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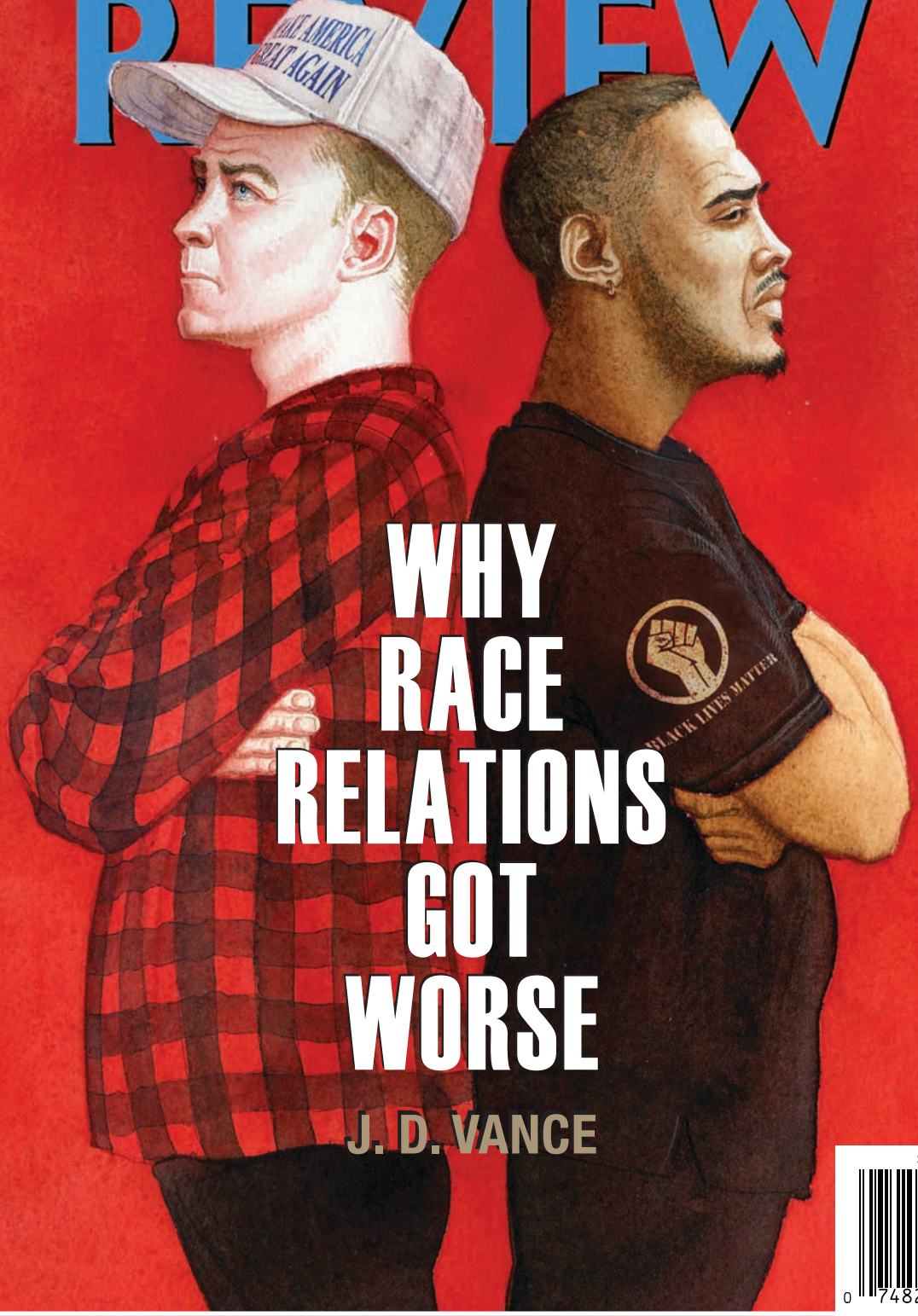

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Two Underclasses

The United States has never been entirely sure what to do about race, but 2016 offers reasons for unique alarm. The progress of recent decades, both political and social, appears to have evaporated in the past few years. And the problems, as so often, are focused on the two oldest classes of our poor. *J. D. Vance*

COVER: ROMAN GENN

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NATIONAL REVIEW

AUGUST 29 ISSUE; PRINTED AUGUST 11

Letters

The Disability Trap

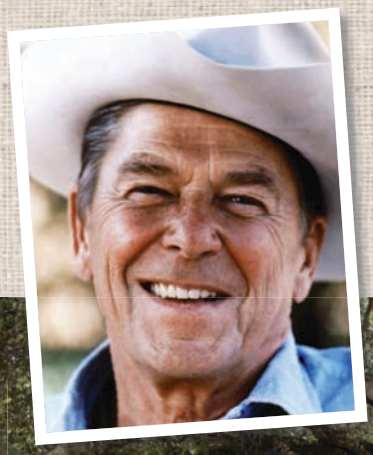
David French's article on the VA's overmedication of veterans ("Casualties of the VA," July 11) was most insightful; your candor is especially noteworthy. You failed to mention what is, alas, a major motivation for recent veterans to claim an "official" PTSD diagnosis—namely, disability compensation. Comparisons with the U.K. are instructive, but so is the comparison between the VA today and before 2001. Today, perhaps with the best of intentions, the VA in conjunction with the Armed Services deliberately channels veterans into "disability ghettos," which can indeed disrupt and delay recovery, impede reintegration into society, and of course misdirect resources. Not only are VA benefits actively pushed onto veterans, but there are negative financial consequences for recovering from mental-health conditions that are eminently treatable. The best thing we could do for veterans would be to emulate best practices in industry and even workers' compensation, which focus on recovery and improved health, not on labeling someone as permanently disabled. This labeling is self-defeating and hinders recovery. Your excellent personal story is illustrative of a poorly run system for both veterans and taxpayers. Thank you kindly.

Arthur Reynolds
Lieutenant Colonel (ret.), Judge Advocate General's Corps
United States Army

DAVID FRENCH RESPONDS: I appreciate Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds's letter and agree with his core point. The VA's disability system is broken, and there are strong financial incentives for making disability claims. Moreover, these incentives actually exacerbate the drug crisis that was the focus of my article. The long-term prescription and use of addictive medications is often cited as evidence of the persistence of the underlying physical and psychological condition—yet that same use and abuse of medication creates new physical and psychological problems. The veteran is thus trapped in a cycle of drug dependency that creates its own set of perverse incentives. The thing that is destroying their life is the thing that is also partly responsible for their disability check.

Nothing I write should be construed as an argument that any given veteran should throw away their pill bottles. There are circumstances in which these prescriptions are life-saving. But each and every veteran prescribed addictive medication should seek additional medical opinions—particularly if they find that the drugs are wreaking havoc with their lives. Too many veterans have lost themselves in pill bottles. It's past time for them to ask questions and seek alternatives.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.



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The Week

■ If only the State Department were as focused on its mission as the Clinton Foundation.

■ Hillary Rodham Clinton does not like to do press conferences, but she may change her mind after her last one. Breaking her eight-month run of evading the press, Mrs. Clinton took questions from the National Associations of Black Journalists and Hispanic Journalists, during which she basked in applause from the reporters. They clapped lustily after her praise of Barack Obama's economic agenda and, perhaps worse, when she boasted about her approval numbers at the end of her tenure at the State Department. Prominent NABJ members include NBC anchor Lester Holt and Dean Baquet, executive editor of the *New York Times*. When the media cover Clinton with kid gloves, we don't need to imagine them applauding her—we've already seen it.

■ On *Fox News Sunday* in late July, host Chris Wallace pointed out to Clinton that FBI director James Comey had said none of her various assurances about how she hadn't sent or received classified material on her private e-mail were true. Clinton responded: "Director Comey said my answers were truthful, and what I've said is consistent with what I have told the American people, that there were decisions discussed and made to classify retroactively certain of the e-mails." Comey had not in fact vouched for Clinton's truthfulness when speaking publicly; he only said she hadn't lied to the FBI. After a berating from the fact checkers at the *Washington Post*, which gave her statement "four Pinocchios," its worst rating, Clinton tried to walk her comment back at the aforementioned press conference by explaining, "I may have short-circuited it, and I will try to clarify." But Clinton didn't "short-circuit"; she lied. The proper response is not a clarification; it's an apology.

■ Those are my principles, Groucho Marx said, and if you don't like them, I have others. It could be Tim Kaine's motto. Throughout his career, he has been a supporter of the Hyde amendment—which forbids taxpayer funding of abortion—and in the past he has cited his Catholic faith as grounds for his "personal" opposition to abortion. But after his selection as Clinton's running-mate, the Clinton campaign claimed Kaine had embraced Hillary's extreme pro-abortion position, including the Democratic-party platform's promise to repeal the Hyde amendment. Then, a Clinton-Kaine spokesman further explained that Kaine was not "personally for repeal of the Hyde amendment" but remained "committed to carrying out Secretary Clinton's agenda." But Kaine subsequently told CNN that he had always supported the amendment and hadn't changed his position. Less than a week later, though, he didn't respond to an audience question asking how he would cast a tie-breaking vote on the Hyde amendment in the Senate. Tim Kaine appears to be wrestling with his conscience on this issue, and winning.

ROMAN GENN

See page 11.

■ Donald Trump gave a speech on his economic agenda to the Economic Club of Detroit. The best of Trump's economic agenda has little or nothing to do with taxes, trade, or spending, but with energy production. He vowed to seek regulatory reform that would "unleash an energy revolution." Some of the promised benefits of that revolution are wildly optimistic, though he is correct that unshackling U.S. energy producers is critical for wider economic success. But while energy is an important driver of the U.S. economy, so is trade, and on trade, Trump promises nothing less than chaos. He threatens to pull out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which has contributed both to employment and to economic growth. On taxes, Trump offers an incoherent program obviously engineered with an eye to nickel-and-diming his way to victory. For example, his proposal for a 100 percent deduction against taxes for money spent on child care will be a boon to Manhattanites with expensive nannies and to baby-sitters from coast to coast, but it is terrible policy. His proposed simplification and reduction of the federal income-tax brackets is welcome, but it would be much better if that proposal were accompanied by a serious plan for reducing spending proportionately. A simplified tax code and an

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energized energy sector are indeed needed, but that Trump has the seriousness or the political capacity to get from here to there is far from obvious.

■ At the Democratic convention, Khizr Khan, an immigrant from Pakistan, paid tribute to his son, Captain Humayun Khan, killed in 2004 in Iraq, and flayed Donald Trump for calling for a pause in immigration from Muslim, or terror-infested, countries. The thrust of Trump's policy makes sense: America has a right to control its immigrant inflow, and we should not import problems. Bereaved survivors are not untouchable oracles; Democrats agree when it suits them, as in their response to Patricia Smith, who, at the Republican convention, blamed her son's death in Benghazi on Hillary Clinton. Trump should have thanked Khan for his son's service and stuck to his guns. Instead he punched back, whined, and maligned Khan's religion, suggesting that Captain Khan's mother, Ghazala, stood silently by her husband because she "wasn't allowed to have anything to say" (Trump had previously made insulting insinuations about the faiths of Ben Carson and Ted Cruz). The fracas damaged Trump and may contribute to making Muslims a rhetorically untouchable class (like blacks, gays, and other liberal totems). Prescribed deference is inherently un-American; deference to Islam is dangerous in a world of fanaticism and religious strife.

■ As an exercise in political pique, it's hard to top Donald Trump's quickly reversed non-endorsements of Paul Ryan, John McCain, and Kelly Ayotte. Trump said he was withholding his endorsements of the trio in what was obviously meant as petty revenge for their criticism of his mishandling of the Khan family. After generating days of pointlessly damaging stories about a GOP crack-up, Trump endorsed Ryan et al. after all, reading dutifully from a script provided by his handlers. His supporters hopefully declared, once again, that Trump had "pivoted," when the episode was simply more of the same from the chronically ill-disciplined candidate.

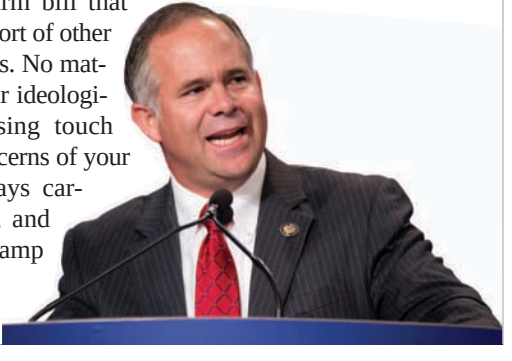
■ *The Nation* rose in defense of Donald Trump. It denounced commentators, many of them liberal journalists, who have expressed alarm at Trump's warm embrace of Putin and at the signs that Putin in turn is rooting for Trump's election. The overwhelming evidence that Russian intelligence groups were behind the recent hack and leaking of Democratic-party e-mails was dismissed as more "cheap neo-McCarthyism." Credit where it's due: The publication has proven remarkably consistent across the decades in turning a blind eye to Russian malevolence.

■ Toward the end of a year during which, in highbrow and popular media alike, the insinuations and the outright assertions that the Republican nominee for president was mentally ill had begun to pile up, a magazine blared from its cover that "1,189 psychiatrists say Goldwater is psychologically unfit to be president!" To its credit, the American Psychiatric Association—not, one would think, a hotbed of Goldwater conservatism—finally put its foot down and issued "the Goldwater rule," as it became known: "It is unethical for a psychiatrist to offer [to media] a professional opinion [of a public figure's mental health] unless he or she has conducted an examination and has been granted proper authorization for such a statement." The APA recently reminded its members that the Goldwater rule still stands: Psychiatrists tempted to use the name "Donald Trump" and the phrase "narcissistic-personality disorder" in the same sentence should exercise restraint. The candidates give us enough purely political wrong-headedness to keep their critics busy through Election Day.

■ Is it too much to ask for a libertarian presidential candidate who is thoughtful about liberty? Gary Johnson, interviewed by the *Washington Examiner*, opined that giving Christian cake bakers or the Little Sisters of the Poor protection under the religious-liberty provision of the First Amendment would be a "black hole." "I mean under the guise of religious freedom, anybody can do anything," Johnson said. "Back to Mormonism. Why shouldn't somebody be able to shoot somebody else because their freedom of religion says that God has spoken to them?" So, in an election in which Mormons dislike Hillary Clinton for her social views and distrust Donald Trump for his bullying of minority religions, and in which Libertarians strive, yet again, to become America's second-and-a-half party, their nominee rakes up the muck of the mid-19th century. (Mormons did shoot people, and were also shot.) In addition, William Weld, Johnson's running mate, thinks Stephen Breyer and Merrick Garland are model jurists.

■ Evan McMullin, a 40-year old former CIA operative and House Republican staffer, is mounting an independent presidential run as an anti-Trump conservative. McMullin is a patriot and constitutionalist, but he is not remotely qualified for the presidency and his protest bid will struggle to get traction. Just because the campaign is already full of candidates not particularly suited to the presidency is not reason to add another.

■ Representative Tim Huelskamp, a Kansas conservative from one of the reddest areas in the country, lost badly in a primary to a business-backed opponent. Congressman Huelskamp had spent his three terms in Washington agitating against the GOP leadership, which got him kicked off the Agriculture Committee. That was strike one in his heavily agricultural district. Strikes two and three were voting against a farm bill that had the support of other conservatives. No matter what your ideological hue, losing touch with the concerns of your district always carries a price, and Tim Huelskamp has paid it.



TOM WILLIAMS/CQ ROLL CALL

■ In January, the Obama administration delivered $400 million in cash—ostensibly the principal in a $1.7 billion settlement to a decades-long arms dispute—to Tehran on the very same day that Iran released four Americans being held as enemies of the state. Administration officials deny that this was a "ransom" payment, but if not, someone forgot to tell Tehran. Iranian general Mohammad Reza Naghdi informed state media in January: "Taking this much money back was in return for the release of

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the American spies." The cash—delivered in wooden crates, flown into Tehran on an unmarked cargo plane—was in euros, Swiss francs, and other currencies, "because we are so strict in maintaining sanctions," President Obama explained. (Actually, sanctions laws prohibit Americans from engaging in financial transactions with Iran using any currency.) It is almost certain that a sizable portion of that $400 million will end up in the hands of terrorists. And there is now a precedent encouraging

Thinking about the Unthinkable

THIS has been a terrible summer filled with a stream of terror attacks. Terrorists have attacked with bombs, knives, guns, hatchets, and even a truck. The damage from these attacks has been horrible.

But the magnitude of the damage that terrorists have inflicted does not approach the catastrophic scale threatened by the possible high-tech attacks that an incipient policy community has begun to study and quantify.

In a recent paper on emerging security threats, Brookings Institution scholar Benjamin Wittes reminds readers that research in the public domain could give scientifically qualified terrorists information that would allow them to carry out severe attacks. He highlights a number of recent developments that illustrate the severity of the problem. Australian scientists synthesized a mousepox virus that was lethal to mice and impervious to vaccination, raising the specter of a vaccine-resistant smallpox virus. Other scientists have developed strains of the polio and Ebola viruses in the laboratory, along with the 1918 version of the influenza virus, which infected as much as a third of the world's population and may have killed as many as 100 million people.

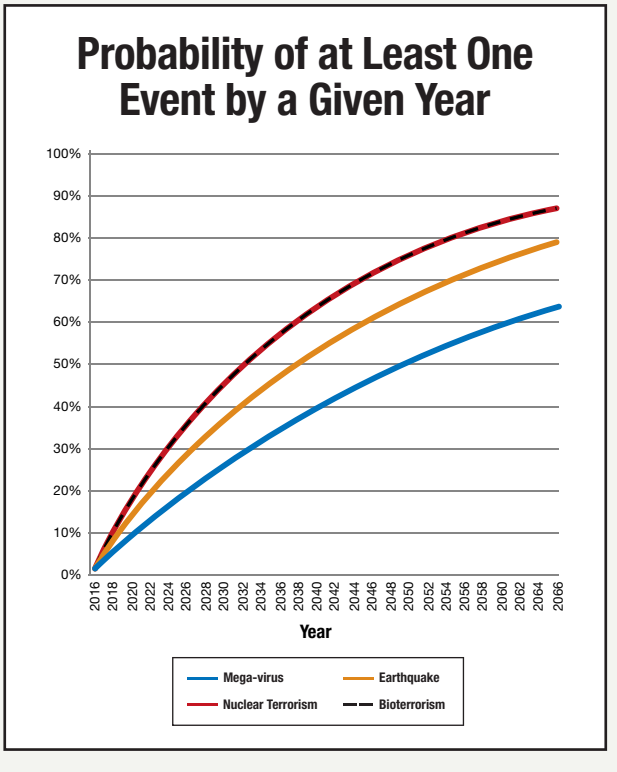
Bioterror isn't the only threat of catastrophe. A recent paper in the *American Economic Review* by London School of Economics economist Ian Martin and MIT economist Robert Pindyck set out to collect information across a number of scientific fields about a wide array of threats of catastrophic magnitude. These include man-made disasters, such as nuclear attacks and climate change, and natural disasters, such as a massive earthquake or the evolution of a deadly new virus. Sifting through the data, they estimate the probabilities that certain catastrophic events will occur within a given year.

While even a data-grounded prognostication cannot avoid speculation, assessments of the probability of, for example, a mega-virus at least have the history of pandemics to ground their analysis. Likewise, assessments of the probability of severe weather events can be formed on the basis of the frequency with which they have occurred in the past. While even the most rigorous probabilistic assessments of biological or nuclear terrorism cannot avoid significant uncertainty, Martin and Pindyck make their best effort to synthesize the most reliable estimates offered by experts in the field. The results of some of their work is plotted in the chart.

The chart shows the odds, based on the Martin and Pindyck probabilities, that at least one realization of a given type of catastrophic event will occur by the date given. For example, the odds that a mega-virus, which the authors define as a major pandemic that affects a significant portion of the world's population, will emerge by 2025 are about 18 percent, climbing to 50 percent by 2050. Martin and Pindyck predict that the likelihood of at least one catastrophic earthquake by 2025 is 26 percent, while the likelihood of one by 2050 is 66 percent. However, both nuclear terrorism, defined as the detonation of one or more nuclear weapons, and bioterrorism, defined as the deliberate release of harmful biological agents, are according to Martin and Pindyck much more likely to occur than either of the foregoing disasters. For each of these types of terrorist attack, the odds of at least one by 2025 are estimated to be 34 percent, and the estimate rises to 76 percent by 2050.

If these admittedly speculative odds are even close to correct, then we are all thinking far too little about catastrophe. It seems essential that planning for possible catastrophes be prioritized, the interactions between them be explored, and worst-case scenarios prepared for. A large increase in research on infectious diseases, for example, could help avoid both the bioterror and mega-virus scenarios. Scholars could accelerate efforts to identify the possible costs and benefits of various steps to secure food supplies in the event of volcanic activity or nuclear attacks. The alternative is to remain unprepared and hope for the best, which is a poor strategy.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



the kidnapping of American citizens, which Iran is already exploiting. Two Iranian Americans have been detained since the January payment. Is anyone surprised? It used to be a federal crime to provide material support to terrorists. Now it's apparently federal policy.

■ The Obama administration is engaging in a stealth escalation of the war against ISIS. American forces have now intervened directly in Libya's ongoing civil war, launching air strikes in support of Libyan forces seeking to seize the city of Sirte from ISIS. This escalation is welcome. ISIS has been working to establish Libya as a secondary geographic stronghold to which it can retreat in the event that it loses its Iraqi and Syrian heartland—and Libya's close proximity to Europe makes an ISIS presence especially dangerous to European and American interests. But while the escalation is welcome, it is still not enough. Obama continues to wage a version of slow-motion war that allows ISIS to recruit fighters and spread its influence. The administration is content to try to win slowly, and its threat demands a more urgent response.

■ President Obama is reportedly considering pledging America to a nuclear "no first use" policy—essentially promising to use America's most powerful weapons only in retaliation for a nuclear strike. The policy is useless at best, dangerous at worst. It's useless because his successor can abandon it with the stroke of a pen, and a responsible president would do so with the utmost haste in the event of looming strategic disaster. It's dangerous because its mere existence could encourage the kind of aggression that would make a nuclear exchange more likely. America's current strategic approach—which forces potential adversaries to consider the possibility that aggression could provoke a nuclear response—has helped keep the global peace for more than 60 years. There is no reason to abandon it, except to engage in anti-nuclear moral posturing.

■ The policymaking entity of Black Lives Matter has released a 40,000-word manifesto that is a grab bag of racially tinged Occupy Wall Street–ism: America is "an empire that uses war to expand territory and power"; it is founded upon "white supremacy, imperialism, capitalism, and patriarchy"; etc. But tucked away between calls for reparations and the end of private education is a bizarre attack on Israel, which Black Lives Matter calls an "apartheid state" and says is perpetrating "genocide" against Palestinians. This is false and slanderous and has no apparent connection with the problems of black Americans.

■ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has made a preliminary ruling in a complaint, filed by a black employee, that a co-worker wore a cap bearing the DON'T TREAD ON ME rattlesnake of the Revolution-era Gadsden flag. The complainant called the design "racially offensive" because Christopher Gadsden, the patriot who created it, owned and traded slaves. The EEOC, while admitting that the flag has "express[ed] various non-racial sentiments," called for further investigation. We would gladly provide the EEOC a Gadsden flag to fly outside its headquarters.

■ In 2013, North Carolina passed a law requiring voters to show a government-issued photo ID, ending same-day registration, and shortening the length of early voting from 17 days to ten. The Left rent its garments—Hillary Clinton called it an "assault on voting rights"—and foretold mass disfranchisement. It never happened. In 2010, before North Carolina's law, 38.5 percent of blacks in North Carolina voted in the year's midterms; in 2014, with the law in effect, it was 41.1 percent. Nonetheless, the Fourth Circuit has swatted down the law, going out of its way to ignore evidence, impugn the motives of North Carolina's legislature, and concoct specious legal rationales to reach its verdict. The Left's ultimate quarry is *Shelby County v. Holder*, the 2013 Supreme Court decision that made North Carolina's law possible by striking down part of Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act. That section required jurisdictions that had a history of voter suppression as of the early 1970s to receive federal permission for any changes to election procedures. Given the strong provisions that remain in place to protect voting rights, pretending that the decision began a downhill march back to literacy tests and poll taxes is sheer demagoguery. Voter-ID laws have longstanding legal precedent, broad popular support, and ample justification. That is why the Left is turning to the courts, the self-appointed legislatures of last resort, to quash them.

