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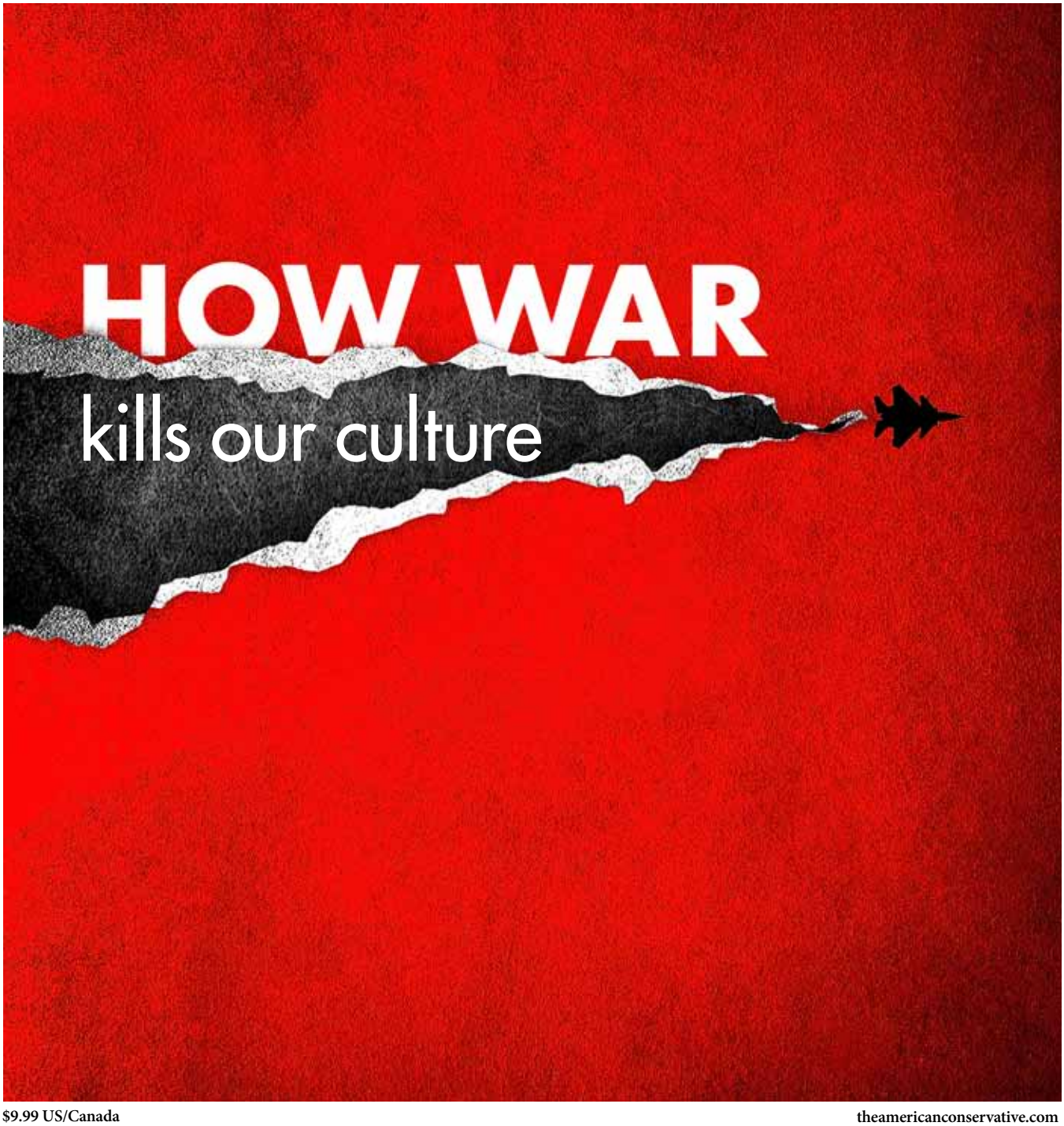
MAISIE ALLISON

MARCH/APRIL 2013

The American Conservative

IDEAS OVER IDEOLOGY • PRINCIPLES OVER PARTY



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Reactions

A NEW AGENDA FOR THE RIGHT?

Andrew Bacevich ("Counterculture Conservatism," January/February 2013) gives us plenty of food for thought in his meditation on what a vigorous conservatism ought to look like. He rightly observes that "our first responsibility lies in stewardship, preserving our common inheritance and protecting that which possesses lasting value." So far, so good. But later in the article he seems to exhibit cognitive dissonance. He brushes off the efforts of traditionalists to retain in law the millennia-old understanding of marriage, while on the other hand conceding that the central problem is "the collapse of heterosexual marriage as an enduring partnership sustained for the well-being of offspring." He fails to acknowledge that the breakdown of the natural family and the successes of the same-sex "marriage" movement both have their genesis in the same basic problem.

In the post-World War II period, various cultural phenomena, from Alfred Kinsey's pseudo-science to Hugh Hefner's mainstreaming of pornography to the introduction circa 1960 of "the Pill," combined to sever what had been seen as necessary links between sex, marriage, and procreation. The sexual revolution which exploded in the 1960s gradually entrenched itself in our society and government and was heavily promoted in our media. The dilemma we face is that we no longer possess a clear sense of the sanctity, nature, and purposes of marriage, and this is reflected both in the epidemic of fatherlessness and the gay "marriage" juggernaut. These are merely two sides of the same coin.

So, to paraphrase Aristotle: you can't have it both ways. "The institution most essential to conserve," wrote Russell Kirk, "is the family." This can't be done well unless we recover a clear, unambiguous understanding of what marriage actually is, as opposed to the "inclusive" construct many today want it to be. Without complementarity of the sexes, there is no marriage; marriage is the seedbed of the family; and without the family, civilization crumbles.

