Making Mitt
RON UNZ

Policing the Mideast
WILLIAM W. CHIP

Age of Hayek
MARK SKOUSEN

Stephen King's Past
MARIAN COOMBS

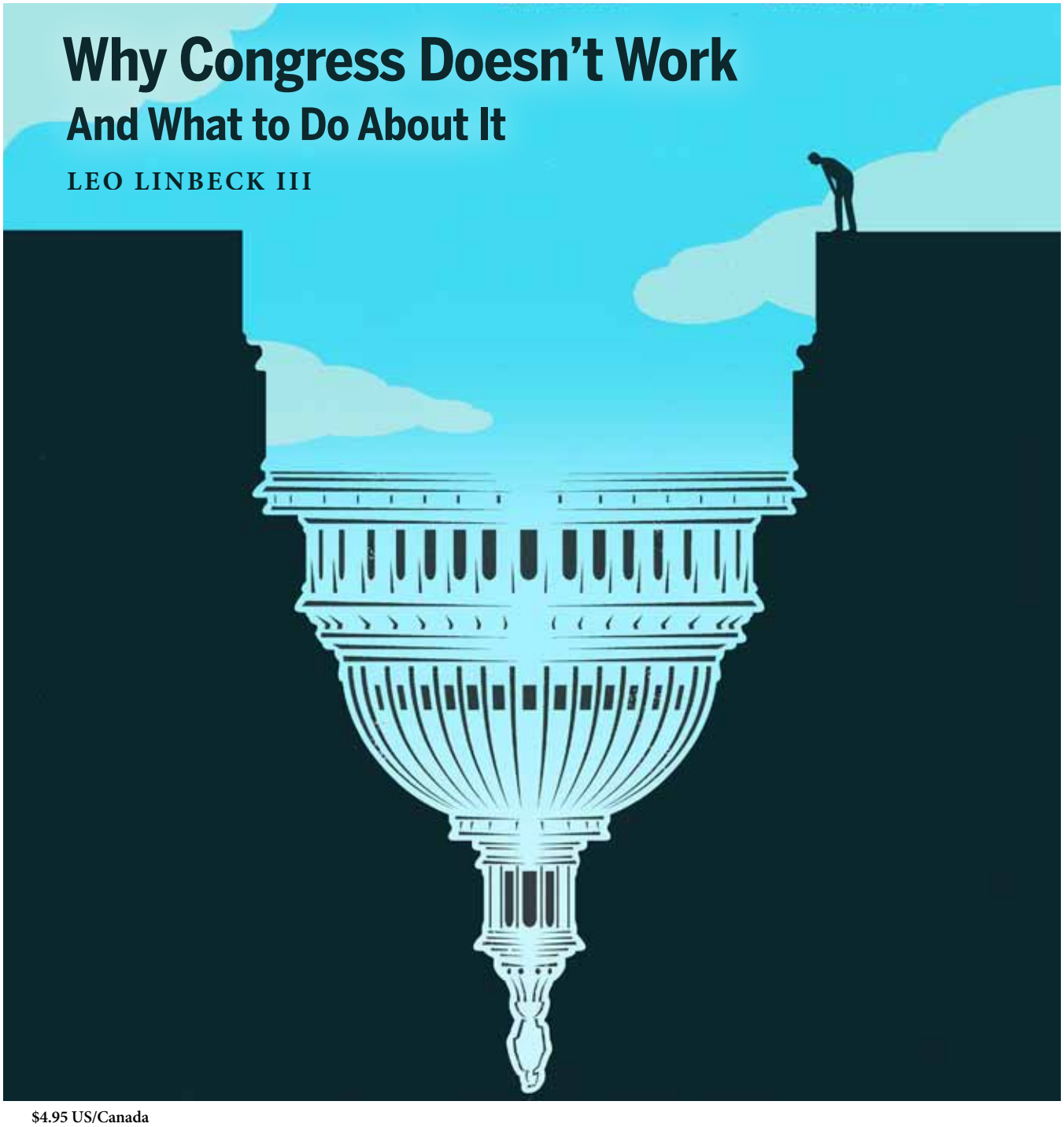
JULY 2012

The American Conservative

IDEAS OVER IDEOLOGY • PRINCIPLES OVER PARTY

Why Congress Doesn't Work
And What to Do About It

LEO LINBECK III



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There is one aspect of life that unites, controls, and affects all people.

That one aspect is life's natural laws. They ***unite***, ***control*** and ***affect*** people no matter what their race, gender, creed, or where on this planet they live.

If you are a new reader of this subject matter, be prepared for a pleasant shock.

Whoever or whatever is the creator revealed ***nature's law of right action*** to the mind of Richard W. Wetherill decades ago. ***The law calls for people to be rational and honest not only regarding laws of physics but also in their thinking and behavior toward one another.***

Wetherill also cautioned that the law, itself, is the final arbiter of right action. It states: ***Right action gets right results*** whether it relates to laws of physics or to the law of behavior.

Ordinarily people unknowingly have been conducting their relationships to satisfy *their* purposes; not the purposes of the creator of natural laws. Such behavior explains why the earth's population has never been peacefully ***united*** and ***controlled*** nor favorably ***affected***.

Do people intentionally refuse to meet the requirements of laws of physics: gravity for instance? No, they try their best to keep their balance or safely recover it whenever necessary.

Scriptures record the first wrong action of the created beings was their disobedience. It ended the perfect situation that had existed and resulted in the predicted penalties. More shockingly the admonition to obey ended with the creator's words, "or you will surely die." Whether that account is actual or symbolic, it describes ancient people's misbehavior still continuing today.

Obeying nature's law of right action unites people, giving them the benefits that then control and favorably affect their lives, nullifying that final admonition, "or you will surely die."

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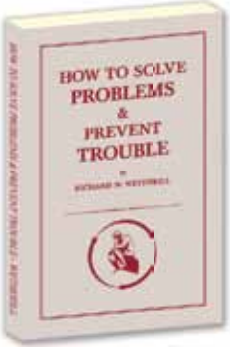
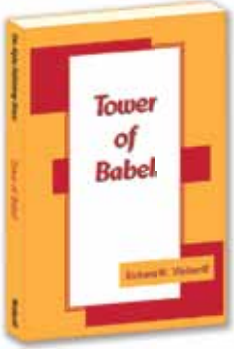
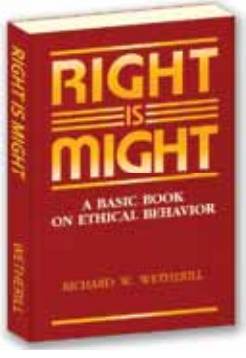
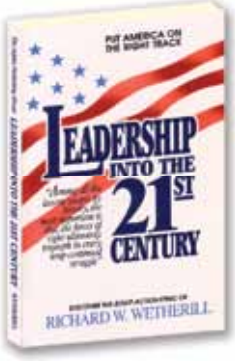
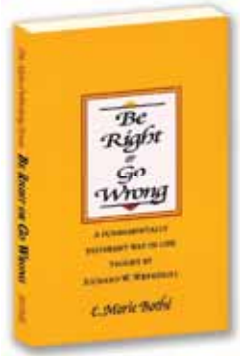
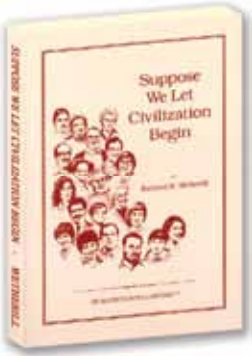


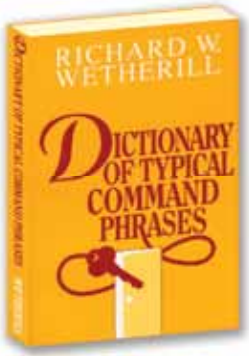






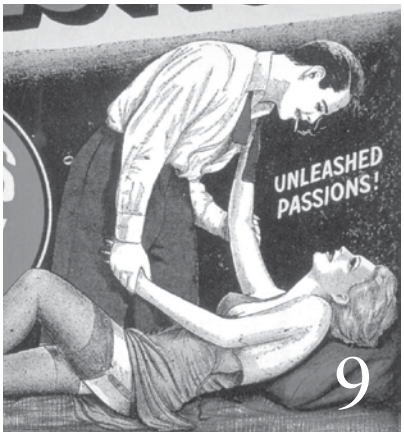






This Month

Vol. 11, No. 7, JULY 2012



COVER ILLUSTRATION: *Michael Hogue*

Letters

FOR JUDAISM, AGAINST ZIONISM

I read with interest Paul Gottfried's review of *Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism* by Jack Ross ("Jews Against Israel," May 2012). The headline is misleading: Rabbi Berger, a long-time leader of the American Council for Judaism and for many years America's most prominent Jewish critic of Zionism, was not "against Israel." Instead, he rejected the Zionist philosophy, which holds that Jews are an ethnic group whose "homeland" is Israel and those living outside of that state are "in exile."

Gottfried expresses the view that Zionism has won in this debate and that it now represents American Jewish opinion. He also says that the Zionist view of the nature of Judaism and Jewish identity is, somehow, more "authentic" than that expressed by its critics. There is, in fact, a silent majority of American Jews who reject the idea that they are "in exile" in America. This was the predominant view of American Reform Judaism from its inception.

Prior to the mid-20th century, the overwhelming majority of all Jews rejected Zionism. In 1929, Orthodox Rabbi Aaron Samuel Tamarat wrote that the very notion of a sovereign Jewish state as a spiritual center was a "contradiction to Judaism's ultimate purpose."

"Judaism at root is not some religious concentration which can be localized or situated in a single territory," he wrote. "Neither is Judaism a 'nationality' in the sense of modern nationalism, fit to be woven into the three-foldedness of 'homeland, army and heroic songs.' No, Judaism is Torah, ethics and exaltation of spirit. If Judaism is truly Torah, then it cannot be reduced to the confines of any particular territory. For as Scripture said of Torah, 'Its measure is greater than the earth.'"

For more than 60 years, the American Council for Judaism has proclaimed that Judaism is centered on the worship of God, not the idolatry of any political entity. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly called upon American Jews to make a "mass aliya" (immigration) to Israel. While we wish Israel well and hope for lasting peace in the Middle East, we believe that Israel should content itself with being the government of its own citizens.

The reality of Jewish tradition and the views of the majority of Americans of Jewish faith is far more complex than Gottfried indicates. Elmer Berger did not "lose" a battle over the nature of Jewish identity. The widespread debate within the American Jewish community over what author Peter Beinart has described as "the crisis of Zionism" indicates that this debate is still very much with us. It may be eternal. In the end, the question is not who "won" or "lost," but either who is right or wrong or which view of the Jewish tradition one wishes to embrace. Elmer Berger represented the prophetic Jewish tradition and rejected those who would transform Judaism into a form of tribalism. It is our view that his values still represent the views of a silent majority of American Jews.

ALLAN C. BROWNFELD
Publications Editor, American Council for Judaism
Alexandria, Va.

VIVA TAKI

Please be informed how much I look forward to reading the columns by Mr. Taki Theodoracopulos. They always put a smile on my face.

ERIK THORP
Warwick, RI

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Rule of Happiness

What is "the pursuit of happiness?" When Thomas Jefferson added the phrase to the Declaration of Independence, he posed a mystery to later generations. Egalitarians have seized upon his words to justify wealth redistribution—by omitting the more conventional right to property from the Declaration's triad, they reason, Jefferson must have been underscoring an alternative.

There are likelier explanations. For one, the Declaration's author fought hard for the abolition of entail in Virginia, and entailed estates are precisely property that cannot be alienated. An unalienable right to property is not the same thing as unalienable property itself, but why risk a misunderstanding?

That doesn't clear up what the pursuit of happiness is, however. Whether he intended to do so or not, Jefferson in fact hit on a characteristic quality of self-government: it makes people happier, at least according to recent studies from Switzerland.

Writing in *The Spectator* last November, British journalist James Bartholomew called attention to the work of Bruno Frey at the University of Zurich. Frey found that the degree of local democracy in Swiss cantons correlated with the happiness of each canton's citizens. "The canton of Basel Land, which is near but does not include the city of Basel, had the highest democracy rating of 5.69 out of six," Bartholomew wrote. "It was notably happier than the Canton of Geneva, which has the lowest democracy rating of only 1.75." (Geneva, of course, home to the United Nations, is in some respects as much a part of the "international community" as it is of Switzerland.)

Frey's work controlled for age, income, and other variables, and while unemployment was the factor with the biggest impact on happiness, democracy had as measurable a positive effect as moving up one income bracket—and the effect seemed to apply to everyone, men and women, young and old, of all classes.

The most interesting finding to come from Frey's research was why local democracy adds to the sum of happiness. It was not a case, Bartholomew noted, of getting "a better government, or one more in accordance with your views," but rather "that you gain a sense of well-being from the fact that you have the capacity to influence events"—even if you don't vote or otherwise use that capacity. For that reason, the "democracy" in question had to be local and direct; "Professor Frey found that local autonomy made people a bit happier, too."

Democracy is a word apt to cause confusion. Switzerland is a confederation of small, highly self-governing cantons. It resembles, loosely, the United States under the Articles of Confederation or early on under the Constitution, when most decision-making was still small-scale and local. This localism was in large part what the American Revolution was fought to preserve—against policy dictated from London.

If effective local self-government makes people happy, perhaps it isn't surprising that today the loss of self-government has translated into a politics of rage and frustration. The illusion of self-government maintained by an unrepresentative Congress and an executive branch that poses as avatar of the nation only salts the wound, causing Americans to wonder what "vast right-wing conspiracy" or insidious, unpatriotic influences in media and the academy could have robbed us of our republic. The loss of self-government drives identity politics, too, as tribal membership rushes to fill the vacuum of citizen self-responsibility.

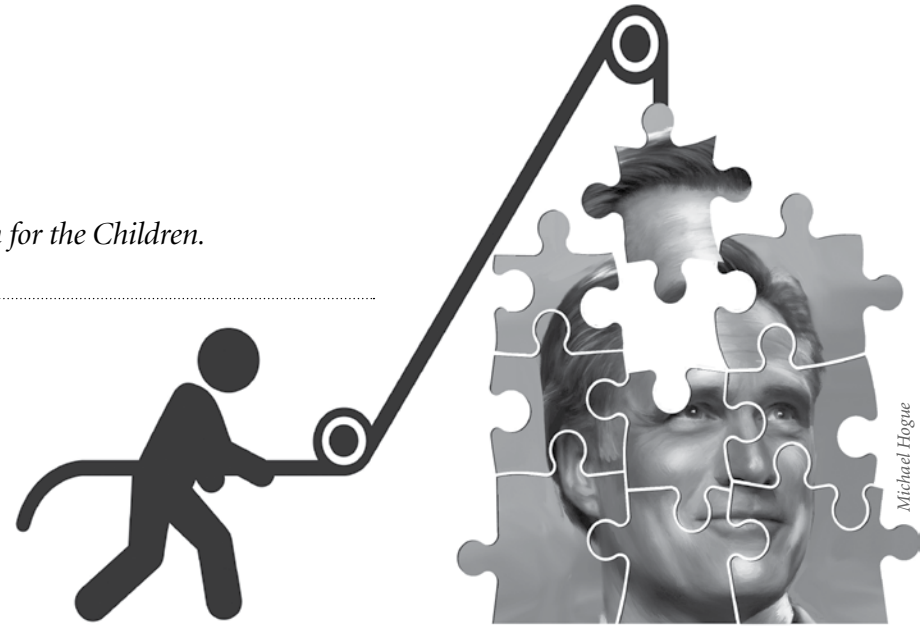
In the presidential season, when these emotions are heightened and hitched to competing demagogues, it's worth remembering the Swiss example—and the example of our own revolution. ■

Front Lines

How I Made Mitt

Romney owes his only win to English for the Children.

by RON UNZ



Michael Hogue

With Mitt Romney now the de facto Republican presidential nominee, I sometimes recall how I inadvertently launched his political career a decade ago, which is less implausible than it might sound.

Unlike the vast majority of previous major-party presidential candidates, Romney has a remarkably slender record of election victories, having previously won just a single race, his 2002 election as governor of Massachusetts.

In 1994, he had taken a break from his long and highly successful career in private equity to challenge Sen. Edward Kennedy's reelection. Although he then positioned himself as a very liberal Republican and even attempted to outflank Kennedy to the left on some issues, Massachusetts was a heavily Democratic state and Kennedy was its leading political icon. Romney suffered a landslide defeat, losing by 17 points to his famous opponent despite a huge national Republican tide.

After this drubbing, Romney eventually recouped his political fortunes by serving as appointed president of the organizing committee for the 2000 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. He was widely credited with having provided the organizational skills that rescued the event from looming calamity.

This prestigious success led Romney to make another stab at winning political office, and he entered the 2002 Republican primary for Massachusetts governor. Since I was then running an "English for the Children of Massachusetts" ballot-initiative campaign to dismantle bilingual education, I closely followed the political developments of that year.

Romney's initial opponent was Acting Governor Jane Swift, a very moderate Republican who had been elected lieutenant governor in 1998 and succeeded to her office upon the resignation of Governor Paul Cellucci, whom President Bill Clinton had appointed U.S. ambassador to Canada. Governor Swift was widely viewed as weak and ineffectual, and Romney, buoyed by his Olympic success and his vast personal fortune, soon attracted such overwhelming support among local Republican leaders that Swift dropped out of the race.

Under Massachusetts law, candidates for governor and lieutenant governor run as a single ticket but are each chosen separately in their party primaries. Therefore, since Romney had pushed a female Republican incumbent governor out of his race, and his general-election opponent seemed likely to be another woman, popular State Treasurer Shannon O'Brien, he sought to gender-balance his ticket by selecting a female running mate. Only 15 percent of registered Massachusetts voters were Republican, so the party's talent pool was minuscule, and he selected Kerry Healey—a somewhat obscure local GOP activist who had never held political office—persuading her to enter the primary for the second slot.

She was quickly challenged by Jim Rappaport, a wealthy Republican leader who hoped to win the primary by running sharply to her right. Thus, although Romney was unopposed for the Republican nomination, there en-

sued a bitter battle for the second slot between the Rappaport forces and the Romney forces, backing Healey.

At this point, my own campaign entered the equation. I had successfully qualified our measure as Question Two for the November ballot, and its requirement that all immigrant children be taught English as soon as they started school had begun attracting heavy coverage in the local media, proving to be wildly popular among more conservative voters. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the state's Democratic political establishment declared their opposition to the measure. Since Romney was positioning himself for the general election, he soon did the same.

Romney's opposition concerned me, since unified Democratic and Republican attacks on our initiative might endanger its passage in November. Therefore, I quickly reached out to Rappaport, and with "English" having perhaps 90 percent support among Republicans, he immediately endorsed our Question Two, hoping to use the issue as a weapon against Healey in the primary.

Just as I had hoped, Romney soon decided that Healey needed to protect herself by also endorsing the measure, which forced him to avoid an embarrassing split in the ranks by reversing his previous position and doing the same. Partly as a result, Healey soon won an overwhelming victory in her primary race, and the political lines were set for November.

As it turned out, Romney's decision was a fateful one. The *Boston Globe* and other media outlets soon noted that on almost every other major issue, his positions were identical to those of his Democratic opponent, O'Brien. Only support for English in the schools separated the two candidates.

When rival candidates have identical positions, campaigns often become unappealing slugfests, and that was the case throughout most of the 2002 gubernatorial race in Massachusetts. Romney bludgeoned O'Brien as a lifelong career politician who was part of a corrupt party machine, while O'Brien denounced Romney as a greedy, carpet-bagging Wall Street takeover artist—both charges being backed by millions of dollars of television attack ads.

As the election grew near, however, the hot-button question of whether or not all public schools should teach their students English exploded into public awareness, becoming far and away the biggest issue of the election, without a single dollar of advertising having been spent on its behalf. When reporters from the *Globe* and other newspapers went out and interviewed ordinary voters, many of them didn't much know or care about the candidates running for any office, including governor, but almost everyone was talking about "English" and most were overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Finally, Romney's people noticed this and decided to hitch a ride on the issue, so for the last few weeks of the campaign his advertising focused on the fact that he supported "English" while his Democratic rival opposed it.

Then, on Election Day, our measure won by over 32 points, perhaps the largest landslide of any contested initiative in modern Massachusetts history, while Romney scraped across the finish line with 49.8 percent of the vote. And that's how Romney won his first and only election victory. ■

Ron Unz, publisher of The American Conservative*, served as chairman of English for the Children, the nationwide campaign to dismantle bilingual education.*

Unfriendly Fire

How the Taliban mastered the operational art of modern war

by WILLIAM S. LIND

The greatest intellectual challenge in Fourth Generation war—war against opponents that are not states—is how to fight it at the operational level. NATO in Afghanistan, like the Soviets three decades ago, has been unable to solve that riddle. But the Taliban appears to have done so.

The operational level of war lies between strategy and tactics. While great commanders have always thought and fought at the operational level, the concept was not formally recognized until the 19th century. As usual, it was the Prussian army that led the way. Some historians think the operational level may have been formalized by Field Marshal von Moltke himself in the Franco-Prussian war as a way to keep Bismarck out of his business. ("Yes, my dear Bismarck, you are in charge of strategy, but you simply must not interfere in operational matters.")

The U.S. Army did not officially recognize the operational level of war until 1982, but the tsarist Russian army and later the Soviets picked up on it. By 1944-45, the Red Army was as competent at what they called "operational art" as the Wehrmacht. That was never true of the Western allies.

The operational level of war lies between strategy and tactics.

The Russian term, operational art, is a good one, because unlike tactics or

strategy it is not a thing but a link. It is the art, not science, of using tactical events, battles and refusals to give battle, victories and sometimes also defeats (from the North Vietnamese perspective, the Tet offensive was a tactical defeat but a decisive operational victory) to strike as directly as possible at the enemy's strategic center. Because it resorts to battle only when and where necessary, operational art is a great economizer of fighting strength—even a battle won eats up soldiers, fuel, equipment, and, most importantly, time.

A brilliant example of its application comes from General Heinz Guderian's XIXth Panzer Corps in the 1940 campaign against France. Guderian led the famous advance through the Ardennes mountains' weakest point, the junction between the strong forces the Germans had pushed forward into Belgium and those manning the Maginot fortifications. After Guderian crossed the Meuse river at Sedan, he faced French forces coming up from the south. He could have stayed there and fought them. Instead, thinking operationally, he held the crossing with minimum force and threw everything he had north toward the English Channel. That collapsed the "hinge" between the French and British forces in Belgium and those in France, winning the campaign in one stroke. France, which by everyone's account had the best army in the world, went down to defeat in six weeks.

The Taliban have found an elegant way to connect strategy and tactics in decentralized modern warfare.

Were war to remain in its Third Generation incarnation, a matter of fast-moving campaigns led by tank armies, the U.S. military might eventually get operational art. But war has moved on: tank armies are now as irrelevant as armies of mounted bowmen. So the question must be asked anew—how do you link tactical events to winning strategically?

The Soviet army focused its best talent on operational art. But in Afghanistan, it failed, just as we have failed. Like the Soviets, we can take and hold any piece of Afghan ground. And doing so brings us, like the Soviets, not one step closer to strategic victory. The Taliban, by contrast, have found an elegant way to connect strategy and tactics in decentralized modern warfare.

What passes for NATO's strategy is to train sufficient Afghan forces to hold off the Taliban once we pull out. The Taliban's response has been to have men in Afghan uniform—many of whom actually are Afghan government soldiers or police—turn their guns on their NATO advisers. That is a fatal blow against our strategy because it makes the training mission impossible. Behold operational art in Fourth Generation war.

According to a May 16 article by Matthew Rosenberg in the *New York Times*, 22 NATO soldiers have been killed so far this year by men in Afghan uniforms, compared to 35 in all of last year. The report went on to describe one incident in detail—detail NATO is anxious to suppress. There were three Afghan attackers, two of whom were Afghan army soldiers. Two Americans were killed. The battle—and it was a battle, not just a drive-by shooting—lasted almost an hour.

What is operationally meaningful was less the incident than its aftermath. The trust that existed between American soldiers and the Afghans they were supposed to train was shattered. Immediately after the episode, the *Times* reported, the Americans instituted new security procedures that alienated their native allies, and while some of these measure were later withdrawn,

> Afghan soldiers still complain of being kept at a distance by the Americans, figuratively and literally. The Americans, for instance, have put up towering concrete barriers to separate their small, plywood command center from the outpost's Afghan encampment.
>
> Also still in place is a rule imposed by the Afghan Army after the attack requiring most of its soldiers to lock up their weapons when on base. The Afghan commanding officer keeps the keys.
>
> One American soldier nonetheless advised a visitor to take an armed escort to the Afghan side of the base, which was about 100 feet away, 'just in case.'

Multiply the aftermath of this incident 22 times since the beginning of the year and it becomes operationally important. Each incident quickly becomes known to all NATO troops in Afghanistan, which spreads the impact. Just a few hundred more such "green on blue" attacks will effectively end our training mission.

The Taliban know this technique is operational, not just tactical. They can be expected to put all their effort into it. What counter do we have? Just order our troops to pretend it is not happening—to keep trusting their Afghan counterparts. That order, if enforced, will put our soldiers in such an untenable position that morale will collapse.

So powerful is this taste of Taliban operational art that Washington may fear the example it sets. During a recent visit by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to Afghanistan, no American soldiers were allowed to get near him with loaded weapons. Might the Pentagon be worried that our own troops could learn from the Taliban? Were I an American soldier who had been told to hand over or unload his weapon before approaching Secretary Panetta, I would certainly have read it that way. ■

William S. Lind is director of the American Conservative Center for Public Transportation.

The Tragedy of Stoner Comedy

For Hollywood, marijuana prohibition is a joke.

by A.G. GANCARSKI

Media outlets didn't need a toxicology report before deciding that Rudy Eugene—the maniac who over Memorial Day weekend chewed off a homeless man's face in Miami before being shot dead by police—had been high on "bath salts." The synthetic drug is America's latest craze, or panic, and now there were grisly images to go with it—what might as well have been scenes from a zombie film.

Drugs are good box office and great ratings on the nightly news and television's endless police procedurals. But the nation's attitude towards some narcotics appears to be mellowing. Fourteen states have effectively decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana, and on June 4 Mayor Bloomberg and the New York Police Department announced plans to follow suit in NYC. As marijuana goes mainstream, its media portrayal has likewise softened. But the soft focus hides a hard reality—not about the drug but about the war to prohibit it.