■ William Bratton announced that he will leave policing for the private sector in September. He served stints in Boston and Los Angeles, but his mark on American crime-fighting was made in New York City. As chief of the transit police in 1990–91, he pioneered the strategy of broken-windows policing—nabbing the small offenders who corrode public space and confidence and who are often wanted for more serious offenses. As police commissioner in 1994–96, he implemented this policy city-wide. Gotham's long recovery began. In 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio brought him back; Bratton held the line against left-wing race agitation encouraged, in part, by de Blasio himself. Bratton is not the only hero of this tale: Jack Maple, chief of detectives, pioneered CompStat, the daily tracking of crime's ebb and flow. Ray Kelly was a worthy successor, and mayors Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg led from City Hall. But a great city owes Bratton a great debt, and thousands of New Yorkers owe him their lives. Well done.

■ Mayor Charlie Hales has reversed the "safe sleep" policy under which police in Portland, Ore., could not disturb "houseless" people who slept on sidewalks and in other public spaces. Business owners and neighborhood groups complained. The idea had been that the law against camping on the streets should remain on the books but not be enforced for groups of six or fewer people between 9 P.M. and 7 A.M. Hales said that "outreach workers and law enforcement struggled to educate people about the difference between a safe night's sleep and unsanctioned camping." The road to urban hell is littered with good intentions.

■ "You read about someone who's killed his girlfriend or his mother-in-law, and these are violent baptized Catholics," Pope Francis said to a reporter who pointed out that it was in the name of Islam that Father Jacques Hamel of Rouen, France, was publicly murdered in July. "If I talk about 'Islamic' violence, should I speak about 'Catholic' violence too?" Francis continued. "Not all Muslims are violent." Francis was confusing two arguments. One of them is cogent: Most Muslims are not jihadists, and many are friends to Christians, as they demonstrated that very day by flocking to Sunday Mass in churches across France and Italy to honor the Catholic priest whom their

co-religionists had brutally martyred. In the same breath, however, Francis attempted to draw a moral equivalence between a murderer who happens to be Christian and a murderer who, by his own account, kills because he's Muslim. Francis glossed over a distinction that it is crucial for Christians to maintain if they are ever to achieve clarity of purpose in fighting jihad: Most Muslims are not jihadists, many Muslims are victims of jihadists, and many Muslims are allies or potential allies of Christians; but all jihadists are Muslims.

■ Things at the Rio Olympics are going about as well as you would expect of a large, complex international event in a poor, dysfunctional South American country run by a corrupt socialist party. The Games' security chief got mugged after the opening ceremony, as did the Portuguese education minister. Another

robber targeted the Russian vice consul; that robber is dead now, after a shooting that the authorities insist never happened. Ordering concessions requires a ridiculous two-part process: Stand in line for an hour to order from a cashier, then stand in line for another hour or more to trade the receipt the cashier gives you for your order, all of which turns out to be beside the point, since the concessions have run out of food and drink. There's a Zika epidemic under way, the yachting competitions are taking place in a sea of sewage (Guanabara Bay was supposed to have been cleaned up, but Brazil ran out of money), the Australians were burgled in the Olympic village, and the government just arrested a dozen or so local Islamic State sympathizers who allegedly were planning an attack. Brazil is expected to suffer serious financial losses. The real winner here is Chicago, which would have hosted this year's games if Barack Obama were a better negotiator.

■ Admirers of Bernie Sanders insist that there's a difference between "democratic socialism" and what goes on in places such as Cuba and North Korea. For years, Hollywood leftists and Democratic grandees celebrated the democratically elected Hugo Chávez and his so-called Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela as an exemplar of this. The revolution is going as expected—which is to say, as F. A. Hayek expected when he wrote *The Road to Serfdom*: As central planning fails, the Venezuelan government has not loosened political control of economic activity but rather tightened it, citing, in language that would have been familiar to V. I. Lenin, economic "saboteurs." (No kulaks were available for scapegoating.) Most recently, the Venezuelan government has instituted a new edict putting the country's ports and food-distribution network under the management of—inevitably—the military. "This is a question of national security and defense of the fatherland," says Vladimir Padrino, the Venezuelan defense minister. When the military isn't busy running the grocery stores, it has dozens of food riots a day to try to control. Several Venezuelans have been killed in the civil unrest. In order to staff up that new food program, the government is conscripting labor. Empty shelves and well-stocked labor camps: Democratic socialism is still socialism.

■ As elections near, parties often get more aggressive in their messaging, and in Palestine this means comparing body counts of Israelis. Sympathetic outsiders like to describe Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party as "moderate," but it still used an official Facebook page to boast that "the Fatah movement has killed 11,000 Israelis." After negative media attention, a party official blamed "hot-blooded youths" for the post, which was not the first of its kind. The party cannot, in fact, take credit for that many deaths—it is an election-time embellishment used to fight off Hamas's claims of superior Jew-killing—but the boast shows that "moderate" hatred of Israel is still plain old hatred.

■ The African National Congress likes to take all the credit for ridding South Africa of apartheid. Leaders of the ANC, Nelson Mandela included, had their roots in Communism, and since 1994 they have accordingly been running a pretty tight one-party state with the attendant self-dealing. President Jacob Zuma, for example, has just spent $20 million of public money on his private palace. Upwardly mobile blacks accuse the ANC of corruption, arrogance, and incompetence, and they have expressed their resentment in the municipal elections just held by voting for the opposition Democratic Alliance. The ANC vote fell dramatically, and it lost control of some black-majority cities, including Pretoria, the capital. General elections are due in 2019, and should they follow this trend, it might be that the country's racial politics will have finally run their course.

■ Finland has a birthday coming up: Next year it celebrates the centennial of its declaration of independence from Russia. To mark the occasion, Nordic neighbor Norway is thinking about giving the Finns a peak called Halti that sits along the border between the two nations and was assigned to Norway decades ago by a careless cartographer. Halti would become the new highest point in Finland, while Norway, which has hundreds of taller ones, would hardly miss it. So the idea seems agreeable to everyone in both countries except the indigenous Sami people, who live on both sides of the border and claim the area surrounding Halti as their homeland. Whatever gift Norway decides upon, it will be much more welcome than anything that neighboring Russia is likely to send.

■ Halloween is becoming too much to bear on college campuses. NR's old friend Jillian Kay Melchior, writing at *Heat Street*, has revealed the latest madness. Last Halloween, a trio of University of Wisconsin–Platteville co-eds posted on Facebook a photo of themselves dressed as the Three Blind Mice. The college's Bias Incident Team swung into action right away over the alleged mocking of a disability. For re-enacting a nursery song, the miscreants were visited in person by Bias Incident Team members; their jobs as dormitory staffers were put under review; and the college decided to draw up rules governing "appropriate" costume choices. We can remember when Halloween was scary because of the ghosts and goblins.

■ Steph Yin, writing in the *New York Times*, has regretted the discovery of fire. Sure, fire brought some benefits in the form of creature comforts—cooked food, warmth, light—but "there were downsides, too." Proximity to smoke, Yin argues, probably led to the discovery of smoking. (This seems likely.) Meanwhile, the ability to cook food encouraged hunting and, therefore, patriarchy. One day, you're just a happy *Homo erectus* living in a sexually egalitarian state of nature, and the next thing you know, everybody is Stanley Kowalski.

■ Give Alex Rodriguez his due. Over 22 seasons, he hit almost 700 home runs, enough to rank fourth all-time. By almost every statistical measure, he was a better player than his teammate Derek Jeter, with whom Yankee fans fell into the habit of comparing him unfavorably. To a ruthless, round-the-clock sports-media industry on steroids, Rodriguez showed himself to be vain and venal, like many of his forerunners and contemporaries, on the field and off. For having been on literal steroids, Major League Baseball suspended him for the 2014 season. In 2004, the players' union had legally but wrongly overruled his agreement to a trade, from Texas to Boston, because it entailed a pay cut. He found little love in New York, where he landed, though he contributed to the Yanks' 2009 world championship. The Yankees were profligate to agree to his bloated contract, despite his prodigious talent, conspicuous since his rookie days in Seattle. He announced his retirement on August 7 and played his last game later that week. His potential was off the charts. No one could have lived up to it, but he came close.

2016

The Democrats Unite

DEMOCRATS may not be able to run the VA or the State of California, but they can do a good political convention, as Philadelphia, with one exception, proved.

The party was united. Debbie Wasserman Schultz was defenestrated from the Democratic National Committee to appease Sandersistas enraged at proof, via hacked e-mails, that she had tilted the primary process to Hillary Clinton's benefit. Sanders himself endorsed his old foe, and Senator Elizabeth Warren further mollified the hard Left. Bill Clinton spun a Horatio Alger biography of his wife ever overcoming obstacles (discreetly omitting her greatest obstacle, which has been living with him). Michelle and Barack Obama delivered encomia, he even going so far as to say that there has never been a "more qualified" candidate than Hillary Clinton. Michael Bloomberg eviscerated Donald Trump, a real self-made billionaire dissing a blowhard poseur.

Donald Trump's vision of a battered America, and his bromantic remarks about assorted dictators from Putin to Erdogan, allowed the Democrats to corner the market on the rhetoric of patriotic uplift. President Obama praised America's "courage and optimism and ingenuity" and quoted Ronald Reagan in calling America "a shining city on a hill." "We are America—second to none!" shouted Vice President Joe Biden. "Never, ever bet against America." Conservative tweeters tried to make hay out of the fact that there were few flags visible in the Wells Fargo Center. There didn't need to be; the rhetoric was red, white, and blue.

Democrats hunting for votes in the middle called themselves born-again nationalists (false) and Donald Trump erratic (true). They did not, however, make any policy moves toward the center. The platform echoed Black Lives Matter concerns about the incarceration state. It backed card check (an express lane to union organizing) and a $15 national minimum wage. Democrats in power want to clip the First Amendment by overturning the *Citizens United* decision and gut the Second by pushing for tighter gun laws and for overturning the *Heller* decision. They want to institute taxpayer funding of abortions and funnel money specifically to Planned Parenthood. Two illegal immigrants spoke from the podium at the Democratic convention; others served on various convention committees.

The off-note was the star. Hillary Clinton is not made for this line of work. She delivered a dull text (which, in fairness, most acceptance speeches are), flashing a forced smile and banging out the sentences like a midwestern jackhammer. With smooth candidates—Bill Clinton, Barack Obama—Democrats have won recent presidential elections rather handily. With stiffs—Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, John Kerry—they struggle. Mrs. Clinton belongs to the second category. Happily for her, she is running against a catastrophically weak opponent.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine at the Democratic National Convention, Philadelphia, Pa., July 28, 2016

ROMAN GENN

Citizen Trump

Nixon, FDR, Gatsby, and more

BY MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

PEOPLE who use the word "buffoon" to describe Donald Trump do so too casually. They overlook the virtuosity of the performance. The yellow hair, the painted face, the histrionic strutting, the naïve egotism—Trump plays the part of Il Capitano, the swaggering soldier of the *commedia dell'arte*, with a skill the professional actor might well envy. Americans have never seen such a performance, not, at any rate, on the political stage; the country is transfixed, fascinated, much as the crowd is spellbound by the conjuror Cipolla in Thomas Mann's political allegory *Mario and the Magician*.

"Who, whom?" was Lenin's formula for the transactions of power. Trump would perhaps phrase it differently. Who kicks, who is kicked? In his acceptance speech in Cleveland (surely the most rhetorically novel utterance in American politics since FDR's fireside chats), Trump eschewed the happy speak and literary flourishes heretofore compulsory on such occasions. Who kicks, who is kicked? America's "forgotten men and women" are getting kicked, in Trump's telling, by a motley crew of globalists, Islamic jihadists, sadistic immigrants, unresponsive leaders, "big business, elite media, and major donors," cynical conspirators who have "rigged our political and economic system for their exclusive benefit."

The thesis itself is not new. Its origins are traceable to the Country-party rhetoric that 18th-century English and American patriots used to denounce Court Whigs, the banker-politician class of the day. It has been periodically updated ever since—by Jacksonian and Bryanite populists, by FDR in his philippics against economic royalists, and more recently by Richard Nixon, who took Roosevelt's Forgotten Man and made him the standard-bearer of the Silent Majority.

Highbrow observers tend to describe Trump's forgotten Americans in scornful, quasi-anthropological terms. A dwindling demographic clinging to guns and religion, rabidly but irrationally discontent, howling at the moon when they should be content when the job packing boxes for an Internet retailer is replaced by a robot or shifted abroad. Trump, to his credit, is the only spotlight figure since Nixon to sympathize so overtly with those who feel "neglected, ignored, and abandoned"—kicked to the curb—by leaders invested in brighter, more fashionable causes. Charlatan he may be, but he has in this respect performed a useful service, even if it is only to say (in so many words), "I am your voice. I kick for you."

That Trump is, in his personal and professional avocations, much closer to the Court Whigs he wants to kick than to the kicked masses he now champions is in his narrative an asset. "Nobody knows the system better than me," he said in Cleveland, the knavish clown-smile further lighting up the already luminous face. The Duc d'Orléans has rechristened himself Philippe Égalité and has this advantage over the other revolutionists: He can show you where the bodies are buried in the Bastille.

Trump knows how to kick, likes to kick. He delivers his thrusts in a slang derived (at whatever remove) from old films noirs, Raymond Chandler novels, J. D. Salinger stories. Trump's is a world of winners and losers. Winners know how to kick. Losers try to kick but do so ineffectually. They must nevertheless be kicked back. When Justice Ginsburg criticized him, he mocked her, in his best Holden Caulfield style, for "making very dumb political statements about me. Her mind is shot—resign!" Arianna Huffington, another detractor, is "unattractive both inside and out. I fully understand why her former husband left her for a man—he made a good decision." "Pocahontas," "Lyin' Ted," "Crooked Hillary"—losers all; must all be kicked.

That old warhorse of presidential scholarship Theodore H. White once asked Richard Nixon "how he could bear campaigning, shaking hands all day, smiling . . ." Nixon interrupted him before he could finish: "And all the while you're smiling you want to kick them in the shins."

Nixon's dark sad-clown face, that of a long-nosed Pulcinella or Mr. Punch, is in contrast to Trump's brazen Miles Gloriosus features. But Nixon is nevertheless one of Trump's masters. Nixon's 1968 campaign, waged on behalf of the "forgotten Americans," has served Trump as a model for his own race. Like Trump, Nixon divided the world into the kickers and the kicked. Virtue lay in learning how to kick effectively. To solve a problem, he said, you had to find the right "place to kick somebody in the ass." Drugs? "Just kick the hell out of it," he told H. R.

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Haldeman, "we enforce the law." Student unrest? "Kick the weirdoes and the beardoes on the college campuses." Inflation? "Kick the chain stores." Rabble-rousers like Salvador Allende? "Kick the hell out of the Chileans." The North Vietnamese? "Kick the sh** out of them." John Dean? "Kick him straight."

Nineteen sixty-eight was a good year for a candidate to run on a platform of kicking the status quo to hell, but 2016 is the darker moment. Nineteen sixty-eight opened with the country getting pummeled in Vietnam in the Tet Offensive, saw the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and witnessed urban rioting that killed twelve in Washington, 16 in Detroit, 26 in Newark, and twelve more in Baltimore and Chicago. But in the ghoulish stakes of murder, ISIS-inspired terrorism against the West in the last year has spilt more blood than all the urban unrest of 1968. And while the Tet Offensive was, as Teddy White observed, "a complete military failure" for Hanoi, today's jihadists have been all too successful in bringing their madness into the heart of Western communities.

But the real difference is economic. The 1960s were a golden age. According to the American Enterprise Institute's Mark Perry, the decade saw a 106-month economic expansion in which real-GDP "growth averaged 5%, with growth as high as 8.5% in two quarters," payrolls increased by 32 percent, and the nation saw the "highest growth in jobs by far of any decade during the postwar period." Twenty sixteen is an economically bleaker time, with anemic growth, a dearth of good jobs, grown-up kids living with their parents, and little faith in the future—a confidence deficit borne out by the astonishingly high numbers of Americans who tell pollsters that the country is on the wrong track.

That 2016 is for many Americans such an anxious time explains why Trump, student of Nixon though he is, has gone beyond the master as a shatterer of molds and is unorthodox in ways that Nixon never could have been. There was always, in Nixon, something of the kicked puppy. He was kicked by Dad, kicked by Eisenhower, kicked by the liberal elites, kicked by the press. They wouldn't "have Nixon to kick around anymore," he notoriously told reporters after losing the California governor's race in 1962. But the kicked puppy doesn't hate its tormentor. It craves its approval. Bored with the domestic sphere during his presidency, Nixon devoted his energy to contriving a foreign policy of such mandarin virtuosity that even the Council on Foreign Relations would have to admire it. Dick the respectable.

Nor did Nixon embrace a politics of rage in the way Trump has. Throughout 1968 he tempered calls for a crackdown on "rampant lawlessness" with assurances of moderation; sensing that the nation wanted calm, he purposefully ran a bland campaign with little overt choler. Where Trump's anger is exuberant and bouffe, Nixon's was closeted. He disliked face-to-face confrontation. "You're fired"? Not for Nixon. He would have sent Haldeman to get rid of the guy. In private he talked about kicking people, but the talk was mostly cathartic. "People blow off steam in different ways," he explained to journalist David Frost. "Some of them kick the cat. I don't like cats, but my daughters do. I should not have said that. But nevertheless, if there were one around I would probably kick the cat."

Nineteen sixty-eight was a good year for a candidate to run on a platform of kicking the status quo to hell, but 2016 is the darker moment.

Nixon's most egregious cat-kicking was hypothetical. He once startled Henry Kissinger by talking about going nuclear in Vietnam, but it was just that, talk. When he came to act he was generally sober and self-controlled. He liked to invoke Teddy Roosevelt's man-in-the-arena bloodlust, but he was always stealing away from the amphitheater, retiring to his hideaway in the Old Executive Office Building; he did much of his governing by memo. Gentle Dick.

Nixon could astonish the world with bold démarches, but he always prepared the ground carefully, and he was at heart what Trump is not, a conventional party politician, with all the cautions and disciplines of the type. The man who accepted his party's nomination in Miami Beach in 1968 had been at the forefront of American politics since the Alger Hiss case 20 years earlier. He had been congressman, senator, vice president, and the 1960 Republican nominee; in 1966 he had masterminded the party's comeback in the midterm elections. Rhetorically, too, he was conventionally filtered; in his public pronouncements he rarely spoke from the gut.

"The nation craved new leadership, new answers." What Teddy White said of 1968 is at least as true of 2016. If Donald Trump, in exploiting the hunger for change, has cribbed some of Nixon's lines, his style, in its un-self-conscious, devil-take-the-hindmost insouciance, is more than a little reminiscent of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. Like FDR, Trump is a happy warrior who doesn't sweat the policy details; he is content to contradict himself and make it up as he goes along. It is not a persona that can appeal to a temperate conservatism, and it would seem, indeed, to foretoken an FDR-like freelancing approach to the presidency: "But above all, try something," without much bother about "horse-and-buggy" constitutional niceties.

Probably the most misunderstood aspect of Trump's politics is its yearning, messianic character. His messianism has nothing to do with the blood-and-soil mysticism of Old World charismatic strongmen, nor is it a form of narcissism, as has been so often and so glibly claimed. Narcissus falls in love with himself and finds what he is looking for; Trump, on the contrary, is dissatisfied with himself, is always chasing something else. He hasn't found it yet, can't even say what it is, but that's no matter—tomorrow he'll run faster, stretch out his arms farther . . . And one fine morning—

Behind Trump's life-course and his current popularity lurks the ghost of Jay Gatsby. Fitzgerald's flawed hero is there, certainly, in the candidate's vulgar wealth, the sort of display that rarely fails to impress us Americans. But he is there, too, in the man's restlessness, his craving for something more. More perhaps than there is. Americans sympathize with the craving; they share it. It's the American way. Whatever else he may be, Citizen Trump is one of us. NR

Life after Trump

From factions, unity?

BY RAMESH PONNURU

Most people who work in Republican politics want Donald Trump to win but think he will lose. They hope that afterward the party will unify in opposition to President Hillary Clinton. They are, however, underestimating the divisions in their party that Trump's campaign has revealed.

From the standpoint of Republican unity, the worst possible outcome of the November election would be a narrow defeat for Trump. The nominee's Republican supporters would be enraged at those Republicans who balked at Trump, and the party would be consumed by recriminations.

A larger defeat would be harder to pin on "Never Trump" Republicans. If Trump underperforms among independents as well as Republicans; if he runs behind Republican Senate candidates, in a reversal of the pattern of the last two presidential elections; if he gets a lower percentage of the vote than Romney, even though Romney was running against an incumbent and a politician better liked than Hillary Clinton: The more such results are registered, the more those Republicans who warned that Trump would be a disastrous candidate will be proven right, and be seen to be proven right.

If Trump were to fail by these measures, almost all of the many Republicans who are backing him solely because he is the party's nominee would accept that verdict. Even some of the Republicans who backed Trump during the nomination contest would accept it and, if past political experience is a guide, would forget that they ever voted for him in a primary. Only his most die-hard fans would maintain that Trump would have won if not for the treacherous opposition of Senator Ben Sasse and the treacherously equivocal support of Speaker Paul Ryan.

But even a decisive result would not clarify other live debates within the party. The bulk of Republican politicians, activists, and commentators are not Trump loyalists, but they are themselves split between "establishment" and "tea party" factions. Republicans aligned with the first group generally blame the second for Trump's rise: The tea partiers kept delegitimizing Republican officeholders as sell-outs and thereby, the argument goes, made Republican voters more open to a demagogic outsider. The anti-Trump tea partiers make a mirror-image argument: The establishment set up Trump by repeatedly selling out and thereby disgusting Republican voters to the point that they turned to a demagogic outsider.

Neither theory is a close fit to the available facts. Exit polls suggest that primary voters who felt betrayed by Republican politicians did not back Trump at greater rates than other voters did. Voters who consider themselves "very conservative"—the voters one would expect to be most disappointed in Republicans for not repealing Obamacare—were less likely than other voters to support Trump. That's not surprising when you consider that Trump sounded more favorable toward government involvement in health care than did any of the other candidates, but it runs counter to both the establishment and the tea-party theories.

The weakness of those theories suggests that these factions are more interested in continuing their feud with each other than in understanding and responding to the Trump phenomenon. Any such effort would have to begin with the recognition that the core of Trump's vote does not belong to either faction and has a very different set of preoccupations.

Trump drew many different kinds of voters during the primaries. In several of his crucial victories, he nearly ran the table among the demographic groups the exit pollsters considered. His strongest supporters, though, made up a distinctive group that had long been present in the Republican party but had never been organized as such or had an influential champion. These voters had less formal schooling and attended church less frequently than other Republicans. They often described themselves as "moderates," perhaps because neither shrinking the government nor saving unborn

SAPA D. DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES

children was a passion of theirs. But they were not Chamber of Commerce Republicans, either.

"Working-class nationalist" might be a good label for these voters. They are, like the vast majority of Republicans, white: Is it fair, then, to describe them as "white nationalists"? Actual white nationalists—the kind of people who explicitly argue that whites should vote for an unapologetic champion of their racially defined interests—are certainly enthusiastic about Trump. But while they are active on Twitter, they are a small group.

A number of media outlets have drawn attention to scholars who suggest that a milder sentiment, which they call "racial resentment," is the defining characteristic of Trump's base. Their research showed, for example, that Trump supporters are especially likely to agree with the statement that a "growing number of newcomers from other countries threaten U.S. values." Findings like this one have led some people to conclude that the Republican party as a whole is better described as "ethno-nationalist" than "conservative": That's how Trump was able to win its nomination without running on either economic-conservative or social-conservative themes.