JEFF McALISTER
Longview, Texas

STAND FIRM ON ABORTION

Bacevich makes a good case that the Republican Party should abandon ideological positions and support essentially paleoconservative ideas, from wherever they derive, whether William Appleman Williams or Flannery O'Connor.

However, I think his asking us to "Forget about outlawing abortion..." is insupportable. Republicans, he says, "may judge the fruits produced by the sexual revolution poisonous but the revolution itself is irreversible."

If that statement is true, and it may very well be, then the battle for our civilization and culture is already lost. The issue is fundamental—if I may use that overworked word. Pope John Paul II said it better than I ever could when he visited the United States on August 12, 1993. Speaking to young people in Denver, Colorado, he said:

> All the great causes that are yours today will have meaning only to the extent that you guarantee the right to life and protect the human person … The ultimate test of your greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless ones. The best traditions of your love presume respect for those who cannot defend themselves.

This statement is at the heart of the matter, and I believe Flannery O'Connor would agree with me. Any political party, any political system that abandons this principle is doomed, because it is based upon a lie.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn warned us of the dire consequences living a lie. Remember the USSR?

PAUL DAVID NELSON
Lexington, Kentucky

MISSING THE MARX

As always, Prof. Bacevich wrote an insightful and intellectually stimulating article. However, I believe that he is completely wrong in claiming that Marxism no longer possesses value as a basis for practical action. On the contrary, this teaching is increasingly popular in the United States with ruling elites and the general public alike. Actually, the three basic foundations of Marxism have become firmly incorporated into the political mainstream. These are the following:

1.) Exploitation of working masses (proletariat, currently known as the 99 percent) by capitalists owning the means of production (bourgeoisie, now referred to as the 1 percent, fat cats, or banksters) is evil. Its main outcome is enrichment of the latter at the expense of the impoverishment and enslavement of the former. A state-controlled public sector is a by far superior way of organizing national economy. Thus, it should absorb most of the available resources.

2.) A free-market economy with its business cycles of expansions and recessions is inherently unstable. Downturns hurt the proletariat (the 99 percent) and should be prevented at any cost. Therefore, "the invisible hand" of the market needs to be replaced with a planning commission of ideologically trustworthy experts (Gosplan or Federal Reserve).

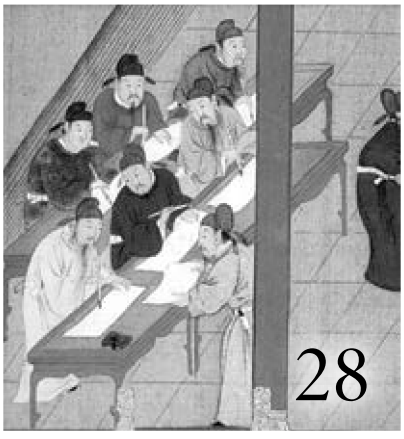
3.) Established bourgeois social institutions, such as family, business corporation, legislative assembly, or the church, defend the status quo in the interests of the ruling 1 percent. Therefore, they are deeply repressive, stand on the way of progress, and should be either thoroughly reformed or eliminated.

Previous attempts of building socialism around the world provided a lot of circus (especially for outside observers), but not much bread for the masses. Soon we will be able to find out if things are going to be different this time.

ANDREI ALYOKHIN
Old Town, Maine

This Month

Vol. 12, No. 2, March/April 2013



Cover illustration: Michael Hogue

The American Conservative

{ Vol. 12, No. 2, March/April 2013 }

Reality's Hour

This is a moment of opportunity for reality-based conservatives. The left has power but no philosophy beyond the stale remains of 1960s pipedreams. The neoconservative right is completely exhausted, both intellectually and politically—marked by just the sort of "irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas" that Lionel Trilling described in the 1950s. The field is open for a prudent, truth-telling conservatism to win new adherents. If its message is heard.

The world of journalism tells the tale—not by what it reports but in the state of the industry itself. *Newsweek* sought to survive a declining magazine market by becoming first a liberal weekly, then an almost neoconservative one, with cover stories by the likes of Niall Ferguson. Nobody was buying, and now *Newsweek* prints no more.

Movement conservatism, meanwhile, has given up on *Policy Review*—a wonkish journal begun by the Heritage Foundation in 1977 and whose last issue was published in February by the Hoover Institution—and *Human Events*, the venerable weekly founded in 1944 as, in part, a voice for the noninterventionist right. Alas, under the same ownership as Regnery publishing (another formerly reality-based bastion of the right), *Human Events* had become indistinguishable from the rest of the GOP media sphere.

Today the tempo for the movement conservative mind is set not by a Russell Kirk or even a William F. Buckley Jr. but by the likes of Sean Hannity and Bill O'Reilly—and increasingly by Internet scandal-mongers of the sort associated with the Washington Free Beacon and Breitbart.com. What's left for the thinking conservative?

A great deal, in fact—the entire top tier, and most of the middle, of the intelligent media market. This is where traditional conservatives and foreign-policy realists have their opportunity, and it's where *The American Conservative* comes in.

We bring together in print the finest critical minds on the right (and beyond), while online we present a daily megadose of traditionalism from Rod Dreher and continuous reality-based foreign-policy analysis from Daniel Larison. *TAC*'s mindshare has been rising rapidly even in the face of a difficult market for all publications. Across all platforms—including our Kindle and PDF editions—more people are reading *The American Conservative* than ever before.

The changing media landscape requires some changes of us, however. To strengthen the print magazine for the long term, we have changed its frequency from 12 issues a year to six—a move that ensures *TAC* will not suffer the fate of *Human Events* or *Newsweek*. Subscriptions rates have also increased: readers have always been generous in supporting *TAC* through donations as well as subscriptions, and to set the magazine on the firmest footing possible, we have priced-in the level of support that so many subscribers were already volunteering.