The first drug-war film of note actually predated the federal prohibition of cannabis by one year. 1936's "Reefer Madness"—which has been, for many years now, obligatory "camp classic" viewing for high-school and college students first discovering the illicit charms of marijuana—was originally released by a church group in reaction to the menace posed by Mary Jane.

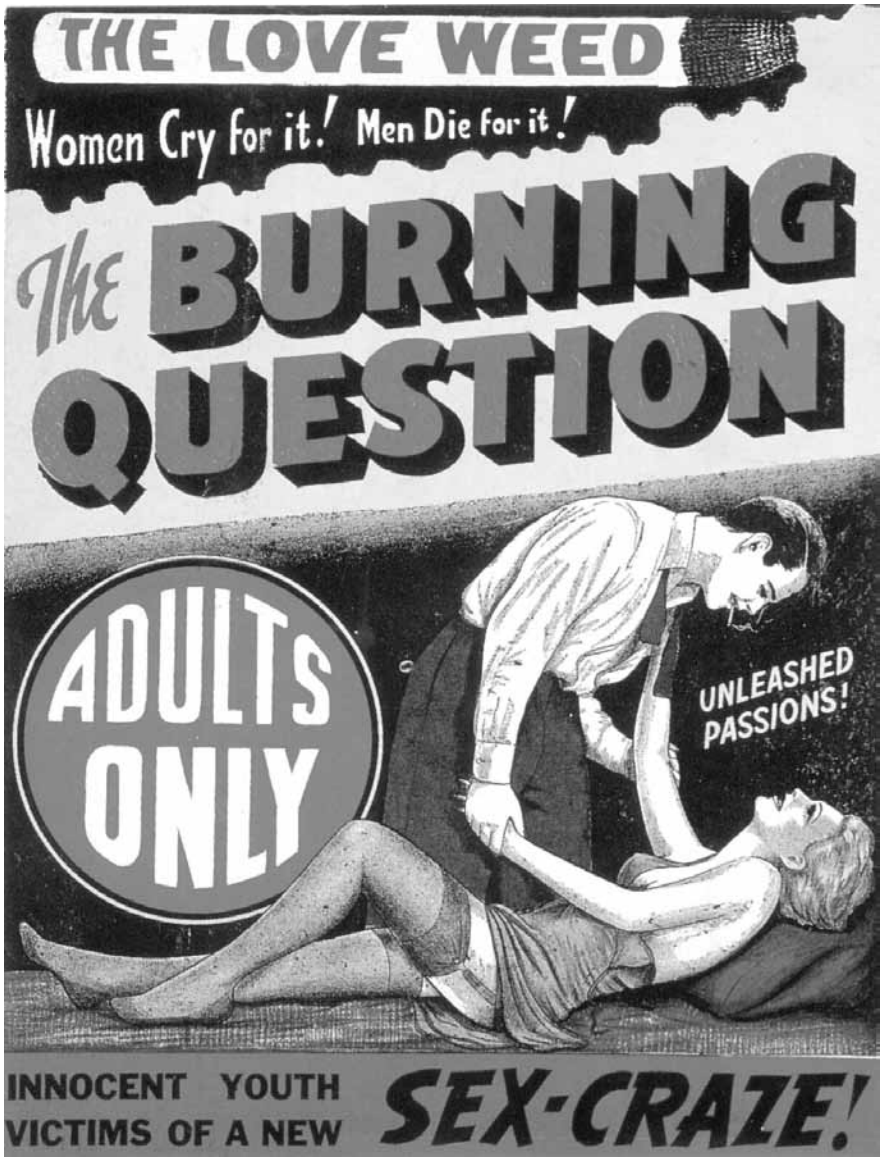
In the film, marijuana transforms seemingly normal, upstanding American youth into maniacs similar to the opium fiends of earlier stereotypes. We see homicide and suicide, sexual assault and generalized insanity. The cannabis of 1936 apparently was so potent that it could destroy society—this at a time when so-called ditch weed prevailed, which decidedly lacked potency compared to today's boutique brands. This trope, so camp in retrospect, nonetheless became central to anti-drug propaganda in the decades ahead.

The 1940s and 1950s saw relatively little in the way of commentary on marijuana, but a shift took place in the late 1960s as the libertine ways of the hippie generation proved problematic. Jack Webb's "Dragnet" television series focused quite often on the myriad evils of narcotics usage—which was never without dire consequence—during its four-season run from 1967 to 1970. Drugs were everywhere: on the strip, where people dropped microtabs of acid and then painted themselves blue; in middle schools, where young pushers did the work of the Fagin-esque masterminds of the marijuana trade; and in middle-class homes, where the sharing of one joint led a young Don and Betty Draper-esque couple to neglect its newborn in a bathtub with a running faucet, where the tot ineluctably drowned.

Jack Webb, a noted jazz aficionado who went so far as to release a couple of albums in that most drug-infused of musical genres, included elements of subtle comedy in his po-faced anti-substance commentaries. But this was nothing compared to what was to come in just a few short years, when Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong released a series of comedies that did for marijuana's acceptance into the mainstream what Amos and Andy did for race relations. Cheech and Chong, in such films as "Nice Dreams and "Still Smokin,'" established a template that has predominated ever since. Their straggly long hair, stoner talk, and constant fiending for the demon weed established the stereotype that prevails, in various permutations, to this day. And as happens when actors embrace caricature roles, both were typecast to such a degree that the stoner aesthetic took over their careers.

Cheech and Chong did for marijuana's acceptance into the mainstream what Amos and Andy did for race relations.

Cheech and Chong influenced everything that came in their wake (and bake). Characters like Sean Penn's Spicoli in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," along with entire films such as "Dazed and Confused" and "Dude, Where's My Car?," offer examples of high-school students who smoke weed and come to be defined by it—ironically, bringing us back full circle



to "Reefer Madness."

These movies had much in common: they took place in majority-white communities and the forbidden herb was consumed with relatively minor consequences beyond the usual cognitive hiccups. This approach to cannabis came to television in "That '70s Show," in which Tommy Chong played a middle-aged hippie treated as harmless, if high, in a manner reflective of the federal detente in the anti-drug offensive during the Carter years. Similarly, "The Big Lebowski," films by the director Kevin Smith, and African-American movies like "How High" and "Friday" reinforce the fuzzy stereotype of the cannabis smoker as an amiable dunce bereft of ambition or agency. (In Quentin Tarantino's drama "Jackie Brown," Samuel L. Jackson's character warns the moll played by Bridget Fonda, "That s--t's gonna rob you of your ambition." She giggles: "Not if your ambition is to get high and watch TV.")

Of late, the stoner comedy has become more realistic. This shift is exemplified by 2008's "Pineapple Express," a James Franco and Seth Rogan vehicle revolving around a process server leaving a joint containing some top-flight herb at the house of a drug dealer—weed the dealer immediately traces back to the smoker and the street-level pusher who supplied him. The movie blended stoner stereotypes and broad humor with blood, gore, and violence. In this, we can see the influence of television drama "The Wire" on the genre.

Undoubtedly, there will be more to come. Greater realism in the portrayal of cannabis users will serve to culturally normalize the illicit activity. But more than likely, the stoner comedies of the future will continue to play up the humor while conveniently overlooking the tragedy at the heart of American marijuana prohibition.

Jails, especially in the South, have many occupants who are there simply for possession of marijuana. With the surge in privatized prisons—some of which have contractual stipulations requiring that occupancy rates not fall below 90 percent—we may well see a political counterforce to the medical-marijuana and decriminalization movements. Then again, perhaps their business plans will refocus on some novel problem: bath salts, maybe.

Whatever the case, there will be no stoner comedy that deals with the harm inflicted on a family when an adult male breadwinner is sent to state prison for what is essentially a victimless crime. Marijuana prohibition has been the gateway to an exponential expansion of the prison-industrial complex, but that's a reality silver-screen fantasies will not touch. As with romantic comedies, which give us a skewed view of love, the stoner genre is riddled with distortions and misrepresentations—a bad trip worthy of the worst directors in Hollywood. ■

A.G. Gancarski writes from Jacksonville, Florida.

Stay Out of Syria

In pushing for U.S. military intervention in Syria—arming the insurgents and using U.S. air power to "create safe zones" for anti-regime forces "inside Syria's borders"—the *Washington Post* invokes "vital U.S. interests" that are somehow imperiled there.

For 40 years, we have lived with a Damascus regime led by either Bashar Assad or his father, Hafez Assad. Were our "vital interests" in peril all four decades?

In 1991, George H.W. Bush recruited the elder Assad into his Desert Storm coalition that liberated Kuwait. Damascus sent 4,000 troops. In gratitude, we hosted a Madrid Conference to advance a land-for-peace deal between Assad and Israel.

It failed, but it could have meant a return of the Golan Heights to Assad and Syria's return to the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee.

We could live with that, but cannot live with Bashar?

Comes the reply: the reason is the Houla massacre, where more than 100 Syrians were slaughtered, mostly women and children, the most horrid atrocity in a 15-month war that has taken 10,000 lives. We Americans cannot stand idly by and let this happen.

That massacre was indeed appalling, and apparently the work of rogue militia aligned with the regime. But in 1982, Bashar's father rolled his artillery up to the gates of Hama and, to crush an insurrection by the Muslim Brotherhood, fired at will into the city until 20,000 were dead.

What did America do? Nothing.

In Black September 1970, Jordan's King Hussein used artillery on a Palestinian camp, killing thousands and sending thousands fleeing into Lebanon. During Lebanon's civil war from 1975 to 1990, more than 100,000 perished. In the 1980s, Iraq launched a war on Iran that cost close to a million dead.

We observed, content that our enemies were killing one another.

In 1992, Islamists in Algeria won the first round of voting and were poised to win the second. Democracy was about to produce a result undesired by the Western democracies. So Washington and Paris gave Algiers a green light to prevent the Islamists from coming to power. That Algerian civil war cost scores of thousands dead.

If Arab and Muslim peoples believe Americans are hypocrites who cynically consult their strategic interests before bemoaning Arab and Muslim victims of terror and war, do they not have a point?

As for the *Post*'s idea of using U.S. air power to set up "safe zones" on Syrian soil, those are acts of war. What do we do if the Syrian army answers with artillery strikes on those safe zones or overruns one, inflicting a stinging defeat on the United States?

Would we accept the humiliation—or escalate? What if Syrian air defenses start bringing down U.S. planes? What would we do if Syria's Hezbollah allies start taking Americans hostage in Lebanon?

Ronald Reagan sent the Marines into Lebanon in 1983. His intervention in that civil war resulted in our embassy being blown up and 241 Marines massacred in the bombing of the Beirut barracks. Reagan regarded it as the worst mistake of his presidency. Are we going to repeat it because Bashar has failed to live up to our expectations?

Consider the forces lining up on each side in what looks like a Syrian civil war and dress rehearsal for a regional sectarian war. Against Assad's regime are the United States, the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, the Turks and Saudis, and Sunni states of the Persian Gulf. On Assad's side are his 300,000-strong army, the Alawite Shia in Syria, Druze, Christians, and Kurds, all of whom fear a victory of the Brotherhood, and Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah.

The question for our bellicose interventionists is this: how much treasure should be expended, how much American blood shed so the Muslim Brotherhood can depose the Assad dynasty, take power and establish an Islamist state in Syria?

"Tell me how this thing ends," said Gen. David Petraeus at the onset of our misbegotten Iraq War. If we begin providing weapons to those seeking the overthrow of Assad, as the *Post* urges, it will be a fateful step for this republic.

We will be morally responsible for the inevitable rise in dead and wounded from the war we will have fueled. We will have committed our prestige to Assad's downfall. And once the U.S. casualties come, the cry of the war party will come. We will be on our way into another bloody debacle in a region where there is no vital U.S. interest but perhaps oil, which these folks have to sell to survive.

Before the religious and ethnic conflicts of Europe were sorted out, it took centuries of bloodletting, and our fathers instructed us to stay out of these quarrels that were none of our business. Syria in 2012 is even less our business. ■

Why Congress Doesn't Work

Lawmakers' avoidance of accountability undermines self-government

by LEO LINBECK III

Faced with a complex, hard-to-solve problem, there is a natural human tendency to solve a much simpler, easier one instead. Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman, in his book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow,* dubs this cognitive process "substitution."

We know our political system is broken. The signs are everywhere: knee-jerk partisanship, massive debts and unfunded liabilities, widespread citizen dissatisfaction, trillion-dollar deficits, rampant public and private corruption, and a federal government that has less support than King George III at the time of the American Revolution.

But fixing the system is a staggeringly complex undertaking. The causes of its dysfunction are deep and obscure.

So what do we do? We use substitution: we focus on electing a president who promises to solve all our problems. Conservatives did this in 2000, progressives did it in 2008, and both sides are doing it again in 2012.

But it won't work. There is no silver bullet, no shortcut, no Superman who will save us. In fact, by focusing almost exclusively on the presidency, we are making the problem worse, not better.

Our nation's core political problem is a loss of self-governance, and the restoration of self-governance cannot come from the election of a single leader who will fundamentally transform America. It will only come from changing the way we think about political conflict, breaking the cycle of incumbency that has destroyed electoral accountability, dispersing power that has become too centralized, and re-engaging citizens in the political realm. The biggest impediment to these changes is not the president—it's Congress.

This is not to say that the presidency is irrelevant. But Congress is the most powerful branch—it writes the laws and holds the purse strings—and it is utterly unaccountable for reasons that are widely misunderstood. Perhaps the greatest mystery of American politics in the 21st century is how Congress can have an approval rating that dips into the single digits while, on average, more than 90 percent of incumbents win re-election.

If Congress is unresponsive, restoring self-governance is impossible. But lawmakers will not reform themselves. Thus the critical first step in returning to self-governance is making congressional elections work—reconnecting the ballot box and the people's will. This is a difficult task, but not impossible. Primary elections are the key.

This year, I have worked with a small group of committed men and women on a simple mission: to use a SuperPAC to defeat, in primary elections, unpopular congressional incumbents in "safe" districts.

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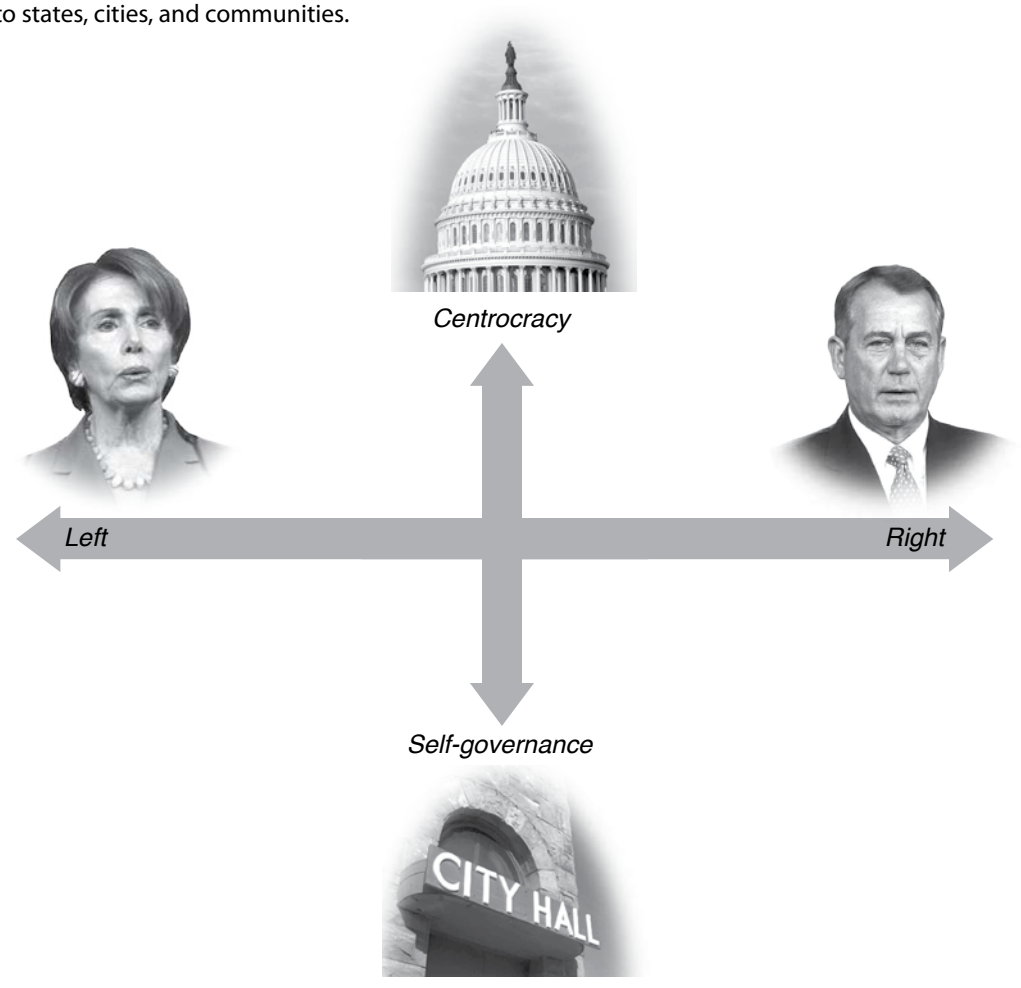
Debates between the Left and the Right are over policy, and whichever choice is made it usually results in power accruing to the Federal government. The real debate – which has been lost in the 24-hour news cycle – should not be about what is decided, but who decides. Only then, will the pull toward Centrocracy be weakened and a measure of self-government returned to states, cities, and communities.



Our organization, the Campaign for Primary Accountability, has targeted Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives. In its first three months, we engaged in nine primary contests and won four. To put this in perspective, only four incumbents out of 396 lost their primaries in all of 2010.

We have beaten an establishment Republican in Ohio, a Tea Party-supported Republican in Illinois, a Blue Dog Democrat in Pennsylvania, and a mainstream Democrat in Texas. In the process, we have been called conservatives, liberals, Tea Partiers, anarchists, right-wingers, and both pro-Obama and anti-Obama. We are the political equivalent of Schrödinger's Cat.

There have been two principal responses to our campaign: fear and confusion. This essay will hopefully alleviate the latter—and thereby enhance the former.

Let me be clear from the outset. On the familiar right-left spectrum, I'm a conservative. Asked to characterize my position, I typically respond that I'm a "conservative communitarian," but that still makes me a conservative.

For example, I am for lower taxes, a smaller public sector, a strong military, more reliance on prices and markets, and less regulation. I am pro-life, highly skeptical of government-provided welfare programs, and a supporter of choice and competition in public education. There are policy areas where I am closer to my progressive friends—crim-

inal justice, anti-trust, campaign-finance reform, and a few others—but any fair-minded observer would view me as a conservative.

Yet I firmly believe that a more conservative Congress will not save America. In fact, a conservative Congress will probably make things worse.

If this strikes you as cognitive dissonance or some bizarre form of philosophical self-hatred, you're not alone. Most people think that if you hold certain policy views, you should support a Congress that would put those policies into effect.

I disagree.

Our system is broken because we have imposed policies from the center that should be decided locally.

The major challenges facing the United States today are not problems of *policy,* but problems of *governance.* Our system is broken because we have imposed policies from the center that should be decided locally. Making those centralized policies more "conservative" will not improve our system; in fact, that will likely make things worse by increasing support for a bad governance structure. And a good policy under a bad governance structure ultimately morphs into a bad policy.

The "horizontal" fight over *what is decided* is a diversion from the more important "vertical" fight over *who decides*. The vertical fight will determine whether we restore the American system of self-governance or continue our progression toward the Bismarckian procedural state.

But shifting the focus from horizontal to vertical confuses those who are embedded in traditional politics. Their goal is to elect a national government that will impose their policy preferences on all 300 million Americans. For them, politics is about power and policy.

For the self-governance movement, however, *who decides* is more important than *what is decided*. This framework allows us to create alliances across the ideological spectrum. We might disagree on policy, but we can unify on governance.

And that unity creates fear in Congress. As well it should.

Congress Is the Problem

My personal political journey began about five years ago when I was sitting at a business luncheon in Houston, listening to a presentation by the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Richard Fisher. He showed a series of slides with typical Fed fare: deficits, interest rates, home prices, mortgage markets.

This was before the financial crisis, and the economy still seemed strong. But Fisher was not so optimistic, and his talk was a little unnerving. At the end, he said words to the effect, "All of this probably sounds scary, but the next slide that I'm going to show you is the one that keeps me up at night. If you are concerned about your country, it should keep you up at night too."

On the screen appeared one number: $84 trillion. "That is the unfunded liability of Medicare," Fisher said.

I quickly ran the math and realized this was almost $300,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States, including my wife, my five kids, and me. I was stunned.

After the luncheon, I made my way through the crowd to find Fisher. I expressed my bewilderment and said the number couldn't possibly be true. "It's true, " he replied. "It's one of the first questions I asked my research staff when I joined the Fed, and it has been checked and double-checked."

"How did this happen?" I asked.

He looked at me and said one word: "Congress."

With that word, Fisher awoke me from my dogmatic slumber.

It is ironic to recall that the Founders gave the power of the purse to the House of Representatives because, being more responsive to the people, it would protect their pocketbooks from the extravagances of the executive branch. For the first 100 years, it pretty much worked that way, with federal spending about 4 percent of GDP.

Today the House is a spending machine—it spends $10 billion each day and more than 25 percent of GDP. Money can't buy love, but it can buy power: in November 2010, Congress had an approval rating of just 17 percent, while the re-election rate in the House was 86 percent.

This disconnect between approval and re-election rates is the clearest sign that the congressional accountability system is broken. But there are several underlying causes:

The problem of scale. When the Framers met to

write the Constitution, there were about 3 million inhabitants in the 13 states. Virginia, the largest, had a population of some 700,000 (of which 280,000 were slaves). The largest city, Philadelphia, had a population of 40,000.

At the Constitutional Convention, there was considerable debate about the size of House districts. When a proposal was made for districts of 40,000, George Washington rose to speak for the first and only time. He opposed the large size and recommended 30,000. His amendment was adopted.

Today, House districts average over 700,000—more than the entire population of Virginia in 1780. This growth alone represents a 96 percent dilution of citizen influence since our Founding.

The problem of primaries. The average margin of victory for incumbents in general elections is 26 percent, and only 15 percent or so of House districts are competitive in the general. For the other 85 percent, the outcome is decided in the primary. But the primary system does not hold incumbents accountable.

During the 19th century, all politics truly was local. Congressional candidates were nominated through a caucus and convention system controlled by local parties and their bosses. The caucuses were non-binding, but they allowed bosses to gauge support for each candidate. Local control also allowed for forced rotation, so that representatives did not serve more than a couple of terms, thus assuring fealty to local parties.

Unfortunately, many local bosses were corrupt, using their power in "smoked-filled rooms" to line their own pockets. Primaries were seen as a way to end that corruption, and they did. But they also gutted the local parties and led to the centralization of party power, first at the state level, then nationally.

Reform was needed, but primaries had unintended consequences—one of which is that incumbents rarely lose. This fact was not lost on incumbents themselves: after progressive Republicans instituted the first primary in Wisconsin in 1904, primaries spread quickly across the country. By 1920, almost all congressional candidates were chosen in this way.

Incumbents still rarely lose. In the four elections between 2002 and 2008, only 12 House members were defeated in primaries. Over the same span, 13 died in office. God creates higher turnover in the House than primaries do.

The problem of money. With districts so large and candidates selected via primary, a member of the House could not win re-election without the substantial financial resources needed to communicate directly with voters. A big differential in funding virtually determines the outcome of a primary.

But money also creates huge advantages for "safe seat" incumbents who face little or no general-election competition. Freed from having to worry about their own campaigns, and assured of the longevity that leads to seniority and power, House members in safe districts amass huge war chests and use that money to help their party win in swing districts, thereby garnering loyalty from the candidates they support.

These war chests deter competition in their own primaries as well: in 2010, 62 percent of incumbents had no primary challenger, and those who did won by an average margin of 66 percent. The vast majority went on to face no serious opposition in the general.

The most powerful members are therefore the least accountable. Their money advantage is a big reason for that.

The problem of "campaign reform." The last hundred years have seen a steady stream of campaign-reform legislation. Incumbents have consistently used these "reforms" to erect barriers to keep local party leaders—who are now supplicants, not bosses—the local business community, and everyone else from impeding their re-election. They have transferred control of elections to the government bureaucracy they fund and control, created complex ballot-access laws, switched to the Australian ballot to weaken local parties, outlawed corporate contributions, and imposed contribution limits to make it hard for opponents to fund a credible challenge.

In 2010, 62 percent of incumbents had no primary challenger, and those who did won by an average margin of 66 percent.

That these reforms protect incumbents by lessening competition is perfectly predicable: in what universe would you expect incumbents to pass laws that make it easier for them to lose?

The power of incumbency. As a result of these changes, incumbency is now golden. Throughout

the 19th century, the average tenure in the House at the start of a session was about two years. By the early 21st century, the average starting tenure had risen to 10.2 years.

With larger districts, primary elections, the greater influence of money, and a series of reforms that discouraged challengers, House members were freed from the accountability system that had held them in check. Incumbents used to be agents of the local party; today they are free agents.

Incumbents used to be controlled by party bosses; today they are the party bosses.