This view has been expressed both by liberals who see in Trump's nomination vindication for what they have been saying all along about Republicans and by conservatives whom that nomination has disillusioned to the point of believing that the liberals were right. But it's worth remembering that "racial resentment" is not the same thing as racism. The view that large-scale immigration has the potential to undermine some of the things Americans value, for example, strikes me as correct. In some voters' minds, this sentiment surely sits alongside less defensible and even ugly ones, with the proportion of each varying from person to person.

The reason these points are worth remembering is that they should affect how Republicans respond to these voters in the event of a Trump defeat. Republicans could follow two paths. The first would be to hope that a big loss would destroy Trump as a political force and that nobody else would be able to mobilize his core vote as he did; then Republicans could go back to ignoring the working-class nationalists in the expectation that this group would continue to vote for the GOP over the Democrats. The risk of this path would be that the calculation might prove incorrect in the presidential race of 2020. But it would have an advantage if the core Trump vote were composed of racist idiots, as some anti-Trump Republicans believe: It would not require Republicans to take the morally dubious step of courting them (and in the process alienating other voters).

Since that view is a hostile oversimplification, however, Republicans should take a second path: Try to appeal to Trump voters on the basis of their reasonable views while rejecting the rest. Henry Olsen, writing about these voters in NATIONAL REVIEW this spring ("Trump's Faction," May 9), pointed out that Republicans in the past have been able to integrate the theme of national solidarity, which they cherish, with other conservative themes, such as individual initiative. Doing so in the future will require some policy adjustments. Doubling the number of low-skilled immigrants we take in, for example, should be off the table for Republicans. Prior to those shifts, though, should be a change in outlook. Republicans need to do a better job of keeping in mind that not all of their voters have college degrees, or care about corporate-income-tax rates, or find the example of Ronald Reagan immediately compelling.

That doesn't mean that Republicans have to abandon everything they have ever stood for in favor of whatever Trump's supporters want. It does mean that even in the Republican primaries, a winning conservative coalition has to be formed rather than assumed to exist.

If Trump loses, then, Republicans will not only have to devise a strategy for responding to President Clinton and healing the bitter split between Trump supporters and opponents. They will also have to stitch together an alliance from among three groups: very conservative tea partiers, voters who think along the same lines as the party establishment, and much of the core Trump vote. And then, if that weren't enough, they must attract some voters who don't belong to any of these groups, since they do not add up to a majority.

So while a Clinton presidency would be a long four or eight years, Republicans would have no trouble coming up with work to fill the time. NR

Two Kinds Of Patriotism

How immigration affects the contest between ethno-nationalists and multiculturalists

BY REIHAN SALAM

At this year's Democratic National Convention, speaker after speaker offered paeans to American greatness. One of the most memorable was Michelle Obama, the first lady, who spoke movingly of America's story as "the story of unwavering hope grounded in unyielding struggle." There was something particularly striking about Mrs. Obama's celebration of what she called "the greatest nation on earth." Many will no doubt remember that in 2008, when her husband was competing for the Democratic presidential nomination, she briefly betrayed a certain ambivalence about America's virtues, remarking before the Wisconsin primary that, "for the first time in my adult life, I am really proud of my country, because it feels like hope is finally making a comeback."

Taken literally, this remark implied that Mrs. Obama hadn't been proud of her country for decades, a sentiment that many Americans found less than relatable. In short order, she clarified her remarks, emphasizing that she was expressing her delight and amazement at the enthusiastic public response to her husband's campaign, which is fair enough. Campaigning can be a grueling experience, and the occasional slip of the tongue is to be expected.

Another possibility, however, is that like many Americans on the political left, heartfelt nationalism wasn't exactly Mrs. Obama's cup of tea. And why would it be? While identifying with America and its triumphs is straightforward for some, it is less so for those who associate America with slavery, segregation, and all manner of other historical evils. It could be that Mrs. Obama accidentally let slip something important—that she believed her husband's political success represented a turning of the page, from an America that was too compromised to really be proud of to one that finally deserved to be celebrated.

We'll never really know what exactly Michelle Obama meant about American patriotism back then, but we have a much better sense of what she's saying now. Jamelle Bouie, writing at *Slate*, celebrated the optimism on display in Philadelphia, which he described as "an expression of pluralistic nationalism and deep civic pride, a progressive patriotism that acknowledges the nation's failures but strives to overcome them." For Mrs. Obama, patriotism is a celebration of the struggle to overcome injustice and to implement various social reforms.

But for many other Americans, patriotism is something more prosaic: It is a celebration of our shared cultural inheritance and a belief that we owe more to our fellow countrymen than we do to the rest of humanity. While Mrs. Obama's patriotism is rooted in ideological liberalism, this other patriotism is rooted in a more emotional appeal to cultural solidarity.

These two brands of patriotism are hardly unique to the United States. Eric Kaufmann, a sociologist at the University of London and a leading scholar of nationalism, has observed that in countries around the world, conceptions of national identity are hotly contested. National identity is not generally a top-down phenomenon that is crafted by the Ministry of National Heritage or some other centralized bureaucracy. It is a bottom-up phenomenon that is largely shaped by the experiences and understandings of individuals and communities. Because different individuals have different cultures, class backgrounds, and ideological perspectives, they gravitate to different conceptions of national identity. As a general rule, Kaufmann finds that in affluent market democracies, the wealthier and more educated are drawn to civic and multicultural conceptions of national identity, akin to Bouie's progressive patriotism, that deemphasize the idea of a shared ethno-cultural background. Other people, however, understand national identity primarily in ethno-cultural terms. In his book *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2012), the historian Azar Gat notes that "there have been very few nations, if any, whose existence was divorced from ethnicity, that is, which did not share cultural and at least some kin affinities." In some cases, this ethno-cultural identity is rooted in common descent, for example, a belief that a given ethnic group is a very extended kinship group. In settler societies such as the U.S. and Canada, ethno-cultural identity is rooted more in the belief that processes of integration and intermarriage have given rise to a hybrid culture—the melting pot, in American parlance. For our purposes, we can call this latter conception of national identity *conservative* patriotism.

The difference between progressive and conservative patriotism is not so much that the former has a laissez-faire attitude about what it means to belong to the nation while the latter does not. Rather, the progressive patriot might be more inclined to insist on adherence to a set of liberal ideological precepts—e.g., Do you agree that embracing gender equality and the Black Lives Matter movement is essential to being an enlightened 21st-century American?—while the conservative patriot is more interested in whether newcomers are willing to make the effort to "fit in."

One of the more intriguing aspects of Kaufmann's thesis is that there are no final victories. These conceptions of national identity are not fixed. All societies have something like a marketplace of national identities, in which some conceptions of national identity win market share over time and others lose it, depending on, among other things, changing tastes and economic conditions. Try as they might, the progressive patriots will never be able to vanquish the conservative patriots, regardless of how vociferously they attack rival conceptions of nationhood as racist or reactionary. Part of the reason is that, as the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has suggested, these different conceptions are rooted in deeply ingrained psychological predispositions. There will always be people who value cohesive communities, and there will always be others who see these communities as hotbeds of oppression.

The divide between these two conceptions of national identity is most clearly illustrated by the immigration debate. Conservative patriots tend to fear that excessively open immigration policies might retard the assimilation process, which requires that newcomers over time adopt the ethno-cultural identity that defines their adopted homeland. Progressive patriots, meanwhile, champion more-open immigration policies, not least because they are wary of those who want to limit immigration to preserve America's English-speaking, predominantly European cultural inheritance. For them, a shared culture matters less than a shared devotion to democratic and egalitarian ideals as understood by the contemporary Left. Whether you speak English or not, if you favor higher taxes on the rich and a generous safety net, the progressive patriot will welcome you with open arms.

As new immigrants arrive, they too are often inclined to embrace less culturally specific conceptions of American national identity, since doing so means that they won't be expected to surrender the cultural traditions they've brought with them from their native country. In this sense, at least, they are closely aligned with progressive patriots. If culturally distinctive immigrants arrive in sufficiently large numbers, however, they can prompt natives who embrace an ethno-cultural conception of nationhood to take their national identity more seriously rather than less. Some will seek to defend their cultural community by calling for limits on immigration and by emphasizing the importance of a common national language. To many Americans, these responses to mass immigration aren't just defensible—they're necessary. I hold these views myself. Nevertheless, members of minority ethnic groups often find them alienating.

Why is that? In *The Politics of Belonging: Race, Public Opinion, and Immigration* (2013), the political scientists Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn offer a novel theory of how different groups of

National identity is a bottom-up phenomenon that is largely shaped by the experiences and understandings of individuals and communities.

First lady Michelle Obama speaks at the Democratic National Convention, July 25, 2016.

PAUL MORIGI/WIREIMAGE

Americans understand immigration policy. They posit that America is defined by a racial hierarchy and that those at the top of the hierarchy—basically, English-speaking whites—are the "default" category of American. Their group identity has no real bearing on their political opinions, and they're subject to (relatively) few stereotypes, positive or negative. They're just people. For non-whites, in contrast, Masuoka and Junn find that there is a tension between group identity and being seen as fully American. Those who are more attached to their group identity will tend to be more favorably disposed to high immigration levels, a fact that Masuoka and Junn attribute to a shared sense of outsider status. In other words, non-white Americans who feel culturally marginalized might be more inclined to identify with non-Americans, particularly those from their ancestral homelands, than with their fellow citizens. So, a second-generation Mexican American who feels excluded from mainstream American society might be particularly inclined to look kindly on an unauthorized immigrant from Jalisco or Oaxaca. "Alternatively," Masuoka and Junn write, "those who feel less attached to their racial group and who practice a higher degree of assimilation with whites may have stronger feelings of American identification and reflect more similar attitudes to whites with strong national identities." That is, a second-generation Mexican American who identifies strongly with the American mainstream might be just as inclined to support strong border enforcement as her fourth-generation Polish-American neighbor.

There is a certain irony here. While whites who value group loyalty and cultural cohesion might champion American ethno-cultural nationalism, less assimilated non-whites with a strong sense of group identity will tend to feel exactly the opposite—they will tend to favor some version of multiculturalism.

Masuoka and Junn are not the only scholars who've argued that the strength of minority ethnic identities shapes political outcomes. A number of researchers, including the political scientist Hovannes Abramyan, have observed that among U.S. Latinos, the native-born are far more likely than immigrants to support restrictionist views. In the words of Abramyan's enormously valuable doctoral dissertation: "Latinos who are more strongly assimilated to the mainstream values and culture of the United States are more likely to have restrictionist views than those who are more weakly assimilated."

While Abramyan maintains that the only way for Republicans to win Latino votes is to embrace a liberalized immigration policy, a widely held view, his findings suggest another possibility: If new arrivals are less restrictionist than earlier arrivals, and if they are less restrictionist because their ethnic identities are stronger and they are less assimilated, reducing the size of the immigrant influx might change the Latino community in ways that favor the political Right. Over time, Latinos would grow more assimilated and, presumably, more restrictionist as the supply of newcomers, who are by definition less assimilated, fell. Suffice it to say, progressive patriots see things differently. They're quick to dismiss calls for immigration restriction as racist, a charge that resonates with those whom Abramyan calls the weakly assimilated.

To return to our marketplace analogy, progressive patriotism is gaining market share as the ranks of weakly assimilated immigrants expand, and as conservative patriotism is increasingly associated with the nostalgic worldview of Donald Trump, which seems to repel younger non-whites more strongly than it attracts older whites. If conservative patriotism is to have a bright future, it will need to find a more forward-looking message and, just as important, more-appealing messengers. NR

Charlie Baker's Success

The Massachusetts governor resembles an older variety of conservative

BY STEPHEN D. EIDE

MASSACHUSETTS governor Charlie Baker is the anti–Donald Trump. He is even-tempered, skilled at working with his political opponents, compassionate, and quite possibly the most wonkish governor in America. He is certainly the most popular, a remarkable accomplishment for a Republican in one of the bluest states in the Union. That Baker should be going so strong in the age of Trump attests to the strange varieties of American federalism and should encourage Republicans who still believe that the path to power runs through serious policymaking.

Elected in 2014, Baker is now halfway through his second year as governor, though he's been a familiar face on the state-government scene since the late 1980s. He got his start as co-director of the Pioneer Institute, a center-right think tank in Boston. In 1991, on the strength of the research he oversaw on safety-net policy, Baker was appointed undersecretary of the state's department of health and human services by newly elected governor William Weld, a Republican. The context was the early-1990s recession, which hit Massachusetts hard and necessitated cuts to health-care programs then overwhelming the state budget. Baker would later become head of the department and eventually take control of the state's budget office.

Though he has significant private-sector experience, having saved Harvard Pilgrim, one of the state's largest health insurers, from bankruptcy before working briefly in venture capital, Baker spent his formative years in the public sector. That is to say, he's an insider. His knowledge of the state budget's nuts and bolts has proved crucial in navigating a political landscape in which only 11 percent of registered voters are Republicans. The GOP holds only six out of 40 state-senate seats and 34 seats in the 160-member state assembly. According to data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, no other governor faces a state legislature dominated by the opposite party to such a degree. In today's political climate, much of the public seems to believe that only an outsider can get the job done, yet Baker demonstrates that sometimes insiders make the most effective politicians.

Baker first ran for governor in 2010 and was soundly defeated by the incumbent Democrat, Deval Patrick. The loss was partly chalked up to Baker's angry campaign slogan—"Had Enough?"—which was not well received and, many believe, didn't reflect Baker's character and temperament. In 2014, Baker went full "Morning in America," adopting the slogan "Let's Be Great, Massachusetts."

The gubernatorial election was closely contested. Baker beat then–attorney general Martha Coakley by about 40,000 votes out of 2.2 million cast. But the electorate hasn't looked back: Baker's approval rating now tops 70 percent and is higher than that of any other governor, according to the *Morning Consult*. Baker owes his popularity to two factors.

First, Massachusetts likes divided government. Since Weld's win in 1990, Democrats have held near-continuous supermajorities in the legislature, but Republicans have prevailed in all but two of the gubernatorial elections. The *Boston Globe*'s endorsement of Baker, its first of a Republican candidate for governor in two decades, extolled the benefits of a "counterpoint to the instincts of an overwhelmingly Democratic Legislature."

Second, Baker's constituents see him as devoted to state affairs, unlike some of his predecessors, such as Weld, Mitt Romney, and Deval Patrick, who were too eager to cultivate a national profile. As current Pioneer Institute executive director Jim Stergios explains, Baker "is a governor who really wants to be governor." Baker endorsed Chris Christie shortly before the New Hampshire primary in a gesture of gratitude toward Christie, who, as chairman of the Republican Governors Association, had provided $11 million in campaign funds for Baker's 2014 race. This blatant quid pro quo played well among Massachusetts voters, who took it as evidence that Baker doesn't take presidential politics too seriously. (One of the few top elected Republicans not to have endorsed his party's nominee, Baker has made it clear he's not voting for Hillary Clinton or Trump.) Baker's studious avoidance of the national spotlight means that the most popular governor in America will never be America's governor.

Baker has largely met his constituents' expectation that he focus on fixing their problems. His management skills were put to the test early on when heavy snowfall brought Boston's public-transit system, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, or "T," to a halt. February 2015 saw the greatest snow accumulation since weather records have been kept for Boston, and only one-third of commuter trains ran on time that month. Baker used the crisis to elevate public awareness of the T's aging equipment, prioritizing of expansion over maintenance, and inefficient procurement and labor-management practices. Following recommendations made by a special panel he appointed in the wake of "Snowmageddon," Baker succeeded in getting reform legislation through the statehouse despite union opposition. The legislation authorized Baker to take over the T via a five-member board and temporarily suspended the "Pacheco" law, which makes it practically impossible to outsource state services. The goal is not to privatize the T itself, but to realize efficiencies and reduce costs by contracting out non-core functions such as warehouse operations and transit-police dispatch.

Baker has also taken on opioid addiction, which has claimed the lives of thousands of Massachusetts residents in recent years. Between 2012 and 2014, the death toll increased by two-thirds. A report from a task force appointed by Baker set the framework for legislation passed in March 2016 that established a seven-day limit on initial opioid prescriptions for adults and all prescriptions for minors.

Baker is socially liberal, a politically essential quality for a statewide official in Massachusetts. He is pro-choice and has long supported gay marriage, a stance informed by his having a gay

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brother. About Baker's social liberalism, two points should be made. One, unlike Michael Bloomberg, another blue-state technocrat, Baker has no interest in ramming his liberalism down other people's throats. Second, it is not thoroughgoing. For example, Baker forcefully opposes a 2016 ballot question to legalize recreational marijuana, arguing that, at a time when opioid addiction is "ravaging" Massachusetts, it's madness for government to be encouraging more drug use.

On fiscal matters, Baker has reinforced the streak of Yankee frugality that has, in recent decades, led Massachusetts to shed its reputation as "Taxachusetts" and boast a tax burden now lower than those of most other deep-blue states. Despite massive deficits left over from the outgoing Patrick administration, Baker has managed to balance two straight budgets without raising taxes. Baker did not sign a "no new taxes" pledge in 2014, claiming that it would restrict his ability to pursue tax reform, but he has been notably cool toward an effort under way by liberal activists, and supported by the state legislature, to amend the state constitution to allow for a progressive income tax (Massachusetts currently has a flat tax). Baker also played a key role in putting a stop to two taxpayer-subsidized boondoggles—Boston's bid for the 2024 Olympics and a proposed expansion of the Boston Convention Center—and he has tried to rein in the state's notoriously wasteful program of tax credits for film production, though the legislature has yet to budge on that one.

The area where Baker is pushing Massachusetts the hardest is school choice. Charter-school expansion is currently restrained by a statutory cap that local politicians and the teachers' union—wishing not to lose per-pupil public-school funding when parents choose charter schools—strongly defend. Baker initially attempted to raise the cap through the legislative process, but the senate balked. He is now pursuing this reform through a ballot initiative in November. With recent polls showing that about half of voters favor the measure and around 20 percent are still undecided, it seems likely to pass.

Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker

RICK FRIEDMAN/RICKFRIEDMAN.COM/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Certainly there is more work to be done, and Baker will need the legislature's help doing it. Government unions, which represent almost two-thirds of the public-sector work force, stymie effective policymaking in far more areas than just charter schools. The state's pension fund is billions in the hole. Massachusetts has one of the most successful post-industrial state economies, but growth is heavily concentrated in the greater-Boston area. Fall River—whose plight was recently highlighted by Thomas Frank in his book *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People?*—has an unemployment rate almost three times that of Cambridge. Though Baker has won high praise for his attention to Fall River and other poor cities long run by Democrats, his urban-redevelopment policies are substantially the same as those of past administrations and thus unlikely to make much of a difference.

Baker's strong poll numbers have raised hopes among Massachusetts Republicans that he will grow the party. Last year, he pushed to elect a number of his preferred candidates to the state Republican committee. But a May analysis by the *Boston Globe* found that the 2016 election cycle is seeing a "dramatic decrease" in Republican challenges to Democratic incumbents compared with 2014. This has led some Republican-party loyalists to think that Baker is avoiding confrontations with Democratic legislators with whom he needs to work. Others have interpreted his maneuvering as an effort to keep the party focused on Massachusetts issues and winnable races. In the midterm legislative elections during his term as governor, Mitt Romney led a broad-based effort to increase the number of Republicans in state elected office. He failed spectacularly.

In short, Baker is trying to govern, not revolutionize, Massachusetts. This approach reflects his mandate from voters, who elected him to improve on a status quo with which they are largely satisfied. In recent decades, American conservatism has tended to be defined in ideological terms, but a more traditional understanding cast it as an attitude. Baker in many ways embodies that older understanding. He once described his governing style as "relentless incrementalism"—Baker prioritizes modest improvements over radical change. His approach to problems such as the T compares favorably with the national scene, where self-interest tends to trump the traditional goals of safety and prosperity. Charlie Baker, by virtue of his government experience and sense of responsibility, is likely to leave Massachusetts in a better position than the one he found it in. And that is no small achievement for conservatism. NR

Behold a Gun Show

A hobbyist's paradise, not a hotbed of lawlessness

BY CHARLES C. W. COOKE

Jacksonville, Fla.

An ersatz Moroccan temple might at first glance seem a peculiar stage on which to set an all-American gun show. And yet, upon closer inspection, it proves rather apt. No tale of Arabia is complete without the appearance of a bazaar or a souk, and, give or take, that is precisely what this was. Here, at the Morocco Shrine Auditorium, the hobbyists and the collectors have convened to parade their wares. "Welcome to the gun show," reads the sign. You ain't in Manhattan anymore.

In the progressive imagination, American gun shows are uniquely perfidious affairs—nothing more or less than illicit, loophole-ridden rendezvous points at which men with undesirable political opinions enable terrorists and criminals to do damage to the virtuous. In the press and beyond, it is hard to miss the lip-curling sneer that typically accompanies their contemplation. If there is one tradition in the United States that sums up the country's unique gun culture it is these shows; necessarily, those who dislike that culture will abhor its pageantry.

And yet one cannot help but suspect that those who cast opprobrium on the tradition are missing the point entirely. Upon arriving at the venue, the first two people I see are an elderly white woman, patiently selling tickets at the door, and a middle-aged black lady offering concealed-carry classes to all comers. Are they aware that they are playing parts in a national morality play? It doesn't seem so.

On the contrary: Inside the hall, civil society flourishes. To the uninitiated, it might seem a touch absurd that a group of ordinary citizens can amass 5,000 weapons within a confined space and attract nothing more sinister than paying customers (in hours at the show, I see no police and no security), but, to those of us who know better, such a spectacle illustrates an important lesson about the nature of people at liberty. On paper, there are enough guns inside the Morocco Shrine to kit out a small army. And yet the only platoons that emerge belong to Burke. Left alone, Americans do not become bandits; they become connoisseurs. Permitted to indulge their interests, they meet minds rather than muster corps. At first glance, the African American in the New York Yankees T-shirt and the good-ol'-boy with the Johnny Rebel hat have nothing at all in common. And then you hear them talk about the value of a good scope and everything falls suddenly into place.

At the tables, bibelots abound. In one corner, an elderly gentleman displays his collection of "relics and curios," among them a pair of English dueling pistols; an engraved lever-action rifle of the sort that Jesse James might have known; a Jacobite cloak-and-dagger; a Luger in an engraved box. By clear proclamation, nothing is for sale. The owner is here for love, not money.

In another little nook, I am privy to a discussion of muskets. "You call yourself a collector and you don't have a musket?" as if to own a Brown Bess were the most natural thing in the world. "I'm focusing on black powder at the moment," comes the nonchalant reply.

Wandering the floor, I am spoiled for choice. I see an assembly of rare Japanese pistols, an array of military gas masks, and an Uzi that was once used by the CIA. I see hollow-point bullets with cheap jewels crammed into their noses. I see customized parts for any gun you could name. And maps! I see enough maps to circumnavigate the world.

I see, in other words, an intriguing cross between the NRA convention and *Antiques Roadshow*.

Oddly enough, it is the latter vibe that tends to give gun shows a bad name. From time to time, a yellow journalist—from, say, the BBC or ThinkProgress—will walk into one of the more than 5,000 gun shows that are staged in America each year and come out horrified by the historical paraphernalia that he has seen on display. Certainly, it can be a bit jarring to see a three-foot Nazi flag, and it is indeed odd to be in close proximity to petty cash adorned with the face of John Calhoun. But to react with reflexive horror to these things—as journalists invariably do—is to misunderstand entirely what is going on. With the exception of one gentleman—an elderly fellow who, without irony, calls the Civil War the "Northern invasion"—none of the historical exhibitors whom I run into on the floor proclaim anything more sinister than a fascination with antiquity. Invariably, any presentation of enemy regalia is accompanied by a tribute to its American counterpart, be it the Continental or Union armies, the 81st Airborne, or the Marines. That reporters so frequently gaze upon the rarities tables and assume that the offerings are being made in warm-hearted homage tells us nothing good about the state of our political discourse—or, for that matter, about the professional integrity of those who work the firearms beat. Surprise of all surprises, it is possible for a man to be an advocate of the Second Amendment without harboring a secret reverence for Hitler.