The forces arrayed against common sense, in politics and the media alike, are extraordinary. But reality has a way of breaking in, and our experience shows that right ideas are growing stronger by the hour as old ideologies fall. ■

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Front Lines

Burke Not Buckley

The case for community-centric conservatism

by CARL T. BOGUS

Conservatives are engaged in deep introspection these days. As they reconsider their direction, they would do well to look back to the formative period of their movement. They may find something there of great value—something many conservatives think their movement embraced, but in truth rejected.

By 1952, liberal candidates had not only captured the last five Democratic presidential nominations but the past five Republican nominations as well. Most observers considered conservatism dead—a philosophy unsuited for modern times. A small number of intellectuals disagreed. They believed that—if redefined—conservatism might be resuscitated. But they passionately disagreed about how it should be redefined.

One group wanted to follow the teachings of the great 18th-century English statesman Edmund Burke. Russell Kirk was the most prominent of this group. In 1953, Kirk—a young assistant professor of history at Michigan State—turned his doctoral dissertation into a book. "Burke's is the true school of conservative principle," Kirk argued, and he described Burke's philosophy so appealingly that Kirk's book, *The Conservative Mind*, became wildly successful. Other Burkeans included Clinton Rossiter, a political scientist at Cornell; Robert Nisbet, a sociologist at Berkeley; and Peter Viereck, an historian at Mount Holyoke College. These men, though academics, were gifted writers, and each produced a popular book advocating the Burkean way.

What is the Burkean way? Those who have read only Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*—his brilliant jeremiad against the convulsive overthrow of the French monarchy—often think of Burke as an implacable defender of institutions and tradition. But that can be misleading. Burke was, in fact, a reformer, though of a particular kind. He believed that society was a complex organism that evolved to its present condition for reasons that were not always evident. Burke believed that changes are often desirable—and a constant process of improvement essential—but those changes should be made carefully, with respect for tradition and a concern for unintended consequences. "We must all obey the great law of change," he wrote. "It is the most powerful law of nature, and the means perhaps of its conservation."

Burke's new disciples agreed. "Conservatism," Russell Kirk wrote, "never is more admirable than when it accepts change that it disapproves, with good grace, for the sake of the general condition; and the impetuous Burke, of all men, did most to establish that principle."

Chris Morris

Edmund Burke

At the most fundamental level, Burke was a communitarian. It is institutions—governmental, professional, religious, educational, and otherwise—that compose the fabric of society. Each of these institutions has classes of people who devote their careers to preserving and improving them: jurists serve the law, scholars their disciplines and universities, clerics their church, and so on. All citizens, in fact, are engaged in a sacred intergenerational compact.

"Society," Burke said, "becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

For the Burkeans of 1950s, emphasis on community was at the heart of a properly conceived conservatism. Kirk wrote: "True conservatism … rises at the antipodes from individualism. Individualism is social atomism; conservatism is community of spirit." Robert Nisbet titled his book *The Quest for Community*.

Though it may surprise people who have been taught that Edmund Burke is the father of modern conservatism, the Burkeans were, in fact, defeated by a rival group with a nearly diametrically opposed view. The leader of that group was William F. Buckley Jr., founder of *National Review*. When, in 1952, Buckley first articulated his philosophy in *God and Man at Yale*, he called it "individualism," though the nearly absolute laissez-faire philosophy he advocated became better known as libertarianism.

How did Buckley prevail? He deftly co-opted Kirk by inviting him to write a regular column for *National Review*, something Kirk could not afford not to do after imprudently giving up his faculty position. Kirk abhorred the libertarian direction in which Buckley and colleagues were taking conservatism. Kirk later denounced libertarianism for revering "self-interest, closely joined to the nexus of cash payment" rather than Burke's "community of souls." He complained that libertarians take "the state for the great oppressor" although Burke taught that government "is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants." Yet for the quarter-century that he wrote for the magazine, Kirk held his tongue.

For their own reasons, the other three Burkeans also left the field of battle. Paradoxically, the Burkeans never collaborated. These communitarians acted—and were defeated—as individuals while the individualist Buckley built a community of thinkers and readers through his magazine.

Maybe Buckley's was the necessary path in the 1950s. Conservatism then needed to differentiate itself starkly from the prevailing liberalism. Burkeanism would have made that difficult because, as Kirk often observed, Burke was both a conservative and a liberal. But if conservatives today are looking for wisdom—and maybe even a less truculent partisanship—they might consider the path not taken. ■

Carl T. Bogus, who considers himself a liberal Burkean, is a professor of law at Roger Williams University and author of Buckley: William F. Buckley Jr. and the Rise of American Conservatism.

Don't Break the China

We need Beijing as an ally against anarchy.

by WILLIAM S. LIND

Much is made of the analogy between the relationship of the U.S. to China today and that of Great Britain to Imperial Germany before World War I. Just as Germany had risen quickly to become a world economic power, so has China. Germany, driven by nationalism, sought commensurate military, naval, and diplomatic power, as does China. As young powers, both Germany then and China now were sometimes brash in ways that were not in their own interest. Both challenged the dominant power at sea, though they had no pressing need to do so.

But there is another side to the analogy, one that cautions Washington. Britain handled Germany's rise poorly. She waged aggressive war on the Boers, a people the Germans regarded as close kin, and alienated German public opinion. The Kaiser was left in the awkward position of being more pro-British than his people. In the Entente Cordiale, Britain entered into an extra-constitutional and strategically unnecessary alliance aimed at containing Germany. In 1914, while Kaiser Wilhelm II did not want war, some important Britons did, including Churchill and, disastrously, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.

