maggie Siff (perhaps best known as the Jewish department-store owner in *Mad Men*); Dayton Callie (*Deadwood*'s Charlie Utter) as the conflicted, cancer-ridden sheriff of Charming, Calif., the fictional town where the show takes place; and a host of oddball bikers, desperate wives, semi-abused children, Aryan thugs, Mexican *banditos*, Chinese gangsters, rogue federal agents, IRA henchmen, and (bada-bing!) porn stars.

SAMCRO, unapologetically inspired by the Hells Angels, is a thoroughly criminal operation. Members of the gang have legitimate day jobs for the most part—a mechanic or two here, a repo man there, an overweight Jewish Elvis impersonator, etc.—but the club makes its real money mostly by gunrunning, with some drug dealing and extortion on the side. One of its functions is to serve as something between a police force and a local militia for the town of Charming. It keeps out other criminal activity, which in Clay Morrow's mind includes big corporations and their retail chains. "The most dangerous gang of all," he explains, is "old, white money." Still, by civilized moral standards, they all belong in prison—and several belong on death row. But, as you might have guessed, Sutter successfully makes the gangsters into good guys.

What makes that possible is the implied moral universe of *Sons of Anarchy*. In *SOA*-land, everything is defined by the morality of the tribe. Loyalty to the tribe, sacrifice for the tribe, sharing the fruits of the hunt with the tribe, and—always—a full-blooded commitment to visiting vengeance upon those who hurt or insult the tribe's honor: This is what defines the ethics of SAMCRO. Everyone is a brother, once he is patched in (i.e., fully initiated). Any transgression, indulgence, or crime can be tolerated, even celebrated, as long as it does not negatively affect "the good of the club."

This social order is nearly identical to the one laid out at the beginning of *The Godfather* (as brilliantly explicated by Paul Rahe in his essay "Don Vito Corleone, Friendship, and the American Regime"). The American legal system has let down Amerigo Bonasera, the undertaker who visits Don Corleone to ask a favor on the wedding day of the don's daughter. Bonasera wants the godfather to punish the men who raped his daughter. This offends the godfather, because Bonasera offered his first loyalty to the American regime instead of seeking "true friendship" from the don. "You go to the law courts and wait for months. You spend money on lawyers who know full well you are to be made a fool of. You accept judgment from a judge who sells himself

like the worst whore in the streets. Years gone by, when you needed money, you went to the banks and paid ruinous interest. But if you had come to me, my purse would have been yours. If you had come to me for justice, those scum who ruined your daughter would be weeping bitter tears this day. If, by some misfortune, an honest man like yourself made enemies, they would become my enemies—and then, believe me, they would fear you.”

It is no coincidence that Amerigo Bonasera means “Good night, America.” By transferring his loyalties from the Enlightenment-era American system to the pre-Enlightenment politics of “true friendship,” Bonasera is bidding farewell to America and the American idea.

Sons of Anarchy is wholly about “true friendship.” When the young daughter of the richest man in Charming is brutally raped, the father seeks justice from the Sons, not the courts, and the

loyalty is the only moral yardstick, and hideous violence is perfectly acceptable so long as it is visited on the Other. Variations on what might be called collective moral relativism can be found in many of the most popular—and best—shows of the last decade, from *The Sopranos* and the FX series *The Shield* (which Sutter worked on) to *The Wire*, *The Unit*, *Deadwood*, *Breaking Bad*, and, no doubt, the upcoming HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*.

One of the things that make *Sons of Anarchy* so compelling is its ability to illuminate not only the seductive power of the tribe, but the inevitability of criminality and bloodshed once you decide to reject the sovereignty of the state and its monopoly on violence. We all know you cannot be a servant to two masters; what is more interesting is that you cannot be a citizen of two regimes. Once you decide to live outside the law, there are no



Sons of Anarchy characters Jax Teller (Charlie Hunnam), Gemma Teller (Katey Sagal), and Clay Morrow (Ron Perlman)

justice is brutally disturbing, even by cable standards. Indeed, the notion that the law and justice are linked is completely alien to the *SOA* moral universe. All that matters is the good of the club.

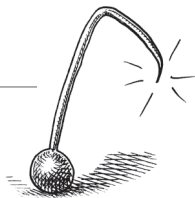
Obviously, the concept of tribe *über alles* has its roots in human nature. One need not read about ancient Sparta or gypsies or prison gangs to understand it, because human nature has no history. What is fascinating is how deeply this vision has penetrated into popular culture. Since World War II, and particularly since the 1960s, antiheroes—protagonists who run counter to the classic understanding of a hero—have been a Hollywood staple. In these films, too numerous to list, loyalty to your personal moral code trumps allegiance to social norms. “Get ready to root for the bad guy” went the tagline for the quintessentially antiheroic Mel Gibson film *Payback*. The joke, of course, was that the film was an homage to movies from the early 1970s, when rooting for the bad guy was cool but already a cliché.

SOMETHING changed around the turn of the century (are we allowed to say that yet?). Antiheroes lost some of their individuality and became leaders or exemplars of groups. Quentin Tarantino’s hideously compelling *Reservoir Dogs* might have been the turning point. In this film, group

rules external to the tribe’s collective will or conscience. The only politics are the pre-modern politics of friendship, and those politics require that debts be paid in blood. Jax Teller’s ghostly father is right when he says that all men seek the bondage of social order, but that goes for the outlaw as well. It’s just that the outlaw’s social order comes at a higher price. As Teller puts it elsewhere in his memoir, “I never made a conscious decision to have the club become one thing or another. It just happened before my eyes. Each savage event was a catalyst for the next. And by the time the violence reached epic proportion, I couldn’t see it. Blood was every color.”

Many first-time or one-time viewers of *Sons of Anarchy* will be stunned by the suggestion that it’s anything but adolescent tripe with better-than-decent acting and worse-than-decent language. But that, too, is an old story. Ancient tales of Roman bacchanalia now enjoy a certain grandeur, and deservedly so. But heaven forbid anyone suggest that the prurient mixes with the sagacious in the telling of those tales. And let no one whisper that Act Five of *Hamlet* turned so bloody in part because an audience might like it that way. No, Sutter is not Shakespeare, but he is truly gifted in his ability to drape fresh costumes on ancient tales and complex ideas. And what else are you going to watch on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M.?

NR



The Bent Pin

BY FLORENCE KING

Fed Up

OPTIMISTS don't mind if you eavesdrop on them. They welcome it, in fact, because it helps them spread their fiendish gospel. Here is what the one behind me in the supermarket line told her morose teenager:

"Stop saying you're fed up! You'll never get anywhere that way."

Oh, I don't know. I've done pretty well as a professional fed-up. The tools of my trade so far have been irony, tongue-in-cheek mockery, and supercilious contempt, but these are highly civilized weapons designed for 18th-century French salons. If you are fed up with 21st-century America you need something sturdier, like a meat cleaver.

So much fed-upness, so little space. Where to begin? How about white men of all socioeconomic levels ostentatiously using "dude" or "man": "What do you think about that hedge fund, dude?" . . . "Man, I'm going to my Groton class reunion." The NASCAR set frequently uses both in the same sentence: "Dude, where you goin', man?"

Here we have the worst descent into political correctness yet. It's purity-through-words. It's 'Enry 'Iggins overdosing on Ebonics, a quick 'n' easy route to false equality and a shameless eagerness to take for oneself the image of supermasculinity long deplored as a black stereotype. It's completely phony, yet millions of Americans obediently register it on their brains and take it as proof that Our Great Diversity really is working. Nobody will accuse you of racism if you hang out in a linguistic tanning box, but for me to admit that I am fed up with stockbroker dudes and trust-fund mans probably puts me on a watch list perused by Jane Velez-Mitchell, who opens her HLN show by stating, "Racism is a sign of mental illness." My bad.