Until one goes to a gun show, one cannot truly appreciate just how keenly America has taken to the AR-15. I do not suggest this because one finds AR-15s lying about everywhere at gun shows—indeed, in my three hours of exploring the floor we saw just four ARs for sale—but rather because the gun show is the perfect environment in which those who appreciate the AR platform can band together to push it to its limit.

By virtue of their designs, most firearms are sold "finished"—that is, they are packaged with a grip and a magazine and a barrel and a trigger and a slide, and, well, with anything else that a gun needs to function properly. The AR-15, by contrast, can come in any state of undress. Why? Because the AR-15 is not so much a type of gun as it's a platform around which guns can be built.

For the purposes of federal law, just one part of the AR-15—an unfinished, square-ish housing-block called the "lower receiver"—has been designated as the firearm. In order to obtain this part, buyers must undergo an FBI background check (yes, even at a gun show). But once they have done that, they can obtain the rest of the gun elsewhere, no questions asked.

An average AR-15 build includes around 100 parts, almost all of which are customizable in some shape or form. Once a builder has got hold of his lower receiver, he can do pretty much anything he wants with it—including select which caliber round he wants it to fire; decide

what length barrel to add and what size magazine to install; and choose what sort of stock, trigger, and rail system he prefers. And, having done this, he can add an almost limitless range of scopes, lights, lasers, and other accessories to suit his purpose.

Naturally, a market has emerged to satisfy this demand—a market that has been filled not only by the usual big-name suspects but also by a panoply of smaller companies, family traders, and individual hobbyists.

By the people, that is, who frequent gun shows.

From these people you can buy almost anything you can imagine. Want a lower receiver with your face etched onto it? No sweat. Want a 30-round magazine decked out like Old Glory? Easy. Want to play mix-and-match as might a child with a bunch of different Lego sets? Quick to arrange. Want a can opener put onto the weapon's Picatinny rail? Doable, at a price.

And so the old has met the new, and the new has met the old. Whether by accident or by design, the modern gun show has taken the place of a host of American traditions that have been undermined or destroyed by sweeping changes in technology. Thirty years ago, anyone who owned a car could pop the hood and tinker to his heart's content. Now, engines are sealed and warranties are tight and the tools of the trade are secreted in Munich. In the 1990s, would-be dilettantes could assemble computers for kicks. Now, the closest an American will get to seeing the inside of his iPhone is to accidentally smash open its screen.

Slowly but surely, item by item, industry by industry, the layman's once-endless dabbling opportunities have been cruelly ripped away. Together, micro-technology and government regulation have conspired to write a death warrant for the good, old-fashioned toolshed. Can it be a great surprise that one of the few products that offer the chance of ground-up customization is rushing off the shelves? Is anyone honestly shocked to learn that men and women alike are giving up their weekends for a chance to use their hands?

The guys at the gun show aren't. And for just eight dollars a visit to the old lady at the door, they'll be more than happy to welcome you into their burgeoning, addictive clique. NR

Familiar Things

The TV series Stranger Things *portrays family breakdown yesterday and today*

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

In *The Fractured Republic*, my colleague Yuval Levin argues that conservatives suffer from a paralyzing nostalgia for the 1980s, in which they detected an echo of the moral certainty and economic dynamism of the 1950s. But some remember the 1980s rather differently: The U.S. divorce rate peaked in 1980, and children in elementary school in the Reagan years were the first generation in which the question "Are your parents still married?" was both common and of intense interest. ("Were your parents married . . ." with the implicit ". . . at all?" came later.) The maudlin term "latch-key kids" became commonplace; "day orphans," from the 1984 documentary on the subject, never quite caught on. The murder rate in 1980 was exactly double what it had been in 1960. The great cultural holdover from the Eisenhower years was that schoolchildren were still being taught to cower under their desks in the event of a nuclear attack. It was, in reality, a terrifying time to be a child.

Stranger Things, the immensely popular new Netflix series that has just concluded its first season, is an exercise in 1980s nostalgia done right: From the frazzled, feckless, chain-smoking single mother played by Winona Ryder (in case your Eighties buttons weren't being pushed hard enough) to the beat-up 1964 Ford Galaxie 500 driven by her older son, *Stranger Things* is set in the 1980s as they actually existed—which is to say, it is set in the wreckage of the 1960s.

The curatorial eye of writer-producers Matt Duffer and Ross Duffer, d.b.a. the Duffer Brothers, lacks the dollhouse preciousness of Wes Anderson or the hothouse-flower aesthetic of Whit Stillman's world. But it is comprehensive: From the typography of the opening credits (a distillate of old Stephen King paperback covers) to the heavily trod-upon shag carpets, the look and feel of *Stranger Things* could hardly be more correct. It is *in* the 1980s but not *of* the 1980s, which makes sense in that the midwestern, small-town, and mostly lower-middle-class characters at its center would have been surrounded by things that were old and worn out. The actual interiors of houses built and decorated in the 1980s were of course nothing like this but instead embraced a princely style (remember all that horrible royal-blue carpeting and cream-colored brick?) that expressed the economic confidence of the era, along with its reassertion of informal social hierarchy. None of that has yet reached the fictional town of Hawkins, Ind., where the world outside consists of only the briefest glimpse of Ronald Reagan on the television.

With its fatherless (and effectively fatherless) families and its adolescent boys on bicycles fleeing menacing government officials in dark suits and haz-mat gear while sheltering a secret friend from another world, *Stranger Things* goes deep and hard into Steven Spielberg territory. What happens is this: The Byers family—mother Joyce (Winona Ryder), older son Jonathan (Charlie Heaton)—are mad with panic and grief at the disappearance and presumable death of younger son Will (Noah Schnapp), who after a long night of playing Dungeons & Dragons has disappeared into a terrifying parallel universe after being attacked by a faceless humanoid creature somehow birthed into our world by a nearby coven of federal spooks led by Dr. Martin Brenner (played by another visitor from the 1980s, Matthew Modine). At the same time, an adolescent girl without a name (Millie Bobby Brown) has escaped from that facility: Project MKUltra, in case you're wondering, is the conspiracy-theory favorite at the story's center, LSD mind-control experiments and all. The two prongs of the plot converge when she is discovered by Will's young gang of Dungeons & Dragons nerds, who set out to find their lost friend with her assistance.

The girl acquires a name, Eleven, from the tattoo on her arm. We learn that she has been a research subject, the prize pig, really, at the forbidden federal facility, that she has psychokinetic powers, and that she not only has the power to roam between the story's parallel dimensions but is probably indirectly responsible for the rift between them.

Caleb McLaughlin, Gaten Matarazzo, Finn Wolfhard, and Millie Bobby Brown in Stranger Things

Millie Bobby Brown, who is twelve years old, is astounding. Her shaved head (to facilitate the electrodes) makes her appear vulnerable and fierce by turns, and because her character has extremely limited social experience and a very small vocabulary, most of Brown's acting is purely physical. The Duffer Brothers make intelligent use of her: For example, when she wanders into the room of another girl her age and sees all the evidence of a happy, full life therein—the pictures on the walls, the parties and friends—she looks wistful only for a second and then scowls, visibly angry at having been denied a childhood of her own and conscious of what that irrecoverable loss means.

Brown is in fact so good that she makes part of the series difficult to watch. Her story is told in flashbacks, and those flashbacks consist mainly of—not to put too fine a point on it—torture. The torture is more psychological than physical, though the line between the two is sometimes blurred (using her powers takes a serious physical toll on Eleven, and she bleeds from her nose and ears from the stress of it), and it is hard to watch a little girl being tortured.

Because the series is skillfully made, it is impossible to say whether it was designed in such a way as to intentionally highlight the differences between a 1980s childhood and a contemporary one, but if you happened to have been a child in the 1980s and to have children of your own now, you'll find much to appreciate. Those who have followed the debate between free-range kids and helicopter parenting will watch with some wonder as our little party of adventurers ranges over the suburban Indiana landscape (which is in fact a Georgia landscape, economic realities being what they are), through wooded areas after dark, while unguarded minors chug beers and have sex and commit petty crimes on downtown streets. The story's hero, Mike (a scrawny kid played by an actor with the preposterously macho name Finn Wolfhard), comes from the relatively prosperous and still-married Wheeler family, where Mom is very accommodating and concerned and Dad is, in the sit-com style, useless. Mike manages to keep Eleven stashed in the family home undetected by his parents, in an astonishing reminder that children were, within living memory, accorded a degree of privacy. But we are also reminded that children could walk into a sporting-goods store and buy a few boxes of ammunition.

Strange what we worry about when it comes to our children. A great deal of the culture-war politics of the 1980s consisted of theatrical wailing about threats to our children that were either entirely made up or wildly exaggerated: The boys in *Stranger Things* love to play Dungeons & Dragons, and, in a rare oversight, the series does not even touch on the minor cultural panic surrounding that game in places such as small-town Indiana, where D&D's supernatural elements sparked terrified tales of occult experimentation. It's not for nothing that this came around the same time as the Salem-style mass hysteria over "Satanic ritual abuse" at the nation's child-care centers, with fanciful worries about Luciferian cults obscuring the more straightforward anxiety associated with abandoning one's children to child-care facilities. Yesterday's Satanic cultists and Alar are today's online predators and brain-scrambling vaccinations.

The Duffer Brothers are fairly cynical about the relations between children and parents: When the missing Will is presumed dead, his oleaginous alcoholic absentee father shows up, looking for someone to sue. But given the trajectory of American parenting since then—the frequency of child abuse, in all categories, continued to increase after 1980, according to the Heritage Foundation—one wonders whether they are cynical enough.

Nostalgia remains a powerful force. Watching *Stranger Things*, you may remember that banana-seated Free Spirit bicycle and the adventures you had on it. But *Stranger Things* isn't about nostalgia, in the end: It's about terror, the particular terror of childhood vulnerability in homes undefended by fathers. In that sense, *Stranger Things* isn't only about the Eighties. **NR**

NETFLIX

LEFT: BOYER/ROGER VIOLLET/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: BUYENLARGE/GETTY IMAGES

Two Underclasses

A brief tribal-political history

BY J. D. VANCE

THE UNITED STATES has never been entirely sure what to do about race. Alone among the countries in the world, it has attempted to construct not just a state of different tribes, but a nation of them—white and black, Christian and Muslim, and many others, too. Its sense of nationalism has evolved unevenly, slowly incorporating an ever growing chunk of the people within its borders, and it has made steady progress.

Yet 2016 offers reasons for unique alarm. The progress of recent decades, both political and social, appears to have evaporated in the past few years. And the problems, as so often, are focused on the two oldest classes of our poor.

These two underclasses pre-date the United States as a political union. The black underclass, brought here in chains, toiled for centuries in the hopes of earning freedom—first physical, then political. They found themselves concentrated in the South—the home of King Cotton. The white underclass, many of whom descended from Scots-Irish peasants of the motherland, came here freely. They tended to concentrate in the rural parts of the eastern United States, especially along the Appalachian Mountains.

The paths of these tribes have sometimes intersected. When recently freed slaves began to marry the white indentured servants of Virginia planters, their children took on a color that entitled them to all of the burdens of their darker-skinned parent. So they moved to eastern Kentucky and eastern Tennessee, called themselves Cherokee Indians, and attempted to live in peace. The locals, unsure what to do with their new neighbors, derisively called them "Melungeons."

A century later, as the industrial economies of the North created millions of new jobs, the white and black underclasses went hunting for opportunities. The black folks encountered a spate of indignities and a government housing policy that forced them into artificial urban ghettos. And the white establishment, confronted for the first time with people who looked like them but possessed none of their sensibilities, treated these seemingly foreign whites with scorn. As anthropologist John

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Hartigan Jr., commenting on the rapid industrialization of Detroit, has observed:

> It was not simply that the Appalachian migrants, as rural strangers "out of place" in the city, were upsetting to Midwestern, urban whites. Rather, these migrants disrupted a broad set of assumptions held by northern whites about how white people appeared, spoke, and behaved. . . . The disturbing aspect of hillbillies was their racialness. Ostensibly, they were of the same racial order (whites) as those who dominated economic, political, and social power in local and national arenas. But hillbillies shared many regional characteristics with the southern blacks arriving in Detroit.

In the face of these pressures, the two groups took different approaches to politics. The white poor, unencumbered by legal discrimination, focused on a politics of class. From Jackson to Truman, they voted their pocketbook, taught their children to mistrust the rich man, and hated the elites who looked down on them. As Martin Luther King Jr. observed shortly before his death, they benefited psychologically from the caste system in the South. Black people, meanwhile, understandably voted the color of their skin, putting their trust in whoever promised to tear down the most legal barriers. Sometimes, as with Lyndon Baines Johnson, these interests aligned, delivering supermajorities in the process. But those moments were largely the product of chance.

The civil-rights successes of the 1960s were supposed to change that. In 1978, the eminent sociologist William Julius Wilson argued confidently that class would soon displace race as the most important social variable in American life. As explicit legal barriers to minority advancement receded farther into the past, the fates of the working classes of different races would converge. By the mid 2000s, Wilson's thesis looked pretty good: The black middle class was vibrant and growing as the average black wealth nearly doubled from 1995 to 2005. Race appeared to lose its salience as a political predictor: More and more blacks were voting Republican, reversing a decades-long trend, and in 2004 George W. Bush collected the highest share of the Latino (44 percent) and Asian (43 percent) vote of any Republican ever. Our politics grew increasingly ideological and less racial: Progressives and the beneficiaries of a generous social-welfare state generally supported the Democratic party, while more prosperous voters were more likely to support Republicans. Stable majorities expressed satisfaction with the state of race relations. It wasn't quite a post-racial politics, but it was certainly headed in that direction.

But in the midst of the financial crisis of 2007, something happened. Both the white poor and the black poor began to struggle mightily, though for different reasons. And our politics changed dramatically in response.

It's ironic that the election of the first black president marked the end of our brief flirtation with a post-racial politics. By 2011, William Julius Wilson had published a slight revision of his earlier thesis, noting the continued importance of race. The black wealth of the 1990s, it turned out, was built on the mirage of house values. Inner-city murder rates, which had fallen for decades, began to tick upward in 2015. In one of the deadliest mass shootings in recent memory, a white supremacist murdered nine black people in a South Carolina church. And the ever-present antagonism between the police and black Americans—especially poor blacks whose neighborhoods are the most heavily policed—erupted into nationwide protests.

Meanwhile, the white working class descended into an intense cultural malaise. Prescription-opioid abuse skyrocketed, and deaths from heroin overdoses clogged the obituaries of local papers. In the small, heavily white Ohio county where I grew up, overdoses overtook nature as the leading cause of death. A drug that for so long was associated with inner-city ghettos became the cultural inheritance of the southern and Appalachian white: White youths died from heroin significantly more often than their peers of other ethnicities. Incarceration and divorce rates increased steadily. Perhaps most strikingly, while the white working class continued to earn more than the working poor of other races, only 24 percent of white voters believed that the next generation would be "better off." No other ethnic group expressed such alarming pessimism about its economic future.

And even as each group struggled in its own way, common forces also influenced them. Rising automation in blue-collar industries deprived both groups of high-paying, low-skill jobs. Neighborhoods grew increasingly segregated—both by income and by race—ensuring that poor whites lived among poor whites while poor blacks lived among poor blacks. As a friend recently told me about San Francisco, Bull Connor himself couldn't have designed a city with fewer black residents.

Predictably, our politics began to match this new social reality. In 2012, Mitt Romney collected only 27 percent of the Latino vote. Asian Americans, a solid Republican constituency even in the days of Bob Dole, went for Obama by a three-to-one margin—a shocking demographic turn of events over two decades. Meanwhile, the black Republican became an endangered species.

Republican failures to attract black voters fly in the face of Republican history. This was the party of Lincoln and Douglass. Eisenhower integrated the school in Little Rock at a time when the Dixiecrats were the defenders of the racial caste system. Republicans, rightfully proud of this history, constructed a narrative to explain their modern failures: Black people had permanently changed, become addicted to the free stuff of the 1960s social-welfare state; the Democratic party was little more than a new plantation, offering goodies in exchange for permanent dependence. There was no allowance for the obvious: that the black vote drifted away from Republicans en masse only after Goldwater became the last major presidential candidate to oppose the 1960s civil-rights agenda. Besides, Republicans told themselves, the party didn't actually need the black vote anyway. It would win where others had lost, by re-engaging the "missing white voter," a phantom whose absence allegedly cost Romney the 2012 election.

By the time Republicans officially nominated Donald Trump as their presidential candidate, he polled even lower among Latinos than Romney had. Asian Americans, arguably the most financially successful minority group in the United States, have abandoned the party in droves. Current polls suggest that only a statistically shocking 1 percent of black Americans will vote to "make America great again" this November. In nominating Trump, Republicans have come full circle: The party of Lincoln has become the party of the white man. And that man has become extremely cynical.

In 2016, the way Republicans talk about race reflects the changed composition of their party. During the Republican National Convention, on an MSNBC show, a commentator suggested that "dissatisfied white people" drove the convention agenda. One of the show's guests, Republican representative Steve King of Iowa, immediately grew defensive, questioning the historical contributions of "non-white" groups to our shared civilization. It was an astonishingly candid and troubling display of racial resentment, the sort of thing that would have ended a career in a more diverse party. But it was also revealing: The commentator offered a straightforward, if intemperate, remark about the composition of the RNC delegation, and King viewed it as an attack on the white race.

King expressed a sentiment with relatively broad currency: that white people are discriminated against in some way. Though there have always been people worried about "reverse racism"—consider, for instance, the continued uproar over race-based affirmative action—recent data indicate that this sentiment has reached population scale. Research by Samuel Sommers and Michael Norton suggests that the average white person now feels that anti-white bias is a bigger problem than other forms of racial discrimination.

For many progressives, the Sommers and Norton research confirms the worst stereotypes of American whites. Yet it also reflects, in some ways, the natural conclusions of an increasingly segregated white poor. In this era of rising residential segregation, conversations about race happen in more-insular environments—especially online. And in the face of a social crisis unmatched in their recent memory, poor whites have been confronted with a confusing and alarming idea: that they are the privileged ones.

Imagine a high-school senior in West Virginia. His father managed to find one of the ever scarcer jobs in the coal mines, and though it has allowed him to put food on the family table, it has destroyed his body in the process. His mother died a decade ago, the victim of a few too many Percocets. The bright kids in his class will head to Marshall or West Virginia University, and he'd like to join them. But the tuition bill, and the debt he'd incur to pay it, would bankrupt his father. So he tries to figure out financial aid—Stafford loans and unsubsidized loans and grants and scholarships, whatever in the hell that all means—before concluding that he could make a down payment on a nice home if he put college off for a decade.

One day, he stumbles across an article from *Breitbart*. The gist is that the elites maintain that there's a thing in the world called "white privilege" and that he's benefiting from it. The article says that this privilege supposedly gives its owner "societal superpowers," which he possessed from the moment of birth, "like thetans in Scientology." This discovery begins a deep dive into the literature on white privilege, all filtered through the social networks—in person and online—that he's depended on for years. When he's finished, he knows only that there are progressive activists who dislike people like him and demand that he recognize the advantages of his life.

The reality is not that black Americans enjoy special privileges. In fact, the overwhelming weight of the evidence suggests that the opposite is true. Last month, for instance, the brilliant Harvard economist Roland Fryer published an exhaustive study of police uses of force. He found that even after controlling for crime rates and police presence in a given neighborhood, black youths were far likelier to be pushed, thrown to the ground, or harassed by police. (Notably, he also found no racial disparity in the use of lethal force.) No other study of comparable rigor exists on the subject, and its conclusion is clear: that black youth derive their fear of police from experience. The injury done to our black citizens is important and no respectable party can ignore it. In law school, the police regularly harassed one of my best friends, who is black, even though he attended Yale just as I did. Republican senator Tim Scott (S.C.) recently recounted with beautiful candor the many times Capitol police officers treated him with disrespect despite his high office.

Getting whipped into a frenzy on conspiracy websites, or feeling that distant, faceless elites dislike you because of your white skin, doesn't compare. But the great advantages of whiteness in America are invisible to the white poor, or are completely swallowed by the disadvantages of their class. The young man from West Virginia may be less likely to get questioned by Yale University police, but making it to Yale in the first place still requires a remarkable combination of luck and skill.

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In building a dialogue around "checking privilege," the modern progressive elite is implicitly asking white America—especially the segregated white poor—for a level of social awareness unmatched in the history of the country. White failure to empathize with blacks is sometimes a failure of character, but it is increasingly a failure of geography and socialization. Poor whites in West Virginia don't have the time or the inclination to read Harvard economics studies. And the privileges that matter—that is, the ones they see—are vanishing because of destitution: the privilege to pay for college without bankruptcy, the privilege to work a decent job, the privilege to put food on the table without the aid of food stamps, the privilege not to learn of yet another classmate's premature death.

That working-class whites have failed to rise to the challenge is perhaps regrettable. But in a world where many poor whites know very few blacks of any class, it is not especially surprising.

Because of this polarization, the racial conversation we're having today is tribalistic. On one side are primarily white people, increasingly represented by the Republican party and the institutions of conservative media. On the other is a collection of different minority groups and a

cosmopolitan—and usually wealthier—class of whites. These sides don't even speak the same language: One side sees white privilege while the other sees anti-white racism. There is no room for agreement or even understanding.

The institutional offshoots of this peculiar moment have monopolized the conversation. Donald Trump is the voice of poor white America. The Black Lives Matter movement is the voice of dispossessed blacks and their sympathizers. Yet if these voices have monopolized the conversation, they certainly haven't monopolized the good ideas. Trump's policies, such as they are, offer little substance to those suffering from addiction, joblessness, and downward mobility. And the Black Lives Matter movement, focused primarily on police violence, cannot alone address the full spectrum of problems faced by the black underclass.

It is tempting to suggest that we change the way we talk about these issues. Perhaps rhetoric on the right that accepted the legitimate black complaints about inequality, paired with a less combative tone on the left, would allow for some progress. But it's a fool's hope: No tribe will change its tactics just so the other tribe will understand it better. That's not how tribes work. As volumes of social science attest, understanding requires empathy, and empathy requires exposure. The only way out of this morass is to integrate the tribes.

This would require a conservative agenda that appealed to black Americans. Recent Pew polls suggest that black Americans care especially about residential segregation and access to good schools. Conservatives have potential answers for each of these problems. Urban ghettos, created by racist housing policy and sustained by bizarre administration of federal housing programs, constitute one of the few entrenched problems amenable to policy interventions. The administration of the federal Section 8 program, for instance, often ignores the importance of eradicating government-created concentrated poverty. Conservative ideas on vouchers and charter schools have delivered better, if still imperfect, schools—often with active participation from local (and progressive) school leaders.

Unfortunately, the Republican National Convention offered four days of messaging tailored to the Republicans' new base. On issues of special concern to black voters, both the party platform and the speeches were largely silent. Ironically, Trump's invocation of "law and order" came closest: Though black voters overwhelmingly cite police violence as a significant problem, they also care deeply about violent crime in their neighborhoods. The convention devoted an entire evening to violence committed by illegal immigrants but spent no time on family dissolution, a concern of all poor people but especially the black poor.

Donald Trump is fond of claiming that "the blacks"—just like "the Hispanics"—love him. Like so much of what he says, this is utterly unsupported by the evidence. But the Republican party's problem is bigger than Trump, and will outlast him: It is increasingly the party of a white population cut off from its fellow citizens.