As Washington "rebalances" its military toward Asia, we too are handling a rising power poorly. The Obama administration's resolve to build up American air and naval forces in the Pacific can be aimed at only one country, China. Our recent offhand guarantee to Japan over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands has a chilling echo of 1914. Like Britain before World War I, we appear unwilling to countenance the natural rise of a new power; we act as if foreign policy were merely a child's game of king of the hill. Elements in the Pentagon see a sea and air war with China as a way to recoup their failures in recent land wars, as well as justify their budgets.

What would a conservative policy toward China look like, one that proceeded from Russell Kirk's politics of prudence? It would arise from recognition of a paradigm shift of rare historic dimensions in the grand-strategic environment. The rise of Fourth Generation war—war waged by non-state entities—has made conflict between states obsolete.

As this kind of war spreads across the globe, defeating one national military after another, it puts at risk the state system itself. It also defines the 21st century as one in which the decisive conflict will be between order and disorder. The state represents order, and order is conservatism's first objective. Conservatives are on the side of

the state, and a conservative foreign policy seeks above all maintenance of the state system. That in turn requires an alliance of all states, including China, against non-state forces.

It is difficult to imagine a conflict with greater potential to damage the state system than one between America and China. We are currently witnessing the consequences of the disintegration of one small state, Libya. A defeated China, its central government delegitimized by military failure, could fall into a new period of warring states. What would be the fate of order in a world in which disorder ruled more than a billion Chinese?

Avoiding this nightmare scenario and creating an effective alliance with China requires that America accept, and indeed welcome, China's rise. A stronger China can and should assume primary responsibility for maintaining order in a growing portion of the world. Such a relief of America's burden—one increasingly beyond our financial strength to bear—is in our interest. Similarly, the maintenance of order is in China's interest, as well as congruent with fast-recovering traditional Chinese culture and Confucian values.

Conservatives' old friend realism offers a device for bringing harmony to Chinese-American relations: spheres of influence. As China's expands, ours can contract, within the shared framework of upholding order. One Chinese admiral jokingly proposed drawing a north-south line through the Pacific, demarcating our respective spheres of influence. We should take him up on it, and add that as China continues its rise, the line will shift.

If this proposal seems radical, it in fact reflects the way Britain accommodated a rising United States. The possibility of war between America and Britain was taken seriously by both sides well up into the 20th century. But instead of clashing, as British power weakened after World War I and, more dramatically, after World War II, London incrementally passed the task of maintaining order to the United States. Britain eventually did this even in areas she had long regarded as vital to her interests, including the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

Just as a return to spheres of influence can replace conflict with alliance between the United States and China, so it can harmonize relations elsewhere, again with the goal of allying all states against the forces of the Fourth Generation. We should recognize Russia's "near abroad" as her sphere of influence. We should work actively to bring Afghanistan into Pakistan's sphere of influence. While contested spheres of influence can exacerbate conflicts, agreed spheres reduce them. By acting as an honest broker to facilitate such agreement—including between China and Japan—rather than joining either side, the U.S. can do more for her real interests, including her vital interest in maintaining the state system.

As the abominable snowman of foreign-policy idealism, made up of Wilsonians, globalists, and moon-gazers melts in the sun of serial failure, realism awakens from hibernation. The destruction of states in the name of "democracy" and "human rights" may not be an unmixed blessing. Results matter—not merely intentions.

A stronger China can and should assume responsibility for maintaining order in a growing portion of the world.

Results have not been quite this important for a bit over 350 years, since the Peace of Westphalia. The state system established by Westphalia is under assault and may fall to non-state forces, ushering in Old Night around the globe. Realism, spheres of influence, and an alliance of all states against the Fourth Generation comprise the policy prudence recommends. ■

William S. Lind is author of the Maneuver Warfare Handbook *and director of the American Conservative Center for Public Transportation.*

Anti-Imperial Presidency

A 19th-century model for the right foreign-policy

by DANIEL LARISON

Grover Cleveland was the only Democrat to serve as president in the second half of the 19th century, and he was arguably the last conservative Democratic president in U.S. history. But what made him a truly remarkable and admirable figure was his opposition to European imperialism throughout his career. Cleveland's foreign policy was in many respects very traditional, but what set him apart from his contemporaries, and many of his predecessors, was his willingness to employ American power in a limited way for anti-imperialist ends.

Foreign policy was not a major part of the first of Cleveland's two non-consecutive terms, although between 1886 and 1888 he successfully countered German ambitions in the South Pacific to take control of Samoa—

risking diplomatic rupture with a great power over a place where no major U.S. interests were at stake. Upon entering office the second time, Cleveland delayed but ultimately could not prevent the annexation of Hawaii, which the outgoing Harrison administration had been eager to realize.

Following an 1893 coup by American settlers against the native Hawaiian government, Benjamin Harrison had tried to rush an annexation treaty through the Senate during his last days as president. Cleveland withdrew the treaty and tried to find some way to repair the damage that the annexationists had done. But nothing short of direct intervention against the coup government could restore the status quo ante, and that was something Cleveland could not and would not attempt.

Grover Cleveland followed the admonitions of the Founding generation against foreign entanglements.

Cleveland had more success when he came to the defense of Venezuela in a boundary dispute with Great Britain's colony in Guyana, a move that briefly increased tensions between London and Washington. Resolving the dispute paved the way for a long-term improvement in relations between the U.S. and Great Britain—though it did so by expanding the scope of the Monroe Doctrine beyond what its authors had originally intended.

The impasse between Venezuela and Britain was by far the most significant international episode in Cleveland's second term, and at first glance his decision to involve the U.S. seems hard to understand. Strictly speaking, the Monroe Doctrine didn't apply since the disagreement didn't touch on Venezuela's form of government or its ability to govern itself. Cleveland was bending the letter of Monroe's statement—which had said, "the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers"—while trying to preserve its spirit.