As you know, columnists must follow the news carefully in order to write columns. This particular column falls under the newish category of "culture watch," which, stripped of its lofty name, means I have to watch all of the news all of the time whether I want to or not. I do this religiously on two TVs, one in the kitchen next to the liquor shelf, and another in the living room next to the wet bar.

The cable-news channel I watch least, because I know what they are going to say, is Fox, and also because Greta Van Susteren's timing could take ten years off my life. She must be a terrible dancer; her rhythm is so far off that she can't absorb the ebb and flow of speech. She and her interviewee fall into a staccato recitation of "When did . . . who was . . . I didn't . . . it's . . . where they . . ." until both fall silent and take turns saying "You go 'head" and "No, you go 'head."

I got fed up with her and now stay mostly with MSNBC, with forays into CNN. At first I loved *Way Too Early* with Willie Geist, whose question, "Why are you up this early," was a snap: I was *still* up. I enjoyed this show because

Willie was alone, but soon the MSNBC tropism took over and other people started drifting in. It turned into a tidal wave with *Morning Joe*, which, I suppose because of the name, started to resemble a college coffee shop with people sinking down at your table uninvited. Now it really is a college coffee shop, complete with the timeless cast. There's Joe, the Big Man on Campus, holding court and out-smirking George W. Bush; Mika Brzezinski, lovely and blonde and intensely locked on the strongest male—Joe—until she decides to shift her loyalties; joined by campus clown Mike Barnicle; and rounding it off, Pat Buchanan as the genial, democratic prof who always sat with the kids because they made him feel "with it."

The others I can stand but I'm fed up with Pat Buchanan. He started a splendid magazine called *The American Conservative*, but instead of running it himself, tossed it into the laps of a hired staff and then took off on his mavening, stormy-petreling rounds, speaking here, appearing there, writing books, and generally toning himself down (soft-"peddling") to make sure he would be welcome as commentator on mainstream TV shows. The ferocious "Buchanan brigades" of his presidential run now consist of agents, publicists, and program schedulers, and "lock and load" has turned into cut and paste.

Back in the early feminist years when women began to seek careers in TV it was said that women lacked the necessary "authority" to report on serious matters, and that the few who had it would be seen as "threatening" by both men and women because they would trigger images of the dominatrix, the femme fatale, and other deadly sexual creatures. It didn't happen. Women are all over TV now, but they are so unthreatening that the only thing they dominate is the news. We don't see Delilah, Cleopatra, or Mata Hari up there. There is no Hedy Lamarr waiting to seduce, no Theda Bara waiting to devour. Just Bonita Granville and Gloria DeHaven.

With very few exceptions, the women of cable news are interchangeable cute girls: long straight hair parted in the middle and hanging down like spaniel-esque dewlaps, with comely but not beautiful faces and good but unthreatening figures. Their grammar should be so unthreatening; their similes so comely; their sex appeal so spaniel-esque. In this they match their guests, other cute girls who are running for national office, like the Minnesota Democrat Tarryl Clark, the one with the dimples who can make them flash like S.O.S. flares at sea, the one with a smile so fixed that for a blessed moment the viewer can hope that tetanus has set in and she will be unable to speak. But no, she speaks, and a river of key words runs through her; "resources," "outreach," "community," "mentor," and of course, her "status": She's a "mom." What did you expect? There are no "mothers" left.

Let's face it: "Threatening" people are the only interesting people around. The unthreatening are, by and large, competent mediocrities who take lemming-like aim at careers in television.

NR

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

"How We Can Help Improve Your Image"

Notes to a PowerPoint presentation to:
The Islamic Faith
By ImageSpinners, LLC

Slide 1: Photo of the Planet Earth from space morphing into ImageSpinners logo.

"Who We Are"

ImageSpinners, LLC, is a New York-based public-relations firm focusing on crisis management, global repositioning, and image enhancement. With a multinational presence and experience in multiple forms of crisis image overhaul, ImageSpinners is the place to go when you want the world to see you differently.

Slide 2: Rapidly morphing photographs of BP logo, Robert Mugabe, Mel Gibson, the Church of Scientology, and the rest of the client roster.

"Why Us?"

ImageSpinners represents some of the most controversial and unpopular people, things, and institutions in our world today. We're ready to help you reach the popularity you know you've always deserved.

Slide 3: Image of an angry crowd burning an American flag in an Arab-looking street.

"Let's Face It: You Need Us!"

Look, none of us is perfect. We all "mess up" sometimes. And that's where we come in. At ImageSpinners, we're not about just buying full-page newspaper ads. We're about shaping an entire dialogue. We're about letting people know that just because people look angry, and just because they're trying to kill you, there's still common ground to be discovered.

Slide 4: Image of American crowd

protesting the Ground Zero mosque.

"Now What?"

Sharia law is going to be tough to impose on Manhattan, let alone *down-town* Manhattan! But to be serious, for a moment, let's be frank: Whatever communications strategy you *were* following isn't working. The Islamic faith is more unpopular than ever. You should have called us *years* ago.

Slide 5: Image of Osama bin Laden morphing into a clean-shaven man wearing a sharp-looking suit, followed by an image of Lady Gaga morphing into a burka.

"Think Outside the Mosque"

Our four-point plan will, if implemented, move the needle in a measurable way. We're about results. If after the implementation of our plan you're dissatisfied with ImageSpinners, *you don't pay a thing.*

It's as simple as that.

Slide 6: A mosque morphing into a mosque with a Starbucks and a J. Crew on the ground floor.

"Go Retail!"

Americans love to shop! We're a consumer culture, and it shows. Just ask the Chinese.

Mosques are spooky places to Americans, filled with strange calligraphy and ominous chanting.

Put the two together, though, and you've got an American-friendly way to get people in the door with their credit cards out. A moderate rollout of this retail strategy should shave ten or more points off the negative associations Americans have with Islamic places of worship, depending on the retail mix.

Slide 7: A group of typical American teenagers morphing into a group of typical Yemeni teenagers, minus the automatic weaponry.

"It's All About the Kids!"

Teenagers are a handful! Every American parent struggles with hot-button issues like drugs, promiscuity, rock music, and a general lack of discipline.

Islam has solved those problems. It's been raising kids in an atmosphere of family values since 700 A.D.! What American parents need to know is that Islam has some pretty solid solutions to the problems plaguing families today.

Depending on the market slice, we can pitch the harder-edged stuff (corporal punishment and honor killings might do better in the Rocky Mountain states, chic burka styles better in urban/progressive areas) or backpedal it, as the numbers indicate.

Slide 8: A plate of hummus, tabbouleh, and olives.

"Eat Healthy!"

Muslims enjoy a low-fat, low-carb diet high in omega-3 fatty acids and natural fiber. Americans are weight conscious—the weight-loss industry is a multibillion-dollar business. Why not introduce Americans to losing weight and living healthy the Muslim way? We can show the American public that Islam isn't all scary beards and yelling. It's also taking the time to eat right.

Slide 9: The plane hitting the second World Trade Center tower morphing into car-bomb damage, airport-security lines, the London Underground, etc.

"Stop Blowing Things Up"

Americans hate to see innocent people die. And they have a fear of fanaticism. Why not, for the duration of this outreach campaign, stop blowing things up? After a year or so of not blowing things or people up—and not *trying to*, either—we predict that Islam and Islam-related issues will experience a measurable and healthy increase in popularity.

It's simple, really.

It's about shopping. It's about the kids. It's about healthy lifestyles. And it's about not blowing things up anymore.

Slide 10: Image of the Planet Earth from outer space morphing into the ImageSpinners logo.