It's easy to sympathize with these voters as they are confronted for the first time with challenges to a privilege they cannot see. But their hope of better government depends on the development of a better political party. And that party cannot develop in a demographic vacuum. NR

Robot Envy

How automation is finally threatening the elites

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

KARL MARX would have welcomed the advent of our new robot overlords as a trigger for revolution, though one more upscale than he'd hoped for: A rising not of, or for, the working class, but by the well educated and ambitious, furious at being denied what they see as their fair share of the pie. The meek will never inherit the earth; clever people with a grudge just might.

To understand why "robots"—sexy, sinister shorthand for the increasing automation of work—might drive them to try, "elite overproduction" (a phrase coined by the University of Connecticut's Peter Turchin) is an excellent place to start. To put it more crudely than Professor Turchin ever would, this occurs when members of the elite (or those with the talents to join it) become too numerous for society to accommodate their aspirations.

Turchin can stretch this concept too far, but he's correct that it can be a useful indicator of trouble to come. Thus, as he noted in 2012, the Arab Spring was preceded by "a remarkable expansion of the numbers of university-educated youths without job prospects"—in other words, by elite overproduction.

According to Turchin, elite overproduction can cause such fierce competition within the elite that the old order risks being pulled apart. Perhaps that's so, but there may be a simpler way to look at this. Oppressed masses generally stay oppressed. They may smolder, but it takes the bright to spark a revolution. And if the bright feel they are missing out, that's what they will be tempted to do.

After the Arab Spring, Occupy: Many of its activists were young and university-educated ("elite aspirants," in Turchin's terminology) and enraged by the shambles that (as they saw it) greedy bankers had created, a shambles that threatened their chances of a comfortable future—not that they would have put it quite so selfishly. Even the name "Occupy" evoked a struggle for territory, a struggle that took physical form in places such as Manhattan's Zuccotti Park, but the tent cities downtown were little more than metaphor. The Occupiers' ambitions went beyond a scrap of real estate: They wanted to take over the political and economic space allegedly held by the "1 percent" they demonized so effectively. Stripped of the revolutionary rhetoric, this was a contest to define the next elite, a contest intended to move from the streets to the legislature—an option, of course, available in America's democracy but elusive in Egypt.

Occupy's demonstrations soon faded, but the ideas they represented live on, their persistence testimony to deeper fears about what lies ahead. The suspicion that the American economy is

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faltering—stagnant incomes, growing structural unemployment, and all the rest—is not new, but up to now those on the way up, or those who were already doing well, have reassured themselves that blue-collar woe was nothing to do with them. Joe Lunchbucket—that slowpoke—just hadn't kept up. But that complacency is fading, and with reason. To be sure, the college-educated have an edge in the workplace, and that advantage has grown; but, as a benchmark, high school these days is a low bar. Over a third of 25- to 32-year-olds in 2013 had a bachelor's degree (or above), up from one-eighth in 1965.

A degree is still a route to higher earnings, but it's not a guarantee. The labor market is not Lake Wobegon: If a third of new entrants to the work force are university graduates, they won't all be above average, especially those who attended one of academe's less leafy groves. Their degrees will be the equivalent of the high-school diplomas of half a century ago, a ticket to the ballpark, not the VIP suite. For many graduates, gently shepherded through often undemanding schoolwork and gently burdened with a monstrous debt, dreams will turn into nightmares. There will be no place for them in the track to success. Their expectations were unrealistic, but their disappointment will be real. If their teachers haven't already radicalized them, life may do the trick.

They will probably find work, but very possibly not of the type they were hoping for. The New York Fed concluded that in 2012 nearly half of all recent graduates were in jobs for which they were, in theory, overqualified. The lingering aftermath of the Great Recession hasn't helped, but underemployment among recent graduates, the cohort that first Occupied and then felt the Bern, has been on a rising trend since 2000. The New York Fed recounted how "during the first decade of the 2000s, many college graduates were forced to move down the occupational hierarchy to take jobs typically performed by lower-skilled workers."

Rubbing salt into Millennial wounds, there's more "under" nowadays in underemployment. The New York Fed divided "non-college" jobs into "good" ("career-oriented, relatively skilled, and fairly well compensated") and "low-wage." The share of those stuck in the latter, such as the college-educated barista of contemporary cliché, has risen. Put this all together and it looks a lot like elite overproduction, and the "gig economy," a hipster euphemism for part-time piece-work, won't fill the gap.

It's not clear what will. The information-technology revolution, once seen as a cornucopia of new, well-paid employment, rolls on, and, as revolutions do, it is eating its own. For instance, many IT jobs have disappeared into the Cloud. In his terrifying *Rise of the Robots* (2015), Martin Ford tells how, thanks to Facebook's Cyborg software, "a single technician [can] manage as many as 20,000 computers." Ford points to a 2013 analysis by the Economic Policy Institute that showed that "the number of new graduates with engineering and computer science degrees exceeds the number of graduates who actually find jobs in these fields by 50 percent." If education—that perpetual panacea—is no longer the answer, what is?

In *Player Piano* (1952), Kurt Vonnegut depicts an America in which most jobs have been automated away. The country is split between a large underclass and an elite made up of "managers and engineers and civil servants and a few professional people." In one passage, a member of the elite explains "how the First Industrial Revolution devalued muscle work, then the second one devalued routine mental work." He is asked whether there will be a third. He replies that it's under way and that it involves "thinking machines . . . machines that devaluate human thinking . . . the real brainwork." He doesn't, he adds, want to be around to see where it will lead. He would not like the looks of 2016.

By replacing brain as well as brawn, technology is encroaching into ever more elevated areas of employment, menacing those who have good jobs as well as those who are merely searching for them. Real brainwork will be industrialized, subdivided into discrete parts that can be either performed more efficiently or, with the help of algorithms, automated altogether. For example, ask securities traders what this has meant for them. Despite the strong recovery in financial markets since the late unpleasantness, Wall Street employs fewer people than it did in 2007, and many of the jobs that remain are at risk. At its core, the business of finance is about the organization, manipulation, and exploitation of data, and that's what software is for. As those algorithms increase in sophistication, they will substitute not only intelligence but judgment, vetting customers, spotting opportunities, managing portfolios. Wall Street culls used to be focused mainly on clerical staff; now the "front office" is sharing in much more of the pain.

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Lawyers are facing a similar fate. Search engines have long since simplified the trudge through case law. Now other technologies are coming into play, ranging from the use of predictive coding to speed up the pre-discovery process by determining the relevance (or otherwise) of a particular document to the preparation of basic documentation to (soon) advising on the winnability of simple lawsuits. Unemployment among law-school graduates is bad enough as it is. Either it will get worse or the Paper Chase will have far fewer participants: Another gateway to the elite narrows.

And doctors shouldn't feel smug. Ever more sophisticated data-sorting technology is already leading to more accurate diagnoses, and if it is not yet suggesting more effective treatments, it soon will be. Thus IBM's Watson, a "cognitive system" that has long since moved on from its *Jeopardy!* triumph, has now branched out into areas that include medicine. IBM Watson Health, a smarter-than-Sherlock Doctor Watson, is, claims IBM, "pioneering a new partnership between humanity and technology

with the goal of transforming global health." Initially, such advances will deliver no more than an electronic—and unusually erudite—second opinion, but ultimately? And in the meantime, increasing reliance on technology will see a gradual de-skilling of a profession that has long ranked high in the social scale. A decline in pay will not be far behind.

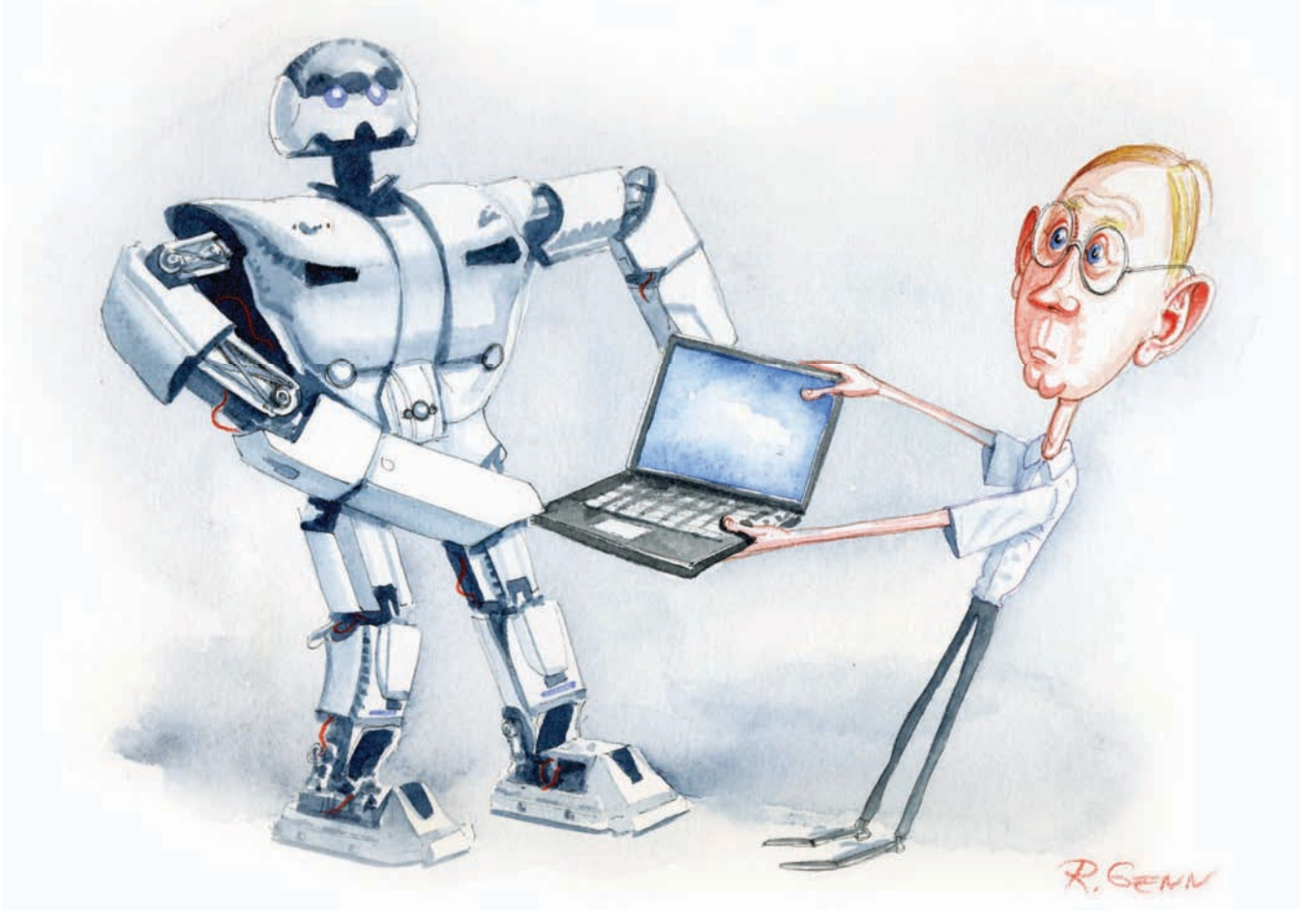
If medicine, finance, and law, three great pillars of the modern elite, are coming under siege from the machines, it's not unreasonable to ask how much room is going to be left at the top. An additional twist of the knife comes from communications technology. Not only will brainwork be industrialized, but much of it could easily be "exported" to telecommuters based in, say, China and India. Even the possibility that this might happen will drag the wages of the formerly valuable still farther down.

It's no secret that inequality has widened throughout much of the West (and that automation has contributed to this). What's less well known is how that inequality is sharpening at the top. In *The Second Machine Age* (2014), Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee cite research showing that the top 5 percent took 80 percent of the increase in America's wealth between 1983 and 2009, but the top 1 percent took "over half of that, and so on for ever-finer subdivisions of the wealth distribution." The middle classes are trailing the upper middle classes, the upper middle classes are falling farther behind the rich, and the rich are lagging the very rich, a process that is likely to accelerate. This is more than a matter of technology eliminating or downgrading previously lucrative work. Technology also broadens access to the skills of the most talented. Their rewards rise. But it reduces demand for the services of the runners-up, the able but not quite able enough. Their rewards fall. TurboTax, for example, has enriched its creators, but has been rather less than splendid news for your local CPA.

Of course, new technology frequently requires significant capital investment. Much of the wealth it generates will go to those who can provide the cash. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given," as someone once said. And for "whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." The winner's circle will shrink, leaving growing numbers of the talented stranded outside.

If the alarm bells are ringing, they are, so far, being heard by comparatively few. A 2015 survey by the Pew Research Center revealed that "65% of Americans expect that within 50 years robots and computers will 'definitely' or 'probably' do much of the work currently done by humans," but "an even larger share (80%) expect that *their own* jobs or professions will remain largely unchanged." Younger (18- to 29-year-old) Americans—iCocooned perhaps—are even more optimistic despite their deteriorating employment outlook, as are the better paid, and those working in the "government, education and nonprofit sectors." They are all in for a nasty surprise, and in rather less than 50 years.

When Americans do finally grasp what automation is doing to their prospects, rage against the machines (or, more specifically, their consequences) will blend with existing discontent to form a highly inflammable mix. This broader economic unease is already spreading beyond left-behinds and Millennials, but when we reach the point where even those who are still doing



ROMAN GENN

well see robots sending proletarianization their way, there's a decent chance that something akin to "middle-class panic" (a phenomenon identified by sociologist Theodor Geiger in, ominously, 1930s Germany) will ensue. Many of the best and brightest will face a stark loss of economic and social status, a blow that will sting far more than the humdrum hopelessness that many at the bottom of the pile have, sadly, long learned to accept. They will resist while they still have the clout to do so, and the media, filled with intelligent people who have already found themselves on the wrong side of technology, will have their back.

THE endangered upper-middles will not only be talking to themselves. Tough times, and an acute awareness of how well those at the top are making out, have left the battered American working class open to a more radical rearrangement of the status quo. Technology is not solely to blame for what's happening—far from it—but its capacity to disrupt the workplace is set to increase at an exponential rate. One Oxford study predicts that "about 47 percent of total U.S. employment is at risk" from technological change within the next couple of decades, an estimate that is less of an outlier than might be hoped. Both number and timetable have been challenged, but they give a clue about what may be at stake—and how soon. The implications aren't pretty. Trump and Sanders may prove to be no more than rats in the coal mine.

Every revolution, whether at the polling station or on the street, needs foot soldiers drawn from the poor and the "left behind." Still, it's the leadership that counts. Add the impact of automation to the effects of existing elite overproduction and the result will be that the upheaval to come will be steered by a very large "officer class"—angry, effective, efficient, a "counter-elite" (to borrow another term from Turchin) looking to transform the social order of which, under happier circumstances, it would have been a mainstay.

Some people argue (correctly) that humanity has been able to weather earlier episodes of technological transformation and will do so again. But they need to rebut the argument that this metamorphosis—the replacement of "brain"—really is, as none other than Charles Murray has insisted, different. Past is not always prologue: Google, that colossus of our time, now employs more than 60,000 people worldwide, still considerably fewer than the 80,000 who worked for General Motors in or around Flint, Mich., alone, in the mid 1950s. Needless to say, Google now is not strictly comparable with Flint then (a techie is more than an updated assembly-line worker), but putting those two numbers side by side acts as a poignant reminder that today's new technology-intensive businesses do not generate jobs in the numbers that the old manufacturers used to do.

It's also worth adding that past technological transformations sometimes led to more lasting collateral damage than we now remember. We comfort ourselves with the knowledge that the Luddites were proved wrong, but we forget that proof of that was quite a while in coming. Economic historian Robert C. Allen refers to the decades that it took for real wages to rise in Britain after the technological changes of the early 19th century as "Engels' Pause." That's the same Engels who argued in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) that the industrial revolution had made workers worse off. Over the long term, things changed for the better, but what happened in the interim should concern those worried about the political consequences of this latest technological revolution. These were the years not just of the Luddites, but also of the Peterloo Massacre, the Swing Riots, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and the 1842 General Strike. By the time of the Chartists, a mass movement of the working class, an explicitly political agenda had evolved alongside struggles over pay. Engels took things even further. In 1848 he co-wrote *The Communist Manifesto* with Karl Marx, not an encouraging thought. The robots might one day deliver almost unlimited bounty, but the road to the Star Trek economy could be very rocky indeed.

We are on a conveyor belt to what Marx described as a "plastic moment," when old assumptions crumble and everything is up for grabs. There will be no red flag over the White House, but, writes Martin Ford, "we are ultimately headed for a disruption that will demand a far more dramatic policy response."

That "policy response," shaped by the demands of that "surplus" elite, will be focused on a largely fruitless (but for a few, fruitful) "war against inequality" centered on a drastic redistributive effort. Taxes will rise steeply, on capital gains as well as income, and, given time, on the mere ownership of capital: We can expect a wealth tax on the living, a foretaste of death taxes to come.

Spending will doubtless soar, on infrastructure (occasionally even sensibly) and on retraining schemes for jobs that will never be. Health care will grow ever closer to single-payer. For the upper middle class squeezed by automation, reinvented as Robin Hoods on the make, all this will combine power play (the opportunity to redistribute away the gains of their more successful competitors) with marvelous career opportunities (someone has to operate the machinery of redistribution) and, of course, claims to the moral high ground.

In all probability, the politics of redistribution will also include ever noisier calls for a universal basic income (UBI), a guaranteed payment from the state to everyone. Finland will start testing a variant of this next year, although the reliably cautious Swiss recently rejected a version of UBI in a referendum in which the effect of technology on employment played a notable role in the debate. To be fair, UBI (with careful caveats) has its supporters on the right, from Friedrich Hayek to Charles Murray, with the latter citing the rise of the robots as part of his justification: "A UBI will be an essential part of the transition to [an] unprecedented world."

Whatever the arguments in its favor, there's an obvious danger that a UBI could shatter what's left of the American ideal of self-help while handing immense and unhealthy power to a state on which too many will depend for too much. Who will fix the level at which the UBI is set? Who will decide who is to pay for it? Viewed from the right, the UBI may be nothing better than the price to be paid to maintain the peace, the lesser of two upheavals. Not every revolution needs blood in the streets.

At the same time, conservatives have to face the possibility that technology will build a world in which wealth will be ever more concentrated, most of the most talented will be cast aside, and unemployment lines will lengthen relentlessly, a dark trifecta that could trash social cohesion and take democracy down with it. Hoping for the best is not the way to head off catastrophe, nor is "standing athwart history." As to what is, I simply don't know. NR

Home Economics

Jennifer Roback Morse proclaims the social utility of the family

BY JOHN J. MILLER

"It's a discouraging time to be a social conservative," says Jennifer Roback Morse. "We've been marginalized everywhere: the media, the academy, the legal system, and now even in politics."

Many of her brethren know exactly what Morse means. Everywhere they look, it seems, they're on the defensive. The Supreme Court just overturned abortion restrictions in the states and has mandated gay marriage everywhere. The Republican presidential nominee, usually a conduit for their ideas, rarely addresses their concerns. Their numbers may be shrinking, too: The percentage of Americans who describe themselves as social conservatives has fallen from 42 percent in 2009 to just 31 percent last year. This is the lowest rate the Gallup Poll has ever recorded.

Yet Morse concedes nothing. "The cause of truth is never lost," she says. "Hope is not a plan or a strategy. It's a supernatural virtue."

She might benefit from a bit of divine intervention. As the founder and leader of the Ruth Institute, a small nonprofit organization, Morse has taken up a difficult vocation: "We're trying to create a social movement that supports people harmed by divorce, the hook-up culture, and other aspects of the sexual revolution," she says.

People call her "Dr. J"—a reference to her Ph.D. in economics, a background that allows her to bring an uncommon perspective to debates over everything from women in the work force to transgender bathroom access. She writes a weekly column, gives radio interviews, and travels the world; I caught up with her in June, when she had just returned from a ten-day trip to Australia and was getting ready for a couple of speeches in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Morse refuses to speak in code. She mixes her moral sensibility and economics training to produce a bracing candor that listeners tend to find either plucky or abrasive. Here's how she talks about single motherhood, for example: "There's no such thing as a single parent. They've become dependent on other people in commercial transactions, such as their employers and child-care providers. A single mother may look like she's doing so much 'on her own,' but she has merely commercialized the things the father would have done."

This style of rhetoric has the power both to attract and to repel potential converts to the cause of social conservatism—and behind these words lies not only an unequivocal voice but also a fascinating story of personal conversion from anything-goes libertarianism to strait-laced conservatism.

Born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, the 62-year-old Morse attended Oberlin College in the early 1970s and then transferred to Ohio State University, shedding the Catholicism of her youth and discovering the free-market thinking that would form the initial basis of her professional life. "I was attracted to the way it explained the world," she says. By the time she was a graduate student at the University of Rochester, she had become attached to libertarianism in its most freewheeling forms. "I was deeply committed to all of it, even legalized prostitution," she says.

She also had an abortion. "I regretted it right away," she says. "I was in a marriage that I knew was a mistake and I was scared that I wouldn't be a good mother." She divorced her husband, earned her Ph.D., and threw herself into the politics of the Libertarian party, even joining its platform committee and cheering the presidential candidacy of Ed Clark in 1980. The abortion continued to haunt her, however. "I had night terrors

AP PHOTO/*STAR TRIBUNE*, GLEN STUBBE

Jennifer Roback Morse

and anniversary anxiety," she says. "I went to counseling but none of the counselors said that maybe the abortion had something to do with my troubles."

As a young woman with a doctorate in economics and a devotion to free-market philosophy, Morse was a rare commodity. "I was often the only girl in the room," she says. The legendary public-choice economist James Buchanan tried to recruit her to Virginia Tech, where he was then teaching. She turned his offer down in favor of a post at Yale. By 1985, however, Buchanan had moved on to George Mason University in northern Virginia, where he was assembling an impressive faculty of latter-day Adam Smiths (and where he would win the Nobel Prize in 1986). He remembered the impressive young lady from several years before and once again offered her a job. This time, she accepted.

Morse's academic career looked bright. "She was a sharp colleague and an excellent scholar," says Walter Williams, a longtime member of GMU's economics department. She was happily remarried, too. "I had it all planned out," she says. "I was going to get tenure and have a baby, and we were going to make sure the baby came at the end of one school year so that I could deliver and be ready for the start of the next school year. I thought I was in complete control and that I could choose everything."

She got tenure but failed to get pregnant, let alone on the precise timetable she had imagined. A year went by and then another. The abortion still disturbed her and she began to wonder if she had missed her one chance at motherhood. "I was panicked," she says.

Looking for solace, Morse started to attend early-morning Mass at a Catholic church. Then she went to confession, which she had not done in years. "The priest understood right away how the abortion was weighing on me," she says. "I started to calm down." She finally made a full return to the faith of her youth. "I realized that I didn't have to get all of the things that I wanted." One day, as she walked down the baby-food aisle of a grocery store—"an experience," she points out, "that can be emotionally hard for childless women"—it occurred to her that she could be a mother without having a baby. She and her husband could adopt.

"Then something unlikely happened," she says. In 1991, as the couple entered the advanced stages of adoption, she became pregnant. In April, they brought home a boy from Romania. In October, Morse gave birth to a daughter.

With the Romanian adoption, they thought they were not only aiding a child but also doing their part to help a struggling nation realign itself after the fall of Communism. What they didn't anticipate was a two-year-old with disabilities. "From birth, he had almost never left his crib," says Morse. "He had serious developmental needs. What he needed most was a mommy. To put him in day care would have been cruel. He didn't need a mother substitute. I was already that." They named him Nick. "He convinced me that children require parents. This is the great insight of my life!" she says, laughing. "Somebody's got to say it."

So she tried to balance the demands of work and home, teaching courses on microeconomics and researching the economic history of the Civil War while also looking after her kids. "I could

have stayed at GMU forever," she says. Yet her husband wanted to leave. "He didn't like Washington, D.C. The old me would have said, 'I'm not going—not unless I get an academic position somewhere.' But that was no way to live." So she quit her job.