Britain initially rejected the administration's offer to mediate, leading Cleveland to make the dispute a high-profile issue in 1895. Cleveland and Secretary of State Richard Olney linked it directly to the Monroe Doctrine's guarantee of independence and sovereignty for the Latin American republics, and for a short time it seemed possible that Britain and America might go to war over the issue.

Of course, Cleveland had no intention of plunging the U.S. into an unwinnable war against the preeminent military power of his day. But he also wasn't content to ignore European colonial expansionism in the Western Hemisphere. As Cleveland saw it, the possibility that Britain was taking advantage of a weaker state to establish a boundary favorable to its interests was an intolerable intrusion into the sovereignty of a fellow republic by a major European state. The disparity in power between the disputants, and Britain's colonial projects elsewhere during this same period, led Cleveland to be extremely suspicious of British goals.

No less important for Cleveland than this interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine was his faith in arbitration as a mechanism for resolving international disputes. Cleveland saw an obvious role here for the United States, as the world's greatest neutral republic, but he also placed great importance on arbitration as a means of avoiding war. Fortunately for all parties, Britain wished to avoid conflict over the Venezuelan issue as well. In 1897, Britain and Venezuela signed a treaty in Washington agreeing to submit to arbitration, and by late 1899 the dispute had been resolved. Venezuela was a test case for the American use of arbitration, and Cleveland hoped it would establish a precedent to be followed by his successors and other nations.

His aversion to unnecessary military conflicts was most obvious in his reaction to the war fever that erupted in 1898, the year after he left office. As Alyn Brodsky recounts in *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Character*, he believed it would be "an outrage to declare war" on Spain even after the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine*, and he ridiculed the yellow journalism that clamored for bloodshed. "I decline to allow my sorrow for those who died on the *Maine* to be perverted to an advertising scheme for the *New York Journal*," he said. After the war, Cleveland objected strongly to the idea that the U.S. should annex the Philippines and joined the Anti-Imperialist League to protest against that move and America's subsequent war against the Filipinos.

Cleveland followed the admonitions of the Founding generation against foreign entanglements and in favor of a policy of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations. But he also pursued a more activist course in opposing European and U.S. colonial schemes than any president had before him. The results were mixed, but they remain an instructive example how a powerful republic might conduct its foreign policy without the constant recourse to military action to which we have become accustomed in the modern era. ■

Daniel Larison blogs at www.theamericanconservative.com/larison.

Pope Benedict's Farewell

"To govern the bark of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me."

With those brave, wise, simple words, Benedict XVI announced an end of his papacy. How stands the Church he has led for eight years?

While he could not match the charisma of his predecessor, John Paul II, his has been a successful papacy. He restored some of the ancient beauty and majesty to the liturgy. He brought back to the fold separated Anglican brethren. The Church is making converts in sub-Saharan Africa. And in America, new traditionalist colleges and seminaries have begun to flourish.

That is looking back eight years. Looking back half a century, to that October day in 1962 when Pope John XXIII declared the opening of Vatican II, the Church appears to have been in a decline that, in parts of the world, seems to be leading to near extinction.

At Vatican II, the Rev. Joseph Ratzinger, the future Benedict XVI, was among the reformers who were going to bring the church into the modern world. The encounter did not turn out well.

In 1965, three in four American Catholics attended Sunday mass. Today, it is closer to one in four. The number of priests has fallen by a third, of nuns by two-thirds. Orders like the Christian Brothers have virtually vanished. The Jesuits are down to a fraction of their strength in the 1950s.

Parochial schools teaching 4.5 million children in the early 1960s were teaching a third of that number at the end of the century. Catholic high schools lost half their enrollment. Churches have been put up for sale to pay diocesan debts.

And the predator-priest sex-abuse scandal, with the offenses dating back decades, continues to suppurate and stain her reputation and extract billions from the Sunday collections of the abiding faithful.

The highest-ranking Catholic politicians, Vice President Joe Biden and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, support same-sex marriage and belong to a party whose platform calls for funding abortions to the day of birth. Catholic teaching on contraception, divorce, and sexual morality is openly mocked.

Among Catholics, there has long been a dispute over the issue: did Vatican II cause the crisis in the Church, or did the council merely fail to arrest what was an inevitable decline with the triumph of the counterculture of the 1960s?

As one looks around the world and back beyond the last half-century, it seems that Catholicism and Christianity have been in a centuries-long retreat. In the mid-19th century, Matthew Arnold wrote in "Dover Beach":

> The Sea of Faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar …

In Christianity's cradle, the Holy Land and the Near East, from Egypt to Afghanistan, Christians are subjected to persecution and pogroms, as their numbers dwindle. In Latin America, the Church has been losing congregants for decades.

In Europe, Christianity is regarded less as the founding faith of the West and the wellspring of Western culture and civilization than as an antique; a religion that European Man once embraced before the coming of the Enlightenment. Many cathedrals on the continent have taken on the aspect of Greek and Roman temples—places to visit and marvel at what once was, and no longer is.

The Faith is Europe, Europe is the Faith, wrote Hilaire Belloc. And when the faith dies, the culture dies, the civilization dies, and the people die. So historians and poets alike have written.

Surely that seems true in Europe. In the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, Western Man, under the banners of God and country, conquered almost the entire world. But now that Christianity has died in much of the West, the culture seems decadent, the civilization in decline. No Western nation has had a birth rate in three decades that will enable its native-born to survive.

Dispensing with Christianity, Western peoples sought new gods and new faiths: communism, Leninism, fascism, Nazism. Those gods all failed.

Now we have converted to even newer faiths to create paradise in this, the only world we shall ever know. Democratic capitalism, consumerism, globalism, environmentalism, egalitarianism.

The Secular City seems to have triumphed over the City of God.