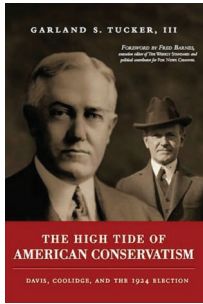
"Questions?"

Begin Q & A.

Books, Arts & Manners

Bliss Was It . . .

JOHN DERBYSHIRE



*The High Tide of American Conservatism:
Davis, Coolidge, and the 1924 Election,*
by Garland S. Tucker III (Emerald,
336 pp., \$29.95)

THE 1924 presidential election was, on the face of it, a snoozer. The major-party candidates were Calvin Coolidge (Republican) and John W. Davis (Democrat). Both were conservative—sensationally so by today’s standards. As Garland Tucker notes in this enjoyable and informative book: “There were . . . very few philosophical differences between Davis and Coolidge.” Both men thought that federal power should intrude as little as possible into the life of the nation. Both favored minimal taxation, wanted the states left to conduct their own affairs where the Constitution did not forbid their doing so, saw America’s international role in terms of diplomatic sweet nothings, and believed that “to tax one person, class or section to provide revenue for another is . . . robbery” (Davis) and that “the chief business of the American people is business” (Coolidge).

(Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the fact that 1924 is still, just barely, within living memory. There are citizens walking our streets today who were alive and sentient when the presidency was contested by two rock-ribbed conservatives. Reflect, and weep.)

Nor was there anything to choose between the two men in background or

character. Both began their working lives as country lawyers (and both returned to legal practice when their political adventures were over). Both were of spotless reputation. Neither showed any outward sign of burning ambition to be president. It is reasonable to suspect an element of political jujitsu behind that kind of diffidence; but it does really seem that both Coolidge and Davis were propelled forward in their political careers not by any lust for office, but by the urgings and maneuverings of well-placed, public-spirited friends who admired their principles, abilities, and characters.

Coolidge had ascended the political ladder painstakingly, barely missing a rung, from city councilman to vice president of the United States, with no taint of impropriety, nor even any significant political error. He became president under very romantic circumstances. He was vacationing at his father’s farm when the news of Warren Harding’s death arrived in the early hours of Aug. 3, 1923. Coolidge Sr., who was a notary public, administered the presidential oath of office to his son by lamplight in the family parlor.

Davis reached the national stage somewhat earlier than Coolidge. After a term in Congress he served in the Wilson administrations, first as solicitor general, then as ambassador to Great Britain. He returned to legal work in 1921 to recoup his finances, joining a prominent Wall Street firm. Of his character, no one seems to have uttered a negative word. King George V said that Davis was “the most perfect gentleman I have ever met”—no mean compliment from a man who was, for all his much-mocked intellectual shortcomings, a severely discriminating judge of gentlemanliness, and chary of compliments.

For all this uniformity at the tops of the tickets, mighty forces were stirring below. Strong factions hostile to Coolidge-Davis conservatism were active in both parties. These factions all traveled under the banner of progressivism, but there were nontrivial differences between the earnest, paternalistic, liberal-Protestant progressivism of the

Republican party and the spicier, noisier mix of fundamentalist farmers, “free silver” populists, and urban ethnics gathered under the Democratic side of that banner. Those differences kept progressives loyal to their respective parties. Garland Tucker argues that the 1924 election was a key event in the gradual detachment of Republican progressives from their party, leading to their subsequent absorption into FDR’s coalition, and thence to the familiar ideological configuration of the later 20th century: Republicans right, Democrats left.

The personification of that detachment in 1924 was Robert La Follette, the progressive Republican senator from Wisconsin. “Fighting Bob” (whose cousin Suzanne was, by the way, NATIONAL REVIEW’s first managing editor) led his state delegation into the Republicans’ Cleveland convention as a favorite-son candidate. Having lost all his floor fights and been relentlessly heckled, La Follette decamped. A month later he accepted the nomination of the revived Progressive (“Bull Moose”) party.

America’s political system is unkind to third parties, though. As Tucker points out: “Third parties have appeared with some regularity; however, their appearance has generally signaled some major realignment between the two dominant parties, rather than the emergence of a new permanent political party.” La Follette had a particularly steep hill to climb in 1924, with the nation in a period of great security and contentment. Millions were ascending into the middle class, lifted up on waves of prosperity generated by new technologies—the automobile, the airplane, radio, the movies, plastics—and energized by conservative fiscal policy. Foreign affairs troubled no one. There was little enough chance of a major-party candidate’s unseating an incumbent president in such a time; a third party had no hope. Writes Tucker: “Neither La Follette’s radicalism nor Davis’s me-too conservatism could shake the voters’ faith in the link between prosperity and Coolidge conservatism.”

Fighting Bob gathered 17 percent of the popular vote, but won only his home state. Just a dozen years earlier, the presidency had been contested by three candidates of progressive inclination (though in different degrees) and one socialist. They had shared 98 percent of the popular vote between them. Not for nothing did later generations of liberal historians deplore the 1920s as a regrettable lapse—"dull, bourgeois, and ruthless," said Henry Steele Commager—between the idealistic statisms of Wilson and FDR.

As the campaign opened, John W. Davis was in a position little better than La Follette's. The Democrats' New York convention had been exceptionally rancorous. After 103 ballots across nine days, the delegates had thrown ideology to the winds and nominated Davis by acclamation. It was a pyrrhic victory for conservative Democrats. William Jennings Bryan loyally supported the ticket, which included his brother Charles, governor of Nebraska, as vice-presidential candidate. However, other key Democratic progressives defected to La Follette. One of them, Sen. Burton Wheeler of Montana, spoke for all: "When the Democratic party goes to Wall Street for a candidate, I must refuse to go with it." The ailing Samuel Gompers, still monarch of the U.S. labor movement, endorsed La Follette, refusing an invitation to meet with Davis.

The party never again put forward a conservative for the presidency.

In the tactics of campaigning, Davis faced three hindrances. First, there was not much to talk about other than some fine points of trade and tax policy. The Harding scandals were a fast-fading memory, and nobody thought Coolidge had anything to do with them anyway. The League of Nations was a dead letter for most Americans, though it remained a boutique issue among progressives.

On the two big social topics of the day, Prohibition and the resurgent Klan, Coolidge and Davis were of like mind. Both spoke respectfully of the 18th Amendment as embodying the people's will, while simultaneously dog-whistling to the "wet" factions of their parties. Coolidge, for example, noted that the law was the law, but that "any law that inspires disrespect for other laws—the good laws—is a bad law." The Klan was a much bigger problem for Davis than for Coolidge, there being a strong pro-Klan faction among Democrats. It is greatly to Davis's credit that he denounced the organization in unambiguous terms—"frequently and forcefully," writes Tucker. Coolidge signaled his own views by delivering the commencement address at all-black Howard University four days before his party convention.

Davis's second tactical hindrance was

that he lacked the common touch. He had a first-class mind, but in oratory he was too habituated to the syllogisms and sonorities of courtroom argument. Says Tucker: "The literary allusions, elegant structure, and crisp diction that he consistently employed in his speeches routinely sailed over the heads of most of his crowds."

His third and most vexing problem was that Coolidge would not talk. He was a taciturn man at the best of times: "The Coolidges never slop over," was his proud boast. By the time the campaign got under way he was in any case disabled by a terrible blow that had fallen in July: the death of his younger son Calvin Jr. at age 16, from blood poisoning. Coolidge never recovered psychologically from this tragedy, but it at least excused him from any active campaigning. He ventured a few speeches, most notably one on October 24 to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in which he laid out his economic philosophy. Tucker quotes from this speech at length, saying that it "was not only classic Coolidge, it was classic conservatism."