The family moved to California, first to Silicon Valley and later to San Diego. Without a job, Morse spent more time with her kids, and especially with her son, who required extra attention. They also opened their home to eight foster children. "As this was going on, I was losing my libertarianism—or rather, it was losing me," says Morse. "Without strong families, you can't have free markets or limited government. Instead, you get 'The Life of Julia.'" This is a reference to a slide-show advertisement from President Obama's 2012 reelection campaign that treated a fictitious woman's cradle-to-grave dependence on government as a triumph of progressivism.

The intellectual dissonance became personal when one of the leading lights of libertarian economics—Morse's mentor, James Buchanan—publicly disapproved of her decisions. The showdown came in 1997, at the 50th-anniversary meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, a prestigious organization of classical liberals founded by F. A. Hayek. Morse had been asked to deliver remarks at a confab in Switzerland. She didn't want to take time away from her family, so she wrote a paper. William Campbell of Louisiana State University presented it.

There is no transcript or recording of the session—at least none that I could track down—but several witnesses described what happened. During a discussion period, Buchanan spoke. "I don't remember exactly what he said, but it had something to do with throwing away a career to do a minor thing like raise a family," says Edwin J. Feulner, the longtime head of the Heritage Foundation who was at the time also the society's president. "A few years before he had told me that Jennifer was one of his star protégés." Father Robert A. Sirico of the Acton Institute also was there. "Jim didn't speak for long, but he made clear that he was disappointed in her." (Buchanan died in 2013.)

Back in the United States, Morse heard about the incident from friends and colleagues. Today, she doesn't want to say much about Buchanan's comments—they still sting—but she offers this much: "He was very good to me until he wasn't."

During those years, Morse was slowly writing a book. *Love & Economics* came out in 2001. "My understanding of the human person and society had been deeply influenced by free-market economics and libertarian political theory, which have shaped my entire adult working life," she wrote. "As I came to realize how much I had overlooked, I concluded that my profession was overlooking much as well." It had forgotten about the vulnerability of children and the need for families: "Without loving families, no society can long govern itself."

These words set the stage for the second part of her career. In 2008, as her kids approached adulthood, Morse found herself with more time for travel and activism. She started the Ruth Institute, envisioning it as a way to help her talk to young women. "I wanted to warn them about the careerist trap," she says. "It's okay to get married, stay married, and do something later. You don't have to get on the career bandwagon."

She spoke on campuses around the country but soon, like so many social conservatives, found herself embroiled in the gay-marriage debate. At first, she tasted success as part of the team that pushed for Proposition 8, the ballot proposal in California to ban gay marriage, which voters approved. Then judges struck it down in what became a series of rapid legal defeats, culminating in the Supreme Court's *Obergefell* ruling last year.

"We learned that making a correct argument doesn't matter to the Supreme Court," says Morse, who departed California and moved to Louisiana last year. "It's not listening to reason and evidence. So we need a new strategy, one that focuses on the entire sexual revolution, not just the gay parts. That's my mission now—to tell the truth about how the sexual revolution oppresses us."

Divorce is a favorite topic. "Nobody talks about it, but this is an issue of justice for the child," she says. She ticks off statistics about the children of divorced parents: They're more likely to fall behind in school, abuse drugs and alcohol, and think about suicide. "This is the number-one lie of the sexual revolution: Kids are resilient. No, they're not."

> 'Modern society tries to make guilt go away by saying nothing is ever wrong—that there's no right or wrong at all—and that's not true,' says Morse.

And though she ended her first marriage, Morse won't shy away from criticizing others who make the same choice. "We didn't have kids and I got an annulment," she says. "I'm not a hypocrite. I'm penitent. Divorce has harmed lots of people and those people have harmed lots of people. We have to say this. Modern society tries to make guilt go away by saying nothing is ever wrong—that there's no right or wrong at all—and that's not true."

The most important thing social conservatives can do right now, she says, is persevere. "It's as if we've lost a war and now we live in an occupied country. What did people in Communist Poland do? They resisted." She brings up the example of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the dissident writer in the old Soviet Union. "He may have thought he was in a minority of one, but then he started writing and people read him," she says. "I believe that millions of people agree with us, even Democrats who are sick of a culture that's saturated in pornography and the sexualization of children—as well as people who have survived the sexual revolution and are willing to tell the whole story. Is it really so hard to say that children are entitled to parents? This is the birthright of every child, not an impossible dream." She pauses, then concludes: "When nothing is politically possible, you don't need to trim sails. You can just tell the truth." NR

The Long View

BY ROB LONG

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT 10.002.1

TICKET NUMBER: 77

Customer states that current software build HRC Unit 4.4 works well in high-stress situations. Customer further states that HRC Unit 4.4 is working well and beyond promised capacity. Unit performed at a high 80% during Unit's recent "Democratic National Convention" unveiling, and the new patches installed last month to limit the randomized, disconnected facial/emotional responses seem to be holding up. Unit's internal software and installed firmware are interacting well with the living tissue that contains them, and Unit's installed AI capacity to learn/unlearn behavior without engineering inputs seems to be operational.

(Customer states that Unit's outsized physical and emotional response to the balloons dropped at the close of Unit's unveiling at the DNC were the result of faulty instruction code installed by us, to which we agreed to open a ticket (#76) and negotiate a refund.)

Customer states that Unit is executing multiple instruction layers without bumps or restarts and has shown much-improved ability to communicate with human life forms without resorting to machine language. In addition, according to Customer, Unit no longer lunges inappropriately at humans as if to devour their life essence, and Unit no longer brays abruptly, "You will obey me! I am your leader!" These impulses are shuttled to the Approval-Required File and await execution commands from external operators on the campaign staff. These interfaces and their hardware connects are working flawlessly.

All of these successes are direct results of the newest build, which improves on 4.0–4.3 updates and fixes.

However: Customer is concerned that HRC Unit as currently configured in the 4.4 build is not equipped with instruction codes for execution of commands in the current environment. Customer states that current environment is "highly optimistic" and "extremely positive" and that has resulted in HRC Unit reacting and behaving without proper governors and second-level-response restrictions. Unit is currently behaving without customary sub-routines—"Paranoia Patch 2.0" and "Encourage Intra-Staff Infighting Protocols" and "Monitor and Manage the Media" (all three part of the initial build which we were not lead engineers on)—and without them in place and running, Unit runs the risk of overconfidence and complacency and burning out.

Customer understands that those are legacy clusters of software code and are not covered under our engineer-build-maintain contract. Customer further understands that we warned earlier that old, outdated instruction language from the 1990s could and probably would interfere with the new layer of operational control we installed. The HRC Unit is a very very old one and any attempt to "update" it—as we stated during contract negotiations—might reveal additional areas of deficiency.

Customer agreed with that assessment and agreed to a follow-on contract for new installation and firmware/software updates.

Customer understands the costs involved with this but is eager and somewhat anxious to begin. The Unit is behaving in such an uncharacteristic way that Customer is seriously concerned.

Currently, according to Customer, the HRC Unit is smiling widely with unusual and alarming sincerity and has been observed being nice to the staff. Customer states that Unit recently remembered the first name of a longtime staffer without resorting to external memory drive or a direct query. While this is, in some ways, the entire goal of the recent rebuild of the Unit (Versions 4.0–4.3 were designed to make interface more "human" and "lifelike"), Customer states that there is concern among Product Management team that Unit's newfound success in opinion polls and recent focus-group research that rates Unit as "warm-blooded" and "almost normal" have led Unit's Internal Processor into believing that she is now "liked" and "popular" with the target marketplace and not, as Customer states, simply that she is not as reviled and despised as her opponent.

Customer asks that we develop new patches and fixes to deal with this unexpected outcome and issue a timeline for their installation into the HRC Unit. Customer is aware that this will require a total shutdown of the Unit for as many as 7–10 days, but Customer responded that "lying low" is actually the current strategy anyway, as Unit's opponent seems to be in throes of a suicidal meltdown, so 10 days' system downtime is not a worry. When reminded about Labor Day and engineering-staff holidays, customer shrugged and said, "Take two weeks if you need it. We're just letting the other guy shoot himself."

Customer asks about rebooting time and was promised a two- to three-hour window of rebooting and reconfiguring the firmware. Customer asked if during shutdown it's possible that we could develop software patches for the following old issues: the Cackle (see Ticket #3) and the Gratuitous Lie (see Ticket #1) and was told that we're engineers, not magicians.

End report.

Athwart

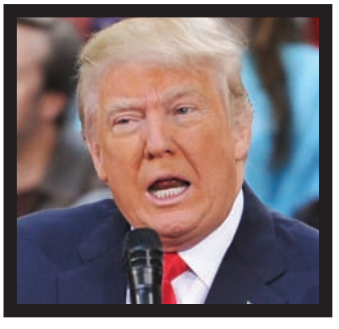
BY JAMES LILEKS

Deal Me Out

QUESTION posed to Trump by the *Portland Press Herald*: What would be the best deal you could negotiate as president of the United States?

Before we read his reply, let's imagine a hypothetical Hillary response:

A. "'I think as we move forward, and I've been clear on this both in the Senate and at the State Department, in fact going back to the 1990s when we saw great progress before the Bush tax cuts, you know, set the stage for the housing crash that almost sank the economy—I mean, gosh, some of us in the Senate were sounding the alarm about how Dick Cheney and the rest of 'em were ruining housing values in Baghdad while Wall Street was makin' their money off poor people just one paycheck away from being out on the streets. You have to remember that at least those streets were better after President Obama and the Democrats passed the infrastructure bill that pulled us out of the worst recession since Ronald Reagan.



But it's just not enough to build real bridges, Chuck, we have to build bridges of understanding. If I could make a deal, it would be just that everyone understood that America will always be a place that takes in orphans who might not, you know, always look like the folks you see at one of those Trump rallies [sudden spastic eruption of marrow-chilling cackle] but can be part of the diversity we know is our strength in the 21st century. And I'll fight for that."

That would be textbook Hillary: evasive, mendacious, grinding, boring, but passably effective, at least when it came to reassuring the base and mollifying the stupid. Sorry, the undecided. It would have some colloquial speech patterns deployed every few sentences, 'cuz shucks, she's regular folk who drops a "g" like the rest of us. (You're surprised she doesn't do some ads as Larry the Cable Guy: "Git Her Dun!") It would circle around to something her 1 percent backers approve, because immigration makes them feel good about themselves and there's no chance the government will pitch tents for 10,000 23-year-old Syrian men on the beaches of Malibu. It's all crazy, in the sense that it's a farrago of twaddle, misdirection, and falsehoods, but it's not crazy crazy.

Now let's contemplate a theoretical Trump response—not something from the man himself, but the one his fervent supporters seem to think exists in this actual world.

A. "I love a good deal. It's what we live for in the real-estate business, but you know what? There's real estate, and there's the real world. In real estate you might make more from being bought out and walking away, as I did with the West Side Television City project, than you'd make if you'd stuck around to see the building finished. The real world is different. America might get a short-term benefit from a deal that has us walking away from our obligations to our allies or that favors a few multinational corporations. But in the long run, it would hurt us. Those are the deals I won't do. To me, the American economy is like the Empire State Building. You know how many times it's changed hands in deals? So many, let me tell you. The important deal is the one that got it built. Those are the deals I'll make."

That person, alas, does not exist. This was Trump's actual answer when asked what would be the best deal he could negotiate:

A. "Peace all over the world would be the best deal. And I think I would know how to do it better than anybody else, but peace all over the world."

Thank you, and now on to the swimsuit-competition portion of the event.

You wish the interviewer had pressed him with a follow-up: *How?*

A. "Well, you know the U.N. building is a tremendous property. Used to be a slaughterhouse, not many people know that. Bad neighborhood, a real disaster. Now you have a building with magnificent views, east and west. Tremendous. I hear they have an asbestos problem. Maybe it's fixed. It should be fixed for what we pay the U.N., which is a disaster. I'd turn the building into condos and then have the U.N. meet on a hill and give everyone a Coca-Cola and sing that song, you know, I'd like to teach the world to sing in harmony. I know many, many bottlers who are supporting me, and they'd provide the Coke because they want to make America great."

Q. But can you reach out to the millions of Americans who choose Pepsi?

A. "Look, Pepsi owns Dr Pepper. Was he a real doctor? I don't know. I've never seen any papers. We need good doctors. You got Obamacare, which is a disaster, and they're saying, Oh, we can't fill our hospitals, we need doctors from India. Do we? I love Indians, love the food, there's a fantastic curry at the Trump Tower café on Wednesdays, you should try it. Comes with this bread, it's incredible. You know they have trouble with Muslims in India, but we can't talk about that, oh, you can't say Bombay, it's Moombay or something now, like Peking is Beejing. And this political correctness, it's killing us, it's killing our maps."

What the fervent Trump fan heard from that: We should leave the U.N.

What the Hillary fan heard: I know Hillary would not only fight to keep us in the U.N. but lead the way against sugary drinks like Coke.

What the undecided voter heard: What? Sorry, I was watching the Olympics. NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.

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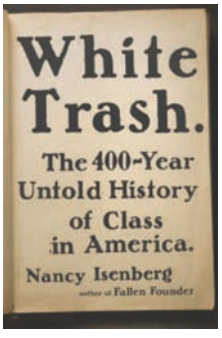
Cracked History

KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON



White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America, by Nancy Isenberg (Viking, 480 pp., $28)

Nancy Isenberg has produced, in *White Trash*, a dreadfully stupid and lazy book. It is badly written, poorly conceived, and incompetently executed. Isenberg would join the long line of American debunkers and would-be debunkers of a familiar and surpassingly tedious sort: "Sure, Americans sent a man to the moon, but what about the United Fruit Company in Guatemala back in 1954? Huh? Huh?"

Isenberg's argument, if we may be so generous as to call it that, is this: The American culture was not born ex nihilo on July 4, 1776, and in the English parts of the New World colonists reproduced some form of the English class structure; the freedom-seeking Puritans were not alone, but were joined by all manner of riff-raff dispatched by English powers as a form of domestic social hygiene, making the United States a kind of Australia before there was an Australia; the United States today is not a society without class divisions.

Well, raise my rent.

Virginia was named for an English queen and its settlement was sponsored by a *knight*. Its basic law was a royal charter, and its economy was shaped in no small part by indentured servitude and chattel slavery. These are not egalitarian arrangements, and they did not produce egalitarian outcomes. This is not "untold history." This is history told, and told, and told again. Life in early-17th-century Jamestown, Isenberg tells us, was not unlike the world of William Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*; what we are to take from the fact that an English settlement was culturally consistent with the work of an English playwright working at approximately the same time (1596 in this case) is anybody's guess.

About 20 pages in, I found myself thinking: "I wonder when we get to NASCAR?" Obviously, you cannot have an intellectually lazy and cliché-ridden book about white-trash culture without NASCAR, preferably with a tangential report on the box-office performance of *Smokey and the Bandit* in 1977. That would be like having a batty and ignorant book on African-American culture without fried chicken and watermelon. Rest assured, you'll get your NASCAR, your *Dukes of Hazzard*, and more.

But it's a while coming. The structure of the book reeks of sophomore-level procrastination. Perhaps this will be more obvious to you if you've ever been obliged to write something long and complicated on a deadline and performed poorly. (Not that I would know anything about that.) The first chapter of the book is the book essay, a distillation of the book's argument that usually is submitted to publishers as part of a book proposal. You aren't supposed to publish the book essay, but Isenberg seems to have done that or something quite close to it. So what we have is a brief version of the book's overall argument, followed by a series of half-thought-out chapters in which we are treated to reports on Thomas Jefferson and class, the Civil War and class, the Great Depression and class, each connected only vaguely, if at all, with the others, and an epilogue.

You will not be surprised to learn that Jefferson had attitudes about class that were more or less characteristic of a man of his day, and that popular attitudes toward the subject changed slowly over time in response to historical events. It may be that all of this could add up to an illuminating account of class differences in the United States, and maybe even an account of persistent social injustice of a kind, but, if it does, that has escaped Isenberg entirely.

She does not even seem to read her own sentences, at least as they relate to one another in sequence, e.g.: "[Benjamin] Franklin was not sympathetic to the plight of the poor. His design for the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1751 was intended to assist the industrious poor, primarily men with physical injuries." I found myself blinking and rereading that sentence, and wondering how and why a man who *was not sympathetic to the plight of the poor* should *design a charity hospital for their benefit*. It is true that Franklin, like charitable men before and after and now, distinguished between different kinds of poor people, between the so-called deserving poor and ordinary bums, partly as a moral exercise and partly as a kind of philanthropic triage, resources being limited. But there is not an ordinary reading of the English words "was not sympathetic to the plight of the poor" that describes a man who undertook to relieve the plight of the poor through charitable works.

Franklin particularly perplexes and vexes Isenberg. He was a fugitive from an apprenticeship to his older brother (a form of indenture) and was from a family of modest means. Isenberg writes: "He had arrived in Philadelphia in 1723 as a runaway, meanly dressed in filthy, wet clothing." Given this fact, she is scandalized by Franklin's later complaints about "vagrant and idle persons" congregating in Philadelphia. (The more things change . . .)

One wonders whether Isenberg has ever been to America. Franklin, as Isenberg might learn from reading Isenberg, was a man who began with very little and who managed to rise in Philadelphia—and rise and rise until he became its most celebrated resident—despite being an outsider to the Quaker mafia that ran the place and having no real connections to the "Proprietors," the Penns and allied families who dominated the colony socially and economically. How did that happen? Isenberg knows: "Quaker patrons," including the lawyer Alexander Hamilton (no relation to that guy Aaron Burr shot), "a non-Quaker leader of the Quaker

Party," along with "liberal Friends, who were not exclusive about who should wield influence within the political faction of the Quaker Party." Which is to say, Franklin rose in no small part through his own hard work and cunning but was also enabled by an open, liberal, cosmopolitan, commercial society in which one's original station in life was not necessarily one's final station—i.e., he rose because of the very American order whose liberality this daft book was written to debunk.

Isenberg has a habit of doing that to herself. Hilariously, she argues that one of the problems with westward expansion was that the settlers' class positions became less secure the farther they traveled from the eastern colonial capitals. That is, of course, the founding idea of the American meritocratic ethos and the related myth of a classless American society. The old divisions really did melt away in the refining fires of the frontier—only to be replaced with new ones. Isenberg writes as though class politics in the United States were a seamless continuation of British class politics (French-speaking, Spanish-speaking, German-speaking, and Russian-speaking America effectively do not exist in her account), when in reality they constitute something closer to an inversion of them. If an Englishman today has the wrong accent and failed to go to the right schools, it doesn't matter how much money he has; if an American has enough money, nobody cares what sort of funky, plebeian manner of speech he has (cf. Trump, Donald, yugeness of) or whether he went to school at all—in fact, we tend to celebrate those who come from outside the Ivy League–Wall Street world much more intensely than those who merely advance a few degrees within it. If you're the 14th Earl of Derby and just Derbying on the way the 13th did before you, the English class system regards you with some awe; if you're the ninth Biddle to be chairman of the Merion Cricket Club membership committee, the American system thinks you should have maybe tried harder in school or gotten an MBA or something.

Perhaps Franklin appalls Isenberg because he is recognizably the first modern American, and he talked like one. "I think the best way of doing good to the poor is not making them easy in poverty but leading or driving them out of it." Is that Ben Franklin or Paul Ryan?

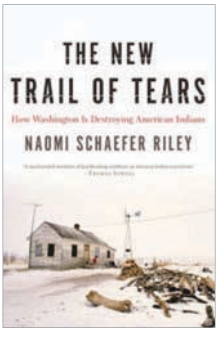
Eventually, we get to the modern era, and the sympathetic Joads of Isenberg's imagination become objects of her contempt, from those NASCAR-watching, Burt Reynolds–impersonating hordes to Sarah Palin, who inspires a hatred in Isenberg that is unpleasant to witness on the page and must be absolutely manic in person. She repeats *Slate*'s report that Palin's home town of Wasilla, Alaska, is just a place to "get gas and pee," but she writes as one who obviously never has stopped there, or watched a Lady Wildcats game with bar patrons in Harlan, Ky., or stopped to talk with foot-washing Baptists praying for rain in a cotton field outside Brownfield, Texas. Well, if the bright kids at *Slate* say so, it must be true.

Isenberg teaches at Louisiana State, having studied at Rutgers and the University of Wisconsin. Her book inevitably will be compared—poorly—with J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*. In Isenberg, there is no sense of *knowing* this culture and its people. By her own telling, her interest in the subject is rooted in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (the film, not the book), and her work is full of such information as can be had from Google or in a classroom in Madison. As for the people, they're mainly just evidence to be mustered against the Great Satan that is American capitalism, or else, like Sarah Palin, characters in Isenberg's white-minstrel-show version of history. There may come a time when the members of the white underclass decide that they do not want or need nice liberal ladies from Rutgers, who get so much wrong speaking *about* them, to speak *for* them. But for those of Isenberg's disposition, the poor are very little more than pawns, and in the end it doesn't matter very much whether you're playing the white side of the chess board or the black. NR

Perhaps Franklin appalls Isenberg because he is recognizably the first modern American, and he talked like one.

Locked In

JAY NORDLINGER



The New Trail of Tears: How Washington Is Destroying American Indians, by Naomi Schaefer Riley (Encounter, 232 pp., $23.99)

Let me tell you about "lock-in"—a practice at Pine Ridge, the Indian reservation in South Dakota. One weekend a month, a school has lock-in, literally locking children into the school, where they play games and so on. Lock-in is timed for the arrival of government checks. When adults receive them, they have money to booze up, and when they do, they are likelier than ever to abuse the children. Hence, lock-in, for the kids' protection.

They could use this all the other days of the month, too.

Naomi Schaefer Riley tells us about lock-in in her new book, *The New Trail of Tears*. She is a journalist based in New York. She spent two years traveling Indian country, interviewing anyone and everyone, observing what she could, learning what she could. The result is a book that is part travel journal, part history, part anthropological study, part policy review, etc.

At the end of her book, she cites Tocqueville, and she herself is a kind of Tocqueville, for Indian country.

It's safe to say, I think, that Indians rarely cross the American mind. Many people are upset that the Washington football team calls itself the "Redskins." Would that these people were half as upset at what takes place every day on Indian reservations. Indians tend to be regarded as environmentalists,

communitarians, and sages. They are endlessly flattered, or condescended to.

Riley quotes Michelle Obama telling a group of young Indians, "Today, on issues like conservation and climate change, we are finally beginning to embrace the wisdom of your ancestors."

There are not many Indians: 3 million, of whom 1 million live on reservations. The total population of San Jose, Calif., is about a million. There are more people in Dallas—1.3 million—than on reservations.

But Indians lead the country: in poverty, alcoholism, rape, child abuse, and suicide. Indian reservations are the worst places in America, and among the worst places anywhere. "The United States is the wealthiest nation on earth," says Riley, "but we have what amounts to a Third World country within our borders." I might dispute her a little: There are plenty of Third World countries that are poor but without the depravity of Indian reservations—with a lot less child rape, for example.

Indians lucky enough to have wit and drive, or simple nerve, leave the reservations. They get gone, as you would, too. This leaves, on the reservations, the dregs.

I have spoken very impolitely, but politeness, or an erring sense of it, is one of the things that have been killing the Indians for years. Children on reservations don't have many people to look up to. And they repeat the criminal or self-defeating behaviors they see around them.

Early on, children are instilled with a sense of historical grievance—a sense of terrible victimization. This is poisonous to the child. Justifiable or not, grievance is a poison to individuals and societies alike. It blocks progress, constantly.

Riley begins her book with an essay, "What Does America Owe Indians?" (a burning question). She ends it with another one, "Native Americans as Americans." In between are considerations of economics, education, identity, and the law. She provides chapter and verse. I will continue with some blunt generalizations.

For decades, federal policy toward Indians has been money and pity, laced with guilt, and accompanied by the blind eye. What I mean is, nobody really wants to know what goes on on Indian reservations. Riley says that these places give us "a microcosm of everything that has gone wrong with modern liberalism."

I think of James G. Watt, President Reagan's first interior secretary—and the most controversial and lampooned member of that cabinet. In 1983, he said, "If you want an example of the failure of socialism, don't go to Russia, come to America and go to the Indian reservations." The world condemned him roundly. And he was right.