"Reforms" That Will Not Work

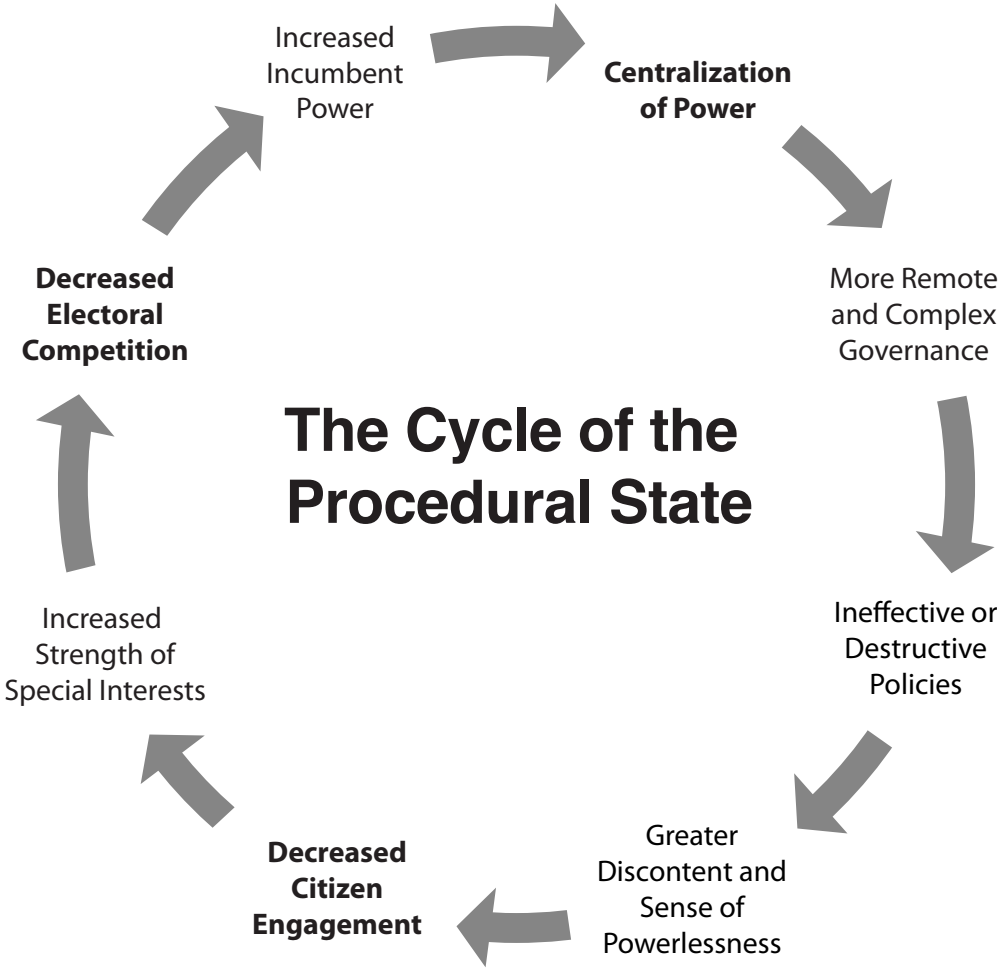
None of this will surprise the careful observer of American politics. But diagnosis is only the first step. What is the remedy?

Several therapies have been prescribed and, in a few states, even tried. But none of them have cured the disease and restored accountability.

Curtail gerrymandering. The most common prescription is to change the process by which congressional districts are drawn. We are promised that if we just eliminate the gerrymander, we abolish the safe seats that protect incumbents.

Clearly, gerrymandering is offensive, but it is almost as old as the republic—the term was first used in the *Boston Gazette* in 1812. If it were the root problem, its effects on the behavior of the House would have appeared long before the late 20th century. Moreover, detailed academic studies have shown that the number of competitive House elections is virtually unaffected by redistricting.

Surprisingly, partisan redistricting results in more competitive elections than bipartisan or non-partisan redistricting. To understand why, consider two adjoining House districts, one a suburban district that is 70 percent Republican, the other an urban district that is 60 percent Democratic. If Republican legislators were in control of redistricting, what would they do?



They would try to shift 10 percent of GOP voters from the suburban to the urban district. This would leave the suburban district with a safe 20-point advantage and put the urban district in play. As a result, both districts would become more competitive. This outcome is due to the natural incentive partisans have to increase the potential number of House seats for their party at the cost of the margin of safety.

So why since the 1960s have incumbents enjoyed re-election rates of about 90 percent? Alan Abramowitz and his colleagues at Emory University, who have written on the shift toward uncompetitive elections in the House, came to the following conclusion:

> This shift has not been caused by redistricting but by demographic change and ideological realignment within the electorate. Moreover, even in the remaining marginal districts most challengers lack the financial resources needed to wage competitive campaigns. The increasing correlation among district partisanship, incumbency, and campaign spending means that the effects of these variables tend to reinforce each other to a greater extent than in the past. The result is a pattern of reinforcing advantages that leads to extraordinarily uncompetitive elections.

The problem is not gerrymandering but a system that has created "reinforcing advantages" driven by money, incumbency, and low voter turnout (which tends to accentuate partisanship).

Enlarge the House. Among functioning democracies, our legislature is the least representative body. In Japan, each member of the Diet's lower house represents about 245,000 people. For members of the German Bundestag, the ratio is 1 to 123,000. For the French Assembly, 1 to 100,000. For Canada's House of Commons, 1 to 96,000; and for the UK's, 1 to 89,000.

After the 1920 census, the House of Representatives for the first time refused to enlarge itself to accommodate a larger population. In 1929, it formally fixed its membership at the current number. The population has tripled since.

If we had held to the Framers' original limit, the House would now have over 10,000 members. Clearly that would be impractical. Various proposals have been made to enlarge the House to 1,200 members, reducing the average size of a district to around 200,000.

There is just one problem: only Congress can make this change, and it has no incentive to do so. If the House would not consent to its enlargement in 1920, why should it in 2012? The perks, the power, and the money have only increased since then. Why risk diluting those benefits?

The only recourse is a constitutional amendment. But constitutional amendments do not cause political change; they are a consequence of political change. Arguing today for an amendment to reduce congressional power would be akin to arguing in 1840 for an amendment to free the slaves. Slavery ended because of the abolitionist movement and the Civil War, not the Reconstruction Amendments. The war is first won, and then the victors codify the result.

Institute term limits. From 1990 to 1995, the term-limit movement won many battles, with 23 states imposing limited terms of office on their elected representatives, including members of Congress. But by a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court ruled that only Congress could limit its own terms.

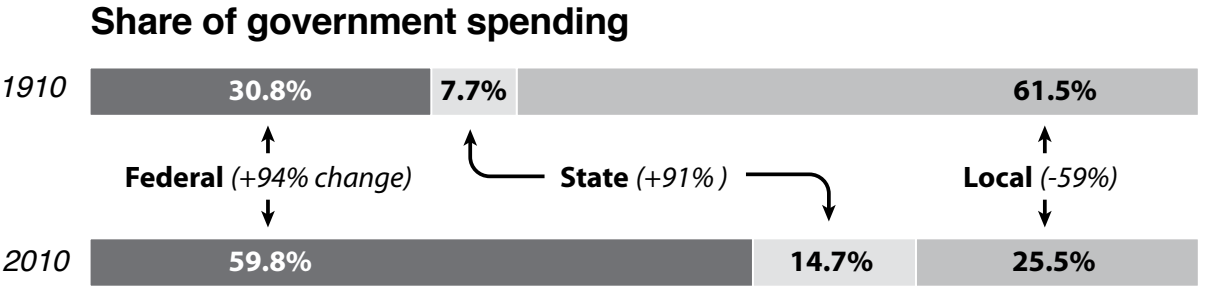
That was not the only reason for the movement's collapse. Skeptics can now offer a one-word rebuttal to term-limits enthusiasts: California. Although there are many reasons for the Mess in the West, 20 years of term limits for state legislators have not kept California from hurtling toward fiscal disaster.

Reform campaign finance. Given the role that money plays in elections, why not directly try to "get money out of politics"? This is a very popular idea among progressives, who see the corruption within the system and view shutting off the cash flow as the obvious solution.

Arguing today for an amendment to reduce congressional power would be akin to arguing in 1840 for an amendment to free the slaves.

There are several reasons why this will not work. First, as with all "campaign reforms," no law will pass Congress that adversely affects incumbents. And since the current finance system favors them, there is no reason to believe they will make the kinds of changes to funding rules that would increase electoral competition.

Second, the Supreme Court has been very clear that



political spending is a form of political speech and is therefore protected by the Constitution. You might disagree with their jurisprudence, but unless and until the justices change their minds, money will continue to flow into super PACs and other independent-expenditure entities.

Finally, given how much money Congress appropriates, it is practically impossible to eliminate the money others spend to influence lawmakers. Outlawing money in politics wouldn't stop the flow; it would simply push it underground.

So, if eliminating the gerrymander, increasing the size of the House, term limits, and campaign reform won't break the cycle of incumbency, what can we do?

Two things, neither of which requires the consent of Congress:

First, change the political narrative.

Second, use primary elections to restore Congress's accountability to the citizenry.

Defining the Alternatives

E.E. Schattschneider once wrote, "The definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power." Political alternatives are defined through narratives.

It is fashionable to bemoan the "lack of bipartisanship" that has resulted in "gridlock." The conventional narrative goes something like this: The Tea Parties and Occupy Wall Street are responsible for the increased polarization of political discourse, which makes it impossible for bipartisan consensus to emerge. These extremists pressure legislators to accept no compromise, but without any compromise, we are left with gridlock.

This story has a certain internal logic. But it is not the best explanation for the failures that have left Congress with a lower approval rating than polygamy.

An alternative narrative goes something like this: There is a broad bipartisan consensus in Washington, D.C. on the most important political question today: *Who decides?* Both parties agree that Congress should decide, and they cooperate to protect and expand this power. By arrogating these decisions to themselves, lawmakers are tackling problems they cannot solve and pre-empting the search for diverse local solutions by others. There is gridlock because Congress tries to force a single solution on the entire country, when no politically acceptable solution exists.

Each narrative is rooted in one dimension of politics: the conventional wisdom is "horizontal," the alternative narrative is "vertical." And that defines the real conflict in American politics today, which is not between the parties or between the right and the left, but between *centrocracy* and self-governance.

Consider the increased share of federal and state spending and decreased share of local government spending over the past 100 years as shown in the above figure. Is there any doubt that government decision-making has become more centralized over this period? This is what happens under a centrocracy.

But that is not the American system, which was designed as a self-governing republic, not a procedural republic like the one established by Otto von Bismarck for the Second German Reich.

The transformation of our system from a self-governing to a procedural republic is the result of a series of Progressive Era reforms that began around the turn of the 20th century. These created a self-reinforcing loop of incentives that moved power from individuals, families, communities, local governments, and states to the federal government.

Changing the narrative from left vs. right to centrocrats vs. citizens is a necessary step. But it is not sufficient: Congress will not happily give up its power. That power must be taken away. One way to do this is to turn one of their own advantages against them: primary elections.

How to Break the Cycle of Incumbency

The primary is the weakest link in the chain that keeps the centrocrats in control. If the objective is to break the feedback loop that leads to centrocracy, the primary is the place to do it.

Here a distinction may be useful. As the readers of this magazine know, there is a difference between conservatives and conservative Republicans. There is also a difference between progressives and progressive Democrats. Many progressives are repelled by the growth of the national-security state, and they believe Congress has abetted Wall Street in the looting of the financial system. These progressives, many of them young, have been at the forefront of the movement toward localism in areas such as food, urban design, and community engagement, while being globally connected through the Internet—the independence and freedom of which they cherish. They are deeply suspicious of centralized power.

Anti-centrocracy conservatives and progressives are natural allies in a long war to dismantle centralized power. They may not agree on policies, but they can agree on *who decides* these policies. Both understand that the two political parties have a financial stake in keeping decision-making in Washington, D.C. Conservatives may speak of "federalism" while progressives speak of "local control," but they are anchored in the same underlying sentiment: a desire for self-governance.

Alliances can be made, and are being made. Intrepid and sophisticated warriors on both sides are beginning to realize that policy battles are stage fights, used to divide us and weaken our efforts against the centrocracy.

A practical place for anti-centrocrats to start is by increasing turnout in primaries, which is abysmal. In 2010, about 12 percent of the voting-age population cast ballots in Republican primaries and about 8 percent did so in Democratic primaries. This is the tiny base on which the centrocracy rests. By encouraging people to participate in primaries—voting when the decision as to who represents them is actually made—citizens can restore accountability and bring the centrocracy to heel.

We are testing this thesis in the 2012 primary cycle. So far our efforts have been able to materially increase turnout in targeted primaries.

But increasing turnout is not enough: we also have to close the funding gap between incumbents and challengers. Only then will we create a truly level playing field that will force incumbents to pay more heed to Main Street than to K Street.

Ultimately the key to this long war will be attracting candidates from both parties to the self-governance movement. They will not have to abandon their party or policy preferences, but we will show them that they can win elections by siding with the citizenry against the centrocracy.

The centrocracy is the enemy. Bring it down, move decision-making closer to the people, and the real policy debates between left and right can begin. But this time, those debates will take place where they should: in the hearing rooms of the state legislatures, in town-hall meetings, in city council chambers, in neighborhoods and living rooms.

If enough conservatives and progressives realize that they have been conditioned to view the world through partisan lenses, and that they have been used by the parties to increase the power of a ruling elite, we can start to turn the tide. And if these people also engage in primaries—whether as candidates, funders, or local activists—we can restore self-governance.

Anti-centrocracy conservatives and progressives are natural allies in a long war to dismantle centralized power.

This may sound naïve, but consider that the leaders of the American Revolution did not agree on policy. Samuel Adams, Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, John Adams—they had many different visions for our new nation, and their disagreements were serious and fundamental.

But there was consensus on one point: decisions about America should be made in America, not in London. The rallying cry "No Taxation Without Representation" was not about tax policy; it was about governance. And on governance, on *who decides,* there was complete agreement—we should govern ourselves.

We've moved away from that agreement over the past 100 years, but the experiment in self-governance is not over. It has only been interrupted. ■

Kentucky Massiecre

The Bluegrass State extends Ron Paul's revolution—again.

by W. JAMES ANTLE III

When Thomas Massie won the Republican nomination for Congress in Kentucky's fourth district, wags dubbed it a second "Randslide." Almost alone among elected officials in the state, Sen. Rand Paul supported Massie. "I don't like anyone telling me how to vote," Paul said in his video endorsement. "I make up my own mind and vote for the candidate who best supports term limits, balanced budgets, and the Constitution."

It didn't hurt that Massie had been an early supporter of Rand Paul during the 2010 primary, or that he had endorsed the senator's plan to balance the budget in five years. But Massie also enjoyed the backing of the senator's father, Rep. Ron Paul, Utah Sen. Mike Lee, Michigan Rep. Justin Amash, the Club for Growth, and Young Americans for Liberty. Massie repeatedly invoked "the liberty movement" in his victory speech.

Some of Massie's opponents liked to use another l-word. Alecia Webb-Edgington, the candidate backed by most of Kentucky's GOP elected officials, proudly proclaimed that she was a real Republican rather than a libertarian. (For this, columnist Jack Hunter dubbed Webb-Edgington a "female Lindsey Graham.") A Facebook page in support of her campaign claimed that libertarians were trying to buy the primary at the expense of conservatives. "We don't need any more socialists, communists, or libertarians in the Republican Party," she told a local Lincoln Day Dinner.

Webb-Edgington touted her law-and-order credentials. Although a member of the Kentucky legislature, her ads were just as likely to mention her service in the state police—even when she was talking about spending cuts. In one commercial, Webb-Edgington noted that she had pulled over child predators and other undesirables, something much tougher than trimming fat from the federal budget. "After fighting real criminals, these guys in Washington don't scare me one bit," she said. For good measure, the camera repeatedly panned to the candidate's legs.

Fourth district voters were unmoved. Massie won 45 percent of the vote to Webb-Edgington's 30 percent, with Gary Moore, who was favored by some social conservatives, taking another 15 percent. Democrats have seldom won this House seat, with the recent exception of conservative former Rep. Ken Lucas, and aren't seriously contesting it this fall. "To call the Democratic candidate a gadfly is an insult to gadflies," says David Adams, a local Tea Party activist who managed Rand Paul's campaign during the GOP primary two years ago. Massie is a near-lock to win in November.

But libertarian money certainly did play a role in the race. Liberty for All, a super PAC started by a 21-year-old Texas college student, dropped nearly $600,000 to fund operations and television ads on Massie's behalf. This soon crowded out the other candidates' negative ads. Even the *New York Times* took notice: "With their favorite having lost the nomination for president, [Ron] Paul's dedicated band of youthful supporters is looking down-ballot and swarming lightly guarded Republican redoubts like state party conventions in an attempt to infiltrate the top echelons of the party." The Gray Lady quoted Massie as saying of the super PAC, "They owned the airwaves, everything from the Food Channel to Court TV."

John Ramsey, the group's founder, points out that he is just following his supporters' lead. "Thomas Massie matches our values," he says. "Our supporters saw an engineer and job creator in Northern Kentucky as a good candidate." Ramsey says of his PAC, "We're just trying to make the world a little freer." Adams puts

W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator *and a contributing editor of* The American Conservative.

Michael Hogue

it a bit differently: "When opponents in a Republican primary are essentially reduced to complaining about the First Amendment, with 20-20 hindsight that was the point when the race was over."

Massie is representative of a new breed of liberty-minded candidate. He is a strong fiscal conservative who emphasizes cutting government spending and reducing the national debt, but he doesn't toe the neoconservative line on civil liberties or foreign policy. Massie told Young Americans for Liberty that he opposed the Iraq War and wants to end the conflict in Afghanistan. He is against the National Defense Authorization Act's indefinite-detention provisions, the PATRIOT Act, and the TSA. He is for auditing the Federal Reserve.

But Massie didn't beat Republican primary voters over the heads by focusing inordinately on issues where he might disagree with the base. He mostly let his opponents do the talking about libertarianism. And he isn't just an ideologue. A Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate, Massie is accomplished in the private sector. He founded a technology company that employed 70 people and secured two dozen patents. Massie was elected Lewis County judge executive in 2010 and used his position to attack government waste.

In 2008, many of the first Ron Paul Republicans to win their primaries did so in Democratic districts where they had little shot of prevailing in November. That year four of six GOP challengers to Maryland's incumbent congressional Democrats were Paul supporters, but none of the incumbents were vulnerable. Even B.J. Lawson, a talented candidate who ran two competitive races for Congress, sought election in a district where the odds were stacked against him.

David Weigel offered the following description of such candidates: "They live either in districts where Democrats could hold fundraisers for the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and still win by landslides or those held comfortably by old-line Republican incumbents" who couldn't be dislodged in primaries. But now, candidates like Massie are beginning to target open seats and vulnerable incumbents in districts where the Republican nomination actually means something.

"We want candidates to be in the party, in the district, and running in the year they can win," says Preston Bates, executive director of Liberty for All.

These contenders are also helped by a certain hardening in the mood of the Republican electorate. As recently as 2004, Arlen Specter could be competitive in a GOP primary while being to the left of his party platform on a host of issues ranging from abortion to taxes. Indeed, Lincoln Chafee was to Specter's left and won a bruising Republican primary in 2006.

Over the last two years, incumbents who could check most boxes on conservative litmus-test issues have started losing primaries over isolated votes in favor of bailouts. Even the perception that one is too close to the party establishment can be damaging. Trey Grayson, the Kentucky Republican who lost a senate nomination in the original Randslide, didn't run as a moderate. But he did seem comfortable with GOP power brokers and beneficiaries of the bank bailout.

Not all of the conservative primary challengers who have benefited from this trend are in the mold of Thomas Massie or Rand Paul. Many of these upstarts express their willingness to mix it up with the establishment by being equally eager for the country to fight more wars. But it is certainly an opening that Paul-influenced Republicans are well situated to exploit. After all, what kind of candidates are most likely to have opposed TARP or to have a record criticizing government growth even under Republicans? "Any enemy of freedom, be they Republican or Democrat, should be shaking in their boots," says Ramsey.

More important than scooping up Ron Paul delegates to the Republican National Convention, Paulites are descending on state and local GOP gatherings to advance like-minded candidates. Local party leaders, of whom the liberty movement can claim an increasing number, may become local elected officials; they also can help swing competitive primaries. People yelling and screaming outside the convention hall seldom have as much power to effect change as those attending the boring meetings inside. It's a tactic previously used in Republican politics by groups as disparate as the Goldwater movement and the Christian right.

Massie's win may have particularly important long-term implications. With Ron Paul retiring from Congress after November, he needs successors, and the small band of constitutional conservatives in the House needs reinforcements. Barring a successful primary challenge against him, Massie could potentially hold his northern Kentucky House seat for as long as he wants it. And with Rand Paul possibly harboring national ambitions, it gives both men room to move up without setting back the movement.

"The liberty movement is succeeding in overthrowing the Republican establishment," Bates says confidently. "The Karl Rove fear-and-smear types are dying out in the party." But obituaries for the Republican establishment may be premature, given Mitt Romney's relatively easy path to the GOP presidential nomination. And the libertarian wing of the party has experienced some setbacks this year.

In Utah, legislator Carl Wimmer—who endorsed Ron Paul for president over Romney in the heavily Mormon state—lost a congressional nomination to Mia Love at the state convention. Wimmer had the backing of Mike Lee but unexpectedly failed to make it to the primary. (This is partly attributable to an overzealous Wimmer supporter referring to Love, who is black, as a "novelty" candidate on the convention floor.) But he was thought to have had a decent chance of winning.

The candidacy of Evan Feinberg, a former Rand Paul aide who challenged Pennsylvania GOP Rep. Tim Murphy in a primary, was a much longer shot. Feinberg billed himself as a "principled, conservative voice for western Pennsylvania" and had impeccable movement credentials: he chaired the Grove City College Republicans, worked at the Heritage Foundation, and was a staffer for Sen. Tom Coburn. He was mostly noninterventionist on foreign policy, but his wife was an Iraq War veteran and he tended to stress the fiscal cost of military adventurism. Murphy nevertheless trounced Feinberg by 28 points.

Yet the inroads being made by such candidates are undeniable. So is the strategy that tends to produce success, as evidenced by Massie's victory. Republicans like Massie rely on libertarian activists for fundraising and organizational muscle, putting them in a position to be competitive in the first place. But they don't simply bank on a money bomb or a Ron Paul endorsement being the game-changer. They campaign on local issues, they build connections with their constituents, and they reach out to a much larger base in the party than the Paul vote, which in some places is merely in the single digits.

The people giving Thomas Massie money care deeply about his views on the Patriot Act and formal congressional declarations of war. But many of the Kentuckians voting for Massie were more interested in how he saved money for Lewis County taxpayers by canceling a bogus contract: the county had been paying to rent land from a company that had actually sold it 20 years ago. Massie put an end to it. "Voters were looking for someone they could really trust to be for small government," says Adams. "Not just the rhetoric, but to actually mean it."

It's a delicate balance. If Massie didn't hold strict constitutionalist positions on foreign policy and civil liberties, he might not have raised the funds he

needed to win. But neither would he have won if he simply ranted and raved about the Fed in his interactions with local voters. He found an intersection of politics and principle that often escapes Ron Paul Republicans and establishment types alike.

There's a precedent for what Massie is doing: Ron Paul himself. Paul has held a House seat for 12 terms, winning election to Congress three times as a non-incumbent, by hewing to a similar strategy. He raises money from a national libertarian donor base that is attracted to him mainly because of his differences with the rest of the party. But Congressman Paul reflects local social mores rather than those of his libertarian benefactors. His office practices good constituent services, and he does the things a politician needs to do to win local elections. The result has been a successful congressional career pushing an anti-statist message, capped by two national campaigns that have given his ideas a wider audience than ever before.

None of this would be a bad thing for a new legislator like Thomas Massie to aspire to. "It's like the first shot in a war," Adams argues. "It may not be very loud, but look at what it starts." Massie's supporters hope that what started as a Randslide can continue with a "Massie-cre." And it may show that the Paul movement is no longer just a family affair. ■

OLD *and* RIGHT

Inflation destroys no property—no real wealth. Instead it causes a process whereby real values, land, and productive assets of all kinds gravitate into the hands of those who understand what is happening and can get bank credit. A few grow rich while many grow poor.

Those who invest in forms of cash have a uniform fate. They all get poor. Inflation is redistribution of wealth with a vengeance—because the humble and innocent folks who trust their government and hold its promises to pay take the worst beating.

Certainly the day will come when the consequences of inflation will have hurt enough people to make massive resistance possible. But as of now, as a nation, we are like a bunch of inexperienced innocents who have made some easy money speculating.

The gambling experience has been exhilarating and superficially invigorating. High wages, increased dividends, big cars, lush homes—"Why," says the average citizen, "we never had it so good!" and he adds with a threat in his voice, "Don't try to take it away from us, if you know what's good for you."

That threat is involved in the first of the major forces driving us toward inflation.

Bipartisan foreign policy has made military, economic, and political commitments all over the world, commitments that are immeasurable in terms of money, men, and resources. The result is that the United States Treasury is financing part of the budgets of most of the non-Communist governments of the world, and even contributing hundreds of millions to Communist governments.

How does this policy affect inflation in America?

The answer is found in another question. Can an elective government play Santa Claus to a multitude of foreign nations and be Old Scrooge at home?

United States senators and representatives are elected by citizens who, in the aggregate, are paying the highest taxes in the world. Is it fair or reasonable to expect these taxpayers to tighten their belts so that gigantic spending overseas is offset by penny-pinching economy at home?

Evidently congressmen do not think so. Again and again they will explain their loose-spending votes by saying in effect, "If we can send billions overseas to help the Hottentots, we can afford to spend adequate funds for our own people's wants." The ballot-box logic of this conclusion is certainly inescapable.

There is no reward in military life for the advocate of economy or retrenchment. Pressures for larger spending are automatic. With Sputnik and other missile developments, the climate of fear that breeds unrestrained spending has become almost irresistible.

Those who would cut back military expenditures, even those in departments largely outmoded by atomic and missile developments, face the open or covert charge of playing into Moscow's hands.

Moreover, so long as we try to police the world, there seems no feasible way to bring this spending under civilian control where it belongs. Likewise, the giant size of military orders, repeated year after year since 1940, has made their continuance vital for many American firms.

Today overall military expenditures are running at a rate not too far from a billion dollars a week. All military spending is waste, a necessary waste to the extent required to defend our land, but an inflationary force leading toward communism in the exact amount that this is spent beyond that required to defend America.

—Howard Buffett,
"Inflation and Economic Survival," 1958

Neighborhood Watch

If we don't police the Islamic world, who can?

by WILLIAM W. CHIP

Before my son's first trip to Buenos Aires, several Argentine acquaintances emailed him advice about the best places to visit in that lovely city. Every message ended with a warning to stick to the neighborhoods frequented by tourists. Although most folks in other neighborhoods would be harmless, and only a few dangerous, as a foreigner he would not be able to tell the difference.