It was an appreciation of that classic pre-FDR conservatism that led Ronald Reagan to hang a portrait of Coolidge in the White House Cabinet Room in 1981. Reagan's action was revolutionary at a time when the common view of the Harding-Coolidge years was still the scornful one shaped by such liberal historians as Commager, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Allan Nevins. There has since been something of a rehabilitation, marked notably by the late Bob Sobel's 1998 biography of Coolidge and by Amity Shlaes's 2007 *The Forgotten Man*.

With *The High Tide of American Conservatism*, Garland Tucker has made a splendid contribution to this recovery work. Here is a well-researched, well-structured narrative of classic conservative principles in action at the highest levels of politics. Along the way we get thoughtful pen-portraits of two great American gentlemen, men of the highest honor and integrity, both of whom believed, in the words of Coolidge, that "unless there abides in [the people] the spirit of industry and thrift, of sacrifice and self-denial, of courage and enterprise, and a belief in the reality of truth and justice, all the efforts of the Government will be in vain."

NR

GREAT LAKE WINTER

A crack in ice will join as well as rend.
In every ear that thinks it's safe from harm,
The snap can clearly cause, or not, alarm.
But those who hear know how the world will end.

On lakes almost as big as tidal seas
The crack booms on into a moonlit night.
It takes a ball in cold and awful flight
To crack a lake like that and not appease.

Such rips in ice deploy the easy thought
Of dying warm and creviced in a bed.
But often with a light and practiced tread
I close on what the watery dead have taught

But stop too short the edge to catch the lore,
Become a coward tripping back to shore.

—CHESTER L. WOLFORD

Moot Causes

ROGER CLEGG

acting
white
the ironic
legacy of de-
segregation

stuart buck

*Acting White: The Ironic
Legacy of Desegregation*, by Stuart Buck
(Yale, 272 pp., \$27.50)

WHERE did the idea come from that, if a black student studies hard in school, he is “acting white”? Stuart

Buck—a Harvard Law graduate who is currently a doctoral fellow in the education-reform department at the University of Arkansas—has written a thoughtful and provocative book in answer to this question.

Acting White is straightforward and jargon-free. It first reviews the solid empirical evidence on the existence of the “acting white” accusation, and on the real harm it does to students. Then it provides a fascinating historical narrative: what segregated schools were like for blacks; how desegregation frequently ended not in their integration but in their closing, and in the firing of black teachers and black principals; and how the “acting white” charge did not exist before, but quickly grew after, schools desegregated. Buck observes that, during the Jim Crow era, the people who accused smart black kids of trying to be white were not those students’ peers, but white racists.

Buck demonstrates that black students’ rejection of academic achievement as acting white grew out of their rebellion against the white schools in which they found themselves after desegregation. And it makes sense. While underfunded, Jim Crow schools had principals and teachers who shared their students’ skin color, enjoyed the support of the students’ parents,

and were held in high regard by the black community. They were also dedicated to their students and insistent that they work hard. But with desegregation, the black students found themselves in an unwelcoming environment: one in which the white students did not like them, and in which the white teachers frequently manifested the soft bigotry of low expectations (and sometimes even outright hard bigotry).

The author is not suggesting that desegregation was a bad idea; we can be reasonably certain of this because he says so on every other page. His point, rather, is that it is unwise to ignore “cultural factors” in academic performance—and “unintended consequences” in public policy.

Buck’s thesis is powerfully argued and scrupulously referenced. (An additional historical footnote: The author Zora Neale Hurston had misgivings about desegregation, for reasons along the lines Buck discusses.) It is made even more convincing by the author’s willingness to acknowledge countervailing evidence, and instances in which—of necessity—he has relied on anecdotes rather than statistical data.

So the book is well worth buying and reading. But there is an important problem with it: It is not until page 153 of the 162 pages of text that the author addresses the obvious question of “what can be done”—and, as it turns out, that is just as well, since this prescriptive part of the book is also the weakest.

The “tentative suggestions” offered are 1) allowing black students “to choose an all-black environment that includes black teachers and principals”; 2) “single-sex schools”; 3) “do[ing] more to recruit and encourage blacks—especially black males—to go into teaching”; 4) “special programs [that] might be able to counteract bad peer pressure”; and 5) “eliminat[ing] individual grades” so that, “instead, students would compete against other schools in academic competitions” (with, perhaps, “cash rewards for grades on a *group* basis”).

Buck acknowledges that his last two suggestions are largely untested and “radical,” respectively. Let me also suggest gently that there are legal problems with the balkanizing approach of assigning students to schools or classes on the basis of skin color, and with singling out particular racial groups for favorable treatment in job training, to say nothing of discriminating against women in that training. Also, it’s not clear why a black teacher who urges study won’t now be viewed as an Uncle Tom, since

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*Mr. Clegg is president and general counsel of the
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TUE/Nov. 16	Grand Turk	12:00PM	6:00PM	morning seminar late-night smoker
WED/Nov. 17	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 18	Grand Cayman	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar
FRI/Nov. 19	Cozumel	10:00AM	11:00PM	afternoon seminar “Night Owl” session
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high-achieving black students experience that same accusation.

The argument that a person of a particular race might serve as an especially strong role model has been explicitly rejected by the Supreme Court as insufficient to justify racial discrimination. And I think most Americans would be uncomfortable with the suggestion that a student cannot have a role model of a different skin color from him or her. As George W. Bush once cheerfully noted, when he was growing up he didn't want to be president—he wanted to be Willie Mays.

The lameness of Buck's prescriptions underscores an obvious question he does not address: Sure, blacks in the Sixties may have been unhappy with the newly integrated schools they were sent to. But why are so many blacks *today* willing to accuse their hard-working classmates of acting white—and, more to the point, able successfully to intimidate them? Buck mentions the likely cause in a few places, but fails to come to grips with it: Seven out of ten blacks today are born out of wedlock.

Suppose your twelve-year-old son came home and announced that it would compro-

By the time school desegregation really got going—with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which gave the U.S. Department of Justice authority to sue the hundreds of school districts that had ignored the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*—the breakdown of the black family was well under way. (Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous report was leaked in 1965.) My guess is that, without this breakdown, the "acting white" phenomenon would never have caught on to the extent that it has.

Which raises, again, the question of what is to be done. Since illegitimacy is, at its heart, a moral problem, black churches should probably play a leading role. Biology being what it is, it is also probably more fruitful to attempt to persuade females than males to change their behavior. The point can certainly be made to a young woman that having children without being married is not in her—or her child's, or her boyfriend's, or her community's—best interest. And bearing and fathering children out of wedlock (which is becoming much more common among nonblacks, too) must be restigmatized in our culture.

Bearing and fathering children out of wedlock must be restigmatized in our culture.

mise his racial authenticity were he to study hard and get good grades, and that he will therefore concentrate on misbehaving in class. Or, more realistically, suppose you simply saw that he was balking at homework and getting poor grades, with or without an excuse. What would your reaction be? More to the point, what would the reaction of Dr. Cliff Huxtable be?

Dr. Huxtable would explain, with as much patience as he could muster, that not studying is unacceptable and that the "acting white" justification for not studying is idiotic nonsense: Even if your teacher is a white racist, son, you should not—will not—slack off. Such instinctive rebellion, even if understandable, is obviously irrational.

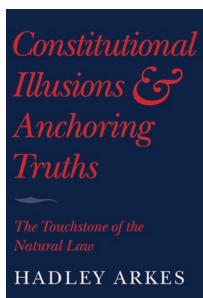
The problem is that Dr. Huxtable is nowhere to be found in most black households. The fact that, as Buck points out, the acting-white malady apparently affects boys more than girls further suggests that the absence of strong fathers is a big part of the problem.