Reagan liked to quote FDR, much to the annoyance of Democrats. In his State of the Union address for 1935, Roosevelt said, "The lessons of history, confirmed by the evidence immediately before me, show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit."

The Indians are not afforded "relief" by Washington; rather, they are doled a permanent and rotten way of life. And the effect on their spirit is not subtle but blatant.

Odd as it may seem, Indians have little freedom of movement or action on reservations, which are vast. A person can barely sneeze without government permission. "We are the most highly regulated race in the world," a tribal leader tells Riley. When their options are limited, people learn helplessness. That is true wherever they live, and whatever race they belong to.

Riley is on a Montana reservation, surveying the scene. It is a scene of typical squalor. Windows on homes are broken, "with only a kind of tarp" keeping the weather out. "Residents say they're waiting for HUD to come fix things." That's the spirit (or lack of it).

Many reservations have casinos—which are both cash cows and curses. Riley talks to a man who once worked for a tribe in Minnesota. Thanks to casino revenue, members were given $80,000 when they turned 18. Consequently, there was no incentive to work, says the man. There was no incentive to further one's education. The windfall "caused drugs and alcohol to be rampant. There was a lot of stress on families, the breakdown of families, addiction to gambling."

Riley reports a poignant detail from another state, New York. Kids with sudden cash will walk into a store to buy candy. They'll hand over $50 or $100—without expecting any change. They have never been exposed to the norms of the mainstream world.

When it comes to education in Indian country, Riley has little good to report. How could she? But she introduces us to a bright light—Ben Chavis, a well-known, no-nonsense educator. He is a Lumbee Indian from North Carolina (not to be confused with the Ben Chavis who used to head the NAACP, and also happens to be from North Carolina). He knows what ails Indian communities, and does all he can to address it, whether people like it or not.

Tirelessly, he advocates education, entrepreneurship, and responsibility. Not long ago, one of his sisters accused him of "acting white." His reply was for the ages: "Honey, you've got to be more specific. 'Acting white' is not enough. I'm acting Jewish. Or maybe Chinese."

Indians who try to break out of dependency and stagnation are often accused of being race traitors. They are "apples" (red on the outside, white on the inside) or "Uncle Tomahawks." Envy rears its head, and notions of tribal solidarity can be cruel.

It is the pages on sex crimes that are the hardest to read in this book. Little kids are raped by adults; in turn, they rape each other. If you see this and try to report it, you may be hushed or ostracized—because you are a threat to tribal solidarity.

That's if you're an Indian. What if you're white, and learn of these horrors? You may think, "I have no standing to raise an alarm. Think of what we have done to the poor Native Americans, over the centuries! Plus, don't they have their own law enforcement, their own mores? Their own culture?"

Riley makes an astute comparison to recent events in Rotherham, England. There, the widespread rape of children was ignored, because good progressives were loath to criticize Muslims.

She has written an important book, Naomi Schaefer Riley has. She has also done American Indians a great favor. She cares about them enough to have investigated their lives, and written honestly about them. People may fancy themselves friends of the Indians if they

condemn "Redskins" as a nickname for a football team. Or if they say "Native American" instead of "Indian." Riley is their real friend.

When I first saw the cover of her book, I wrinkled my nose at the subtitle: "How Washington Is Destroying American Indians." Is it Washington doing the destroying or the people themselves? Are they without volition? No—but Riley makes the case that federal policy, however well intentioned, has hampered them, and crippled them.

She recommends a number of reforms, including the introduction of charter schools. Her answer to the question of that opening essay—"What Does America Owe Indians?"—is inarguable, from my point of view: We owe them "nothing less than the opportunity to live lives of freedom and dignity in the land we all share."

As you may be able to tell, she is a good and compassionate soul. All through her book, she is measured, sensible, and polite. (Largely polite.) I myself am not in so polite a mood—and I wonder whether Indians would be better off if reservations were simply abolished. Broken up. Dissolved. For too long, they have been incubators of misery, emasculation, and perversity. How many generations is enough? How many more must suffer?

People would call the breakup of the reservations one final injustice. One last blow against our eternally wronged Natives. Let them.

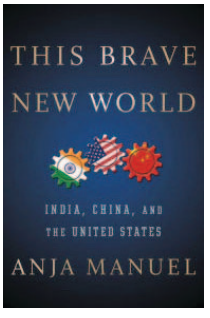
And let the Indians get on with their lives, without this charade of sovereign nations within a big sovereign nation. Let them be like immigrants—though they were here first—striving and integrating like other groups. If they want to teach their children songs and dances, languages and religions, who's to stop them? But enough of the reservation racket, the reservation trap.

I think of the Gypsies, or Roma, in Europe. Generation after generation, they have kept their racket going. Children are born into a life of begging and crime. They never have a chance. Who can call this compassion or plead "cultural diversity"?

Those who defend or excuse or sentimentalize reservations should be forced to live on them. Or at least visit them. Or at least know something about them. Then we might have a talk. **NR**

The China Delusion

ARTHUR HERMAN



This Brave New World: India, China, and the United States, by Anja Manuel (Simon & Schuster, 368 pp., $27)

READERS of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* will remember the White Queen's pride in teaching herself to believe six impossible things before breakfast. In *This Brave New World*, Anja Manuel, former State Department official and now partner in RiceHadleyGates LLC (more on that later), struggles to get her readers to do the same. Her six impossible propositions concern China, the country that occupies the bulk of her discussion of why "a prosperous, confident China and India are good for the United States." In India's case, she's certainly right. In China's, Manuel's main thesis—that "it is preferable to have China and other rising powers inside a larger tent, even if they often disagree, rather than on the outside creating an alternative order that Washington cannot influence"—requires ignoring certain key features about today's China, not to mention geopolitical reality.

Unfortunately, that's an occupational hazard in Washington when it comes to China. Advocates of appeasement of China thickly populate the major think tanks and top lobbying firms, not to mention certain key offices at State and even in the Pentagon. Manuel's book gives us a close look at how they rationalize away the truth about China and its geopolitical ambitions.

The first thing Manuel works to make us believe is that China's frighteningly rapid rise as a military power since the 1990s, with double-digit defense-spending increases virtually every year, won't pose a strategic threat to the United States. She notes that "China is building navy ships and attack submarines at warp speed": It has doubled the size of its attack-submarine fleet since 2005, so that by 2020 it will surpass ours in numbers, if not quality. China already has more warships than the U.S., and they are concentrated in Asian waters instead of being spread thinly across the globe. Manuel also acknowledges China's sophisticated strategy aimed at shoving the U.S. out past China's surrounding "first island chain" (which includes Taiwan), even as it "bull[ies] its neighbors" in the South and East China Seas.

Yet none of this needs to be a source of worry, she says, unless we overreact. "There is a real threat that misunderstandings and distrust on all sides will lead to everyone arming to the hilt in a way that benefits no one." Her recommendation? "We should take a longer-term view of China: As its economic interests expand, it will continue to invest heavily in its military, as all rising powers have done." In Manuel's view, we need to face the fact that America's dominant role in the Pacific and Indian oceans is ending, and we shouldn't be tempted to turn to India as a way to make up the difference. "India and the United States must carefully temper their desire to cooperate militarily with a real effort to avoid alienating China." What Manuel avoids asking is whether China isn't alienated already, i.e., determined to carve out its geopolitical destiny at the expense of the U.S. and the global system we've built and protected since World War II. Failure to face that possibility may be the real misunderstanding that lands us all in trouble.

Second, she says that China's appalling record on human rights and its willingness to team up with some of the most repulsive regimes on the planet, including North Korea, are issues we can't let derail our dealings with China, and that we need to "resolve conflicts in private and prioritize collaboration in public." Manuel mentions China's Great Firewall to censor the Internet and points out that "for years, China has spent more on internal

Mr. Herman is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and the author, most recently, of Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior.

Sailing November 13–20 on
Holland America's *Nieuw Amsterdam*

2016 Post-Election Cruise

PLEASE JOIN Victor Davis Hanson, Sheriff David Clarke, Heather Higgins, Steven Hayward, Dinesh D'Souza, Bing West, Jonah Goldberg, Andrew McCarthy, John Podhoretz, Kevin Williamson, Neal Freeman, John Yoo, Richard Allen, James Lileks, Kathryn Jean Lopez, Eliana Johnson, Charles C. W. Cooke, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Jim Geraghty, Katherine Timpf, John J. Miller, John Hillen, David French, Reihan Salam, Rob Long, & Charmaine Yoest as we visit Ft. Lauderdale, Half Moon Cay, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, & Key West

Join us on the ***National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise**, certain to be *the* conservative event of the year. Featuring an all-star cast, this affordable trip—*prices start at $1,999 a person (based on double occupancy), and just $2,699 for a single*—will take place November 13–20, 2016, aboard Holland America Line's beautiful MS *Nieuw Amsterdam*.

From politics, the elections, the presidency, and domestic policy to economics, national security, and foreign affairs, there's so much to debate and review, and that's precisely what our conservative analysts, writers, and experts will do on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, your luxury getaway for fascinating discussion of events, trends, and the 2016 elections.

SHERIFF DAVID CLARKE SIGNS ON AS SPEAKER!

We're thrilled to annonce: Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke will be joining our terrific line-up of speakers, which will also include historian **Victor Davis Hanson**, terrorism and defense experts **Richard Allen**, **Bing West**, **Andrew McCarthy**, and **John Hillen**, Independent Women's Forum chairman **Heather Higgins**, conservative moviemaker **Dinesh D'Souza**, best-selling author and policy expert **Steven Hayward**, pro-life champion **Charmaine Yoest**, conservative legal expert **John Yoo**, NRO editor-at-large **Kathryn Jean Lopez**, *Commentary* editor **John Podhoretz**, former *NR* Washington Editor and Buckley expert **Neal Freeman**, *NR* senior editors **Jonah Goldberg**, **Jay Nordlinger** and **Ramesh Ponnuru**, *NR* essayists **David French**, **Charles Cooke**, **Kevin Williamson**, and **Reihan Salam**, *NR* Washington Editor **Eliana Johnson**, *NR* columnists **Rob Long** and **James Lileks**, ace political writers **Jim Geraghty** and **John Miller**, and culture-scene reporter **Kat Timpf**.

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All that and more will take place over a spectacular week of world-class cruising on the beautiful and luxurious *Nieuw Amsterdam*, which will sail a Western Caribbean itinerary that includes Ft. Lauderdale, Grand Cayman (always an ideal place to snorkel—you must visit Sting Ray City, or catch the other rays on Seven Mile Beach), Half Moon Cay (Holland America's private island, home to a most pristine blue lagoon and tons of fun), Cozumel (your gateway to the Mayan ruins at Tulum), and Key West (with its beaches, beaches and beaches—and of course lime pie).

JOIN US FOR SEVEN BALMY DAYS AND COOL CONSERVATIVE NIGHTS

DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
SUN/Nov. 13	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		4:00PM	evening cocktail reception
MON/Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
TUE/Nov. 15	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
WED/Nov. 16	Georgetown, Grand Cayman	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 17	Cozumel, Mexico	11:00AM	11:00PM	morning seminar late-night Smoker
FRI/Nov. 18	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars "Night Owl" session
SAT/Nov. 19	Key West, FL	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
SUN/Nov. 20	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		Debark

THE CONSERVATIVE EVENT OF THE YEAR — DON'T MISS IT!

And for those times when we are "at sea," or you feel like staying on board, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* (need I say it offers well-appointed, spacious staterooms and countless amenities, and hosts a stellar staff that provides unsurpassed service and sumptuous cuisine?) has a classy, terrific spa, a must-attend Culinary Arts Center, exceptional evening entertainment, pools, luxury boutiques, plenty of nooks and crannies to hide in with a good book, and, oh yeah, a casino!

NR's **2016 Post-Election Cruise** will be remarkable, *and* affordable. Prices start as low as $1,999 a person, with "Single" cabins starting at only $2,699 (in many cases our rates are *lower* than we charged in 2012!). And they can go even lower: Get a friend or family member to reserve a cabin (a single or a couple who are first-time *NR* cruisers), and you'll receive an additional $100 discount (and so will they).

If you've always wanted to go on an *NR* cruise but could never pull the trigger, couldn't send in the application, chickened out, for whatever reason, you've just got to give in. Make the ***National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise** the one where you finally yes. You will not regret that decision: Take the trip of a lifetime with America's preeminent intellectuals, policy analysts, and political experts. Reserve your cabin online at **www.nrcruise.com**. Or call The Cruise Authority (M-F, 9AM to 5PM EST) at 800-707-1634.

(Single and worried you'll be a fifth wheel? Don't: About a third of our contingent, a most happy and welcoming crowd, are single travelers.)

Come. You'll be glad you did. We'll see you—in the company of Sheriff David Clarke, **Victor Davis Hanson, Bing West, Heather Higgins, Steven Hayward, Richard Allen, John Yoo, Dinesh D'Souza, Jonah Goldberg, Andrew McCarthy, John Podhoretz, Neal Freeman, James Lileks, Kathryn Jean Lopez, Eliana Johnson, Charles Cooke, Kevin Williamson, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Jim Geraghty, Jillian Melchior, Rob Long, John J. Miller, Charmaine Yoest, David French, Reihan Salam,** and **Kat Timpf**—this November 13-20 aboard the *Nieuw Amsterdam* on the ***National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise.**

For more information or to apply online go to

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or call The Cruise Authority at

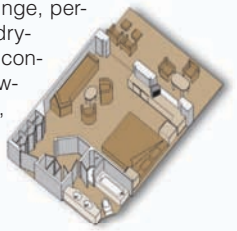
1-800-707-1634

RATES START AT JUST $1,999 P/P!

Superior service, gourmet cuisine, elegant accommodations, and great entertainment await you on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. Prices are per-person, based on double occupancy, and include port fees, taxes, gratuities, all meals, entertainment, and admittance to and participation in all *National Review* functions. Per-person rates for third/fourth person in cabin (by age and category):

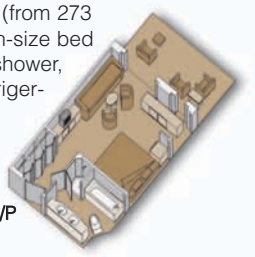
Categories C to N	17-younger: $ 567	18-up: $ 748
Category VC	17-younger: $ 617	18-up: $ 798
Categories SS & SA	17-younger: $ 670	18-up: $ 851

DELUXE SUITE Magnificent quarters (from 506 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge, personal concierge, complimentary laundry/dry-cleaning service, large private verandah, convertible king-size bed, whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, safe, much more.



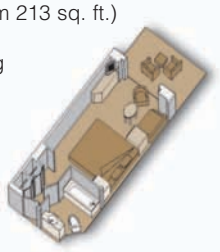
Category SA
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,899 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 7,599

SUPERIOR SUITE Grand stateroom (from 273 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe, and much more.



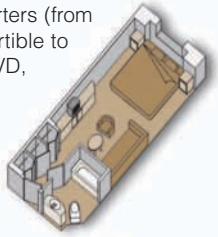
Category SS
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,799 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 5,999

DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (from 213 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bath/shower, sitting area, mini-bar, TV/DVD, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



Category VA
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,899 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,299

LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (from 174 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bathtub/shower, sitting area, TV/DVD, large ocean-view windows.



Category C
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,399 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,299

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (from 151 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), shower, sitting area, TV/DVD.

Category J
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 1,999 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,699

National Review 2016 Post-Election Cruise Application

Mail to: National Review Cruise, The Cruise Authority, 1760 Powers Ferry Rd., Marietta, GA 30067 or Fax to 770-953-1228

Please fill out application completely and mail with deposit check or fax with credit-card information. One application per cabin. If you want more than one cabin, make copies of this application. For questions call The Cruise Authority at 800-707-1634.

Personal

GUEST #1: Name as listed on Passport (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) | Date of Birth

Passport Number | Expiration Date | Citizenship

Are you a past Holland America cruiser? ☐ Yes ☐ No

GUEST #2: Name as listed on Passport (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) | Date of Birth

Passport Number | Expiration Date | Citizenship

Are you a past Holland America cruiser? ☐ Yes ☐ No

PASSPORT INFORMATION This cruise requires a valid passport. Passports should expire **after** 5/21/17. Failure to provide this form of documentation **will** result in denied boarding of the *Nieuw Amsterdam.* For more information visit **www.travel.state.gov**.

MAILING AND CONTACT INFORMATION *(FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY)*

Mailing address

City / State / Zip

Email Address

Daytime Phone | Cell phone

CREDENTIALS

Your legal first and last name are required for travel documentation. If you have an informal name you would like reflected on your name badge, please indicate it here:

Guest #1 _____ Guest #2 _____

Cabins, Air Travel, & Other Information

All rates are per person, double occupancy, and include all port charges and taxes, all gratuities, meals, entertainment, and *National Review* activities. Failure to appear for embarkation for any reason constitutes a cancellation subject to full penalties. Personal items not included. **PLEASE CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES!**

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First cabin category choice:_____ Second cabin category choice:_____

Bedding: Beds made up as ☐ Twin ☐ King/Queen

BOOKING SINGLE? ☐ Please try to match me with a roommate. (My age: _____)

II. DINING w/ FRIENDS/FAMILY: I wish to dine with _____

☐ Every Night ☐ 3-4 times ☐ 2 times ☐ Once

III. PRE- AND POST-CRUISE TOUR PACKAGES

☐ Please send me information on pre-/post-cruise packages in Ft. Lauderdale.

IV. AIR / TRANSFER PACKAGES

☐ We will provide our own roundtrip air and transfers to and from Ft. Lauderdale *(arriving there on 11/13/16 by 11:00AM and departing after 11:00AM on 11/20/16).*

☐ We would like The Cruise Authority to customize roundtrip air (**fees apply**) from _____ ☐ Coach ☐ First Class Air

Arrival date: _____

Departure date: _____

Preferred carrier: _____

V. MEDICAL / DIETARY / SPECIAL REQUESTS

Please enter in the box below any medical, dietary, or special needs or requests we should know about any of the members of your party:

Payment, Cancellation, & Insurance

Deposit of $600 **per person** is due with this application. If paid by credit card, the balance will be charged to the *same* card on 8/12/16 unless otherwise directed. If application is received after 8/12/16, the full amount of the cruise will be charged.

☐ My deposit of $600 **per person** is included. (Make checks to "National Review Cruise")

☐ Charge my deposit to: **AmEx** ☐ **Visa** ☐ **MasterCard** ☐ **Discover** ☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiration Date ☐☐/☐☐ *Month Year*

Security Code ☐☐☐☐ *Amex 4 digits on front, others 3 digits on back*

☐ The card's billing address is indicated above. ☐ The card's billing address is:

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CANCELLATION PENALTY SCHEDULE: Cancellations must be received in writing by date indicated. Fax / email is sufficient notification. Guests must confirm receipt by The Cruise Authority. PRIOR to June 13, 2016 cancellation penalty is $100 per person; June 13 to August 12, 2016, penalty is $600 per person, AFTER August 12, 2016, penalty is 100% of cruise/package.

CANCELLATION / MEDICAL INSURANCE is available and highly recommended for this cruise (and package). The exact amount will appear on your cruise statement. Purchase will be immediate upon your acceptance and is non-refundable. Call 1-800-707-1634 for more information.

☐ **YES** I/we wish to purchase the Trip Cancellation & Medical Insurance coverage. Additions to the cruise package will increase my insurance premium.

☐ **NO** I/we are declining to purchase the Trip Cancellation & Medical Insurance coverage and understand that I/we will be subject to applicable cancellation penalties.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I understand and accept the terms and conditions of booking this cruise package and acknowledge responsibility for myself and those sharing my accommodations (signed)

_____ SIGNATURE OF GUEST #1

_____ DATE

security than on its military budget—more than $130 billion in 2013." But she wants to increase American business in China, especially by Internet companies, even though "they will censor content and will have to turn over data about activists to China's security apparatus." "More trade and interaction is good," she assures us, an argument China appeasers have been making for two decades, with little or no evidence of any improvement in human rights. "Each tiny wedge in the Chinese firewall will be helpful"—even though Apple and Google will be obliged to show the authorities where all the wedges are.

Third, she believes that China's economic rise really is a benefit to the rest of the world, even though, she admits, "China is flooding the world with cheap money that mostly helps its own enterprises," and its export policy is actually geared toward overwhelming its competitors and building China's geopolitical influence rather than gratifying customers.

Fourth, we mustn't let China's serial cyber thefts get us all excited. Manuel does acknowledge that its cyber attacks are part of a larger, highly sophisticated cyber strategy developed in the late 1990s and that "China now has access to advanced U.S. designs that they could exploit to jam or otherwise disable U.S. systems in a conflict." Cyber theft "also accelerates China's ability to acquire advanced military technology, saving it billions in development costs." But this isn't a reason to rethink our dealings with China. After all, President Xi Jinping signed an agreement with Obama promising to end cyber theft, so that's taken care of. (Let's ignore the fact that China-based entities launched cyber attacks on several U.S. companies in the three weeks after the agreement was signed.)

Fifth, and perhaps most egregious, is Manuel's praise of China's global One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative as a "a real positive for the world." Conceived in 2012, this massive infrastructure project involves some $1.5 trillion in spending on oil and gas pipelines, roads, bridges, high-speed railways, harbors, and port facilities (one of which is in the Israeli port of Haifa). In constant dollars, OBOR is twelve times the size of the Marshall Plan. The goal is a rewiring of the entire Eastern Hemisphere, to the advantage of China—and to displace U.S. influence from half the globe. Far from proving China's grandiose geopolitical ambitions, Manuel says, OBOR simply demonstrates that "globalization has firmly taken root in today's world." Once again, she does admit that China's efforts to buy the land and transportation links that are needed to make OBOR work have been nothing less than rapacious: Since Chinese companies have no sanctity of contract at home, they feel free to ignore it abroad. She also admits that "an important side effect" of OBOR is that countries benefiting from its project, such as Niger and Pakistan, will tend to be grateful to China and so side with China in international disputes.

OBOR is also a useful way to isolate potential rivals, including Manuel's other rising power, India. China's strategy involves pouring more than $46 billion into Pakistan alone for infrastructure, extending trade loans to Nepal, and increasing trade links with Sri Lanka by building a $1.4 billion port that will be even larger than one China is building in Gwadar, Pakistan. China has already replaced India as Bangladesh's biggest trading partner, and "if the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor is actually built, India could find itself excluded from the biggest new supply chain in the region." But again, no cause for alarm: In Manuel's view, the real danger is that India might take too aggressive and provocative a stance regarding China's moves. Meanwhile, "if Pakistan can't repay the [OBOR] loans, China could own many of Pakistan's coal mines, oil pipelines, and power plants."

Can any writer on China, especially one with years of experience in the State Department, really be this naïve? Of course not. And here we close on the heart of the matter.

As mentioned above, Ms. Manuel is a partner in RiceHadleyGates LLC, a consulting firm put together by former secretary of state Condi Rice, former national-security adviser Stephen Hadley, and former Pentagon boss Robert Gates.

A PAINTING IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Flowers and weeds together spill,
Careless and drizzly, down the hill

In a long back garden that's anywhere
Outside London. I am living there

Beside the window, no longer trying
At all, but easily, innately dying

Far from the shame for what I broke,
Far from the urge for a brilliant stroke.

The neighbor's son, who's a little slow,
Comes every couple months to mow—

No worry of mine what he achieves:
I'm even grateful for what he leaves.

Yes, it's pure nonsense, any place
Closer to God's own "presence," His "face":

Hardly a joke I could call unknown
By now, or a good one—but leave me alone,

As if I were twenty-one and stood
Staring and seeing as much as I could;

As if I were twelve and lay in bed,
Sensing an arm on my back, my head

On a sturdy chest, and a voice in my ear.
What I hope, I know; now leave me here.