A growing majority of Americans, Republicans included, are beginning to feel that way about the neighborhood we call the Middle East. An April Pew poll found that 59 percent of Americans, including 48 percent of Mitt Romney supporters, favored withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan "as soon as possible." The month before, a majority of both Democrats and Republicans surveyed told Pew that the United States had no responsibility to stop the slaughter of civilian protesters in Syria.

The public's frustration is understandable. Over eight years of operations in Iraq, the United States suffered nearly 5,000 military fatalities and spent nearly $800 billion to take down the country's Sunni dictator and suppress the ensuing Sunni insurgency, only to have the successor Shi'ite government eject our troops from the bases we had planned to keep, turning into a white elephant our $750 million "mother of all embassies" in Baghdad.

After 11 years (and counting) in Afghanistan, with nearly 2,000 military fatalities and almost half a trillion dollars of U.S. taxpayer money spent, we must bear reports of our officers being gunned down by Afghan soldiers and police and of pallet-loads of hundred-dollar bills being whisked away through the Kabul airport. Having spent so much money and lost so many troops in both countries, we are left to wonder whether these sacrifices, far from winning friends and allies, have simply nurtured a new generation of foes in the Middle East.

"Middle East" is actually a misnomer for the belt of countries across North Africa and Southern Asia that are the homelands of Islamic terrorism and present the geopolitical threat that instigated our nation-building enterprises in Iraq and Afghanistan. This "Islamic Belt" includes Iran in the center, the Arab countries to the west, and the "stans" (Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.) to the east. For the past three decades, the Islamic Belt has been the world's most dangerous neighborhood, home to political upheaval, internecine violence, and suicide bombers.

Notwithstanding widespread disillusionment with the Bush administration's game plan for the region, no one at either end of the political spectrum has articulated a comprehensible alternative. President Obama has underscored his distaste for the mess he inherited by announcing a "pivot to the East." But to imply a more modest role for the United States in Islamic Belt affairs without redefining that role is an empty gesture.

There is no more coherence on the president's right. During the GOP presidential primaries, Rep. Ron Paul as usual offered the most acute understanding of the predicament, along with the most simplistic solution, jumping from candid insights—how our zest for democracy withers when the likes of Hamas or Ahmadinejad win an election—to naïve proposals "to bring our troops home" not just from the Middle East but from everywhere.

Senator Santorum and Speaker Gingrich, meanwhile, competed with Benjamin Netanyahu in their zeal to confront the Iranians, Santorum threatening airstrikes and Gingrich proposing to "take out their scientists." Governor Romney promised to double down on our Islamic Belt commitments, writing in the *Washington Post* that he would deal with Iran by "restoring the regular presence of aircraft carrier

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groups in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf region simultaneously" and "increasing military assistance to Israel."

Is there a principled yet realistic—which is to say, conservative—middle ground between Paul's strict noninterventionism and Iraq redux? I think so, but before taking a new direction, we must ask why we became entangled in the Islamic Belt in the first place. We did not stumble there unawares: our entry was deliberate, in three discrete steps, based on explicit rationales that may or may not remain relevant today.

Step 1: The Cold War. During the 1950s, the Northern Hemisphere divided itself into two heavily armed camps, the democratic, free-market West, led by the United States, and the Communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union. For the next half-century every "nonaligned" nation outside the two camps was potentially a target for Soviet expansion or a brick in the wall of containment. Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution was a "loss," Anwar Sadat's reversal of Egypt's Nasserite Soviet alignment was a "win," and we had to play the game everywhere, including in the Islamic Belt.

Step 2: The Oil Crisis. In the 1970s, the belligerent mindset of the Cold War, shaken by our defeat in Vietnam, gained a new lease on life when the Arab members of OPEC imposed an escalating oil embargo aimed at punishing America for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War. While we had been obsessing about the string of Communist advances after the fall of Saigon, our dependence on Arab oil had risen to a level that empowered a handful of otherwise impotent Middle Eastern states to bring our economy to its knees. The opportunity to redirect our geopolitical energies came in 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, giving Saddam Hussein control of more Middle Eastern oil than anyone other than Saudi Arabia. According to then-Secretary of State Jim Baker, the reason for America rescuing Kuwait was "jobs, jobs, jobs," by which he meant "oil, oil, oil." The Arab states were now more than pawns in the Cold War; they posed a direct economic threat that needed to be managed.

Step 3: The War on Terror. Our successful defense of Kuwait—and incidentally of Saudi Arabia, whose Eastern Province appeared to be next on Saddam's hit list—cemented our relationship with the Gulf States, which proceeded to buy more of our weapons and to provide basing rights for our overseas forces. Unfortunately, one upper-class Saudi, Osama bin Laden, was so incensed by our infidel army's presence in the Islamic heartland that a decade later he mobilized his al-Qaeda organization to launch the 9/11 attacks. Jockeying for influence among nation states may have been the right response to the threats posed by the Soviet Union and OPEC, but al-Qaeda was not a state, and 9/11 called for a different strategy. The one embraced by the neoconservatives who held the upper hand in the Bush administration's foreign policy was to take down and rebuild the political and social institutions that nurtured terrorism in the first place. The War on Terror became a crusade.

Our ascent to captaincy of the Islamic Belt's "Neighborhood Watch" evolved over these three distinct periods with three distinct motives. Given widespread disillusionment with the role we now play, it is fair to ask whether those motives, assuming they were valid in the first place, are sufficient in 2012 to warrant continuing our present policies. I think they are not.

The Cold War is long over, and there is no longer any way in which our security hinges on whether one or even many Islamic Belt states align with Russia or any other country. To the contrary, the only great power that holds itself out as our rival is China, and replaying the Cold War with the Chinese—surrounding them with our bases, fleets, and client states—does not enhance our security. It exacerbates the risk of a war that we could not possibly win. (Call it paranoia, but according to Wang Jisi, dean of Peking University's School of International Studies, China's leaders view the United States as a declining power that lands "on the wrong side of history" by fighting to disrupt the rise of Chinese economic and military might.)

If enormous expenditures on Islamic Belt nation-building and base-construction are no longer needed to maintain the balance of power against Russia or any other geopolitical rival, can these costs nevertheless be justified by our dependence on foreign oil and our exposure to Islamic terrorism? Again, I think not. The Islamic Belt is surrounded by some pretty tough neighbors—Russia to the north, China to the east, India to the south, and Europe (including Turkey) to the west—and these neighbors have far more at stake than the United States.

Islamism has been far more of a danger to the Islamic Belt's next-door neighbors than to us.

Except for Russia, which exports oil and gas, each of these neighbors is more dependent on Arab and Iranian oil than the United States is. Europe relies on Arab/Iranian oil for 12 percent of its domestic needs, China for 25 percent, and India for a whopping 40 percent. The United States, in contrast, relies on imports from the Middle East for only 7 percent of its oil consumption. In fact, thanks to hydraulic fracturing and other new extraction technologies, the United States will soon be able to dispense with Arab oil altogether.

Terrorism sponsored or nurtured within the Islamic Belt may remain a threat for decades. But Islamism has been far more of a danger to the Islamic Belt's next-door neighbors than to us. The United States has a relatively small population of Muslim immigrants, most of whom came legally and are middle class. The perpetrators of 9/11 were all nonimmigrant aliens, most of whom would have been kept out or kicked out if the government had troubled itself to enforce the immigration laws.

Europe, in contrast, has a much larger and less assimilated Muslim population, including many poorly-educated illegal immigrants. European Islamists, unlike their American counterparts, seem to have enough encouragement and support within their own communities to organize cells and plan violence against buses, trains, and subways.

Russia, China, and India face even graver risks. Their Muslim populations are not recent immigrants; they are native separatists who aim to tear apart the states in which they reside. In 2004, Islamic separatists from Chechnya massacred 334 Russian hostages, including 186 school children, in Russia's North Ossetia province. In 2005, the so-called Islamic Revolutionary Front claimed responsibility for bomb blasts that killed 62 people in Delhi, India's second largest city. In 2009, rioting by Muslims in China's Xinjian Uyghur Autonomous Region left at least 192 people dead.

The Islamic Belt's closest neighbors possess the means as well as the motives for keeping the region under control. Although India, China, and Russia all suffer widespread poverty, they are economic superpowers in comparison to any combination of Islamic Belt economies. According to the World Bank, the gross domestic product of the entire Middle East is less than $1.1 trillion, compared to $1.5 trillion for Russia, $1.7 trillion for India, nearly $6.0 trillion for China, and more than $16 trillion for the European Union. Each of these neighbors, moreover, is armed with nuclear weapons. The Federation of American Scientists estimates that India has almost 100, China has over 200, Europe has over 500, and Russia has at least 10,000.

Given the economic strength and military might of Europe, India, Russia, and China, their much greater dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and their much greater exposure to Islamic terrorism, we should ask ourselves why imposing order on their dangerous neighborhood is a task for us rather than for them. Europe, perhaps, may be too disunited and delicate to play the tough cop, but we can be sure that Russia, India, and China will be ruthless in responding to economic and military threats. And we should not overlook Turkey. While not a nuclear power, it is mightier than any other Islamic Belt state. It has shown some willingness to help put a lid on the violence in Syria, and the role it plays in that unfolding drama may position the country for a broader regional peacekeeping role.

Notwithstanding their grumblings about U.S. interventionism, these regional powers find it convenient

to leave the dirty work of policing the Islamic Belt to Uncle Sam, as opposed to collaborating with each other to maintain regional stability, which would not be easy given their arbitrary internal politics and quarrels with each other. The United States is still so immensely powerful that our machinations in the Islamic Belt are of greater interest to the neighbors than the local events we are trying to manipulate. Russia, for example, appears to be more concerned about the implications of U.S. intervention in the Syrian civil war than about the outcome of that war. Were the United States to step back, these powers might focus more on the need for regional stability than on the need to resist U.S. hegemony.

While I view as wishful thinking his proposals on many topics, in framing the issue of U.S. policy towards the Islamic Belt, no one says it better than Ron Paul: "The smartest thing we could do is admit we don't know all the answers to all the world's problems ... . Other nations around the world find our interference in their affairs condescending, and it is very dangerous for us. We may think we have much to gain by inserting ourselves in these complex situations, but on the contrary we suffer from many consequences..."

Nobody asked us to become captain of the Islamic Belt's neighborhood watch; we are free to resign whenever it suits us. The time has come to let the neighbors watch the neighborhood. ■

DEEPBACKGROUND *by* PHILIP GIRALDI

The intelligence community is giving the Obama White House some serious pushback over Syria. A not-yet-completed National Intelligence Estimate on the Syrian situation is stalled in a familiar limbo between Langley and the White House because the report does not support administration representations of what is taking place. It paints a bleak picture of post-Assad Syria and reveals that the Free Syria Army is much smaller than it claims to be, that its leadership has been infiltrated by the Muslim Brotherhood, and that many insurgents have a demonstrated radical agenda. Most damaging of all, the report cites extensive information derived from technical intelligence to make the case that many of the deliberate massacres of Syrian civilians can be attributed to militants rather than to the government of Bashar al-Assad. It seems that the rebels have not been careful when speaking over cell phones about what they have been up to.

A number of Internet service providers, tech companies, and social networks are refusing to permit the FBI unlimited access to email accounts and other electronic traffic records due to concerns about subscriber lawsuits over invasions of privacy resulting from illegal searches. Under current legislation, telephone service providers must allow law-enforcement to access communications, but the legislation does not cover Internet and Internet-based systems, which are becoming more numerous than conventional phone networks. The FBI is seeking voluntary compliance from the companies, asking them to modify their codes and security systems to provide access for law enforcement through so-called "backdoors," but the bureau is also threatening to push new legislation through Congress if the industry continues to resist.

Currently the bureau can exploit provisions of the Patriot Act to obtain records of Internet transmissions, but it must support the demand with a National Security Letter or a subpoena. Every computer has an individual and distinctive IP address, which is how the information is requested, targeting the machine rather than the owner. But a protocol change in the computer address system that went into effect June 6 increases the number of possible IP addresses a thousandfold while bundling them in a fashion that has made identification of individual addresses more difficult. Thousands of computers will now work from the same basic address, like old party-line telephones, and law-enforcement requests for information will require many more details of date, time, and place to identify an individual account, information that is difficult to retain because of storage capacity limitations and privacy concerns. Ready access to numerous bundled new addresses also means that suspects can more easily exploit multiple addresses. The FBI is warning that its ability to access communications is being technically eroded and its capability might eventually "go dark," but the real issue is how to regulate law-enforcement access to personal information to avoid searches that have no terrorism or criminal connection. The overwhelming majority of FBI teltaps are in fact exploratory, not related to any actual or impending illegal act.

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No War for Manila

America risks conflict with China for a feeble ally.

by DOUG BANDOW

The Philippines is counting on America to defend its territorial claims against China. This brings to mind the German army officer who, upon witnessing military maneuvers by his country's principal ally, Austria-Hungary, remarked: "My god, we are allied with a corpse."

The U.S.-Philippines relationship goes back more than a century. Washington acquired the islands as war booty after defeating Spain in 1898. But Filipino independence fighters were not about to accept a switch in colonial overlords easily, so three years of brutal guerrilla warfare ensued, in which at least 200,000 noncombatants died. Washington did not grant the territory formal independence until 1946, after reclaiming the islands from Imperial Japan.

The Philippines long has been the sick man of East Asia. Its democracy is almost feudal, with bouts of military interference. The Filipino economy, while growing, remains bureaucratic, inefficient, and corrupt. Manila's military strength is marginal. Despite years of U.S. assistance to the government, Islamic insurgencies in the nation's south continue to smolder.

Yet this spring the Philippines played a dangerous game with China over control of islands in the South China Sea. When eight Chinese fishing vessels entered disputed waters near Scarborough Shoal in April, Filipino warships attempted to arrest the crews. Beijing sent surveillance vessels in response, sparking a lengthy standoff.

Beijing suspended tours to the Philippines and slowed agriculture imports from the country. *China Daily*, an official mouthpiece, declared, "No matter how willing we are to discuss the issue, the current Philippine leadership is intent on pressing us into a corner where there is no option left but the use of arms." A brief war scare erupted when rumors circulated of Chinese military mobilization.

Philippines Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario told the *New York Times* that his nation wanted a peaceful solution, but warned, "If the Philippines is challenged, we are prepared to secure our sovereignty." Manila eventually withdrew a couple of its ships, reducing tensions.

But the controversy runs deeper than a single confrontation over a fishing trip. Based on dubious historical grounds, Beijing has made extensive territorial claims in the South China Sea involving the Spratly and Paracel Islands, parts or all of which also are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines. In May, the PRC proclaimed a ban on fishing in the South China Sea, including the waters around Scarborough Shoal, and detained Vietnamese fishermen whom it accused of illegally fishing near the Paracel Islands.

Manila's arguments for control of the region's tiny islets are not much better than China's: the Philippines did not formally claim Scarborough Shoal until 1978. Three years ago, Vietnam as well as China protested when the Philippines passed new legislation defining its maritime boundary to include the Spratlys.

The specks of land matter less than the fishing grounds and, more importantly, gas and oil deposits conferred by ownership of the islands. Leszek Buszynski, a visiting fellow at the Australian National University's Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, notes in *The Washington Quarterly*, "Had the issue remained strictly a territorial one, it could have been resolved through Chinese efforts to reach out to ASEAN and forge stronger ties with the region." But recently every claimant has been more inclined to assert sovereignty forcefully, with an eye to taking the underlying and surrounding resources.

It is in Washington's interest to have friends rather

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than China—a growing geopolitical competitor—managing these new energy sources. Yet markets would prevail irrespective of ownership: even if the Philippines ended up in charge of the oil and gas deposits, Manila would sell to Americans only if they paid full price. At the margin, it is better that an American ally controls the resources, but the benefit isn't substantial.

Yet Washington's alliance with the Philippines could lead to a war with China. The U.S. risks being sucked into what Benjamin Carlson of the *Global Post* calls a "toxic brew of jingoism, nationalism, and disputed territory." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has even referred to the South China Sea as the West Philippine Sea, a name used only by Manila.

The Cold War relationship between America and the Philippines was close, but Subic Bay and Clark Airfield closed in 1992. A decade later President George W. Bush sent Special Forces, later backed by drones, to aid Manila's long-raging battle against Muslim insurgents. Over the last decade, the U.S. has given Manila more than $500 million in aid, and this spring Washington promised to up military assistance for the year to $30 million, double what was initially planned. The Obama administration gave the Philippines a cutter last fall, plans to provide a second ship this fall, and has assisted Manila in developing its "Coast Watch" radar system. American and Filipino military forces regularly conduct joint war games, most recently in April.

Under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between Washington and Manila, "Each Party recognizes an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes." At the time, the U.S. was mostly concerned about the Soviet Union, while Manila worried more over a revived Japan.

China is ambitious but has demonstrated no interest in global military competition with America. Even in East Asia, Beijing seeks influence, not conquest. The PRC's extensive claims at sea appear to be animated by a combination of nationalism and mercantilism, not colonialism. If Beijing's pretensions seem excessive, so do those of its neighbors. And China appears no more desirous of war than anyone else.

So far Washington has avoided expressly backing Manila's territorial claims. Even Walter Lohman of the hawkish Heritage Foundation admits, in a recent brief, "It would be folly for the U.S. to cast its support for the disputed territorial claims of any party, even that of an ally."

When previously pressed by Manila, the U.S. indicated that its defense promise only extended to the original territory acquired from Spain. Nevertheless, Washington acts as enabler for the Philippines' challenges to China. An April "Ministerial Dialogue" in Washington between Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and their Philippines counterparts—Foreign Secretary Alberto del Rosario and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin—affirmed the two nations' "shared obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty and our mutual commitment to the peace and security of the region," without spelling out those duties.

U.S. credibility would be on the line in any military confrontation between Manila and Beijing.

Manila has taken an aggressive tack, asserting that America has an obligation to defend the Philippines regardless of how or why conflict breaks out. Agence France-Presse reports Gazmin as saying that the treaty covers "armed attack … [on] island territories in the Pacific." And Gazmin interprets comments by Secretary Clinton on the Scarborough Shoal controversy—"We oppose the threat or use of force by any party to advance its claims"—to mean that America's guarantee would "cover our problem in the West Philippine Sea." The *Philippine Star* reports that after visiting Washington in late May, Guzmin asserted, "Without a deterrent force, we can be easily pushed around." But "now that we have a good neighbor on the block, we can no longer be bullied."

The pact between the two countries explicitly covers any attack on Manila's "armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific." In 1979, the Carter administration reaffirmed this commitment. While the defense treaty is not self-enforcing—each party merely promises to see such an attack as "dangerous to its own peace and safety" and pledges to "act to meet the common dangers"—U.S. credibility would be on the line in any military confrontation between Manila and Beijing.

Although Manila emphasizes that it isn't considering reestablishing U.S. bases, del Rosario was quoted by Reuters as saying, "As part of building up our minimum credible defense posture, we would like the Americans to come more often." Indeed, "Let's have these joint training exercises more frequently and on a bigger scale. As many times as we can, in different places if we can, that's the objective of the exercise."

The Ministerial Dialogue reaffirmed last year's Manila Declaration, which pledges both sides to "enhance the defense, interdiction, and apprehension capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines." But relying on Washington, the Philippines has shirked investing in its own forces. Manila's military is small, its capabilities derisory. The Philippines' defense priorities have always emphasized the army, given the country's internal security problems. The navy and air force have languished for decades. The navy's flagship is a 46-year-old American cast-off.

Defense spending is anemic, less than 1 percent of GDP. The International Institute for Strategic Studies reports that since America's withdrawal from the country in 1992, "perennially low defense budgets have thwarted efforts to develop any significant capability for conventional warfighting or deterrence." President Aquino's promise to strengthen the military has so far yielded no results. Naturally, the Philippines wants America to provide more equipment, including aircraft. Manila also has been panhandling for aid among Australia, Japan, and South Korea.

Unfortunately, U.S. charity only reduces the pressure on the Philippines to adopt serious reforms and contribute substantial resources to its own defense. After another Filipino-Chinese naval confrontation last year, President Aquino promised the military an extra $255 million. But even that amount won't go very far in creating an effective navy and air force.

Washington should not readopt the Philippines as a client state. America's principal interest in the South China Sea is maintaining freedom of navigation. Washington can firmly assert free-transit rights in bilateral discussions and international forums, and through U.S. naval movements. Washington should indeed work with the Philippines and its neighbors to keep the sea lanes free: India, too, has reason to cooperate with America in this regard. New Delhi has rejected expansive Chinese territorial claims, plans to help train Vietnamese submariners, and is involved in Vietnamese energy exploration near the Paracel Islands. Manila ought to be working more closely with these neighbors as well.

As long as free transit is protected, which country owns particular islands and shards of land is of little consequence to America. The dueling claims in the South China Sea risk inadvertent conflict: everyone is throwing sharp elbows hoping everyone else will back away. Chinese and Japanese vessels already have had physical contact. Worse may follow from bad or inadequate instructions to individual ship captains.

Washington might hope to deter Chinese adventurism by sprinkling security guarantees throughout the region. But Manila's confidence that the U.S. will ride to its rescue only makes the Philippines' government more likely to take risks. Similar behavior has been seen from Chen Shui-bian's Taiwan and Mikhail Saakashvili's Georgia, two states that in recent years provoked China and Russia, respectively, in expectation of American support. In the South China Sea, the result threatens to be a cycle toward war: the Philippines acts aggressively, Beijing responds with greater force to dissuade U.S. involvement, Washington then feels pressure to intervene lest its credibility suffer.

And territorial disputes in the region will only be harder to resolve if they are tied to other U.S.-China disagreements. If the South China Sea becomes an integral part of the strategic rivalry between Washington and Beijing, the PRC will fear that a reasonable settlement with individual nations or ASEAN could be perceived as a U.S. victory. China may instead decide that it must accompany its expanding naval capabilities and deployments with more assertive territorial claims and foreign-policy objectives as a test of American power and resolve.

The most effective means to increase China's willingness to negotiate is for the Philippines and other interested states to strengthen their own military capabilities and political cooperation with one another. Filipino economic growth appears to be accelerating, which will provide greater resources for the military, but Manila needs an incentive to invest more significantly in defense. Most of the other countries interested in the South China Sea—India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea—are buying submarines and other weapons. Although none of these nations wants to take on China alone, collectively they could constrain Beijing's claims.

But that won't happen if the U.S. continues to relieve friends like the Philippines of responsibility for their own defense. The worst policy for Washington would be, like Wilhelmine Germany, to ally with a geopolitical corpse. Washington should not give Manila the power to drag America to the brink of war with China. ■

Austerity's Prophets

How Friedrich Hayek eclipsed J.M. Keynes and Milton Friedman

by **MARK SKOUSEN**

"Austerity" has become the watchword of the year. Governors, prime ministers, and presidents around the world are talking about cutting welfare benefits, curtailing public union power, and reducing deficits. We've over-promised at the public trough, and now we must pay the price. Whoever is elected president in November is going to face the need to retrench.

Yet only one school of economic thought, that of Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, predicted and prescribed austerity before the Great Recession. More prominent branches of free-market economics, no less than the spendthrift left, have been slow to realize that neither fiscal nor monetary stimulus can cure what ails the West. As the psalmist says, "The rejected stone has become the chief cornerstone."

Nobody in power was talking austerity in 2008, when the financial crisis hit. Big government and its patron saint, John Maynard Keynes, were in the saddle, with Republicans and Democrats falling over each other to run up deficits and pass the Troubled Asset Relief Program. Keynes's biographer, Robert Skidelsky, came out with a bestseller, *The Return of the Master*.

The monetarists, meanwhile, students of Milton Friedman and the Chicago school of economics, were extravagant in their own way. The Federal Reserve's Ben Bernanke had told Friedman on his 90th birthday, in 2002, "You're right, we did it"—causing the Great Depression by allowing the money supply to collapse—"We're very sorry. But thanks to you, we won't do it again." Yet what was the monetarist response to the crisis?

Central bankers and professors of money and banking answered as one: Inject liquidity! Cut interest rates! Over the next two years, Bernanke instituted two rounds of "quantitative easing" (QE1 and QE2), a duplicitous name for printing money, and adopted a zero interest rate policy (ZIRP). He was convinced that Friedman would be smiling down from the Pearly Gates.

Maybe he's right about that—or half-right. Last month on the London Underground I ran into Paul Krugman, last of the old "crude" Keynesian breed. He was in the city to promote his book, *End This Depression Now!* For the next half hour, we debated the causes and cures of the Great Recession. Krugman insisted that we need to double or triple the deficit—but only in the short run. "We must eventually adopt austerity." He paraphrased St. Augustine: "Give me austerity, but not yet."

I asked him if there was anyone equal to him in debate. He couldn't think of anyone, so I suggested Milton Friedman—a safe bet because Friedman died in late 2006. Krugman nodded reverently, but insisted, "If Milton Friedman were alive today, he would be anathema to the Tea Party Republicans because he would have favored easy money to end this crisis."

"But not TARP and the deficits," I replied. Krugman sheepishly nodded. Friedman was convinced by the empirical data that fiscal activism—deficit spending—was unnecessary and even counterproductive. Monetary policy could do all the heavy lifting. British monetarist Tim Congdon confirms this. In his excellent and underappreciated work *Money in the Free Economy*, Congdon cites Friedman's denigration of fiscal policy: "A deficit is not stimulating because it has to be financed, and the negative effects of financing it counterbalance the positive effects, if there are any, of spending."

Massive government expenditures and deficits during World War II appeared to get us out of the

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Great Depression. But wait—Friedman was quick to point out that monetary policy was also activist: M2 grew at a 20 percent annualized clip from 1940-45. In another famous example, the Kennedy-Johnson tax cut of 1964 engineered by the Keynesians appeared to be stimulative. But wait—monetary policy was also expansionary during this time.

Congdon, following Friedman's lead, looks at natural experiments where fiscal and monetary policy moved in opposite directions to see which one dominated. Monetary policy won out in almost every case. He observes that in 1981 the Thatcher government in Great Britain raised taxes by £4 billion in a recession, while adopting expansionary monetary policy. Three-hundred and sixty-four Keynesian economists signed a statement in *The Times* decrying the move and predicting economic collapse. Yet the economy roared. Why? Because monetary policy was liberal at the time, offsetting fiscal austerity. Congdon concludes: "Contrary to a large number of textbooks, the size of the government's budget deficit is by itself not necessarily of any importance to aggregate demand."