There are three basic parts to a school-age child's environment: his home and parents, his school and teachers, and his friends. In all three, black children are, in general, at a woeful disadvantage. More than 70 percent are born out of wedlock; they disproportionately attend failing public schools; and, on top of everything else, their friends tell them that studying hard is "acting white."

If you take the long view, and look at relations between the races in 1650, 1950, and 2010, it is hard not to be happy and optimistic. But we have to face the fact: There still remains a significant problem in American race relations, and it is rooted in illegitimacy. The challenges of assimilating Latino and Asian immigrants lack anything like the intractability of black problems. Illegitimacy must bear much of the blame not only for black educational outcomes but for other disparities—in crime, unemployment, you name it—that, in turn, feed what remains of racism. In short, it is *the* American domestic social problem. **NR**

Laws of Thought

RYAN T. ANDERSON



Constitutional Illusions and Anchoring Truths: The Touchstone of the Natural Law, by Hadley Arkes (Cambridge, 280 pp., \$25.99)

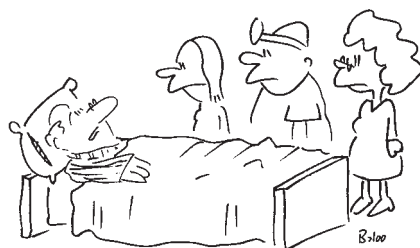
ON entering the Catholic Church earlier this year, Hadley Arkes explained that he had become convinced that the Church was fundamentally a truth-telling institution. He arrived at this judgment after repeatedly seeing the Church act as the lone voice of reason defending unpopular moral truths in an age of relativism. From his academic perch, Arkes, too, has defended these moral truths, casting doubt on the claims of some overly excitable commentators that the defense of life or the protection of marriage is the work of “Christianists,” “theocons,” or other Bible-thumping theocrats. Arkes’s latest book, written well before his baptism, shows that the anchoring truths of the natural law are accessible to reason and provide the proper lens for seeing beyond the illusions of some of the trickiest cases of constitutional law.

A professor at Amherst College since 1966, Arkes is one of the leading proponents of natural-law jurisprudence. His new book, *Constitutional Illusions and Anchoring Truths*, can profitably be read as the culmination of many diverse yet intertwined strains of Arkes’s thought. From moral philosophy to applied ethics and constitutional theory, the foundational role that moral reason-

ing plays in public life unites all his life’s work.

Arkes first made a splash on the political-theory scene with his 1981 book *The Philosopher in the City*. In what he described as “a manuscript in which Immanuel Kant meets Mayor Daley,” Arkes showed how principles of moral judgment—not only expediency or power—affect daily political realities, from the demands of civility to racial equality, from public education to the regulation of vice. His 1986 tome *First Things* provided a more elaborate philosophical defense of these first principles of moral judgment, drawing on the insights of Kant, Reid, and Aristotle. Comparing moral science to other sciences, Arkes argued not only that there are truths of morality, but that there are necessary moral truths—first principles of practical reasoning—that we regularly use in our judgments, knowingly or not. He then applied his moral theory to topics ranging from war and welfare to abortion and privacy.

In *Beyond the Constitution*, published in 1990 to the acclaim of political and legal theorists, Arkes made his most extensive case that interpreting the Constitution requires going beyond the written text to the principles that informed its drafting. With a particular focus on the Bill of Rights, Arkes showed how only a philosophical understanding of what was deserving of protection could identify which rights we possess by nature (and, thus, which ones the Framers sought to protect in the Constitution). He further elaborated this natural-rights jurisprudence with *The Return of George Sutherland* (1994). Through a detailed treatment of the jurisprudence of this anti-New Deal Supreme Court justice, Arkes argued that both conservatives and liberals failed to grasp the moral grounding of Sutherland’s legal opinions and thereby lost sight of key principles of interpretation.



“I wish I’d spent more time on the Internet.”

These points all converged in Arkes’s most penetrating analysis, *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose* (2002). This book included a detailed history of the “Born-Alive Infants Protection Act,” an act that Arkes drafted and defended through passage in Congress, to establish the “most modest first step” in explaining the logic against abortion “rights.” As Arkes showed in this book, the entire system of natural rights falls to pieces if a so-called natural right to choose abortion—i.e., to choose to kill another innocent human being—is upheld. Once, in the name of “privacy” or “autonomy,” a right to kill one’s child is established in law, the moral logic that explains the entirety of our other (real) rights is eviscerated. Having pointed out in this modest way that surely the child who survives an abortion attempt and is born alive deserves the protection of the law, Arkes worked this premise backwards to show that the same protection of law is deserved by the child in the process of being born (refuting justifications of partial-birth abortion), along with the child waiting to be born.

Constitutional Illusions, published this summer, builds on Arkes’s insistence that moral judgment pervades all politics, that it relies upon standards of judgment that are rationally accessible, and that understanding our Constitution requires grasping these moral standards. Provocatively, he challenges the conventional wisdom on issues such as “prior restraint,” substantive due process, and ex post facto laws.

Arkes opens the book with a defense of the natural-law foundations of our positive-law rights. Are the rights protected in our written laws bestowals on us lowly citizens by beneficent earthly rulers? Are some constitutional regimes better than others, and, if so, why? Answering these questions, Arkes insists, requires appeal to the natural law. He argues, for example, that the Founders understood that our right to speech comes not from the First Amendment that enshrines it, but from nature. Understanding the amendment’s protections, then, requires a philosophical grasp of its underlying moral principle.

While much contemporary work in natural law—especially the legal theories of John Finnis and Robert George—relies heavily on Aristotle and Aquinas, Arkes finds his main inspiration in Kant’s philosophy and in his own teachers’ seminal

Mr. Anderson is editor of Public Discourse: Ethics, Law, and the Common Good, an online publication of the Witherspoon Institute.

works: Leo Strauss's *Natural Right and History* and Harry Jaffa's *Crisis of the House Divided*. From the fact that we are rational animals who can give—and demand—reasons for action (and thus justifications of state coercion), Arkes develops the groundwork for a categorical imperative to act on a universalizable maxim. Failure to do so, Arkes argues, forces one into contradiction: “To the extent that we would govern our acts by principles of judgment that are true, the standards that are grounded in this way, in propositions that must be true of necessity, have an unsurpassed claim on us.” Arkes sees something like this at play in Lincoln’s insistence that “there was nothing one could cite to disqualify the black man as a human being, and the bearer of rights, that would not apply to many whites as well.” Force the principle of your judgment to apply to all similar cases, and bad reasons for action drop out of the picture.

With this theory of practical judgment in place, Arkes turns to a series of puzzling cases to pursue “the thread that runs through them and connects everything,” that is, “the move back to first principles and the moral ground of the law.” He begins by defending what has become viewed as indefensible economically conservative judicial activism: the majority opinion in 1905’s *Lochner v. New York*. Arkes argues that the Supreme Court, in striking down a New York law that limited the number of hours one could work in a bakery, simply protected “the ‘natural right’ of the worker to his own labor,” labor that “did not belong, in the first instance, to the state.” Of course, one could not contract one’s labor for immoral or otherwise unlawful or unhealthful acts. But Arkes sees in the Court’s opinion the sound judgment that the New York statute was ultimately an arbitrary regulation, and thus an infringement of liberty. As the Court said, “No trade, no occupation, no mode of earning one’s living, could escape this all-pervading power.” And as Arkes notes, the Court “seemed to recognize that even people in prosaic callings may find it quite as useful to have the freedom that we are quicker to attribute to the professional classes.”