But in the Islamic world, an ancient and transcendental faith is undergoing a great awakening after centuries of slumber and seems anxious to reengage and settle accounts with an agnostic West.

As ever, the outcome of the struggle for the world is in doubt. ■

The GOP's Vietnam

How Republican foreign policy lost the culture war—and a generation

by DANIEL McCARTHY

America doesn't really have a two-party system. It has a one-and-a-half-party system, where one party at a time tends to dominate the national agenda while the other becomes a half-party—one that might hold onto the House of Representatives and some state governments, but that isn't trusted by voters to run the country.

The Republicans are America's half-party today. This is a reversal from a generation ago, when the GOP typically held the White House—for all but four years from 1969 to 1993—and occasionally the Senate, while Democrats, despite a 40-year majority in the House of Representatives, were the party Americans deemed incompetent to govern at the national level.

The root of the GOP's problem now is the same as that of the Democrats in 1969: the party's reputation has been ruined by a botched, unnecessary war—Vietnam in the case of the Democrats, Iraq for the GOP. This may sound implausible: every political scientist knows that Americans don't care about foreign policy; certainly they don't vote based on it. But foreign policy is not just about foreign policy: it's also about culture.

That the "culture war"—as well as the "War on Drugs"—assumed its present shape in the wake of the Vietnam conflict is no accident. Vietnam polarized, realigned, and radicalized cultural factions. During the Lyndon Johnson administration, Republicans in Congress were still more likely than Democrats to support civil rights legislation. Attitudes toward abortion and homosexuality did not clearly divide left from right: Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, and even William F. Buckley favored liberalizing abortion laws in the early 1960s, while as late as 1972 Democratic vice presidential nominees Sargent Shriver and Thomas Eagleton were antiabortion. Few mainstream figures in either party supported gay rights, but it was clear enough from their social circles that right-wingers such as Reagan, Goldwater, and Buckley were not about to launch any witch-hunts.

Nor were attitudes toward drugs a mark of partisan distinction: Clare Booth Luce was an early evangelist for LSD. She urged her husband, *Time* proprietor Henry Luce, to try it, and he "did much more to popularize acid than Timothy Leary," in Abbie Hoffman's opinion. Buckley, of course, was a longtime supporter of marijuana decriminalization.

One could find many more right-wingers who took the opposite views—but one could find just as many Democrats who did as well. The civil rights movement and the sexual revolution had supporters and opponents on both sides of the aisle.

And in the early '60s, Democrats still had a reputation for military prowess. Their party had led the country against Nazi Germany, and while

Daniel McCarthy is editor of The American Conservative.

Republicans blamed them for losing China to Communism, John F. Kennedy gained more traction against Richard Nixon in 1960 when he accused the Eisenhower administration of letting a (fictitious) "Missile Gap" open up with the Soviet Union. Republicans certainly weren't the only party considered competent to handle foreign affairs.

That changed with Vietnam. President Johnson seemed to have started a war he couldn't win or even end. It split his party and transformed the American left: until then, labor muscle and social-democratic brains were the left's principal organs. They tended to support the war and oppose the cultural upheavals that coincided with it—positions diametrically opposite those of the student movement and nascent New Left. "Cold War liberalism was forced to choose between the two terms of its definition, and chose war," recalled former Students for a Democratic Society leader Todd Gitlin in *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*.

But that was only the beginning of how losing the Vietnam War would lose the Democrats America as well. There were concrete connections between the conflict abroad and increasingly radical social movements at home: veterans came back from Indochina having tried, and in some cases being addicted to, drugs. ("During fiscal year 1971," according to Gitlin, "for every hundred soldiers… twenty smoked marijuana *frequently*, ten used opium or heroin *regularly*.") Blacks wondered why they were being drafted to fight in the name of freedoms they didn't enjoy. Young radicals who refused to go to war, meanwhile, in rejecting the military rejected everything associated with it: the haircuts, the university system (and administrators' place *in loco parentis*), and in some cases the norms of bourgeois life itself. The war and its failures put the lie to everything.

Radicals were not the only ones who felt this: ordinary Americans also had to contend with the unsettling questions an unsuccessful war raises. A disastrous conflict can shatter a nation's faith, as attested by the effects of World War I even on Europe's nominal victors. Patriotism and authority in all forms come into question—which is not to say that the answer most Americans arrived at was to reject such concepts. But clearly if they were to be reaffirmed, they had to be purged of the war's pollution.

Democrats thus became not only the party of strategic ineptitude but also a symbol of defeats beyond the battlefield. Moderates or conservatives in the party were caught in a pincer: Democrats were branded with unmanliness and lack of patriotism—and radicals in the party (as well as outside of it) actually embraced these extremes. The party's remaining Cold War liberals could not exorcise the ghost of Lyndon Johnson: their ideology had failed in practice in the eyes of the public and was rejected in theory by their own side's brightest young minds. Yet non-left Democrats secure in House districts and state governments had a hard time understanding this. They were just safe enough not to have to admit the magnitude of their catastrophe.

An opportunity now arose for the right to strike a sharper contrast with this New Left than had ever been possible with the old Democratic Party. The radicals themselves had made the personal political, and now the quiet social tolerance of old-guard conservatives like Buckley and Goldwater was unfashionable—indeed, treasonous. The New Right that emerged in the 1970s around figures such as George Wallace and Jerry Falwell was proud to be everything the New Left was not: pro-white, Protestant, heterosexual, and all-American. This was a very different style and emphasis from that of the old *National Review* set, who had been embarrassed by too much talk about race or sex, were disproportionately Catholic and Jewish, and tended to be heavily Anglophile when not actually European by birth.

America has a one-and-a-half-party system, where one party at a time tends to dominate the national agenda. The Republicans are America's half-party today.