—SARAH RUDEN

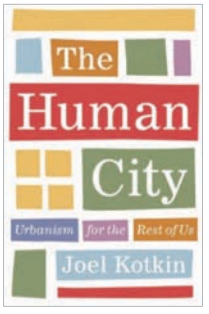
The firm does plenty of business in China; as its website states, it works in "assisting several companies to navigate the political, policy, and regulatory problems related to their expansion into China, Vietnam, and India." So do many other consulting firms that also offer "expert" advice on China policy; just as several influential Washington think tanks have China and Chinese companies as significant donors and supporters. China has a long history of using financial levers to dilute Western opposition to its policies. Keeping this in mind is useful in understanding why America's policy toward China has been so halting and painfully passive. We should not forget the influence of American corporations that have a large stake in doing business in China or, like Google, would like a large stake.

This indeed is the sixth impossible thing Ms. Manuel would have her readers believe: that "to extend a world order based on American values, we must bring China and India along rather than alienating one or both." But what if the rest of the world, and China particularly, doesn't want American values? And what if China doesn't want "a world order that suits everyone," as Manuel puts it, but is determined to build a new order that suits China and China alone? Indeed, her effort throughout the book to suggest that India and China somehow reflect the same problems of newly emerging great powers seems insulting, not just to India, which is, after all, a democracy with a tradition of rule of law, but to Americans who can sense the difference between an India, where citizens are free, and a China, where they are not.

As for China's currency manipulations, and its recent provocative actions in such places as the South China Sea, "many American commentators see a dangerous scheme to dominate the rest of the world," even though, "seen from China's perspective, they are not necessarily menacing." But it's not China's perspective we need to think about, but our own. Manuel's book unintentionally reveals how we got ourselves into so much trouble up to this point. You don't have to be Donald Trump to decide that we need some serious rethinking of our policy toward China—or to realize that believing the impossible before breakfast can be ruinous. NR

Huddled Masses

JONATHAN LEAF



The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us, by Joel Kotkin (Agate B2, 304 pp., $24.95)

WHAT are the effects on families of living in a city of skyscrapers?

That's one of the pivotal questions raised by Joel Kotkin's new book. Kotkin is both a field researcher who travels widely and a demographer who makes extensive use of Census Bureau research. He employs both these avenues of inquiry on behalf of a provocative thesis: One of the main causes for the declining birth rates seen in the industrialized world is the experience of life in crowded metropolises.

From this idea, Kotkin goes on to a further argument: There needs to be a complete reappraisal of urban design and a new appreciation for the merits of suburbs.

This is radical thought, and attached to it are a series of other contrarian propositions—including stinging critiques of the widespread advocacy for expanding public transportation, and of environmentalists' calls for the conversion of areas along the outskirts of cities into wildlife refuges. For Kotkin, the latter is a plan that will endanger a native creature commonly known as the child.

The evidence Kotkin cites may be unfamiliar to the urban elite living in the country's coastal cities. Contrary to their immediate perceptions, nearly all of the nation's population growth is in low-density areas. This is reflected in the rapid expansion of sprawling cities such as Houston, Austin, Phoenix, and Dallas, and in the continued development of less concentrated neighborhoods at the edges of newer metropolises and in towns outside them. Simply put, gentrification is reshuffling populations in the urban core of cities such as New York and Washington, but it offers few answers to the question of where to place the country's still growing numbers of people.

However, Kotkin goes beyond this observation to an even more dramatic proposal. What urbanists call densification—increasing the numbers of people in a given area—is mostly bad, he suggests. In presenting this view, Kotkin is taking on the ideas of Jane Jacobs, doubtless America's most influential writer about civic life. While Kotkin never makes the point directly, he is identifying a fundamental conflict in her writings. Although Jacobs heralded the variety and richness of life that arises from neighborhoods with concentrations of people, the places she presented as models, such as the section of Greenwich Village in which she herself lived or the North End of Boston, were actually low-rise areas, stretches with few tall buildings. Hence, those of her followers who are calling for building large new apartment complexes in order to increase population density, in the hopes of wakening a spirit of urban vitality, may not in fact be working toward Jacobs's vision or her aims.

In rendering his arguments, Kotkin is also making a frontal assault on the ideas of Richard Florida, the promoter of the notion that a "creative class" of young, single artists and intellectuals can turn hipster enclaves into engines of economic activity that will provide upward mobility for the poor living alongside them. As even Florida himself has been forced to admit, this simply isn't happening. The principal beneficiaries of the relocation of technology, fashion, and media companies into urban centers are the people employed by these firms—mostly recent college graduates.

One serious criticism that may be leveled at Kotkin is that he fails to examine the possibility that some of his data on low urban birth rates might reflect selection bias. Is it that people living above Times Square don't feel comfortable having and raising children with mobs of tourists milling about beneath them, or are they living there because they have no

Mr. Leaf is a playwright and journalist in New York City.

ALLAN BAXTER/GETTY IMAGES

interest in rowdy tykes in the first place? This is a difficult problem to tease out, but Kotkin points out that suburban child-rearers and urban non-child-rearers are often the same people at different stages in their lives. Last year's bearded singleton with a nose ring may be next year's suburbanite with a mortgage and a two-car garage. For all the talk of couples' staying in trendy neighborhoods such as Brooklyn's Ditmas Park and raising children there, Census Bureau figures continue to show a pattern of parents' migrating away from the centers of cities to bedroom communities.

Still, Kotkin presents such a mountain of data on birth rates in different countries and locales that at some point it becomes hard to avoid his basic conclusion: Life in densely populated urban environments really does discourage couples from starting families or from having more children. And while rabid environmentalists may see this as a welcome outcome, the rest of us cannot but regard the pattern as a profound economic, social, and demographic peril. Who will pay for the costs of an aging population? Who will care for retirees? A society that encourages its people to live in neighborhoods where they won't reproduce is obviously going to have trouble meeting its future needs.

One of Kotkin's most intriguing arguments follows from his field research in East Asia. Emigrants are eager to flee many of its richest, most technologically advanced cities. One in ten people in Hong Kong and Singapore are emigrating, and half say they would if they could. Kotkin believes the principal cause is the desire to start families. As evidence, he cites polls showing that 45 percent of couples in these cities say that, because of the cost of living, they can't do that over there. Kotkin then associates these data with an interesting shift. Where once almost three-quarters of immigrants to the U.S. moved to cities, census data show that two-fifths of non-citizen immigrants are now moving directly to the suburbs.

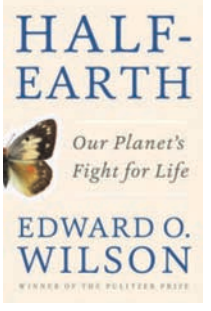
It's long been known among demographers that rural folk have higher birth rates. Perhaps this is because humans are unlike most other animals: We desire privacy in our moments of intimacy, and the sense of being surrounded by others simply isn't conducive to reproduction. And one might go beyond this belief to a more general one: The "densification" of the mass media in places void of children is grossly distorting our news coverage. One wonders: If CBS and ABC News were not headquartered on New York's Upper West Side, but rather in a leafy suburb like Armonk, would they still think that transgender bathrooms were a crucial issue? Might they have greater concern for road maintenance and less preoccupation with calls for higher gasoline taxes?

Such questions and avenues for discussion lead Kotkin and his readers to a final irony. The present intellectual preference in academia for dense cities comes at a time when the low supply and consequent high prices of apartments in fashionable central-city locations has led to homogeneity within them: Banana Republics boxed in next to Victoria's Secrets set cattycorner to H&Ms. In short, the very thing that was traditionally presented as an argument against the suburbs now afflicts many of the hipster havens. Yet this shift is taking place even as changes in technology make our choices in friends and in entertainment unrelated to where we live.

Kotkin has a lot to say, and it demands a hearing. Wholesale reassessment of the role of our cities and the areas around them is long overdue. NR

God's Plenty

MARIO LOYOLA



Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life, by Edward O. Wilson (Liveright, 272 pp., $25.95)

"If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity," wrote Saint Francis of Assisi, "you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men." The Golden Rule, it turns out, has a naturalist sequitur. We can call it "biophilia," the term coined by the zoologist Edward O. Wilson to describe the love of all living things.

Biophilia, and the wonders of creatures great and small, inspired Wilson from an early age. It led him to become, while still quite young, the world's leading authority on ants: It was he who discovered that ants communicate by leaving pheromone trails for one another; and he went on to discover more than 3 percent of all known ant species. Now, 60 years after he started teaching at Harvard, Wilson is one of the most influential scientists of modern times.

Wilson first became famous, even notorious, for an idea that was widely seen as a frontal assault on any sort of spirituality or humanism. In the 1970s, he introduced the term "sociobiology" to describe the study of the biological basis of social behavior, including traits such as altruism and the brother–sister incest taboo, all of which, he said, could be explained by population genetics. In *The Insect Societies* (1971), Wilson demonstrated that many aspects of social behavior among insects were a product of "kin selection," a concept he

later expanded to "group selection." In *Sociobiology* (1975), he extended the study to all social species, including humankind. The book caused a firestorm, starting with his fellow faculty members at Harvard. One implication, inferred by critics more than implied by Wilson, was that social inequality might sometimes be deterministic and biological in origin, a notion that struck many as a virulent new kind of racism.

But Wilson never claimed to have discovered the biological basis of *all* social behavior, much less that social inequality was a biological phenomenon. In animals without culture or learning, such as ants, all social behavior is biological. But in humans, among whom culture is dominant and behaviors are learned, only the most primitive instincts are explainable in terms of population genetics. That was the subject of Wilson's marvelous *On Human Nature* (1979), for which he won the first of two Pulitzer Prizes.

Wilson's increasingly pronounced biophilia led him eventually to focus on man's threat to the diversity of species on Earth. That is the subject of his latest book.

Since multicellular life forms first appeared on this planet 650 million years ago, there have been six "mass extinction" events, in which a large fraction of species were wiped out, and the current one is our doing. Like the meteor that wiped out the remaining dinosaurs 65 million years ago, modern civilization has devastated large swathes of the natural habitat on which most species depend, and fragmented much of the rest, which is nearly as bad.

Conservative estimates put the potential loss by 2050 at 20 percent of all land species; other estimates are far higher. Large fractions of all vertebrate phyla—which include birds and mammals—now face extinction because of habitat loss and fragmentation. Humans have already driven thousands of species to extinction, including the vast majority of megafauna (animals weighing more than 10 kilograms) that existed at the end of the last ice age. Many of the largest prehistoric mammals of North America, such as woolly mammoths and saber-toothed tigers, were driven to extinction by prehistoric man. More recently, man's colonization of the Pacific Islands alone wiped out about 10 percent of all the planet's bird species.

Not long ago, the rainforests of southeast Asia teemed with millions of smallish single-horned Java rhinos. Alas, the Java rhino was on land that humans needed for expansion, and the rhino's horn is highly prized in Chinese medicine, which leads to rapacious poaching; the species is down to one small population of maybe 50 individuals, ensconced in a small national park at the water's edge in Indonesia. "A tsunami or determined band of poachers," writes Wilson, "can take out the species in a single strike."

Wilson proposes to set aside half the world as a nature preserve, a ratio he arrives at by observing that if you can preserve 50 percent of a particular habitat, you can typically save 90 percent of the species that are unique to it. But where other environmentalists call for a world government to bring population and industrialization under control, and invoke familiar socialist boilerplate about how we need to escape the vices of capitalism and profit, Wilson is silent on precisely how we should implement his vision. In fact, he puts enormous stock in genetically modified foods (a big taboo for typical environmentalists) because their potential to feed many more people from the same land area means that we won't need as much land.

By the end of the book, the reader is anxiously awaiting the punchline: How are we going to get to a "Half-Earth" preserve? But, in the book's final pages, Wilson veers instead into an excursion on the possibilities of artificial intelligence and virtual reality—which might enable us to experience the limitless possibilities of nature while reducing humanity's footprint and energy consumption. We would be able to enjoy waterfalls without mucking them up, or even touching them at all.

The current mass extinction raises difficult questions that have thus far eluded good answers. Punishing landowners who happen to host endangered species on their property, as the Endangered Species Act does, is clearly the wrong answer, because it imposes a cost on a small number of people when it should be borne by society as a whole, and creates a huge incentive to make endangered species on your property disappear before they are discovered.

But if progressives have the wrong answer to this problem, conservatives have no answer at all. The animus on the right against such organizations as the Sierra Club is a natural product of these groups' often far-left politics. But purchasing critical habitat, as such organizations were created to do, is far more promising than punishing its owners.

The most important question raised by *Half-Earth* is: Why should we care? The purely utilitarian answer is both unsatisfying and speculative: The biosphere is very fragile, and tipping points could bring much of the ecology on which we vitally depend crashing down, but we will probably colonize other planets long before Earth becomes barren.

Wilson stresses the moral obligation to love all creatures, but as he himself noted in *Sociobiology*, the "hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain . . . flood our consciousness with all the emotions—hate, love, guilt, fear, and others—that are consulted by ethical philosophers who wish to intuit the standards of good and evil."

In a recent encyclical, Pope Francis offered the best answer, and perhaps the only one. He recalled that his namesake, Saint Francis, found God in all living things: "For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary gardens always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty." NR

The most important question raised by *Half-Earth* is: Why should we care about the biosphere? The purely utilitarian answer is both unsatisfying and speculative.

Film

To Not-So-Boldly Go

ROSS DOUTHAT

John Cho, Anton Yelchin, Karl Urban, Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, and Simon Pegg in Star Trek Beyond

KIMBERLEY FRENCH/2016 PARAMOUNT PICTURES

THE original *Star Trek* movies, the ones with Shatner and Nimoy and the rest of the '60s cast, were distinguished by their straightforwardly descriptive titles. If you went into *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, you knew you were going to get a movie about a vengeful guy named Khan. *The Search for Spock*? Self-explanatory. *The Voyage Home*? No surprise that it was set on Planet Earth. The last two were more metaphorical, but they had clear referents in the specifics of the plot—*The Final Frontier* described the quest for God; *The Undiscovered Country* was the promise of Federation–Klingon peace.

The titles in the new, rebooted *Trek* franchise, whose third installment bowed into theaters this month, are not nearly so pellucid. The last one was called "Star Trek into Darkness" (no colon, note); its sequel is called "Star Trek Beyond." Both titles are portentous, and both are empty. The only "darkness" in *Into Darkness* is conventional villainy, the only "beyond" in the newest installment is just a normal outside-Federation-territory venture by the *Enterprise*, and honestly you could have switched the titles without anybody noticing.

"The vaguer the title, the weaker the plot" isn't an ironclad rule, but it isn't a bad assumption. If you know exactly what you're doing with a story, you'll feel more comfortable distilling it; if you don't, you'll want to hide behind something vague or car-commercial-esque. ("The Nissan Pathfinder: Go *Beyond*.")

And the stories in the new *Trek* movies fall very much into the latter category. *Into Darkness* was a dog's dinner—a J. J. Abrams special, all plot twists and no plot, which wasted *Trek*'s most famous villain (the wrathful one) on a plot that didn't make a lick of sense. *Beyond*, helmed by Justin Lin of the *Fast and Furious* franchise, is better but only by comparison: It tries to meld the themes and structure of a classic *Trek* episode with the arc that's required of every FX blockbuster these days, and the shotgun marriage is a botch.

We begin with James T. Kirk (Chris Pine) having—well, not a midlife crisis, surely, since he's just turning 35 and presumably life expectancy is a little longer three centuries in the future. But he's got ennui, at least; partway through his ship's five-year deep-space mission, the eternal silence of those infinite spaces has him longing for terra firma.

Instead he gets the next best thing: shore leave in Yorktown, which is the movie's best use of computer animation, a floating city in space where skyscrapers bristle at impossible angles to one another.

But no sooner has the *Enterprise* docked then help is requested from inside a nearby nebula, where a stranded ship needs rescuing. Of course in reality IT'S A TRAP, sprung by aliens whose swarming spacecraft slice and dice the *Enterprise* and send its saucer spinning down to the planet's surface. There the crew is scattered in pairs: Bones (Karl Urban) with a wounded Spock (Zachary Quinto), Kirk with Chekov (the late Anton Yelchin), Sulu (John Cho) with Uhura (Zoe Saldana), and Scotty (Simon Pegg) with a tough-but-sexy alien, Jaylah (Sofia Boutella), who help fills him in on the nature of their common enemy.

His name is Krall (Idris Elba, sadly unrecognizable beneath prostheses), and he wants an artifact their ship collected recently to complete his superweapon, with which he intends to undo galactic peace. That undoing is Krall's only plan and purpose: He believes that all good things emerge from strife and struggle, and that a weak piping time of peace is a tragic waste of the human race's Nietzschean potential.

This is not the most original setup—it steals Kirk's ennui from *The Wrath of Khan*, the saucer crash from the Kirk–Picard hybrid *Generations*, the rejection of peace from *The Undiscovered Country*, and so forth. But it is recognizably *Trek*-ian, pitting Gene Roddenberry's 1960s utopianism, his vision of interracial and interspecies progress and cooperation, against a foe who basically hates Starfleet's End of History and wants to bring the old days back.

But in a TV episode (especially on *The Next Generation*, the longest-running of the shows), this kind of conflict would usually end up resolved peacefully, through some brilliant maneuver or personal appeal. In the older movies, there were more explosions but the climaxes were still somehow intimate—Kirk versus Khan, the *Enterprise* versus a Klingon Bird of Prey, a foiled assassination attempt, or a special delivery of whales.

Here, though, the inexorable logic of the blockbuster takes over. Krall gets his superweapon and turns it against Yorktown's teeming millions, only the *Enterprise* can stop him from Destroying the (artificially created) World, and what happens next will be totally predictable to anyone who's seen *Guardians of the Galaxy* or *The Force Awakens* or any other recent sci-fi or superhero movie . . .

. . . including, of course, the last two *Trek* movies, the first of which blew up Spock's home planet, Vulcan, and threatened to do the same to Earth; the second of which leveled a big chunk of San Francisco.

Going to that world-destroying well yet again makes the Roddenberryesque theme seem a little ridiculous. On the evidence we have, Krall *isn't* actually threatening a galaxy at peace. Instead, he's threatening a Federation that seems totally in denial about its own vulnerabilities, that suffers the equivalent of 9/11 plus Hiroshima every few years but still doesn't bother to give its huge, expensive, densely populated space station adequate military protection.

Give me *Star Trek: The Search for a Sustained Defense Build-Up* next, though, and all will be forgiven. NR

Happy Warrior

BY HEATHER WILHELM

Trump Tourism in Hillary Country

Deep in the heart of a deep-blue city, hugging a bright-green river, there rises a massive, gleaming hotel that bears the name of Trump. The letters, which spell out the Donald's last name, stand an almost comical 20 feet high, forming a gloriously tacky belt on an otherwise good-looking skyscraper. The city is Chicago, that great midwestern sprawl of big shoulders, fevered Democrats, and a cluster of architecture buffs forever peeved at what one prominent critic called "Trump's self-inflicted urban acne."

Twenty sixteen is full of ironies, and so it is that I, a decidedly non-Trumpian Republican, came to stay at this decidedly Trumpian fortress during the week of the Democratic National Convention. True story: Within approximately two minutes of our entry into the building's soaring lobby, the good people at the Trump International Hotel and Tower Chicago gave each of my children a hat.

Good heavens. How did I let this happen? The journey began last year, on an earlier Chicago trip, when one of my aforementioned children literally fell through the floor of a shady discount condo rental procured through Airbnb. While my son was downright delighted with this development—"Mommy," he declared, wide-eyed, one leg submerged in a rogue air vent haphazardly covered with something resembling tin foil, "this apartment has SECRET PASSAGES!"—I was not.

And so, for our next trip, I swung the other way, finding a quasi-acceptable deal on a Trump hotel suite that I assumed (correctly, it turns out) would have no holes in the floor. I promptly booked it, about a year before the hotel's blustery namesake would snag the GOP nomination for president. The Trump phenomenon, in other words, was barely a twinkle in the mischievous universe's eye.

To be fair, the Trump hotel's hats were gray, not red, and they said "Trump International Hotel and Tower," not "Make America Great Again." My oldest son, who is growing impressively proficient at subtle forms of torture, promptly donned his hat, beaming. "Hey, Trump can't be all bad," he said, tromping into our admittedly very nice room. Trump Chicago is not the infamous Trump Taj Mahal, which for years was reportedly held together by a few strands of twine hastily gathered from the seediest corners of the Jersey Shore. In fact, my stay at the Trump Chicago was largely enjoyable.

One night, the staff left us a giant bowl of caramel and cheese popcorn, and I grudgingly ate it all. I heroically managed to stop anyone in our party from opening the room's bottle of "Bling H_2O," which came in a promiscuously bedazzled bottle and likely cost $565.95. The only mishap came when the room's hair dryer, a machine that apparently had a good sense of humor, suddenly stopped blowing hot air.

"You're either staying at a Trump, or in the shadow of one," the Trump Chicago website booms. On a rainy Wednesday, I found myself in the shadow of a giant gray Trump International Hotel and Tower umbrella, which, as you might imagine, makes for an awkward accessory in downtown Chicago. I shuffled down Michigan Avenue, sheepish, trying to decide the best way to hide the Trump logo. Twirled to the front? Twisted to the back? Alas. Every few blocks, I heard various mutters of "Hillary!" A homeless man, busy shouting something terrifying about vaccines, paused to give me a dirty look.

But it is a strange animal, this surging American political polarization. The next night I took in a show at the Second City, the famed Chicago comedy house that for decades has served as a pit stop on the way to outlets such as *Saturday Night Live*. If anyone from the Donald Trump campaign is reading this, I have some unusual advice: You could do worse than to send a busload of on-the-fence Republicans to a show at the Second City.

There are three types of leftists in this world: the happy leftists, the melancholy leftists, and the angry leftists. This third group is unquestionably The Worst—and unfortunately, it also dominated the stage during my time at Second City. There were huffy jokes about abortion, surly jokes about Christians, haughty jokes about Texas, jokes I couldn't repeat without at least three NC-17 ratings, and, of course, various perfunctory and self-congratulatory jokes about Donald Trump.

The smugness would have been fine, really, if the ideas behind it had been fresh, not moldy progressive tropes. It also would have been fine if the cast had exhibited even the tiniest sliver of good-humored recognition that maybe, just maybe, Hillary Clinton is terrible, too, the political equivalent of a charred-fire-ant sandwich served with a vat of long-expired Jalapeño Cheddar Bugles dangled over one of those dramatic Indiana Jones booby-trap snake pits. Sadly, this did not happen. Maybe they forgot that part of the show. Hey, at least they served wine.

Two friends from Texas joined us in Chicago, and they were lucky enough to miss the show at Second City. They did not, however, miss one particularly long and painful Uber ride piloted by a passionate Hillary Clinton supporter. As we rolled along, the radio blasted the harsh-edged, quietly desperate strains of the former secretary of state's perfunctory DNC speech. "She's going to be president!" our driver crowed, turning the volume up.

Outside the car, the 20-foot TRUMP sign loomed. Inside the car, Hillary droned. "I've got to get back to Texas," one friend whispered. Up in the front seat, our other friend was quietly cracking—and at the next intersection, he suddenly leapt out of the car. He ran across the street, arms thrown back into the night air. It was glorious. He was free. For a moment, we were all free. NR

Heather Wilhelm is a NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE *columnist and a senior contributor to the* Federalist.

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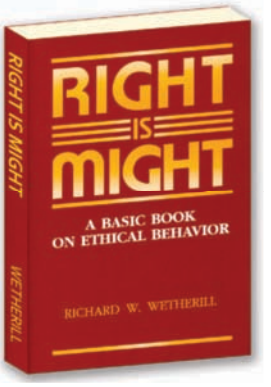

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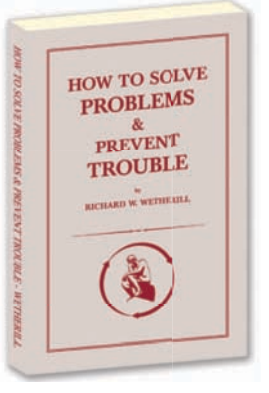

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