Arkes also reconsiders the question of “prior restraint,” arguing that the Supreme Court doctrine against laws allowing the government to review and

prohibit the publication of dangerous information is wrong, and incoherent: The reasoning in *Snepp v. U.S.* (1980)—which allowed the CIA to redact writings by Agency members before publication—contradicts precedents in the Pentagon Papers case (1971) and *Near v. Minnesota* (1931) without actually overturning these faulty cases. As Arkes sees it, to bring criminal or civil suit after the fact against someone who has recklessly published unjustifiably harmful information—e.g., classified documents that reveal undercover agents’ locations to an enemy, or reckless defamations—is to get the moral logic of responsibility backwards. Criminal or civil sanctions cannot repair one’s unjustly damaged reputation, to say nothing of one’s unjustly taken life. Instead, Arkes argues, the Court should allow the government to seek “prior restraint” in the publishing of such sensitive information, subjecting it to Court review *before* the damage is done. Granting that a suit seeking reparations after the fact is a valid legal action shows that the Court understands the wrong committed, but fails to see that once there are valid grounds for suspicion, the burden of proof should lie on the would-be publishers to justify their intended action.

Those familiar with Arkes’s work will find much to praise in *Constitutional Illusions*. But the standard criticisms will be made by the standard critics. The Aristotelians and Thomists will think his account of natural law is too Kantian, and thus too thin because insufficiently grounded in an understanding of human flourishing. Conservative jurists who think our constitutional regime leaves questions of the natural law entirely to elected legislators will think Arkes allows too broad a role for judges’ moral judgments—and his concluding “good word on behalf of the legal positivists” will do little to assuage their worries. All of these criticisms have some merit.

But none is fatal. Though Arkes does not claim the charism of infallibility, he has proven over his long academic career that he, too, is a truth-telling institution. For those who only now have recognized this truth about Arkes, reading *Constitutional Illusions* may prove to be a critical step in their own intellectual conversion.

NR

Father Brown At 100

JAMES E. PERSON JR.

‘BETWEEN the silver ribbon of morning and the green glittering ribbon of sea, the boat touched Harwich and let loose a swarm of folk like flies, among whom the man we must follow was by no means conspicuous—nor wished to be. There was nothing notable about him, except a slight contrast between the holiday gaiety of his clothes and the official gravity of his face.”

In this manner, on a September day 100 years ago, G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936) began his story “The Blue Cross” for readers of the English magazine *The Storyteller*. Those opening words, evoking the wings of morning and an untroubled sea—but with a hint of lurking danger—remind us that September 1910 was the twilight of a placid lull in Western history, a last breath of what scholar Bertram D. Wolfe called the “grand century of peace and progress” before the armed conflagration of 1914–18 erupted and set in motion our long time of troubles.

Chesterton could not have known it at the time, but in “The Blue Cross” he introduced one of the immortal characters of 20th-century literature. Not “the man we must follow” of the story’s opening paragraph: That would be merely Aristide Valentin, “the head of the Paris police and the most famous investigator of the world.” But before the story concludes, Valentin and one of the most notorious thieves in Europe meet their match in an unlikely figure: a stumpy, moon-faced Roman Catholic priest and maddeningly perceptive crime-solver known as Father Brown.

This rumped, clumsy detective-priest appeared in 52 short stories, 48 of them collected in five volumes during Chesterton’s lifetime. The strongest of the

Mr. Person is the author of critical biographies of Russell Kirk and Earl Hamner, as well as a longtime book reviewer.

stories are the earliest—"The Blue Cross," "The Secret Garden," "The Wrong Shape," "The Sins of Prince Saradine," "The Honour of Israel Gow," and seven others that all appeared in the first collection, *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911), a work the prominent pseudonymous American mystery writer Ellery Queen called "the miracle-book of 1911" and "one of the finest volumes of short stories ever conceived and written." These tales were written when inspiration was strong upon Chesterton, and the key concept of Father Brown and his potential were fresh and exciting to the author.

Each of these early stories is a tightly plotted gem, with fresh dialogue, surprising twists, gorgeous scene-painting, and—most important—a main character who solves and thwarts crimes not by *CSI*-style clue-chasing or Sherlockian inductive reasoning but by his knowledge of the passions that motivate men. The key to Father Brown's powers of insight lies in the fact that among his daily duties is hearing the confessions of his flock. "Has it never struck you that a man who does next to nothing but hear men's real sins is not likely to be wholly unaware of human evil?" he asks one astonished would-be robber—his greatest antagonist (and in time his best friend), Hercule Flambeau.

Another unlikely advantage held by the little priest is that in physical appearance he looks for all the world like the sort of hapless rube "whom anybody could lead on a string to the North Pole," in Valentin's dry assessment. While he is an observant man, a discerning listener, and a witty conversationalist, Father Brown is forever being underestimated and snickered at by his betters. Not surprisingly, then, his foremost trait is humility. In the story "The Flying Stars," as guests at a country house prepare for a hastily thrown-together Christmas play, someone finds a paper donkey head and playfully slips it over the head of Father Brown, who "bore it patiently, and even found some private manner of moving his ears." Father Brown exemplifies the fact that humility, the disregarding of one's dignity, is an attribute of the great and the godly. "Humility is the mother of giants," he declares in another story. "One sees great things from the valley; only small things from the peak."

Puritanical self-righteousness is far from his heart, but he sees it often, in

the lives of the religious chest-thumpers, Eastern mystics, and metaphysical go-it-aloners who often prove to be the guilty parties in Chesterton's stories. Here, as in life, it is often those who talk the loudest about their own enlightened selves and firsthand knowledge of God who are in fact the farthest from God in their inner lives and outward conduct.

In "The Queer Feet," Father Brown, having convinced Flambeau to repent of a daring crime and return a silver service he had cleverly stolen, challenges a group of sneering clubmen to consider for a moment: "Odd, isn't it . . . that a thief and a vagabond should repent, when so many who are rich and secure remain hard and frivolous, and without fruit for God or man?" He is asked whether he actually caught the man who attempted to steal the clubmen's silverware. "Yes," he said, "I caught him, with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread." This passage was famously quoted by Evelyn Waugh in *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) to illustrate the peculiar nature of divine grace, the fact that—as the proverb has it—"God writes straight with crooked lines." Chesterton managed to smuggle the good news of divine grace into his stories in such a manner that it largely slips past the watchful dragons of his readers' imaginations, which are ever on guard for any sort of potted, Sunday-schoolish "lesson of the week."

Which is not to say that all the Father Brown stories are successful: The last four volumes represent a distinct falling off. Those in *The Wisdom of Father Brown* (1914), *The Incredulity of Father Brown* (1926), *The Secret of Father Brown* (1927), and *The Scandal of Father Brown* (1935) are progressively weaker, showing signs of the haste in which they were written for the magazines that originally published them, along with a sense that the earlier thrill was gone.

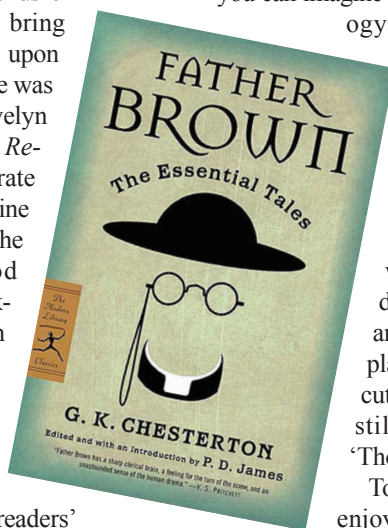
While there are still periodic stretches of the old brilliance for readers who persevere, most of what is encountered is not

in the same league as the earlier stories. Perhaps the most serious complaint that might be leveled is this: Although Father Brown still solves and prevents crimes, he often does so not through his knowledge of the human heart but simply by astute observation and the puzzling-out of clues. This may be satisfying to some readers, but for others the element that made the earlier stories so memorable is missing.