If he were alive, Friedman would not be surprised that trillion-dollar deficits have had little impact in stimulating the U.S. economy. What government gives, private business takes away. Despite record profits and historically low interest rates, corporations are holding back on spending and hiring because of the uncertainty caused by wasteful government spending.

Who would have thought that the austere Hayek would make a comeback after the financial crisis of 2008?

The deficits have run their course without success, leaving us with mounds of debt and interest payments. Monetary easing, Friedman would agree, is the only game in town. But even easy money is not having the effect it once did. Mises said it best: "We have outlived the short run, and are now suffering from the long-run consequences of [Keynesian-monetarist] economics."

The Great Recession is in its fourth year, and the legacy of big-government macroeconomics is long indeed—unsustainable and chronic deficit spending; permanent easy money; excessive dependence on the welfare state (with 46 million on food stamps); overregulation (including Sarbanes-Oxley and Dodd-Frank); an anti-saving, debt-ridden consumer society; deteriorating public infrastructure; economic stagnation; and a stop-start market on Wall Street. Political leaders around the world are looking for a new model with which to restore prosperity and economic stability.

What about the supply-siders? Tax cuts play a role in encouraging economic growth, but in an age of rising deficits legislators are reluctant to slash rates aggressively. Supply-siders blundered in the past decade by repeatedly contending that "deficits don't matter" and assuming that we could grow our way out. Unfortunately, without constitutional restrictions on government spending, increased revenues from more efficient tax policies simply lead to more spending without solving the deficit problem.

There is only one school that consistently defends the classical model of fiscal and monetary responsibility as established by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*. And that is the school of austerity, led by the Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek—whom Krugman laughingly calls the "Austerians." But nobody is laughing anymore.

Who is the anointed economist of austerity? The leading theoretician appears to be Friedrich Hayek. Who would have thought that the austere Hayek would make a comeback after the financial crisis of 2008? He is the only Austrian to have won the Nobel Prize in economics, but until now his reputation has languished in the shade of Milton Friedman's sun.

Perhaps the best example of Hayek's resurrection is a bestselling book by British economist Nicholas Wapshott, *Keynes-Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics*. Even a popular rap song, "Fear the Boom and Bust," has come out of the debate between Keynes and Hayek. (Google "Keynes Hayek" and it's the first result to pop up.) The rap song is the brainchild of musician John Papola and George Mason University economics professor Russ Roberts. It's a favorite way on campuses to explain the ideological divide in macroeconomics.

Why isn't Milton Friedman the nemesis of Keynesian economics? Because during a crisis, he is not a classical economist. While he opposed fiscal stimulus, he advocated easy money to keep the economy from collapsing. Hayek and his mentor Mises are the real enemies of big government. Hard-core Austrians are true believers in the classical model of fiscal and mon-

etary restraint, even during a Great Recession.

The first debate between Keynes and Hayek took place in the 1930s and is recounted in Wapshott's book and in chapter 12 of my own *Making of Modern Economics*. Hayek, then teaching at the London School of Economics, opposed Keynes's prescription of deficit spending and easy money to get out of the Great Depression. Hayek defended the classical "Treasury" view that governments, like the private sector, should cut costs and prudently live within their means even during downturns. He excoriated easy money as well, which he said would only make matters worse. If the central bank had any legitimate role, it was as a lender of last resort—but along the lines described by Walter Bagehot, who advocated in *Lombard Street* (1873) that the central bank lend money to troubled banks at higher, not lower, interest rates.

The Great Depression was so deep and long that eventually Keynes won the debate, at least in the minds of policy-makers. Hayek fell into obscurity and turned to political writing, producing his best-selling *Road to Serfdom* (1944) and *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960). After Hayek shared the 1974 Nobel Prize in economics with socialist Gunnar Myrdal amid the inflationary stagnation of that decade, interest in his economic thinking rose, but he still played a smaller role on stage than Milton Friedman—who won the Nobel in 1976—and the supply-siders.

Hayek, building on the original work of Ludwig von Mises, developed a macro model of the economy and the Austrian theory of the business cycle. Austrian macroeconomics is a sophisticated improvement in the classical model, while Keynesian macroeconomics seeks to demolish the House that Adam Smith built.

Hayek and the Austrians contend that easy-money policies—expanding the fiat money supply and artificially lowering interest rates below the natural rate—lead to structural imbalances in the economy that are not sustainable. Austrians predict that the Fed's policies of QE and ZIRP will inevitably lead to further asset bubbles in the stock market, manufacturing, exports, and real estate, depending on who gets the money first. As Mises taught, "Money is never neutral."

The Austrians conclude that the boom-bust cycle is not a natural phenomenon under free-enterprise capitalism but is caused by government intervention in the monetary sphere. A legitimate international gold standard and "freely competitive banking" would minimize the risks of a boom-bust cycle. (Incidentally, the Austrians are the only school of economics today that defends the classical model of the gold standard.)

Until the 2008 crisis, the Keynesians and monetarists were unconcerned about asset bubbles. A bear market in housing prices or high-tech stocks would, they thought, only have a marginal impact on the global economy and could easily be countered by deft monetary stimulus. The market recovered from the 1988-90 real estate bust and from the 2001-2002 dot-com stock-market collapse without a global meltdown, for example.

The real-estate/mortgage bust of 2008 changed all that, and suddenly the focus shifted to the only school that argued all along that "asset bubbles" had macroeconomic effects: the Austrians. Since then, the Austrians and their primary advocate, Friedrich Hayek, have been in the limelight, popularized by financial gurus like Peter Schiff and political figures like Ron Paul. Management theorist Peter Drucker once predicted that the "next economics" would have to come from the "supply side, productive sector," by which he meant the Austrians. He had in mind Joseph Schumpeter of "creative destruction" fame, but Hayek will do.

In May, I visited Poland for the first time to give a series of lectures on Austrian economics. Most of my books have been translated into Polish, thanks to energetic publisher Jan Fijor. My lectures were packed with business leaders, academics, and students who had an insatiable interest in Austrian economics and finance.

Eastern Europe, in particular, is taking a Viennese waltz down the economy. Leaders there are focused on adopting sound monetary and fiscal policies along the classical/Austrian lines. The supply-side flat tax movement is also popular.

Right now Estonia is in the limelight because it's the fastest-growing economy in the region, expanding at a 7.6 percent rate. It is the only eurozone country with a budget surplus. National debt is just 6 percent of GDP. How did they bounce back from the devastating 2008-09 crisis?

"I can answer in [three] words," states Peeter Koppel, investment strategist at the SEB Bank: "Austerity, austerity, austerity." Estonia went through three years of belt-tightening. Public sector wages were cut, the pension age was raised, benefits were reduced. "It was very difficult, but we managed it," explains Juhan Parts, Estonia's minister of economy and communication. This "little country that could" is now leading the way to recovery and prosperity. The Austrian way. ■

Died on the 4th of July

Fisher Ames, Founding Father and arch-foe of democracy

by STEPHEN B. TIPPINS JR.

I told a friend of mine I was going to write a profile on Fisher Ames.

"Who?" he asked.

"Fisher Ames. One of our Founding Fathers and a preeminent Federalist."

"And you're writing a profile on him?"

"Yep."

"Why?"

"Well… he's largely forgotten. And his brand of conservatism was actually conservative. You know, interestingly enough, he died on July—"

"No, no. I mean *why*?"

"I don't follow."

"Well, it's an election year, in case you haven't noticed. And I don't think a dead Federalist is going to resonate much. How's Fisher Ames going to help Republicans win the White House?"

"I don't know, really. But I do think that Republicans could stand to learn a thing or two from the Federalists. Hell, I think we all could."

"Why is that? I mean, what, exactly, did the Federalists believe in?"

I wasn't prepared to be tested. I thought for a moment. "They lobbied for a strong national government, Hamiltonian finance, a stronger allegiance with Britain, and they believed, I guess, in rule by a natural aristocracy."

"Natural aristocracy? Strong national government? What relevance does any of that have? I mean, a strong national government? Really? Government isn't the answer, you know. It's the problem."

Well, now.

I carefully considered my friend's point. *Government isn't the answer… It's the problem.* It then occurred to me: Like most modern conservatives, my friend had missed the point. To say that government isn't the answer to our nation's problems is to presuppose the wrong incentive for erecting government in the first place. Fisher Ames would know that. And *that's* why he's relevant.

Fisher Ames (1758-1808) of Dedham, Massachusetts is not exactly a forgotten Founding Father. The general public may not remember him, but historians and scholars haven't forgotten Ames so much as they've dismissed him. John W. Malsberger, in his 1982 essay "The Political Thought of Fisher Ames," wrote that for much of American history scholars considered Ames nothing more than an extremist "who resisted the idealism of the American Revolution," an unstable man whose writing was so "infected with hysterical and paranoid symptoms that it is difficult to believe that he represented a sane body of thought."

Henry Adams was more poetic. Ames's "best political writing," he wrote, "was saturated with the despair of the tomb to which his wasting body was condemned."

Yet much can be learned from the life of Ames, and not just from his rhetoric (which gave us the wittiest of all retorts when, in response to the declaration that all men are created equal, he quipped: "But differ greatly in the sequel") or from his writing ("Constitutions are but paper; society is the substratum of government"). He was, in Russell Kirk's words, a man many years dying. This was because in his youth, well before his tubercular demise, he displayed more promise than perhaps any of our other great statesmen. Fisher Ames personified two of conservatism's most indelible tenets: life is fragile and all is vanity.

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Ames began his political journey at Harvard, where he enrolled during the summer of his twelfth year—an early start for this oldest of souls. Providence could not have placed him in a better place at a better time, for he was afforded the opportunity to couch his education in the context of the single great political question of his time. As war with Britain loomed, one of the school's benefactors remarked that Ames and his classmates were brought "to such a pitch of enthusiasm" that it was "difficult for their tutors to keep them within due bounds."

At the time, Ames was enamored with notions of liberty and independence. As a member of Harvard's Speaking Club, he gave such patriotic orations as a recital of Benjamin Church's speech on the Boston Massacre ("When will the locust leave the land?") and a rendition of Cicero's defense of Titus Annius Milo ("by my single efforts has it been brought to pass that right, and equity, and laws, and liberty, and modesty, and chastity remain in this city"). But he was also unknowingly receiving his first lesson in conservative thought. Soon he would see how the people embraced their "liberty." He would not like what he saw.

His eyes opened in 1786, when boom and bust hastily descended on the new republic. The bust proved difficult to weather, especially for rural inhabitants of New England. A precipitous fall in agricultural prices, a shortage of paper money, high taxes, and a rise in foreclosures led many rural New Englanders—believers in an inalienable right to protest the state—to take up arms against their newly formed governments. Led by Daniel Shays, an ex-captain in the Continental Army, the rebellion shut down numerous county courts and brought the impotence of the Articles of Confederation to light.

Though the uprising was quickly quelled, conservative interests in New England recognized the ease with which civilized men could regress "to barbarism … weary of liberty, and unworthy of it; arming their sacrilegious hands against it, though it was bought with their blood, and was once the darling pride of their hearts." Ames believed that because the Massachusetts constitution was the product of "the free act of the people … treason against such a constitution implies a high degree of moral depravity." He also believed that such moral depravity was unavoidable unless "sage politicians" could eradicate "the destructive notions that the seditious" had "infused in the people."

Ames's faith in "sage politicians" reflects the fading optimism that he still held for the American enterprise. About this time he wrote, with decidedly less predestination than in subsequent musings, "If we fall we fall by our folly not our fate." And in defending the idea of biennial elections, he gave credence to the "sober second thought of the people." Such credence he would never entertain later in life.

Whatever optimism Ames may have felt in the aftermath of Shays' misadventure, the French Revolution would exorcise it. The Terror was one of two influences that finally molded Fisher's conservative philosophy. The other was witnessing firsthand his fellow congressmen in action. He had first come to the nation's capital—then situated in New York—with a great deal of enthusiasm and all the fire that political upstarts display. But by the time he left office in 1797, he had realized that the great orators and statesmen of our land were anything but "demigods" or "Roman senators." According to biographer Winfred E.A. Bernhard, even some of the men Ames held in esteem—James Madison for one—he found too "pedantic" and "impractical" for governing.

The French Revolution's bloodletting foreshadowed for Ames the future of the West and reflected for him the true nature of democracies.

Factions, sectionalism, and a growing democratic sensibility among the people left him with a jaded opinion of governing—"I despise politics when I think of this office"—and the uprising in France left him with an even bleaker view of those who were charged with electing him in the first place. The French Revolution's bloodletting foreshadowed for Ames the future of the West and reflected for him the true nature of democracies. "Theories fit for angels," he said of the Jacobins' creed, "have been adopted for the use of a multitude, who have been found, when left to what is called their self-government, unfit to be called men."

Despite his growing melancholy, Ames managed to parlay early success as a country lawyer into a seat at Massachusetts's constitutional ratifying con-

vention. From there he upset Samuel Adams in the nation's first congressional elections in 1788. Once in Congress, he helped author the First Amendment, played a vital role in lobbying for Alexander Hamilton's financial policies, and wrote the lower house's address to Washington when he retired from the presidency. Most famously, he arose in opposition to Jefferson's Republicans on the question of funding Jay's Treaty. His words movingly evoked the faith that composes a nation and binds its pledges to others:

> What is patriotism? Is it a narrow affection for the spot where a man was born? Are the very clods where we tread entitled to this ardent preference because they are greener? No, sir; that is not the character of the virtue, and it soars higher for its object. It is an extended self-love, mingling with all the enjoyments of life, and twisting itself with the minutest filaments of the heart. It is thus we obey the laws of society, because they are the laws of virtue. In their authority we see, not the array of force and terror, but the venerable image of our country's honor. Every good citizen makes that honor his own, and cherishes it not only as precious, but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense, and is conscious that he gains protection while he gives it.
>
> For what rights of a citizen will be deemed inviolable when a state renounces the principles that constitute their security? Or if his life should not be invaded, what would its enjoyments be in a country odious in the eyes of strangers and dishonored in his own? Could he look with affection and veneration to such a country as his parent? The sense of having one would die within him; he would blush for his patriotism, if he retained any, and justly, for it would be a vice. He would be a banished man in his native land.

Ames believed that there was little he and like-minded Federalists could do but "to mitigate a tyranny."

Funding of the treaty helped stay a war with Britain and ushered in a decade of prosperous trade with the country from which we won independence.

Successes notwithstanding, Ames was forced to forego reelection in 1796 due to declining health. To his chagrin, nothing he achieved while in office seemed to carry any lasting influence. The United States were shifting culturally and electorally. The Federalists were declining as a party. The Republicans—the "Jeffs" as he called them—were growing. Soon, war with Britain would come; France under Napoleon would loom as a threat; rights-speak would become the vernacular of the governed as well as the governors; and Jefferson's shadow would forever cast itself upon the nation.

Ames believed that there was little he and like-minded Federalists could do but "mitigate a tyranny." His outlook not only struck many of his contemporaries as alarmist, but later thinkers—even conservatives—tended to agree. Russell Kirk, in *The Conservative Mind*, wrote, "Ames was wrong, so far as the immediate future was concerned; for already a counterbalance to American radicalism was making its weight felt. That saving influence was in part the product of an innate moderation in the planter society Jefferson represented."

But Jefferson's planter society happened to have hung its hat on an immoderate—and infamously peculiar—institution. And whatever Federalist ideals were in place before Reconstruction, we lost them in its wake.

Ames's philosophy can be summed up as follows: the "power of the people, if uncontroverted, is licentious and mobbish." But if checked by a powerful and well-led state, a more virtuous citizenry could be procured, one that feels a "love of country diffused through the Society and ardent in each individual, that would dispose, or rather impel every one to do or suffer much for his country, and permit no one to do anything against it."

He realized, however, that a republican state cannot coincide with a democratic state—into which he perceived us slipping—and a democratic state cannot nurture a more virtuous citizenry. "A democratick society will soon find its morals the incumbrance of its race, the surly companion of its licentious joys. … In a word there will not be morals without justice; and though justice might possibly support a democracy, yet a democracy cannot possibly support justice."

He warned of "schemes of an abolition of debts and an equal distribution of property" that would be "pursued with unremitting industry." For Ames, the truth was that "our country is too big for union, too sordid for patriotism, too democratick for liberty. What is to become of it? He who made it best knows. Its vice will govern it, by practising upon its folly. This is ordained for democracies."

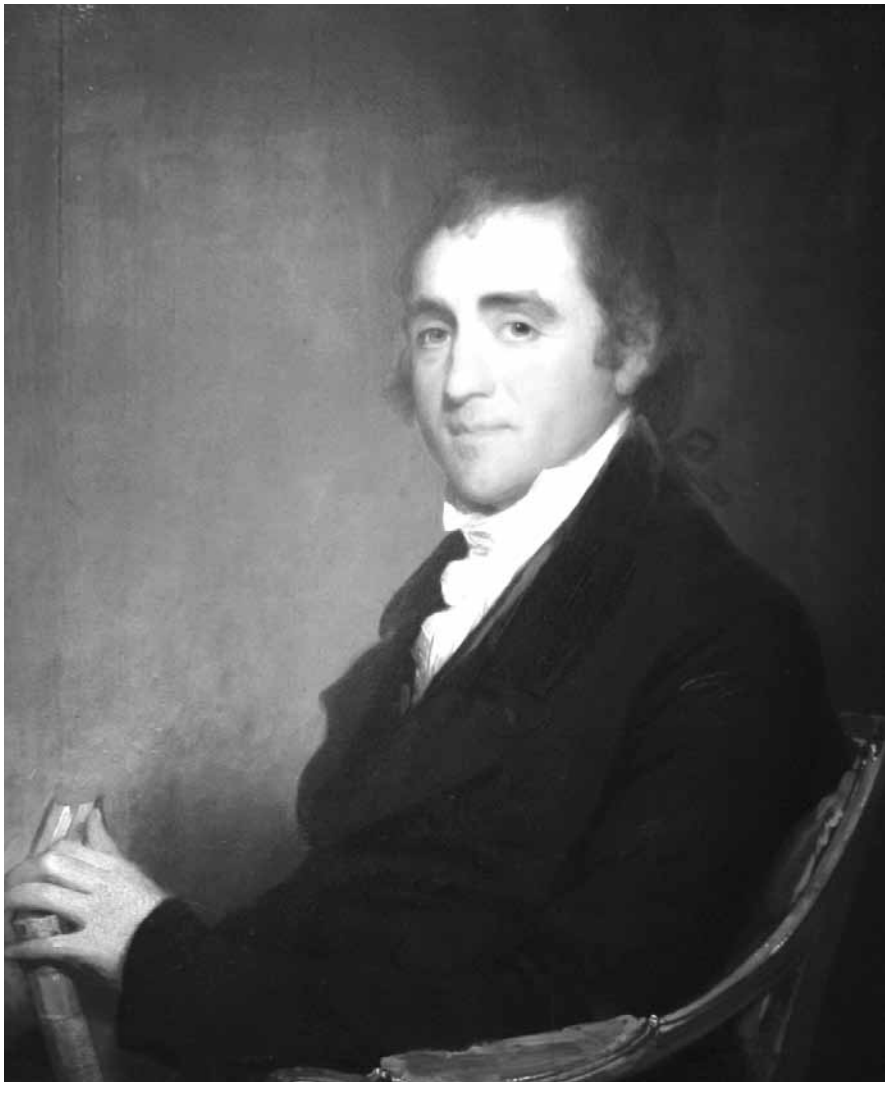
This bleak prophecy sounds irredeemably pessimistic. Yet the skull grinned. "Our disease," Ames wrote,

> is democracy. It is not the skin that festers—our very bones are carious and their marrow blackens with gangrene. Which rogues shall be first, is of no moment—our republicanism must die, and I am sorry for it… . Nevertheless, though I indulge no hopes, I derive much entertainment from the squabbles in Madam Liberty's family. After so many liberties have been taken with her, I presume she is no longer a miss and a virgin, though she may still be a goddess.

Even on the verge of death, he embraced a wry sense of humor and found solace, away from politics, in friends. "My health," he wrote to one,"is exceedingly tender. While I sit by the fire and keep my feet warm, I am not sick. I have heard of a college lad's question, which tolerably describes my case: 'Whether bare being, without life or existence, is better than not to be or not?' I cannot solve so deep a problem; but as long as you are pleased to allow me a place in your esteem, I shall continue to hold better than 'not to be' to be."

A sheer pessimist would not have conveyed such warmth in his waning hours, nor would he have found Madam Liberty still a goddess.

Fisher Ames died on the Fourth of July, 1808. Everyone knows the story of how Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on the Fourth of July, 1826, a half-century after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Every Independence Day, great respect is given to the memory of Jefferson—and at least a little to Adams. But no mention is ever made of that other Founding Father who died on the Fourth of July, primarily because he wasn't a president. The arch-elitist Ames is forgotten beside two men whose 44-man fraternity resembles the closest thing we have to a monarchy.



You can't make a democratic society remember something it doesn't want to remember, which brings us back to where we came in. Anti-statist conservatives forget that we left the state of nature in the first place because the souls of men, which are inherently depraved, need nurturing, and only institutions can provide that. But democracy will not tolerate institutions of restraint, political or otherwise. Fisher Ames warned us well, if only we could recall his words. ■

Saint Sydney

The Anglican Whig who fought for England's Catholics

by **R.J. STOVE**

In 1983, British biographer and novelist A.N. Wilson wrote, in his *Life of John Milton*, "It needs an act of supreme historical imagination to be able to recapture an atmosphere in which Anglican bishops might be taken seriously; still more, one in which they might be thought threatening."

This observation gained a particular force in March, when Rowan Williams announced his forthcoming departure from the See of Canterbury. Not only has Williams been the first holder of his office to abandon all Christian dogma in favor of druidic whimsies and Islamic appeasement, but even against such daunting competitors as Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, and Sarah Palin he has become the most comprehensively derided politician in the English-speaking world since Teddy Kennedy acquired his one-way ticket to Gehenna.

This circumstance lends a pleasing fascination to the spectacle of any English Anglican with *cojones*. Such a being acquires in 2012 the same novel charm that typifies any exotic mindset, and that ensures the continuing appeal of T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis even among those who have never darkened an Anglican church's door. Which is where the Reverend Sydney Smith comes in.

Smith—an overweight, homely-looking cleric who neither obtained nor sought legislative office—never left Europe, seldom left London, could disappear into any crowd without attracting notice, and had about as much obvious magnetism as the proverbial "Mayor of Birmingham in a bad year." "A mouth like an oyster, and three double-chins," one catty female observer remarked.

Yet when Smith died in 1845, some of Britain's toughest political bruisers wept like children. The news of Smith's passing plunged Francis Jeffrey, ruthless Scottish editor and judge, into (one Smith specialist tells us) "an agony of grief." This news—according to the same source—had also "shaken Lord John Russell, silenced Macaulay, caused Lady Holland to forget her ailments, made [dry-as-dust poetaster] Samuel Rogers sentimental, stopped the pen of Dickens … [and] reddened the eyes of Thomas Moore." Once Moore had good-humoredly complained: "Sydney at breakfast made me actually cry with laughing. I was obliged to start up from the table." Sir James Mackintosh, an uninspired but at one time celebrated historian, so forgot his natural tedium in Smith's company that (according to the aforementioned Russell) he "rolled on the floor in fits of laughter."

Among Smith's admirers across the Atlantic was the obscure spokesman for Sangamon County in the Illinois House of Representatives, who delighted in spouting Smith's maxims but whom few on that account credited with a political future. The representative bore the name Abraham Lincoln.

What manner of hero was this Smith? Who would have thought the old man to have had so much fame in him?

He was... odd, definitely. Odd more in a French than an English manner: he himself imputed his ebullient logic to his mother's Huguenot blood, which made a combustible mix with the antic disposition of his merchant father, Robert. Adumbrating Edward Lear's limerick about "the old man of Thermophylae / Who never did anything properly," Robert Smith bought and sold 19 estates in England, for reasons known exclusively to himself. Hesketh Pearson, in *The Smith of Smiths*, describes Smith senior's architectural M.O.: "No sooner had he purchased a house and spent both money and energy in ruining its appearance, than he got rid of it at a loss and departed for another district."

R.J. Stove lives in Melbourne, Australia.

Sydney, born in 1771, was the second of five children. He went to Winchester, one of the leading "public schools"—private schools, in American terms—and loathed it. Over 200 years before David Cameron gave upper-crust puerile sordor a bad name, Smith had flayed the ethical pretensions afflicting Cameron's alma mater, Eton, no less than Winchester itself:

> At a public school, every boy is alternatively tyrant and slave. The power which the elder part of these communities exercises over the younger, is exceedingly great—very difficult to be controlled—and accompanied, not unfrequently, with cruelty and caprice. ... The morality of boys is generally very imperfect; their notions of honor extremely mistaken; and their objects of ambition frequently very absurd. ... This system also gives the elder boys an absurd and pernicious opinion of their own importance, which is often with difficulty effaced by a considerable commerce with the world.

One negative merit such schools preserved: as Lord Melbourne mused, they could not actually prevent you reading books if you wanted to. And read books Smith did. He won so many academic prizes as to inspire demands that he be prohibited from contesting any more. But these prizes, though securing him entry to Oxford, did not lastingly enrich him. Following his father into "trade" would have caused scandal. Becoming a lawyer—as he himself wanted to do—required paternal money long gone. He would not have survived a week's training in the armed forces. Nor would the armed forces.

So holy orders it had to be; so, from 1796, it was. While his aristocratic contemporaries gambled and wenched their way through the Grand Tour of the Low Countries, France, and Italy—with perhaps a penitential week among the clean-living Swiss—we find Smith in a Wiltshire village, catechizing parishioners among whom the ability to read and write ranked well below the knack for milking cattle or harvesting corn. This is what nine-tenths of rural England was like before Gladstone's 1870 Education Act.

Even after young Smith had studied philosophy in Edinburgh, nothing much distinguished him from other scholarly, indigent curates. Certainly he wrote sermons good enough to be collected in a book, but a volume of homilies no more presupposed literary talent in 1800 than a master's thesis does to us. Anglican divines then, however innately uncompetitive, resembled today's racehorses or pop singers in the passionate claques they acquired. (As late as 1922 P.G. Wodehouse, with no hint of anachronism, devoted to these sacerdotal conflicts a marvelous short story, "The Great Sermon Handicap.") Smith nevertheless had what his rivals usually lacked: first-hand understanding of Scottish Lowlands didacticism at its fiercest, and intellectual friendships for which Dr. Johnson's milieu alone provides a counterpart. The didacticism led gradually into the friendships.