More important than the radicalization of the right, however, Republicans were now able to claim the nation's center ground—the GOP became the party of simple military competence, patriotism, and national unity. This was what Richard Nixon's "silent majority" was all about. Nixon was not a New Right president—the New Right would be much more right-wing than Nixon had been—but he did attach some of the New Right's identity-based politics to the only faintly ideological middle American voter. Normal now meant center-right and Republican. The Democrats were by 1972 very obviously the

party of abnormality: of acid, amnesty, and abortion.

Democrats struggled to glue their coalition back together, but the South was permanently lost, and the New Left couldn't be reconciled with many of the old social democrats—some of whom began migrating into the Republican camp as "neoconservatives." These mostly Jewish New York intellectuals might seem strange bedfellows for Southern evangelicals. But admirers of George Wallace and Scoop Jackson could come together over what *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz identified as "the two ruling passions of neoconservatism—its anti-Communism and its revulsion against the counterculture."

The "culture war" that Pat Buchanan spoke of at the 1992 Republican convention was, among other things, a symptom of Vietnam syndrome.

Through the 1980s, both alternate Democratic brands—Johnson-style Cold War liberalism and peacenik McGovernism—were tainted by Vietnam and the war's cultural aftershocks. The party could not shake its reputation for defeatism and radicalism merely by nominating a Southern Baptist like Jimmy Carter or an old-line laborite like Walter Mondale. And even though America had become mildly antiwar—Nixon got out of Vietnam and Reagan never launched an intervention on such a scale—it was not antiwar in a way that the Democratic Party's left could capitalize on.

Instead the Republican Party, for all its anti-Communist rhetoric, adopted a conflict-averse Realpolitik exemplified by Nixon's opening to China and Reagan's negotiations with Gorbachev—maneuvers that cemented the GOP's reputation for adult leadership among centrist voters. The long-remembered excesses of the New Left and the reality-based policies—especially foreign policy—of the Republican Party reduced Democrats to role of half-party for almost a quarter of a century.

That's a role Republicans might have to get used to today, thanks to the Iraq War and prolonged occupation of Afghanistan. And like the Democrats of the '70s and '80s, Republicans of the 21st century not even begun to grapple with the magnitude of what their foreign-policy follies mean for the culture. Instead of the causes of gay rights and black power being tied to the party that started a war in Vietnam that it couldn't finish, the causes of traditional marriage and tax cuts are now tied to a party that started wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that it couldn't finish.

Already by 1992 Republicans had become complacent about their post-Vietnam identity. Not only had the foreign-policy landscape changed with the end of the Cold War, but the cultural associations of the Vietnam defeat were fading. For Baby Boomers, memories of the Vietnam era were inseparable from feelings about racial politics and sexual morality—the alignments brought about by the war had set the template for a generation's understanding of left and right.

Younger voters not only had no memory of the war itself—an 18-year-old first-time voter in 1992 was born the year after Nixon withdrew most U.S. forces from Indochina—but its cultural aftermath didn't and couldn't evoke the same feelings as for Boomers. Young voters had no reason to see the social movements associated with the Vietnam War as radical or un-American. The sexual revolution had been background noise for them since the day they were born.

The "culture war" that Pat Buchanan spoke of at the 1992 Republican convention was, among other things, a symptom of Vietnam syndrome: a chance to right the wrongs of the 1960s and 1970s, if not in the rice paddies of Indochina then in the hearts and minds of Americans, turning back the clock to a more wholesome time before the war and its cultural coattails.

For younger voter cohorts, this couldn't make sense. They were a postwar generation, culturally as well as militarily, and the idea of winning back what had been lost in the wars of the 1960s was emotionally incomprehensible. These voters lacked the psychological backdrop that pulled the Boomers toward the GOP after Vietnam. And over the next 20 years, as talk radio and Fox News continued to pitch the Republican message to Boomer ears, Americans born after 1975 simply tuned out.

That might only have made Millennials and their older siblings a neutral cohort, had it not been for the Iraq War—which has not only done to the GOP what Vietnam did to the Democrats as a party, but has also done to conservatism as an ideology what Vietnam did to the social-democratic left.

America has been at war in Afghanistan for the entire adult life of any voter under 30. For still younger Americans, every living memory is of a country with troops in combat overseas—and for what? The wars haven't brought prosperity: just the opposite. They haven't reaffirmed traditional sex roles or Christianity or family values, all of which are challenged by veterans coming home with missing limbs or mangled minds. The cultural resonances of this decade of war are the opposite of those of Vietnam; they're closer to those of Great Britain after World War I. Britain, too, won its war and wondered what that meant.

Republicans split over Bush's wars as deeply as Democrats once split over Vietnam. The raw numbers aren't similar—the antiwar right is not as numerous as the antiwar left once was—but the philosophical depth of the divide is as great. And it's a generation gap. Boomer Republicans are still refighting old wars—Benghazi is the new Khe Sanh, and they've adopted Israel not only as avatar of the lost South Vietnam but as symbol of the Providential favor and military virtue our nation lost in the 1960s. Yet even the younger evangelicals—let alone Ron Paul's youthful supporters and the neo-traditionalist "crunchy cons"—don't buy it.

The GOP never learned to talk to the post-Vietnam generation in the first place; over the last decade, it compounded the problem by launching wars that, far from resolving the unfinished business of the Vietnam era, only made clear that those who are refighting the conflicts of that time are oblivious to today's realities.

While Republicans wage a war on the past, Barack Obama has staked claim to the future—in the same way that Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan once did. The reputation for competence in wielding power that Nixon (before Watergate) and Reagan accumulated now accrues to Obama's advantage. He brought the troops home from Iraq—however reluctantly—and is on course to end the war in Afghanistan next year. His foreign policy, like Nixon's and Reagan's, involves plenty of military force. But like those Republicans, the incumbent Democrat has avoided debacles of the sort that characterized the administrations of Lyndon Johnson and George W. Bush.