Those early stories, in particular, reflect in lavish detail Chesterton's talent and training as a visual artist. His descriptions of twilight skies, lush gardens, and peaceful rivers evoke the wonder of childhood upon first beholding these things. The beauty of creation hints strongly at a creator, sovereign and infinitely just. "Reason and justice grip the remotest and the loneliest star," remarks Father Brown to the robber Flambeau, in "The Blue Cross." "Look at those stars. Don't they look as if they were single diamonds and sapphires? Well, you can imagine any mad botany or geology you please. Think of

forests of adamant with leaves of brilliants. Think the moon is a blue moon, a single elephantine sapphire. But don't fancy that all that frantic astronomy would make the smallest difference to the reason and justice of conduct. On plains of opal, under cliffs cut out of pearl, you would still find a notice-board, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

Today, readers continue to enjoy these stories, smiling quietly at the ignorant stuffed shirt in "The Flying Stars" who declares to Father Brown "that though he himself had broader views, he could respect those whose creed required them to be cloistered and ignorant of this world." Western literature will not have done with these stories while brass is strong and stone abides. As prominent British mystery writer P. D. James wrote in her preface to the superb collection *Father Brown: The Essential Tales* (2005): "The Father Brown stories are among the finest crime stories ever written. . . . [They] will continue to entrance, entertain, and solace readers inhabiting a world infinitely more complex and dangerous than was the England in which Chesterton wrote." **NR**



Film

Total Immersion

ROSS DOUTHAT

At times, it can feel as though television's auteurs are making the movie industry irrelevant. Fifty years after phrases like "idiot box" and "vast wasteland" entered the American vocabulary, the long arc of a TV serial has officially proven itself a better vehicle for conveying psychological depth and sociological complexity than the 100-odd minutes available for the typical feature film. And from *The Sopranos* and *The Wire* to *Breaking Bad* and *Mad Men*, our small-screen storytellers have been exploiting this advantage to the hilt, turning out human dramas that put most of their cinematic competitors to shame.

as well—this is still something that rarely happens in your living room. It takes a movie theater, and it takes a movie maker.

Anton Corbijn, the Dutch-born director of *The American*, is such a man. A former photographer and music-video director (his debut film, *Control*, elegized the suicidal Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis), Corbijn's first mainstream effort is a thriller in which very little happens, starring a movie star, George Clooney, who is never once allowed to bare his famous smile. This is a way of saying that *The American* is a very European film: It's set in Sweden and Italy, features a great deal of nudity and characters with names like Pavel and Mathilde, and bathes the audience in a distinctively Continental mix of paranoia and ennui.

Clooney plays an aging hit man (he goes by "Jack" and sometimes "Edward") who holes up in a Tuscan hill town after a snowbound shootout with unnamed Swedes, waiting for the coast to clear. His handler, the aforementioned Pavel (Johan Leysen, with a face like the Badlands),

film's slowly built suspense to finally spend itself in violence.

The American is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a perfect film. It's pretentious and predictable, using narrative reticence (who is our hero? who are his enemies? who knows?) to disguise the slightness of its story. The lead role is a variation on the conflicted fixer Clooney played, to good effect, in *Michael Clayton*, but there his charisma was allowed freer rein, whereas here he looks too often like a repressed suburban father mourning a beloved pet. And if the plot sounds hackneyed, well, that's because it is. The script is self-aware, at least, about the debt it owes to a hundred aging-gunslinger films before it: At one point, Clooney's character wanders into a bar playing spaghetti Westerns on its television, and there on the screen, dubbed into Italian, is Clint Eastwood's original Man With No Name. But its self-awareness doesn't make it any less derivative. If you've seen those movies, then you know how this one goes. (Clooney's character falls hard for the prostitute, decides that the current job will be his last, and so on down the checklist.)

But Corbijn knows what the movies are good for, and that knowledge covers a multitude of weaknesses. They're good for conveying a mood, an atmosphere—twilit, existential, with occasional flashes of revelatory beauty. They're good for intertwining dread with frustrated anticipation—for discovering the menace in an empty town square, the danger lurking in a flowered hillside, and then denying the audience the satisfaction of seeing that menace translated into actual violence. And they're good for finally, finally giving the viewer that release, suddenly and almost ecstatically, in a choreographed burst of movement and gunfire, gunfire and movement, that makes all the waiting feel worthwhile.

Above all, they're good for giving the world the big-screen close-up it deserves. This can mean the mazed streets of an Italian hill town, or the snowbound stillness of a Scandinavian lakeside. It can mean the interlocking gears of a high-powered rifle, the crags and jowls of old men, the life-changing smile of a beautiful woman. It can mean anything and everything that a skilled filmmaker wants his audience to see. And that skill can be enough, even in a film where the substance is unequal to the style, to remind us of why we go to the movies in the first place.

NR



Violante Placido and George Clooney in *The American*

So why go to the movies at all, when you can sit home with HBO and AMC, Netflix and iTunes, and experience the closest imitation of a great novel's richness that visual culture can offer? Well, there's spectacle, of course: that James Cameron rush, that Michael Bay high. But there's also immersion: the sense of being surrounded and enveloped, sealed away completely from the real world, seeing only what the director intends for you to see. For all of television's dramatic potential—and yes, for all the advances in flat-screen technology and surround sound

eventually gives him an assignment: He's to build a gun for another assassin, a mysterious woman who needs a potent, quiet rifle for an undisclosed job. In between mechanical improvisations, Clooney's character finds time to have pregnant conversations with a wise old priest (Paolo Bonacelli) and tender sex with a gorgeous prostitute played by Violante Placido. (If Placido looks familiar, it's because her equally lovely mother played Michael Corleone's doomed Italian bride in *The Godfather*.) And then he waits, and waits, for his enemies to find him, and for the

And All That Mighty Heart Is Lying Still



RICHARD BROOKHISER

SUNDAY of a three-day weekend and the city was empty. How empty was it? When we turned out the front door of our apartment building, there was hardly a soul on the street. No doormen or porters, even to hose down the sidewalk; no nannies or parents at the tots' school; no kids at the high school. No poor at the welfare office, no sick at the dialysis unit, no drunks at the rib place. Anyone and Anything had gone Elsewhere. The only person was a young bum, sitting on the sidewalk, pounding an upturned plastic pail. Thoreau heard a different drummer. Here was that drummer, playing merrily away. No one stepped to his music, and he did not care one bit.

We had breakfast at a sidewalk table of a restaurant with a ringside view of the park across the street. Here was some traffic afoot, and some people to watch, but the volume was much reduced. How reduced was it? There were no farmers with their trucks and produce, peaches giving way to apples, and so no flocking shoppers. Home-leaving college kids took a day off; the ark-like SUVs of their anxious parents were otherwise engaged; the grey plastic carts ferrying furniture and stuff into dorms had a break. No audience for street musicians; the kitchen-sink bluegrass ensemble was not foot-stomping today. There were as many dogs as people.

Fashion in ugly dogs is poised between Frenchies and pugs; both have bug eyes and bandy legs; the issue will hinge on what is uglier, and therefore more appealing, wrinkled snouts or pointy ears?

We decided to go to midtown to the museum, the acid test of urban emptiness. There was a show, devoted to a crucial period in the career of a great painter, which was so special you had to reserve a time slot to see it. We got a ticket on a walk-in, that's how empty it was. The painter, in this period, was feeling self-conscious, absorbing influences, thinking of his art. Curators say that it was a fruitful lull, but the paintings he produced were uncharacteristically off. There was a child, straight out of *The Bad Seed*, playing a piano, and a quartet of bathers, who looked like a smudgy sketch for the cover of some pulp paperback: *Women in Prison*, or *Girls' Gym Class*. Love saved the day, as it always did with this painter: Fruit, gourds, and women's faces brought him back to his gifts. He ran off with the-ory, but he returned to earth.