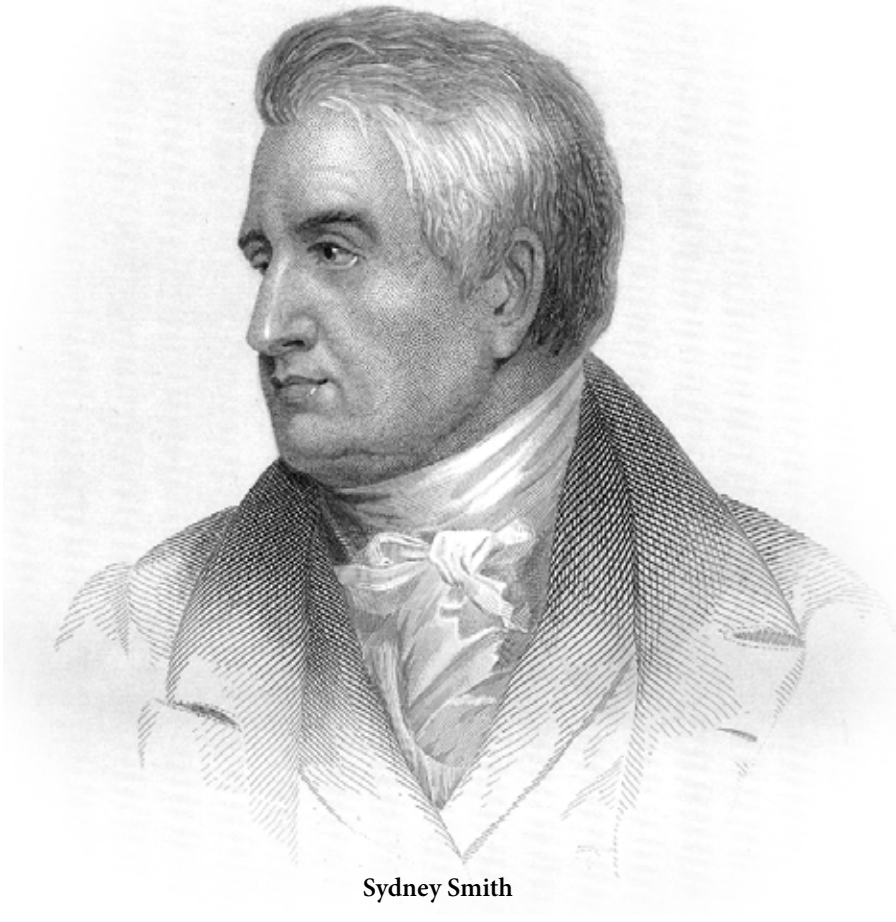
What do intellectual friends in any epoch do? They start a magazine. Smith was erudite and broke. Francis Jeffrey was erudite and broke. Neither Smith nor Jeffrey had shown exceptional prose gifts, or cultivated any rich patrons, or even developed a skill at placating those censors who—in the Britain of Pitt the Younger as afterward in the Austria of Metternich—spied pestiferously on suspected radicals, even while incapable of serious doctrinal combat against them. No matter. In 1802 the *Edinburgh Review* made its début, with Smith being editor, a more experienced candidate having proven invisible. Smith lost his first tiff with his colleagues when they rejected his proffered motto for the magazine: *Tenui musam meditamur avena*, "We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal." The staff did live on oatmeal and saw no reason to publicize the regrettable fact.

A cause had only to be both sensible and apparently unwinnable for Smith to champion it.

Smith took over ever more of the *Review*'s writing assignments—some under his own name, some pseudonymous—consigning to Jeffrey the editorship. For all the *Review*'s theoretical allegiance to the Whig party, Smith did what very few British journalists have done since: he got his periodical read by multitudes who abhorred his politics. Just as innumerable Loyal Orange major-generals once bought the left-leaning *New Statesman* for its book reviews and poetry competitions, just as Trotskyite educrats

once bought *The Spectator* for the shamefaced satisfaction of perusing Sir Peregrine Worsthorne's latest assault on good collectivist taste, so Smith achieved a readership among those antediluvian backwoods peers who equated the Duke of Wellington with the Jacobin Club.

A cause had only to be both sensible and apparently unwinnable for Smith to champion it. Like numerous really fine stylists, he never lost a needful power to shock. And no utterance more shocked England—Smith had become a Londoner in 1803—than any call for Catholic Emancipation.



Sydney Smith

To ordinary Englishmen back then, an advocate of extending civil rights to hold office and practice their religion to Catholics was at once a maniac, a conspirator, and a hoodlum. The best somebody like Smith could expect was to be dismissed as JFK dismissed Nixon: "No class."

This challenge Smith relished. Tory Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, shot dead in 1812, might well have found his killer's ammunition anticlimactic after Smith's onslaughts against his anti-Catholic policy. To drive the message home, Smith—his pen-name "Peter Plymley" deceived no one—combined emancipism with (gulp) the Irish Question: "There is not a parent from the Giant's Causeway to Bantry Bay who does not conceive that his child is the unfortunate victim of the exclusion, and that nothing short of positive law could prevent his own dear pre-eminent Paddy from rising to the highest honors of the State. So with the army, and parliament; in fact, few are excluded; but in imagination, all; you keep 20 or 30 Catholics out, and you lose the affection of four millions."

Finally in 1829 his agitation gained statutory results. Smith acted—let this be emphasized—not through any love of Catholicism. Instead, he obeyed that same spirit that made French War Minister Georges Picquart, whilst personally antipathetic toward Captain Dreyfus, seek the overturning of Dreyfus's conviction for treason: an objective evil had prevailed, it must not continue to prevail, and those who extenuated it degraded the very nation they purported to love. Picquart had much the easier task, given the articulacy of Dreyfus's admirers. Catholic Erin was less fortunate. "The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned," Smith lamented, "the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence, and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants, and the fatuity of idiots." Consult the recent Hibernophobic ravings of historian Andrew Roberts to behold this syndrome in our own age.

If contemplating Smith the pro-Catholic would still suffice to make Roberts reach for the Valium, contemplating Smith the foe of imperial overreach would probably induce in him a fatal aneurysm. Too seldom remembered among Whiggery's successes, between Lord Grey's election in 1830 and Lord Melbourne's retirement in 1841, is its refusal to "go abroad in search of monsters to destroy." But just as our own laptop bombardiers have their Hitlers of the month, the armchair warriors of Smith's day had their Bonapartes of the month, King Louis-Philippe included. Smith, who numbered both the

prime minister and his wife among his closest allies, set to work. Lady Grey drew from him a letter that stands, even now, among the most stirring of all English epistolary utterances:

> For God's sake do not drag me into another war! I am worn down, and worn out, with crusading and defending Europe, and protecting mankind; I must think a little of myself. I am sorry for the Spaniards. I am sorry for the Greeks. I deplore the fate of the Jews. The people of the Sandwich Islands are groaning under the most detestable tyranny. Baghdad is oppressed. I do not like the present state of the [Ganges] Delta. Tibet is not comfortable. Am I to fight for all these people? The world is bursting with sin and sorrow. Am I to be champion of the Decalogue, and to be eternally raising fleets and armies to make all men good and happy? We have just done saving Europe, and I am afraid that the consequence will be, that we shall cut each other's throats. No war, dear Lady Grey! No eloquence; but apathy, selfishness, common sense, arithmetic! I beseech you, secure Lord Grey's swords and pistols, as the housekeeper did Don Quixote's armor."

Intermittent stabs of guilt could make a Whig boss fleetingly entertain the idea of giving Smith condign rewards. "Smith has done more for the Whigs than all the clergy put together," reflected Lord Melbourne, "and our not making him a bishop is sheer cowardice." Alas, cowardice triumphed, and George III's prophecy—"He is a very clever fellow, but he will never be a bishop"—proved accurate. It was probably bound to do so, given that Smith had enfiladed an ecclesiastical opponent with the words, "I must believe in Apostolic Succession, there being no other way of accounting for the descent of the Bishop of Exeter from Judas Iscariot."

But for every individual who feared Smith's tongue, hundreds cherished it. Perhaps recalling Smith's aid to Louis-Philippe's governance, French statesman François Guizot discerned: "It is his condition to be witty, as it is that of Lady Seymour"—a renowned Whig diva—"to be beautiful." Macaulay praised Smith for talking "from the impulse of the moment, and his fun is quite inexhaustible," a fairly generous response to Smith's famous put-down that Macaulay "has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful." Lord Dudley, then considered a political genius, sportingly told Smith: "You have been laughing at me for the last seven years, and you never said anything which I wished unsaid."

Pages of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* will supply as many Smith epigrams as one could desire. May a latter-day admirer cite, instead, an Edinburgh lecture that Smith gave to raise money on behalf of the blind?

> The sense of sight is indeed the highest bodily privilege, the purest physical pleasure, which man has derived from his Creator. To see that wandering fire, after he has finished his journey through the nations, coming back to his eastern heavens ... is it possible to joy in this animated scene, and feel no pity for the sons of darkness? For the eyes that will never see light? For the poor clouded in everlasting gloom? If you ask me why they are miserable and dejected, I turn you to the plentiful valleys; to the fields now bringing forth their increase; to the freshness and the flowers of the earth; to the endless variety of its colors; to the grace, the symmetry, the shape of all it cherishes and all it bears: these you have forgotten, because you have always enjoyed them ... This is the reason why the blind are miserable and dejected—because their soul is mutilated, and dismembered of its best sense—because they are a laughter and a ruin, and the boys of the streets mock at their stumbling feet. Therefore, I implore you, by the Son of David, have mercy on the blind. If there is not pity for all sorrows, turn the full and perfect man to meet the inclemency of fate; let not those who have never tasted the pleasures of existence be assailed by any of its sorrows; the eyes which are never gladdened by light should never stream with tears.

Rare is the writer whose deathbed tenets one would want, on one's own deathbed, to read. Smith is such a writer. In his final weeks he found himself quoting a sermon he had composed long before: "We talk of human life as a journey, but how variously is that journey performed! There are some who come forth girt, and shod, and mantled, to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested, and every beam is tempered. There are others who walk on the Alpine paths of life, against driving misery, and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet, and naked breast, jaded, mangled, and chilled."

Sydney Smith, R.I.P. You were saying, Professor Dawkins? ■

Home Plate

BILL KAUFFMAN

Rocky's Drug War

I had drinks one night with an old friend who had spent the previous year in jail. Despite my entreaties, and my guarantee that it would provide rare cachet, he refused to loudly begin a sentence, "When I was in the joint…" In fact, he denied that prisoners ever called their domicile the joint, the rock, or the big house, and he confessed to not having met a single grizzled veteran of the pen who dispensed such gnomes as "Do time; don't let time do you."

You mean the movies lie about all this?

My levity shamed me. There's really nothing funny about having to live in a cage. My friend's fellow penmen ranged from the violent to the pathetic, from apparently unredeemable scumbags to the luckless and the dumb. *Innocent* was seldom an apt description of these men, but look hard enough and you can see the face of Christ in each one.

The prison-industrial complex depends upon the drug war for its seemingly limitless supply of bodies. (I write, by the way, as one so drug-averse that I don't even like taking Tylenol for a hangover—I much preferred Minor Threat to Johnny Thunders.)

Although we have reached a stage where the jock potheads of my boyhood have their avaricious little hands on the levers of power, the bong throng—including three consecutive deracinated ex-coke-sniffers in the White House—lack the guts even to take the gateway step of saying that to imprison men and women for buying and selling marijuana is an affront to personal liberty. (Not to worry: the empty cells can be filled with Thought Criminals.)

Who are the national political figures willing to say that marijuana ought to be legalized? The noble ascetic Ralph Nader, the heroic physician Ron Paul, and former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson, the triathlete running for president on the Libertarian ticket.

Governor Andrew Cuomo, no one's idea of a libertarian Democrat, has proposed decriminalizing the open possession of less than 25 grams of marijuana. This is the latest meliorative attempt by New York Democrats to soften the state's drug laws, which took an infamous turn toward the draconian four decades ago under Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

I am chagrined, if not surprised, that rural upstate legislators are the primary obstacles to reform. Keeping watch over the largely downstate prison population has become a staple of the regional economy, a degradation to which we have become accustomed. Prison jobs sure beat Wal-Mart.

Fifteen miles down the road sits Attica State Prison, damned site of the 1971 riot in which 29 inmates and ten hostages were killed. Governor Rockefeller refused to come to Attica to negotiate for the release of those hostages. Sure, a bloodbath flooded D Yard, but hey, the dead were mostly rural working-class white guards and urban black prisoners. Probably not a one knew anything about abstract expressionism.

I don't suppose Rocky's sleep was ever troubled by nightmares of the families whose homes and small businesses he stole for his grotesque experiments in modernist urban renewal in Albany, or by the ghetto and shotgun-shack kids rotting away in his prisons for vending substances which the languid heirs of the ruling class consume with oligarchic immunity.

But God has a sense of humor. Rocky perished while—let's see; we must be discreet, as the sole witness to his tumbling off this mortal coil is with us still—let us just say that he died while in the company of a 20-something-year-old female. The reliably fatuous *New York Times* courtier-journalist James "Scotty" Reston provided an unintentionally hilarious eulogy for the Butcher of Attica. Noting that Rocky expired "late on a Friday night" whilst laboring under "the consoling influences of art, beauty, and love," Reston gushed, "He was a worker, a yearner, and a builder to the end."

I'll say!

The great Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, matriarch of "the fighting army of the working class" and opponent of war, capitalism, and women's suffrage, once met with President William Howard Taft to plead for a pardon for labor radicals. (Imagine a modern president meeting congenially with a homegrown revolutionary.)

"Now, Mother," President Taft said pleasantly, "the trouble lies here: if I put the pardoning power in your hands there would be no one left in the jails."

"I'm not so sure of that," Mother Jones replied. "A lot of those who are in would be out, but a lot of those who are out would be in."

That's Mother Mary: speaking words of wisdom. Let it be. ■

The Foreign WTO Now Outrageously Controls Our Economy, Fate and Future

Six Disastrous Points that Negate Our Constitutional Rights

It is inconceivable that we should even tolerate this! The WTO is a biased undemocratic organization of 153 nations that limits America's ability to act in its own best interest. In it, the United States has no larger vote than a smaller country, such as Grenada (Article IX, p. 5).

By signing the agreement with the World Trade Organization, the U.S. Congress agreed to concede a major portion of our sovereignty and usurp our democratic legislative process, including:

- Conforming U.S. laws, regulations and administrative procedures to the will of the WTO *(Article XVI, p. 10)*
- Subjecting all federal, state and local laws and practices that effect trade to international review by the WTO *(Article XVI, p. 10)*
- Allowing any WTO member country to challenge federal, state and local laws and practices as trade impeding *(Section 2 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding)*
- Taking all trade disputes to the WTO judiciary– giving the WTO final jurisdiction over all trade altercations. No appeal exists outside of the WTO (Section 2 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding)
- Empowering the WTO to enforce its rulings by imposing fines on the United States until we comply
- Disallowing Congress to "change" the agreement

Sorry Sam, We're the boss now. You signed away your constitutional rights in 1995. ***Now do as you're told!***

The Rights of America are Subservient to the Will of the World Trade Organization. Those who Signed this Lengthy Agreement did not Read the Fine Print or did not have the Interests of America in Mind.

America's WTO Agreement Puts Control in Destructive Foreign Hands!

Here is just one example of many infractions that may be making us sick, or even killing us.

The WTO outrageously delivered a ruling against a U.S. ban on chicken products imported from China. The ruling forces the United States' market to open up for processed, *often toxic*, chicken breast exports from China. The WTO's ruling stated that the U.S. ban was not in accordance with WTO rules and regulations, and officials concerned with the matter would not disclose further details, citing reasons of "confidentiality."

This WTO-forced importation of dangerous goods provides yet another example of the United States' inability to protect national trade interests.

We do not even have the right in the international community to block the importation of foods that are well below the standards of our country.

Clearly, the U.S. needs to dissolve our own membership, or our interests will continue to be "represented" by international entities that clearly do not have our nation's best interest in mind.

Though consumers may never know, many will soon be subjected to purchasing chicken raised via dangerous methods that were once banned in the United States for health and safety reasons Current regulations do not require stores to label the country of origin on processed meat.

Do we really need foreigners telling us what to? Shouldn't we be allowed to what is in our best interest? The truth is, we can't afford to let other nations make decisions to our detriment. The WTO must be eliminated!

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Arts&Letters

Clichés of Tyranny

by SCOTT GALUPO

The Tyranny of Clichés: How Liberals Cheat in the War of Ideas, Jonah Goldberg, Sentinel, 320 pages

One of the overlooked aims of Jonah Goldberg's bestselling *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the Left From Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning* was to defang, to a degree, the word "fascism." Not to defend it, but to identify it as a body of ideas that, however noxious, did not necessarily entail mass murder.

The book overstated the continuities of intellectual fascism with modern American liberalism and European social democracy, but Goldberg's premise—that fascism was not a variant of conservatism but rather a revolutionary movement of the left—was a worthwhile corrective to mainstream political discourse.

With *The Tyranny of Clichés*, Goldberg—syndicated columnist and editor-at-large of National Review Online—is on another mission of semantic rectification. He is exercised this time with the way the words "ideology" and "pragmatism" are employed by liberal academics and politicians, as well as in the vernacular of Washington media. Goldberg argues that "ideology" should sound less sinister than it commonly does. And he'd like "pragmatism" to sound worse.

There's also a second book here: a deconstruction of liberal shibboleths that Goldberg encounters on college campuses and cable-TV shout shows as an occupational hazard of successful punditry. He skewers these in a style that's informative and light on its feet. Of particular value are Goldberg's sturdy defense of the Roman Catholic Church's record on science and its prosecution of the Crusades, as well as a brilliant little elucidation of the saying, "let them eat cake."

The big argument of *The Tyranny of Clichés* is that liberals' misuse of terms like "ideology" and "pragmatism," and their lazy reliance on empty phrases like "social justice," "diversity," and "community" are part of a deceptive agenda to "expand and enhance the State's mastery over our lives." An ideology, if you will, that refuses to speak its name.

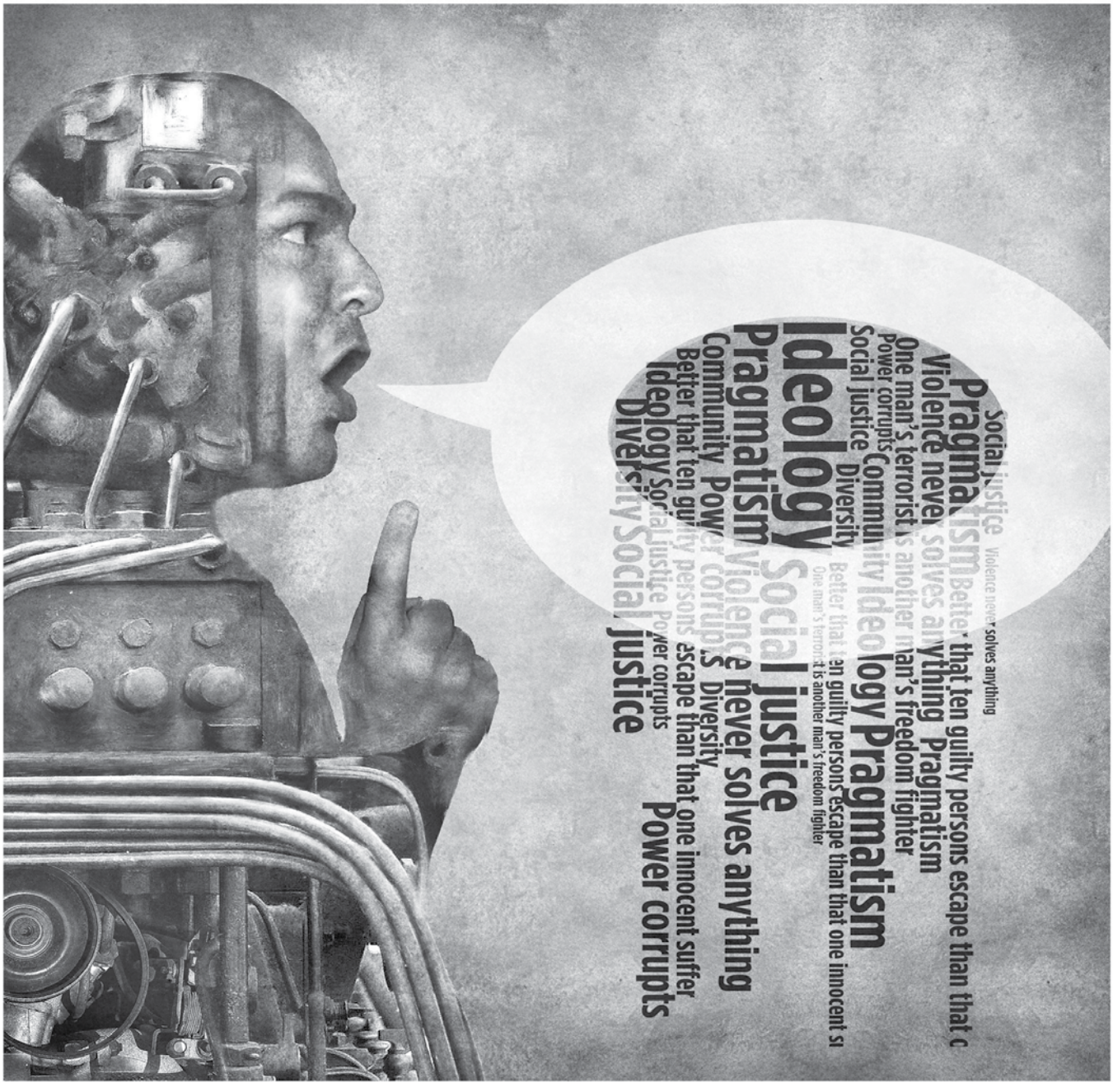
There's a problem of coherence here: several of Goldberg's examples of liberal clichés—"Power corrupts," "Better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer," "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," "Violence never solves anything"—may easily be interpreted as expressions of anti-statism. There's also the fact that in a policy environment where a purportedly liberal U.S. president keeps his own personal terrorist "kill list," and at a time when a scandalously high number of Americans are in jail, Goldberg's worry over such influences is unwarranted and more than a little puzzling.

Goldberg, too, briefly calls out James Fallows and other advocates of "industrial policy," the practice of government actively encouraging the growth of certain sectors of the economy. Is it statism? Yes, I suppose it is. But is it a cliché?

Now, about this business of ideology: an adherent of an ideology, Goldberg writes, isn't someone who is "dogmatically immune to facts." For Goldberg, ideologies are like that unprintable cliché about opinions. Everyone has one. He writes: "An ideology, at the most fundamental level, is simply a checklist of ideas you have about the world. Having an ideology doesn't mean you've been brainwashed, it means you've come to conclusions about how the world works at some basic level."

To be sure, some ideologies—fascism, to name one—can be very bad. But ideology is not bad in and of itself. Indeed, ideology is an essential feature in the life of the mind as well as a practical necessity, he argues: "whatever word you choose, humans need limiting principles, bright lines, ideals, dogma. Bundle them together and you've got a field guide to life that helps you sift your way through new facts and data."

Goldberg's point here is well-taken. Still, I'm rather fond of the negative connotation of ideology, not least because, as the author readily acknowledges, conservative luminaries like Edmund Burke and Russell Kirk plainly held ideology in low regard. "But," he writes, "it's vital to understand that what the original conservatives denounced as ideology was in fact only a certain kind of ideology." Goldberg insists that Burke's foundational critique of the French Revolution wasn't a blanket denunciation



Michael Hogue

of ideology; it was a warning against utopianism and the glib discarding of ancient wisdom.

I can live with that distinction. Yet our lexicon still requires a word to describe someone whose mind is made up before the argument even starts. Take the belief that income-tax cuts are self-financing. Against all evidence, many supply-siders maintain this belief. If they aren't ideologues, what should we call them? Stubborn? Stupid? Or, to borrow one of Goldberg's favorite put-downs, incandescently asinine?

If only because I'm determined to rescue him from obscurity, I suggest as an alternative to "ideology" a catchword used by the late poet-historian Peter Viereck: "apriorism." In *Conservative Thinkers: From John Adams to Winston Churchill*, Viereck described early conservatives' use of the term *a priori* "for ideas deduced entirely from 'prior' ideas, as opposed to ideas rooted in historical experience. ... Conservatives condemn, with the term 'rationalist blueprints,' the attempts of progressives to plan society in advance from pure reason instead of letting it grow 'organically'—meaning: grow like a living plant, naturally and unconsciously, flowering up from the deep roots of tradition."

We might also, in some cases, fall back on the more familiar "absolutism." Most of us favor a broad right to free speech and expression, for example. But only an absolutist would defend child pornography or speech that incites violence.

Or perhaps another old stand-by, "tribalism," should be pressed into ser-

vice. Tribalists of the Drudge-Breitbart-RedState right, for example, were not merely "dogmatically immune to the facts" in the wake of the Great Crash of 2008, they mounted a furious effort to bend the facts to absolve their worldview of any blame for the crisis, concocting a bizarre narrative in which all trails led to the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977.

Now what of Goldberg's beef with the term "pragmatism"?

The Tyranny of Clichés extends the effort Goldberg made in *Liberal Fascism* to revive the textbook association of the term pragmatism with the school of American philosophy developed in the late 19th century by the likes of William James, as against today's popular meaning—a practical emphasis on "what works," a reliance on empirical data rather than abstract theory. And not just any theory, Goldberg asserts: the original pragmatists sought to steer us away from our classical-liberal roots. For Goldberg's pragmatists, the facts always seem to point toward a more active—progressive—role for government.

There's a fair amount of truth to this, but in the course of linking philosophical pragmatists to today's vernacular pragmatists, Goldberg is forced to become, in effect, the Corey Robin of the right. He obliterates important distinctions. In *The Reactionary Mind*, Robin, a Brooklyn College poli-sci professor audaciously seated Sarah Palin and Ayn Rand and Edmund Burke at the same banquet table. The Goldberg schema is awfully similar. At his table, you can find the pacifist Jane Addams seated next to violence-approving Georges Sorel, who's passing the gravy to earnest Methodist Hillary Clinton.