I began to feel as if I were returning to earth myself, more roughly. Even on a slowish day at the museum, many of the people in the exhibit had their ears glued to pre-recorded cicerones. I don't like to read labels, and I'm sure I miss a lot thereby; if

brating a large Third World country. The country has 200 million people; a dozen blocks of midtown seemed like the proper hat-tip. A warm-up band on a sound stage sent deafening music up into the late morning; vendors sold the same old fried food.

We went to one of the downtown shopping districts, where it was not so empty anymore. Eavesdropping on passersby, I understood why: When natives flee, replace them with foreigners. Shopping is work that both Americans and aliens will do. We heard Hebrew and Russian, Italian and German. The visitors consulted fold-out colored maps; I thought sympathetically of possible pitfalls—Broadway vs. West Broadway, which changes for no reason to LaGuardia Place. They all seemed to be doing fine. We walked.

We came to a snug little neighborhood, once ethnic, now hipster. How not-empty was it? Shops and restaurants were packed, the sidewalks were conga lines of pilgrims shuffling from one to the other. To make matters worse, one of the main sidewalks was double-parked with stalls of arts and crafts. I did not have the heart to look, even to look down. A kind of clang in the air sounded like a brass band. The heart of the neighborhood is an old Catholic church, formerly the city's cathedral. It

When natives flee, replace them with foreigners.

I were with a knowledgeable friend, I might listen to him; I certainly don't want to march to the drum of a hand-held pseudo-friend. Worse yet, a museum-goer—or was it more than one—made a call on his cellphone. I doubt it was about the painter. Can we do anything without talking to someone distant? Can we be anywhere, rather than everywhere?

The museum, by the way, had a big do-over recently, and is ugliness itself. It looks like a convention center, or an urban mall. People ride escalators up and down, through unplanned, characterless hallways, like the lost or the damned. A screaming child was testing the acoustics (maybe the piano player had escaped his canvas). The museum's sculpture garden, once its glory, has been ruined too—made bigger, like an airline terminal; all it needed was televisions turned to CNN.

Outside, the streets were livelier. A dozen blocks had been given over to cele-

sits in its own graveyard, surrounded by dead faithful. One of them was a black ex-slave from Santo Domingo, now on the road to sainthood. In a somewhat bureaucratic move, he was dug up and reinterred under the current cathedral once his cause got going. A wedding was breaking up; the porch, yard, sidewalk, and street were filled with guests. The brass players were identifiable by Italian tricolored caps. We watched a bit for bride and groom, but they did not appear. Too crowded out there, maybe.

Time to go home, but where the hell were the cabs? The nearest busy intersection was devoured by construction; concrete walls pushed traffic along and penned in pedestrians like the Three Gorges Dam. We took a breather in a jewelry store and were spared a trek only when some tourists left their cab at the door.

And that's how empty it was.

NR

The Teat Eternal

THE *New York Times* Sunday magazine is where you find nice glossy ads for expensive consumer goods alongside 10,000-word stories on why expensive consumer goods do not make us happy. You often suspect the piece could veer off into Latin halfway through, and no one would notice, except for a few who'd write peevish letters about inaccurate declension. The Internet abbreviation for these pieces is tl/dr: "too long, didn't read." Or so the twentysomethings like to say.

As it happens, twentysomethings were the recent subject of a Sunday-mag study, subtitled "Why are so many people in their 20s taking so long to grow up?" Well, you might have a five-word answer: "Because they don't have to." *Done! You finished with the Style section? Trade you.* But of course there must be more to it than that, or sociologists and anthropologists would have nothing to do. Background: Heretofore we have been content with five basic stages of adulthood, which are finishing up school, not sponging off the 'rents, getting a job, swapping rings with someone who'll put up with you, and turning out replacement units. Now it seems there might be a new step in human development called "emerging adulthood." This new stage lasts until you're 25 and burst from your chrysalis of thrift-store clothing as a fully formed creature who is wearing a tie, and not because it's *Mad Men* night at the bar.

Not everyone goes through Emerging Adulthood. The author paraphrases an expert: "It's rare in the developing world . . . where people have to grow up fast." Because there are tigers, perhaps. Or gangs of guys with guns. Or teeming cities with people packed into shack-towns and one filthy running stream so full of heavy metals you skip a stone off the water and it makes a clanging sound. Or any of the other conditions that apply to parts of the world where people do not have the option of choosing the neighborhood coffee shop over the chain store because they prefer shade-grown fair-trade beans shipped in hemp sacks and served in recyclable cups printed with cruelty-free ink, or some other intellectual luxury you enjoy when you're not hungry all the time.

Perhaps longevity has something to do with the new stage. If people expected to kick off while tickling 70, they'd have the pups ASAP so they could have a few years of peace, listening to Sinatra's later Capitol sessions without competing with Led Zep down the hall. But kids today look around and see Saul Bellow having a child when he's 107, or something, and figure they can space it out. They hear Time's Winged Chariot behind them, and it's a cool ride with a good sound system. Hop on! Floor it! Road trip!

It's hard to say whether twentysomething culture is a

cause of their long anabasis through adulthood or a reflection. There's something sadly infantile about geek/nerd culture—so much talent devoted to finding ways to make fun of Darth Vader or repurpose early Nintendo graphics into endless parodic permutations. It's the Super Mario guy as Napoleon in the Jacques-Louis David painting! Awesome! Because, it's, you know, Mario. It's all quite clever; the artistic talent you find spilling off the Web every day is astonishing, but the Greatest Generation didn't spend their 20s remixing *Katzenjammer Kids* characters. The twentysomethings seem to cling to the near past like a tattered security blanket, filling up the vacant spaces in their culture with

obsessive retrofitting of footie-jammy-era pictures. This may also be their strength: Handed a culture that has lost its initiative, traded wit for snark, enthusiasm for suspicion of enthusiasm, conviction for the hipster's reflexive dismissal, and taught them that everything everyone else knew was wrong—Howard Zinn said so!—they respond by furiously mashing everything up and recombining the parts. Life gave them leftovers; they invented a new cuisine.

But back to the *Times* piece. Ready?

Deep breath: "The core idea of classical stage theory is that all people—underscore "all"—pass through a series of qualitatively different periods in an invariant and universal sequence in stages that can't be skipped or reordered," Richard Lerner, Bergstrom chairman in applied developmental science at Tufts University, told me."

I'm sure he did. So if attenuated proto-adulthood is a new stage, we must readjust society accordingly, right? This will require exquisitely calibrated government programs:

How about expanding programs like City Year, in which 17- to 24-year-olds from diverse backgrounds spend a year mentoring inner-city children in exchange for a stipend, health insurance, child care, cellphone service and a \$5,350 education award? Or a federal program in which a government-sponsored savings account is created for every newborn, to be cashed in at age 21 to support a year's worth of travel, education or volunteer work?

Handing a 21-year-old a pot of money with vaguely described requirements? Toss in a jug of corn likker and the keys to the Buick while you're at it. This is the rule of all new social models: First you are required to tolerate it, then endorse it, then find it equal to previous norms, then admit its comparative superiorities, and finally, you are required to subsidize it. You can count on one thing: After ten years of federal money spent on helping emerging adults turn into the real thing at age 25, the *Times* will run a story about the latest research. Turns out "emerging adulthood" lasts until you're 26.

More money will be needed to find out why.

NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.



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