Goldberg paints progressives influenced by philosophical pragmatism as godless Nietzschean supermen. In fact, pragmatists tried to re-inject God into philosophy in the wake of Darwinism. As the critic Louis Menand wrote in *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*:

> Pragmatism seems a reflection of the late-nineteenth-century faith in scientific inquiry—yet James introduced it in order to attack the pretensions of late-nineteenth-century science. Pragmatism seems Darwinian—yet it was openly hostile to the two most prominent Darwinists of the time, Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley; it was designed, in James's version, to get God back into a picture many people felt Darwin had written him out of.

They were not relativists, either. Menand writes that Charles Sanders Peirce, who coined the term "pragmatism," believed with his astronomer father that the "universe makes sense"; that the world and the human mind are "wonderfully matched."

How to square Goldberg's assertion that pragmatism was a "happy and upbeat" American alternative to "gloomy" Europeans like Nietzsche? Such a dichotomy makes little sense in the context of the searing intellectual formation of the jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., the thrice-wounded Civil War veteran whose youthful abolitionist zeal soon gave way to deep-seated—in its way, conservative—pessimism over the descent of American democracy into mass violence. This pessimism, noted Menand, was the animating purpose behind Holmes's "marketplace of ideas" dictum: the way to prevent another such descent was to create a big tent of competing ideologies.

But I fear we're dancing on the head of a pin. The simple fact is that pragmatism is no longer a Trojan horse for statism. As often as it means acceding to "what works," it means a willingness to compromise on one's principles, whether those are conservative or liberal. To my knowledge, Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Dennis Kucinich are not regularly called pragmatic. Yet President Bill Clinton's tack toward the center on issues such as welfare and capital punishment is regularly characterized that way.

And this entire discussion is worthless if we don't pause to define what liberals mean whey they say they're in favor of "what works." Works to what end? The modern liberal's project was defined centuries ago by Francis Bacon as the "relief of man's estate." On the fundamental appropriateness of this project, there is little disagreement between liberals and mainstream conservatives.

Patrick Deneen, the conservative Catholic political theorist who recently joined the faculty of Notre Dame University, wrote an illuminating 2008 blog post that I beg you to indulge my quoting at length:

> Good policy for the Founders and Progressives alike were policies that promoted the economic and political strength of the American republic and the attendant expansion of power in its private and public forms. For all their differences, what is strikingly similar about the thinkers of the Founding era and leading thinkers of the Progressive era were similar efforts to increase the "orbit" or scope of the national government concomitant with increases in the scale of the American economic order. Only in the backdrop of such assumptions about the basic aims of politics could there be any base presupposition in advance of the existence of 'good policy'—and that policy tended to be whatever increased national wealth and power. In this sense—again, for all their differences—the Progressives were as much heirs as the Founders to the modern project of seeing politics as the means of mastering nature and 'the relief of man's estate.'

The Founders and the Progressives alike sought to increase

the influence of the central government over disparate parts of the nation, while increasing economic efficiency and activity by means of investment in infrastructure and communication. Just as the Founders could promote the "useful arts and sciences" with one of the main positive injunctions of the Constitution, so a Progressive like John Dewey would praise Francis Bacon as "the real founder of modern thought" for, among other things, his insistence that "knowledge is power"—or, implicitly, for maintaining that only discoveries or information that increase human power over nature are worthy of the name "knowledge."

For all of Dewey's valorization of "democracy," it should not be forgotten that his definition of democracy is bound up in whatever outcome would ultimately favor "growth." For the Founders and the Progressives alike, the expansion of what Madison described as "the empire of reason" should be paramount, and on that basis trust in popular government was to be tempered by structural limits upon popular influence over good public policy.

Goldberg concedes, vaguely, that the relief of man's estate does require "some policies." But too much relieving is to "eat the seed corn of social capital." In the words of Rep. Paul Ryan, it is to create a "hammock that lulls able-bodied citizens into lives of complacency and dependency."

A double-barreled cliché is in order here: on this fundamental question of what politics is for, *The Tyranny of Clichés* lets conservatives eat cake and have it, too. ■

Scott Galupo is a writer and musician living in Virginia and a contributor to TAC*'s State of the Union blog.*

Gentleman Bruiser

by WICK ALLISON

If Not Us, Who? William Rusher, National Review, and the Conservative Movement, David B. Frisk, ISI Books, 528 pages

Bill Rusher is thought of, when he is thought of at all, as Tonto to William F. Buckley's Lone Ranger. As David Frisk makes clear in his well-researched and enlightening new biography, that is a sad underestimation of the man.

Buckley's conciliatory style, personal charm, and family money were essential to bringing together—and holding together—the various disparate strains of an inchoate intellectual conservatism in the founding of *National Review*. Without his wit, élan, and celebrity, the word "conservative" would never have achieved respectability, much less become the dominant political force in the country.

But style does not build a house. The lumber has to be cut and shaved, nails have to be hammered, workers recruited, plans made and revised. Bill Rusher was instrumental—and after reading this book, I might even say indispensable—to building what we now call the conservative movement.

From his perch as publisher of *National Review,* Rusher found himself in the ideal position to cajole, encourage, promote, and temper the fledgling organizations that were later to form the ground troops for the conservative revolution. But most important of all, his well-formed political instincts, honed in years of Young Republican infighting, came to bear on the single most important event in coalescing these troops into a unified movement: getting Barry Goldwater to seek the Republican nomination in 1964 and, against all odds, to win it.

How Rusher played an obstinate Goldwater, ignoring his refusals to run, smoothing over his political worries and personal concerns, and finally forcing his hand with the Draft Goldwater Committee, is as dramatic a tale of psychological diplomacy as I have ever read. Once Goldwater committed, it was Rusher who recruited Peter O'Donnell—a brilliant and wealthy young tactician who had managed John Tower's 1961 special-election upset to become the first Republican senator from Texas since Reconstruction—to lead the fight for the nomination.

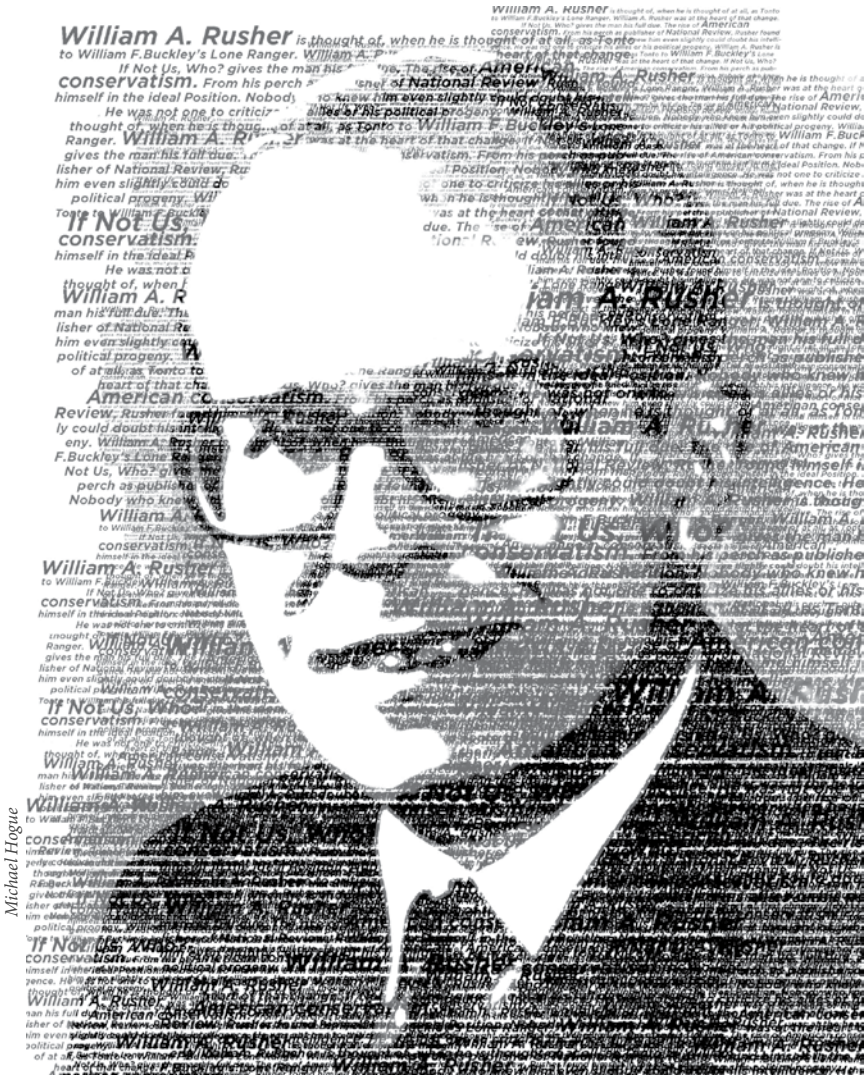
As Bill Buckley once remarked to me, there can only be one sun—and at *National Review*, there was no doubt whatsoever who that sun was. Consigned to the role of sidekick, Rusher sometimes chaffed but never rebelled. As Buckley's fame increased the magazine's importance grew, and Rusher skillfully employed both in achieving his life's sole ambition: to dismantle the liberal political consensus that dominated the postwar period.

Nobody who knew him even slightly could doubt his intelligence, his deep erudition, his zest for life, and his focused determination. But the mild manner, the precise language, the lawyerly demeanor, and the orderly habits—his desk was *always* clean—hid a ferocious heart.

Rusher was a fighter. He took no prisoners, gave no quarter, and cared not a whit for anyone's feelings. Bill Buckley would attract, engage, and convert. Bill Rusher was out to destroy.

The advent of late-night talk radio in the '60s gave him his arena. The Fairness Doctrine was still in force, so hosts had to provide two sides to discuss the controversies of the day. One side may have come to discuss; Rusher came to debate. The other side may have brought notes on yellow legal pads; Rusher brought a carving knife. Time and again, to the delight of the listening audience, he filleted his liberal counterparts and, for good measure, sliced to pieces any host who came to their defense.

Frisk provides the transcript from the Barry Farber Show in 1970 in which Ted Sorenson, who was pre-



Michael Hogue

paring to run for Senate in New York, found himself surgically dissected at Rusher's hand. It makes for fun reading, but it also reveals much about Rusher's style. In the ring, he did not dance and weave. He provoked an opening, went in close, and pounded with his right and his left until the opponent lay flat on the floor. Sorenson never recovered. Needless to say, he did not become a senator from New York.

Success in radio led to television, and for three years Rusher was the star attraction on "The Advocates," a debate program in the format of a trial, on PBS. The show was an immediate hit, and suddenly Rusher was almost as famous in his own right as Buckley. He did not relish the notoriety. He loved politics and debate, but reveling in the public limelight was not in his character. He was meant for the back room, where the deals are cut and the assignments made. After three successful years, he did not renew for a fourth, and the show lasted only one more season without him.

Meanwhile, he kept up an unrelenting schedule of meetings, conferences, and talks, all centered on building the infrastructure of a conservative movement capable of countering the overwhelming liberal dominance of the media, government, and policy institutions. He encouraged new organizations, lent his efforts to their fundraising, and served on their boards. In a sense, he became godfather to the web of think tanks, advocacy groups, and lobbying offices that now occupy Washington. Hillary Clinton was right. There is a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Bill Rusher is the man responsible for it.

He was not one to criticize his allies or his political progeny, but I wonder what he would say of it now, this huge, well-salaried, self-preserving establishment of the right. In his 30 years at *National Review* ("31-and-a-half," he often reminded me), he never earned more than $30,000 a year. Conservatism was not his career. It was his vocation, his mission, and his passion. "I was honestly surprised that they paid me anything," he said one day, reminiscing about joining the magazine. "Considering the state of the finances, I thought I would have to pay *them*." Then he added with a wink, "And what they didn't know was that I would have."

I knew Bill Rusher as a young admirer watching him eviscerate complacent liberals on air, then as a reader of his books, and finally as a fellow board member of *National Review* and his successor as publisher. David Frisk captures the man with a keen eye and with an obvious affection born of long study of his subject's quirks and accomplishments. Integrity comes to us from the Latin *integer*, or whole, and Bill Rusher's integrity was the result of his being a whole man, confident in his critique of American society and of the prescription for curing it.

At the last, Buckley and Rusher were like a couple in a 30-year marriage. Their idiosyncrasies, prejudices, and mutual disappointments were too well known to each other to be worth discussing. Each had played his role, each knew it, and that was enough. For all the fun times I enjoyed with Bill Buckley, I never saw him in such a delirium of delight as he was in planning the details of the magnificent Hudson dinner cruise that marked Rusher's formal retirement from the magazine. The dinner was a complete success, and every little facet of it—from the guest list to the imprinting of cocktail napkins—was an act of love.

As for Rusher, he was glad to leave. For those like me who questioned why he was moving to such a bastion of liberal orthodoxy as San Francisco, he had

prepared an index card that he carried in his breast pocket. It recorded the average temperatures of every major American city. San Francisco's was a perfect 73 degrees, and that was his answer.

Even in retirement, Rusher was called back to duty at *NR*. Frisk relates how Buckley at lunch with Rupert Murdoch in 1990 agreed to sell *National Review* to the media mogul for Murdoch's promise of a $5 million investment. The agreement was presented as a *fait accompli* to me, then-editor John O'Sullivan, and Rusher—who had flown in from San Francisco at Buckley's urgent request—at a tense meeting at WFB's Stanford home. Buckley was known for having, in O'Sullivan's words, "a whim of iron." Once his mind was made up, he never changed it, no matter what mitigating facts were brought to his attention. Rusher knew better than to argue with Buckley. I didn't. I said it was a bad decision, that it would betray the thousands of small contributors and subscribers who had kept the magazine afloat. Rusher took that as an opening and began, in his calm, lawyerly way, asking questions that framed the transaction as a public-relations disaster. Buckley—very reluctantly—changed his mind. Not long after, I was encouraged to pursue another career. O'Sullivan was given the same encouragement a little while after that. I doubt that Rusher was ever invited back.

David Frisk's biography gives us a full portrait not only of a good man at work, but also of an era that saw one of the most abrupt changes in governing philosophy in American history. William A. Rusher was at the heart of that change, and it will be surprising for some to learn that on the political and organizational front he was its chief protagonist. *If Not Us, Who?* gives the man his due. It is invaluable reading for any student of the rise of American conservatism. ■

Wick Allison is chairman and editor in chief of D Magazine partners and president of the American Ideas Institute.

The Psychology of Partisanship

by DANIEL J. FLYNN

The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion, Jonathan Haidt, Pantheon, 448 pages

Jonathan Haidt's new book makes a well-reasoned case against reason. It persuades that the power of persuasion is overrated. It opens minds to the near universality of closed minds. Does Haidt's convincing theory affirm or rebut his argument? My brain hurts.

"Western philosophy has been worshipping reason and distrusting the passions for thousands of years," the University of Virginia psychology professor writes. "There's a direct line running from Plato through Immanuel Kant to Lawrence Kohlberg. I'll refer to this worshipful attitude throughout this book as the *rationalist delusion*. I call it a delusion because when a group of people make something sacred, the members of the cult lose the ability to think clearly about it."

Intellectuals confuse a more ideal state of affairs for the way things actually are—reason is more often than not rationalization, a justification for ideas developed not in the brain but in the gut. Haidt's antecedent here is David Hume. Reason plays servant to man's whims. Man forces the facts to fit his beliefs rather than the reverse. It's no wonder that ideas that work marvelously in our minds fail miserably when applied to the world outside our heads. How a theory makes us feel, not whether it works, is the most important prerequisite for our acceptance of it.

Were athletes to seek rule by the strong or models rule by the beautiful, intellectuals would clearly see naked self-interest masked as reason. But Haidt finds other smart people to be no more reasonable in their use of reason. Intellectuals seek rule by the intelligent. *The Righteous Mind* explains that the rationalist delusion is

> the idea that reasoning is our most noble attribute, one that makes us like the gods (for Plato) or that brings us beyond the 'delusion' of believing in gods (for the New Atheists). The rationalist delusion is not just a claim about human nature. It's also a claim that the rational caste (philosophers or scientists) should have more power, and it usually comes along with a utopian program for raising more rational children.

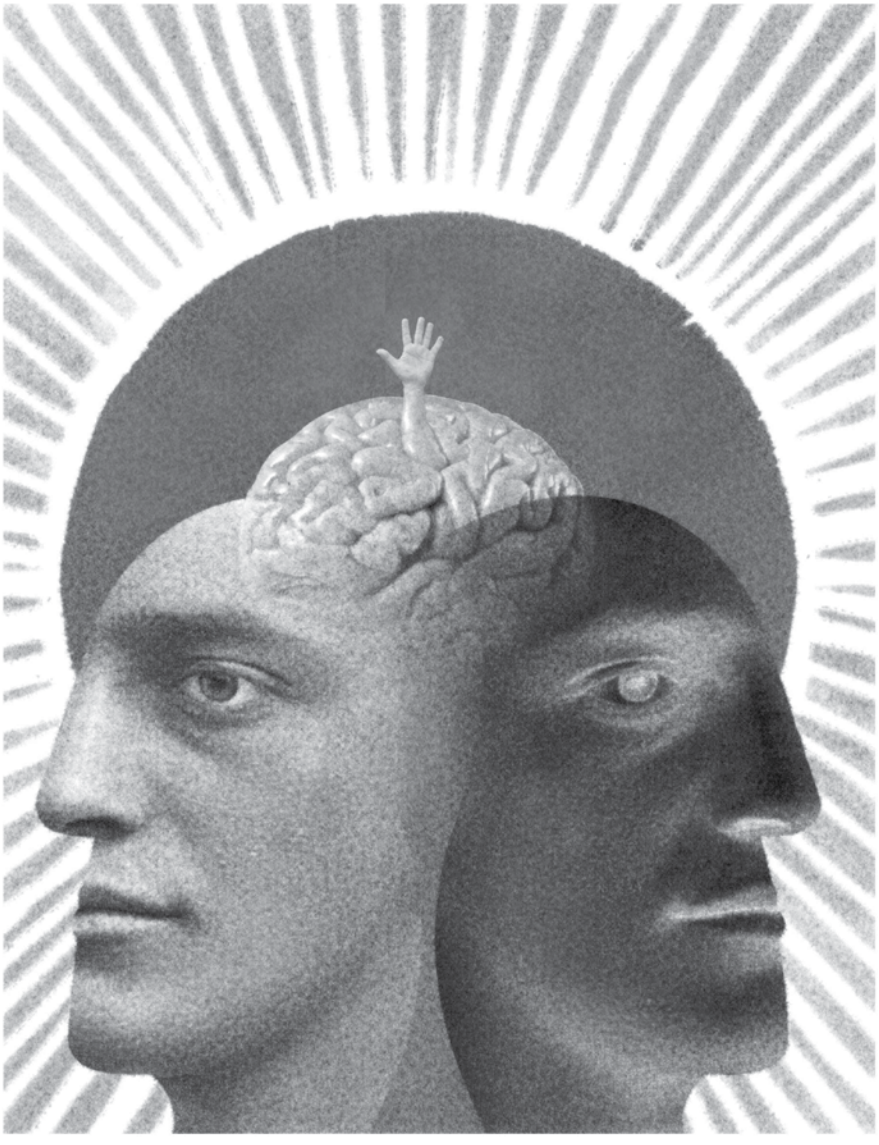
Intelligence is a virtue. So are prudence, integrity, humility, and courage. People who possess the first trait, but lack the latter ones, tend to downplay the importance of their weaknesses and inflate the importance of their strength. The limitations of intelligence are never as glaring as when highbrains advocate intelligence as the panacea for everything. But it is not the intelligence of Haidt's fellow liberals that he indicts. It's their morals.

Intellectuals confuse a more ideal state of affairs for the way things actually are.

Haidt helped devise a questionnaire that gauged moral views by eliciting test-taker responses to statements in five categories: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. Haidt likens these moral groupings to the five taste receptors of the tongue (sweet, sour, bitter, savory, salty). It turns out that liberal receptors failed to engage on questions of loyalty, authority, and sanctity. Conservatives, on the other hand, reacted to all five moral

categories more or less equally. Haidt's conclusion is that his fellow liberals are morally tone deaf. "Republicans understand moral psychology," Haidt concedes. "Democrats don't."

It gets worse for liberals. Haidt and colleagues asked their subjects to answer their questionnaire as if they were liberals, as if they were conservatives, and as themselves. Liberals don't know their political adversaries nearly as well as the right knows them. "The results were clear and consistent. Moderates and conservatives were most accurate in their predictions, whether they were pretending to be liberals or conservatives. Liberals were the least accurate, especially those who described themselves as 'very liberal.' The biggest errors in the whole study came when liberals answered the Care and Fairness questions while pretending to be conservatives." Liberals see caricatures when they see conservatives.



Michael Hogue

The thesis may prove cathartic for Republican readers. But it's more useful to Democrats. Candidates who harp on the gap between rich and poor and appeal to the public's heartstrings to uplift the least among us—but don't grasp the tug of the flag, the fear of disorder, and the revulsion against sexually debasing behavior—really don't get why they lose. They don't get the American people, or just about any other people for that matter. They're WEIRD—as in Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic. Weirdoes are more like weirdoes in other countries than they are like their fellow countrymen. The author notes of his subjects in Philadelphia and two Brazilian cities that "the effect of social class was much larger than the effect of city. In other words, well-educated people in all three cities were more similar to each other than they were to their lower-class neighbors."

Ironically, the values touted by WEIRD multiculturalists are prevalent nowhere but in their own backyards; the nationalism, religiosity, and puritanical values they deride are dominant in the cultures for which they urge tolerance. They mistake the value system of Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic peoples for the value systems of Third World, uneducated, agrarian, impoverished, oppressed peoples. Thus, they urge tolerance of cartoon versions of non-Westerners while condemning their very real moral compasses. On some level, this confusion reflects the deep desire of rich white people to have their outlook affirmed by poor colored people.

The cognitive dissonance inherent in this jumbled conception of the world is remarkable. One question Haidt posed to subjects shows how morally obtuse the WEIRD are: he asked about a man who buys a chicken at the supermarket to eat for dinner, but before turning on the oven, copulates in secret with the dead, presumably plucked and headless, animal. Is that wrong? Everybody thought so, save, predictably, the weirdoes. Who was hurt? The implication here is that there's something obviously lacking in a moral barometer that registers wrong only in direct harm.

Our politics—right, left, and other-directional—is less clinical detachment

than stadium homerism. Haidt observes, "Bumper stickers are often tribal badges; they advertise the teams we support, including sports teams, universities, and rock bands. The driver of the 'Save Darfur' car is announcing that he or she is on the liberal team." Given the paucity of Red Sox fans switching their allegiance to the Yankees, the sports analogy doesn't bode well for a politics open to persuasion. "People are quite good at challenging statements made by *other* people," Haidt points out, "but if it's *your* belief, then it's your possession—your child, almost—and you want to protect it, not challenge it and risk losing it."

Haidt maintains that there are genetic and other biologial reasons for this. He cites a study that claims that agreement with comforting political positions releases dopamine in the brain, thereby conditioning humans to conform to the group. He cites another study purporting to show that one's place on the political spectrum is in large part genetically predetermined. *The Righteous Mind* explains, "We're born to be righteous, but we have to learn what, exactly, people like us should be righteous about." The righteous mind, then, is part nature, part nurture.

The author is that rare academic who presents complex ideas in a comprehensible manner. Repetition and aphorism keep the reader on path. Haidt boils down chapters into pithy, reappearing verses. "Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second." "There's more to morality than harm and fairness." "Morality binds and blinds." It's hard to get lost when the author stays on track even as he meanders through psychology, politics, biology, religion, philosophy, and other fields.

The Righteous Mind delivers power shots to every outlook save its author's. Haidt writes that "my beloved topic of inquiry—moral psychology—is the key to understanding politics, religion, and our spectacular rise to planetary dominance." A liberal or conservative ideologue might substitute his own worldview for "moral psychology." If the irony is intentional, the author is awfully subtle about it. Do psychologists diagnosing "the righteous mind" suffer from the phenomenon, too?

Haidt occasionally inserts head-scratching non sequiturs into the text, such as the bizarre idea that the 1970s crime wave resulted not from a spike in the youth demographic or permissiveness in the criminal justice system, but from leaded gasoline. The psychology professor, when appealing to the hard sciences—or explaining conservatism after telling readers that he happened upon conservatism in a used book store a few years ago—occasionally stumbles outside of his bailiwick. His professed utilitarian ethics would seem sure to dull the five moral sensors if the mathematics of the greater good added up. And implicit in that moral taste-buds metaphor is the absolute claim that morals are relativistic matters of taste rather than unequivocal matters of right and wrong. But if the reader can get past these quirks and shortcomings, the core point—that reason inhibits the search for truth as much as it helps—provokes and rings, well, true.

This book starts debates about the people who forever seek to end them. And with cable news an incessant reminder of our calcified politics, the idea that the human brain is hardwired to rationalize rather than to seek the truth has numerous unwitting televangelists buttressing the argument at every hour of the day. Haidt argues that this phenomenon isn't the work of Phil Griffin or Roger Ailes but of evolutionary psychology; the "righteous mind" is 4.6 billion years in the making. The book arrives not a moment too soon. ■

Daniel J. Flynn is the author of Blue Collar Intellectuals: When the Enlightened and the Everyman Elevated America.

To Save JFK

by MARIAN KESTER COOMBS

11/22/63: A Novel, Stephen King, Scribner, 849 pages

History is the best story: you can't make that stuff up. It takes an Olympian imagination to render historical events believable, much less comprehensible. The most outlandish part of Stephen King's *11/22/63* is its account of the real life and adventures of Lee Harvey Oswald and his shadowy mentor George de Mohrenschildt. Compared to that farrago of double lives, the time-travel fantasy plot seems unexceptional.

Readers don't turn to Stephen King for *belles lettres*, but his writing habits are highly effective for storytelling, plot development, character composition (or decomposition), and other such homely virtues. King specializes in what T.S. Eliot called life's "partial horror." He's a master at seeing the grinning skull beneath the skin, the manic gleam in the eye of the quiet neighbor, the evil that somehow permeates whole towns. He understands how a *Thing* can be hungry and want to feed upon whatever is at hand: fear, jealousy, shame, regret, anger, weakness—even love and happiness.

Almost a quarter-century ago, Tom Wolfe wrote in "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast: A Literary Manifesto for the New Social Novel" (*Harper's*, November 1989) that he had expected to be overrun and outdone by countless writers scrambling to render the American experience—creating the "literature worthy of her vastness" that social-realist Sinclair Lewis called for in his 1930 Nobel Prize speech—only to see the contemporary novel reduced to a mere "literary game."

What happened to the legacy of Zola and Balzac, Dickens and Thackeray? Here Wolfe applies the same analysis to American literature that he earlier applied to the visual arts ("The Painted Word") and architecture ("From the Bauhaus to Our House"): "The intelligentsia have always had contempt for the realistic novel—a form that wallows so enthusiastically in the dirt of everyday life and the dirty secrets of class envy and that, still worse, is so easily understood and obviously relished by the mob, i.e., the middle class."

The intelligentsia look down not only on realism but on all the popular genres: mysteries, war stories, bodice-rippers, Westerns, spy thrillers, science fiction, horror, and humor. But a lot of good writing, and the best storytelling, can be found in those genres, on the page and on screens both big and small, from "The Sopranos" to "My Name Is Earl."

Why do serious writers flee realism? Out of despair, Wolfe says, at being unable to keep up with a reality that grows more fantastical by the day:

> The imagination of the novelist is powerless before what he knows he's going to read in tomorrow morning's newspaper. … [Yet] the answer is not to [abandon] the rude beast … the life around us … but to do what journalists do, or are supposed to do, which is to wrestle the beast and bring it to terms.

Stephen King has always enjoyed a good wrestle with the beast. He made his debut with *Carrie* in 1974, nearly four decades ago, and has been mulling over the big idea behind *11/22/63* for some time. The novel required years of historical research and plumbing his own memories of growing up in the 1950s. The plot is this: Jake Epping is a 35-year-old high-school English teacher in Lisbon

Falls, Maine, who is convinced by a dying friend to check out a portal into the past—11:58 a.m. on September 9, 1958, to be exact—that he's discovered in the rear pantry of his diner.

Each time Jake breaches the portal, the past "resets," effacing any alterations he has previously made. He ages at a normal rate while in the past, although only two seconds have elapsed in the present whenever he returns. Jake soon signs on to his friend's urgent mission: to prevent the Kennedy assassination by first spying on Oswald to ascertain that he's the lone assassin, then eliminating him. Save JFK, they figure, and the evils that come after—including escalation of the Vietnam War ("Is the butcher's bill that high if Kennedy doesn't die in Dallas?"), the MLK and RFK assassinations, the riots, and maybe even Tricky Dick himself—will no longer ensue.

If there were ever an act considered 100 percent righteous by my generation, it would be preventing the death of John Kennedy. His murder was a live horror movie even before we were allowed to watch the Zapruder tape. The '50s were as close to sweetness and light as any cohort of kids has ever come; the '50s ended brutally with the trauma of November 22, 1963. Then carnage in color on the nightly news, riots, more assassinations. Yes, we'd believe Jake's mission could make the world objectively and quantifiably happier.

But first Jake has to wait five years for 1963 to roll around. The plan, as King contrives it, is to be sure Oswald acts alone in his April '63 attempt to kill General Edwin Walker. If he does, that should mean Oswald will also act alone in Dallas. Unfortunately, this assumption turns out to be illogical and even perverse.

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there," wrote L.P. Hartley in *The Go-Between*. As King has Jake accustom himself to living in the past, it's fascinating how he chooses to view the America of a half-century ago through modern eyes. First he notices the mind-blowing debasement of our currency—the bills still marked "Silver Certificate," the coins made of actually valuable metals. And the prices: comics five cents each, gas 19.9 cents a gallon, cars for a few hundred bucks, ground beef 54 cents a pound, complete dinners 95 cents, a revolver for $9.99. Ron Paul can speechify about sound money, but literature transports you back to it.

Next noticed are the trust and friendliness of a more innocent time, the doors and cars left unlocked, the unworldliness, the corniness, the much more pronounced regional identities. Unselfconscious references to God. Kids playing outside till dusk. Happy upbeat music and fun movies. Nights dark enough to display stars, quiet enough to hear crickets. And "the huge and stately elms" that are all gone now.

Then there are the vibrant downtowns, the up-and-running industrial base, trains chuffing, oilfields roaring, the dignity of manual labor, the un-PC conversations, the absence of GPS tracking systems, the lack of a national ID system, no intrusive cell phones or nagging email.

Mid-century America is a feast for Jake's senses, if not always a pleasant one: "I was deciding that 1958 had been a pretty good year. Aside from the stench of the mill and the cigarette smoke, that was." No legislative campaigns to stamp out smoking, no EPA to shut down factories, no health Nazis whinging about trans fats, salt, and sugar. "This fifty-years-gone world smelled worse than I ever would have expected, but it tasted a whole hell of a lot better."

The greatest downside, of course, is the treatment of black Americans. King resists the temptation to introduce one of his black savior/martyr figures like Dick Hallorann in *The Shining*, Mother Abigail in *The Stand*, or John Coffey in *The Green Mile*. King has been a prime purveyor of the "Magic Negro" trope. But he means well—he lives in Maine, after all. And he movingly points out in *11/22/63* that second-class citizenship for American blacks meant a separate and unequal quality of life.

If there were ever an act considered 100 percent righteous by my generation, it would be preventing the death of John Kennedy.

The one serious anachronism I find in King's recreation of this almost incredible world—which I found credible only because I once lived there myself—is his characters' foul mouths. He seems to think nice people, even young Southern women, would have used four-letter words with abandon back then. On the contrary, even "hell" and "damn" were reserved for the most dire situations. What Tom Wolfe has called the "f--k patois" was unknown outside the military, prisons, or core ghettos.

As the novel progresses, the depthless mystery of Lee Harvey Oswald meets the Man Who Wasn't There, George de Mohrenschildt. The latter was clearly an instigator and enabler of Oswald, but why? If we don't know exactly who he was—and no one denies he had ties to reactionary White Russian circles and the CIA—or exactly who Jack Ruby was—and no one denies he was a mobster—how

can we assess Oswald's true role? Just because de Mohrenschildt wasn't with Oswald the night he aimed at Walker doesn't mean he didn't goad the younger man into doing it. Or set him up for ultimate patsyhood.

As it turns out, the past does not quite reset every time Jake dips into it. There is a raving wino who seems to function as a gatekeeper stationed next to the portal, whom Jake is advised to give a 50-cent piece to in order to pass unmolested—like paying the boatman to be rowed across the Styx to Hades. After several trips, Jake finds the guy with his throat cut; the next time, another man rushes up and begs Jake to quit meddling, telling him that every time the past is altered, "it gums up the machine. Eventually a point will come where the machine simply … stops." Apparently each portal or "bubble" is manned by a guardian whose protests are becoming more and more feeble. One is strongly reminded of the Republican Party and its candidates. Diminishing returns, and reaching into the past to cherry-pick events is much like government reaching into society to pick winners and losers.

After Jake kills Oswald in the book depository and returns to 2011, the world has indeed been changed, but overwhelmingly for the worse. The alternate history he triggered has led to nukes being used, climate change, pollution, impoverishment, political chaos, neotribalism—a real equal-opportunity dystopia. Heeding the gatekeeper at last, he returns one final time to let history happen.

Incomparable as they might be, *11/22/63* has something in common with Tolstoy's *War and Peace* aside from their great length and their shared understanding that people most love to read *stories* about *people*: both books deal with theories of history and how it is made. Tolstoy wonders what history would have been like without Napoleon, just as Stephen King wonders what it would have been like without the Kennedy assassination.

For King, the "obdurate" past "doesn't want to be changed." Time resists being tampered with. History happens, history is what happened, and history wants to happen. Moreover, "The resistance to change is proportional to how much the future might be altered by any given act." For Tolstoy, the forces of history are far greater than the will of any man. What appears in 20-20 hindsight to have been willed by one or many individuals only "came about step by step, moment by moment, event by event, as a result of the most diverse circumstances":

> The human mind cannot grasp the causes of phenomena in the aggregate. But the need to find these causes is inherent in man's soul. … To the question: What causes historic events? an answer presents itself, namely, that the course of world events is predetermined from on high, and depends on the coincidence of the wills of all who participate in those events, and that the influence of a Napoleon on the course of such events is purely superficial and imaginary.

"Predetermined from on high" is another way of invoking King's notion of the obdurate past. The Greeks called it *moira*, fate; their tragedies show how the more violently one struggles to evade his destiny, the more tightly it embraces him. Jake's sobering travels through time reveal to him "a universe of horror and loss surrounding a single lighted stage where mortals dance in defiance of the dark." To King, that is humanity's hell, and its ultimate hope. ■

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Md.

Religious Middle

by D.G. HART

Red State Religion: Faith and Politics in America's Heartland, Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University Press, 488 pages

A scholar who wanted to portray Kansas, a state widely known as "a bastion of Protestant Republican conservatism," in a less right-wing light might turn to Arlen Specter. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Robert Dole would also work for showing that not all Kansas Republicans hail from the hard right—the 32nd president of the United States and the GOP's 1996 standard-bearer fit squarely in the mold of political moderation that many intellectuals admire. But Specter, who was born in 1930 in Wichita before moving cross state to Russell—also the hometown of Dole, who is seven years older—may be a better weather of Kansas Republicanism, unlikely as that might sound.

After transferring from the University of Oklahoma to the University of Pennsylvania, Specter established ties to the state from which he would launch his political career. In 1965, when he decided to run for Philadelphia's district attorney, Specter was registered a Democrat, but he switched to the Republican ticket with pledges to uphold law and order. By the end of his career, after serving five terms as one of Pennsylvania's U.S. Senators, he transferred back to the Democrats. Specter believed his former opponents would be more receptive to his brand of political moderation than the extremist ideologues who dominated the GOP. He failed to gain a sixth term in the Senate because he could not survive the 2010 Democratic Pennsylvania primary.

As weaselly as Specter's career might be, his effort to avoid extremes provides a perfect case of the common-sense politics underneath his native state's ideological exterior. Yet Specter fails to surface in Robert Wuthnow's latest book on faith and politics in Kansas, *Red State Religion*. Understandable was Thomas Frank's avoidance of the Pennsylvania Senator in *What's the Matter With Kansas,* since Specter's example would not support Frank's account of the state's shift to the right under pressure from highly contested issues such as abortion. But Wuthnow is interested in a different side of Kansas politics and its religious influences, one less radical and ideological. Specter never lived in the Sunflower State as an adult, but his instincts were formed during his youth, when a fundamentally Kansas-style moderation took root.

Wuthnow is one of the premier sociologists of religion in the United States. Instead of looking to moderate national GOP leaders from Kansas to explain the state's politics, he plays to his strength— analysis of religion. This approach to red state politics allows him to deflect from Kansas Christians the typical charge that religious devotion in the forms associated with the religious right is responsible for the extremes of Kansas-style conservative Republicanism. Wuthnow does not deny the obvious. Since 1960, Kansas has been at the center of the contests and controversies that put the religious right on the national map. With the exception of 1964—an intriguing anomaly for alert conservatives—when Kansas favored Lyndon Baines Johnson over Barry Goldwater, the state's voters have backed all of the Republican Party's nominees of the last half-century: Richard Nixon by a 20 percent majority in 1968 and a 38 percent majority in 1972, Gerald Ford by 7 percent, Ronald Reagan by 24 percent in 1980 and 33 percent in 1984, Bush Sr. by 13 percent in 1988 and 5 percent in 1992, Robert Dole by 18 percent, George W. Bush by 21 percent in 2000 and by 25 percent in 2004, and John McCain by 15 percent. This places Kansas alongside Indiana as the only states in the union to vote for Republicans in 30 out of 38 presidential elections.

As Kansas became predictably Republican, local politics became increasingly hostile. Protests against abortion won national coverage in 1989 when 79 people were arrested for blocking access to a clinic in Wichita. Twenty years later, Kansas opposition to abortion took extreme form when troubled activist Scott Roeder gunned down Dr. George Tiller, a director of one of Wichita's abortion clinics, just before a service at a local Lutheran church. (In 1993, Shelly Shannon, another anti-abortion activist, shot and wounded Tiller.)

Teaching evolution in public schools was another front in Kansas's culture wars. Between 1999 and 2006 religious conservatives were successful in controlling the state Board of Education and rewriting school standards to include alternative accounts of the human race's origins. Religion-based activism also spawned in Kansas a movement to make gay marriage illegal. In 2005 this effort succeeded in gaining voters' approval for a constitutional amendment that banned same-sex marriage. Kansas's version of red state politics offers scholars the triple crown of social conservatism: pro-life convictions, Creation Science, and family values.

If onlookers see these recent developments as an aberration, Wuthnow is quick to point out that the origins of Kansas itself are shot through with forms of radical politics that were prevalent at the time of the Republican Party's birth. The Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, which gave settlers the ability to determine through popular sovereignty whether these newly created states would allow or prohibit slavery—and in the process destroyed the Missouri Compromise of 1820—was crucial to the rise of the GOP and its abolitionist constituency. Not only were Republicans responsible for establishing Kansas as a free state, but they were also advocates of women's suffrage: Kansas became the first state to grant women the right to vote in school elections (1861) and to hold municipal office (1887),

and it was one of the first to embrace universal suffrage (1912). Given the ties between evangelical Protestantism and the Republican Party, observers might be warranted in seeing great continuity between the radicalism of early Kansas politics and the state's contemporary reputation for taking religious zeal into the public square.

Between the fire of 19th-century reformers and the brimstone of contemporary religious activism was a period when moderation prevailed. To be sure, Kansas still displayed a propensity for religiously-inspired political activism—in the service of Prohibition, for example, a cause also associated with the wing of the GOP that opposed slavery and advocated women's suffrage. Carrie Nation's campaign against saloons at the turn of the 20th century is another instance of Kansas's addiction to political extremism. But Wuthnow stresses that Kansas also owned a political style more calm than harried. He attributes this to a historic religious rivalry between Methodists and Roman Catholics, perennially the two largest religious bodies in the state.

Red State Religion follows the comings and goings of these churches, how they benefitted or suffered from Kansas's demographics and economic development, and somewhat awkwardly overlays the state's politics—local and national—on top of its church history. As the churches expanded, they created administrative structures and institutions that cultivated civic participation and restrained "fringe groups and radical factions." To be sure, the Methodists voted for Republican candidates, some of whom were more moderate than others, and Roman Catholics supported Democrats. But until *Roe* v. *Wade*, Kansas's Christians were more of a moderating than a radicalizing element in politics.

Wuthnow, whose charitable interpretation may partly owe to his own upbringing in Kansas, concludes that two elements characterize the state's politics, thanks to its religious adherents. First, Kansans exhibited a "pervasive skepticism" toward big government. Second, they embodied an "associational grassroots democracy," which according to Wuthnow makes "families, churches, schools, and community organizations … the core ingredients of civic life." He goes on to explain that rather than heightening political antagonism, in Kansas "religious organizations serve as mediating structures between the individual citizen and the national government." Instead of proving how extreme Kansas (and by implication, red state faith) is, history shows that religion, especially in the form of denominational institutions, softens politics and encourages civic participation. Only with the rise of national issues like abolition, alcohol, or abortion has the localist orientation and good sense of Kansans receded and faith turned activist.

What is striking about Wuthnow's conclusion is the gap between his description and his understanding of conservatism. As readers of this magazine well know, Wuthnow's depiction of mediating structures and local politics comes straight out of the traditionalist conservative playbook. In fact, the greatest weakness of Wuthnow's analysis is that he identifies political conservatism with the GOP and religious conservatism with evangelical Protestantism. In a two-party system, paleoconservatives and traditionalist or liturgical Christians only have so many options; they may be forced to hold their noses with one hand while pulling the GOP lever with the other. But in the history of political thought and the Christian tradition, the GOP and religious right only faintly resemble anything that can be called conservative. No real conservative would ever countenance prohibiting alcohol as a remedy for human infirmities, just as no genuine Christian would consider grape juice a suitable substitute for wine. Asso-

ciating conservatism with Republicans is particularly annoying given the party's radical origins and current ideological posture.

Still, conservatism is an acquired taste, and if scholars from Ivy League universities don't know the difference between Russell Kirk and Jerry Falwell, or between J. Gresham Machen and Randall Terry, why should anyone expect residents of America's heartland to do so? Whatever is wrong with Kansas, it is not a condition that afflicts Kansans alone. ■

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Recycling Cities

by A.G. GANCARSKI

Small, Gritty, and Green: The Promise of America's Smaller Industrial Cities in a Low-Carbon World, Catherine Tumber, MIT Press, 192 pages

In her second book, Massachusetts Institute of Technology historian Catherine Tumber explores the vexed question of our blighted cities and how to revive these superannuated structures for the 21st century. In the tradition of the iconoclastic James Howard Kunstler, who blurbed this volume, *Small, Gritty, and Green* urges that, for cities to move forward, they need a renewed purpose. Increased localism is Tumber's prescription—production of everything from foodstuffs to energy at the community level.

As Kunstler has maintained throughout his career, the coming end of the fossil-fuel era will demand that fewer resources be expended on transporting goods from far away. Tumber's analysis is more sentimental than Kunstler's, however. Downtrodden industrial cities—Youngstown, Ohio or Flint, Michigan, for example—may be shrinking, but their loss of population provides opportunity for reinvention.

She is excited about the potential of these smaller cities, places that once were thriving parts of regional corridors that have since stopped thriving with the erosion of their industrial base. She theorizes that "smaller-cities could be at the center of a low-carbon world," and she attempts to prove it by taking the reader through a series of case studies that illuminate pieces of the puzzle.

The author spends time with agrarians in Janesville, Wisconsin—a former General Motors town in the heart of Paul Ryan country—who seek to create farmland amid the suburban sprawl. She depicts the small-scale agricultural efforts of Puerto Rican immigrant farmers in Holyoke, Massachusetts. And she introduces the reader to the troubles of Youngstown, Ohio, the former Jim Traficant stronghold hit hard by the twined issues of industrial collapse and Mafia corruption. Youngstown, argues Tumber, would benefit from high-speed rail and more green space. The latter is easier to achieve than the former since the Buckeye State's Republican governor, John Kasich, opposes rail.

Tumber for the most part does well when she describes the mechanics of what is working in various places. But she often bogs herself down in the tired language of partisan politics—blaming Republicans for opposing everything from the aforementioned rail project to efforts to bring back neighborhood schools to North Carolina. Every 20 pages or so, Tumber makes an appeal to the Obama administration to move her concerns along. These attempts to insert the book into partisan disputes have the opposite of the intended effect, reminding the reader that American politics is largely framed in "us versus them" terms and creating the impression that the author would just as soon change someone's party affiliation as change his or her mind on the issues.

Her choice to politicize the text distracts from some of the more interesting phenomena she examines, such as the impact of demographic shifts within the American city. (Lawrence, Massachusetts, a traditional manufacturing hotbed, is now 71 percent Hispanic.) She writes of the self-contained "microeconomies" brought to our major cities by recent immigration into their "first-ring suburbs," but she presents little in the way of context to explain how those microeconomies function. The book also fails to draw connections between the ideas discussed: it reads like a collection of essays. The concept of being "small, gritty, and green" affords a nice catchphrase, but most of the cities Tumber spotlights are making ad hoc efforts rather than taking a holistic approach, which raises the question of whether any industrial city can really repurpose itself in a meaningfully "green" way once its signature industry leaves.

At the heart of Tumber's book is the unspoken assumption that Washington has significant unspent resources that can be devoted to renovating forlorn places that thrived generations ago but will likely never flourish again. But does the federal government have a compelling interest in giving some woebegone hellhole like Flint, Michigan a leg up over some other city? The country has many ghost towns that rose and fell in service of specific businesses and finite economic needs. They vanished, and the country survived anyway. Can a city be considered too big to fail?

Despite my qualms, *Small, Gritty, and Green* is a book that tells stories otherwise unheard at the national level, and it attempts—in a limited, occasionally faltering way—to provide a roadmap for former industrial strongholds to regain a scintilla of their vitality. ■

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Taki

Code of *Bushido*

I've just had the worst time in my life rubbing shoulders—actually masts—with ghastly ex-Soviet gangsters, now being referred to as oligarchs by the gutter press and the *New York Times-Washington Post* camorra. There also were towel-wearing Arabs with obscene boats further polluting the French Riviera, but it's the oligarchs playing Commodore Vanderbilt that make the once-fabled south of France stink. Never have I seen such vile people—arrogant, ill-mannered, covered in bling and surrounded by hookers, all showing off their horribly ugly superyachts that look like giant fridges on steroids.

So let's go back to the good old days for a moment. When my first wife left me for being too uxorious, I reacted as most Greeks would. I threatened to kill myself, although the thought never even crossed my mind. But my mother fell for it, and soon my wishes came true with a telephone call from my father. "Your mother is worried about you, but I know you're faking. Nevertheless, go out and buy yourself a boat."

That was 1968. My only regret after accepting my father's generous offer was that I had not thought of threatening suicide before. Ever since the late '50s I had hitched rides on my father's magnificent sailboat, the *Aries*, or on other elegant sailers like Gianni Agnelli's *Agneta* or a fellow Greek's one and only three-masted schooner, *Creole*. Now it was my turn.

After I acquired a 1939 Swedish cutter of rare lineage, beauty, and lines, my first wife hinted that perhaps we could get back together again. For once I acted smart. Who needs a wife when he has a boat? Or, as my old man always said, "He who has a yacht has a different wife every night." My first boat was all mahogany and teak with a flush deck; I thought of her as the Ava Gardner of sailing vessels: difficult, exotic, but with looks that drove other sailors wild. I re-named her *Bushido*, after the samurai code of the warrior.

"Bushi" as my friends called her, lasted a good 20 years, then was sold off to some conman who turned her into a rental, a bit like pimping out Ava, not the kind of thing a gent would do, *n'est-ce pas*? After my father's death in 1989, I inherited a triple screw speedster of more than 100 feet (that means she had three engines and three propellers, not what you landlubbers first thought), but that particular *Bushido* almost broke me after I took her from Greece to the south of France on bunkers alone. Fortunately some gangsters in Athens blew her up and then demanded the insurance money, something I refused to pay, and a very long war of nerves and threats only ended once I imported some muscle from America who photographed themselves next to the daughter of the leading hood, who gave up the fight.

Then came the present *Bushido*. My son and I conceived her, my wife and daughter decorated her, and soon after she was launched in 2004 she became the "head turner" I always wanted to own. She was Keira Knightley, Ava Gardner, and Betty Grable rolled into one, a black steel hull, two masts, two long overhangs in the bow and stern, and covered in teak and mahogany. She is 120 feet long and by far the most beautiful boat in the Med. When people ask when she was built I always answer 1927, and I have yet to meet someone who questioned it.

So, I should be happy at last, *n'est-ce pas*? The trouble is the rest of the people have yachts, as opposed to boats. Everywhere I've gone these last ten years has been a nightmare. Every marina is impossible to get into, every cove is chock-a-block with large monstrous stinkpots—as we old salts call boats with motors—and even when one is moored in waters far away from the glitzy spots of the Med, the world's most annoying invention—the jet-ski—runs rings around *Bushido* making sure no one on board has a moment of peace and reflection. (We're very big on peace and reflection on *Bushido*).

Back in the glory days, I knew most of the people that sailed around the French Riviera, in Sardinia, Corsica, the Spanish coast, and, of course, the Greek Isles. People would anchor next to one another and a party would ensue. We were all friends. After the Arab oil boycott in 1974, some strange creatures began to float around, men wearing towels and sheets who would throw their rubbish overboard along with the occasional hooker. It was the beginning of the end of floating the good life, and as of this summer, with a gangster like Roman Abramo-son-of-a-bitch polluting the place with five megayachts, it is the end. ■

Why Thomas Friedman's "Flat Earth" ideas are flat wrong—and what we must do to reclaim America's future

Facebook & Twitter create lots of jobs?

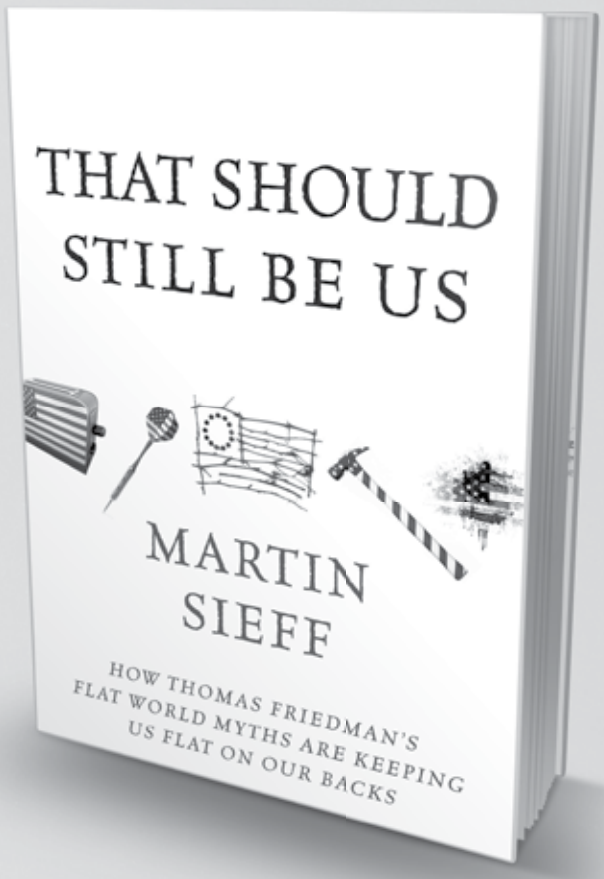
"China is not the problem," despite our $270 billion annual trade deficit with China?

Higher American fuel bills will ultimately be good for Americans?

WRONG!

In *That Should Still Be Us*, veteran foreign correspondent Martin Sieff convincingly refutes the claims Thomas Friedman makes in his bestelling books *The World is Flat* and *That Used to Be Us*. He explains why Friedman and the policies he recommends are wrong on everything from free trade and immigration to alternative energy.

In a stirring call to arms, Sieff takes on Friedman's contempt for the American worker and provides sensible, workable solutions for reversing America's decline and propelling the nation into a new age of prosperity and growth.



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