Meanwhile, Obama is winning the culture war because that war continues to be fought by the right in the terms of the Vietnam era. That mistake, coupled with the natural credit a leader gets from keeping the country out of quagmires, gives the president's party a tremendous advantage among the rising generation. (Sixty percent of voters under 30 supported Obama in 2012, as did 52 percent of those age 30–44.) And older conservatives, seeing that generation's disdain for the culture war, are apt to write them off completely. If you're not outraged by same-sex marriage, how can you be any kind of conservative?

But the reason even young conservatives aren't interested in those kinds of battles is that they're fighting others closer to home. Americans born after 1975 have grown up in an environment in which, Todd Gitlin admits, "only the most sentimental ex-hippie could fail to recognize the prices paid on the road to the new freedom: the booming teenage pregnancy rate; the dread diseases that accompanied the surge in promiscuity; the damage done by drugs; the undermining of family commitment…"

Young adults who have come from home backgrounds marked by divorce, or from intact families that nonetheless never sat down at a dinner table, want to form stronger bonds than their parents did. Boomers who view post-Boomer attitudes toward sex in light of a "revolution" are doing it wrong. It was the Boomers, or at least a key cohort among them, who believed in free love as a salvific concept. Young American have grown up with promiscuity and knowledge of drugs, aren't panicked about these things, but don't see them as possessing redemptive significance either. Even most young progressives do not believe in personal "liberation" of the sort that was at the core of the '60s left—just as no one today believes in the kind of "liberation" once associated with Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Minh.

The Republican Party may not be able to escape its McGovern phase, even if Democrats screw up (as they will) and we briefly get a Republican Carter. The party and the ideology soaked into it have lost their reputation for competence, and they've lost the emotional resonances that come with being the party of America: victory, prosperity, normality. Instead the resonances that come from the War on Terror are of a party and an era marked by resentment, recession, and insecurity. Although the party still sees Ronald Reagan it looks in the mirror, what the rest of the country sees is George W. Bush—much as post-Vietnam Democrats continued to think of themselves as the party of Franklin Roosevelt when in the minds of most Americans they had become the party of Johnson and McGovern.

Until the Republican Party can come to grips with its failure, the Democrats will be the party Americans trust to govern. ■

Beyond Fox News

Meet the post-movement conservatives.

by MAISIE ALLISON

Peter Viereck reintroduced conservatism to modern America in 1949 with his classic *Conservatism Revisited*. "This was the book," wrote George Nash in his seminal history of 20th-century conservative thought, "which, more than any other of the early postwar era, created the new conservatism as a self-conscious intellectual force."

Viereck's conservatism was pre-political, "more contemplative than activist." In fact, he believed that to identify conservatism primarily in political terms would be self-defeating. He opposed the notion of a "conservative movement" before it even got off the ground.

He directed an early salvo at *God and Man at Yale*, which most of today's conservatives consider a founding text of the movement (in most cases, without having read it). In a 1951 review published in the *New York Times*, Viereck took issue with the young William F. Buckley Jr.'s indiscriminate alarmism:

> The author irresponsibly treats not only mild social democracy but even most social reform as almost crypto-communism. He damns communism, our main enemy, not half so violently as lesser enemies like the income tax and inheritance

Conor Friedersdorf
The Atlantic

Andrew Sullivan,
The Dish

David Frum,
Newsweek /
The Daily Beast

Ross Douthat,
The New York Times

Joe Scarborough,
MSNBC, *Politico*

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The University Bookman

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Tucker Carlson's attempt to play Arianna Huffington. Bright spot: **Matt Lewis**

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Host to **Glenn Reynolds's** partisan hybrid of pro-war libertarianism

The Blaze

Townhall.com

The American Spectator

National Review

MVPs: **Jim Manzi, Daniel Foster,** and **Ramesh Ponnuru**

Ricochet

Incoherent, but high-minded online community, with regulars **Rob Long** and **John Yoo**

Commentary

Where the *Washington Post's* **Jennifer Rubin** got her start

Free Republic

Conservative message board for grassroots ranting

Rush Limbaugh The master entertainer (desperately trying to keep up)

Hudson Institute

AEI

Doing the best work: **Henry Olsen, Norm Ornstein, and Jim Pethokoukis**

The Heritage Foundation

A calcified, self-perpetuating fundraising apparatus, now featuring **Jim DeMint**

George Will What happened to you?

Breitbart

Hysterics as investigative journalism

The Washington Examiner

Fox News Channel

Bill Kristol's oracle, redeemed by **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,** and **Jonathan Last**

The Weekly Standard

Michelle Malkin's contribution: "Twitchy," a site that aggregates tweets

WSJ

Reaganomics forever

Hot Air

Strong partisan analysis by **Ed Morrissey** and **Allahpundit**

The Washington Free Beacon

Rabble-rousing in search of page views

Matt Drudge The scoopster, even when there is no scoop

RedState

Home of **Erick Erickson's** overwrought populism

Human Events

A grandaddy of the movement, now out of print, right-wing before right-wing was the norm

Edited by Maisie Allison and Jonathan Coppage; Graphic: Michael Hogue; Photos: Getty Images; Graeme Jennings-Washington Examiner; Josh Haner-New York Times

> tax. Words will really fail you when you reach the book's final 'message': trustees and alumni should violate the legally established academic freedom to 'banish from the classroom' not merely Communists but all professors deviating from Adam Smith!

As the movement coalesced over the next few years, Viereck's wariness of economic materialism and "right-wing nationalist thought control" led coalition-builder Frank S. Meyer—a senior editor of *National Review*—to dub him a "counterfeit conservative." Viereck returned the compliment. In a 1962 *New Republic* essay, "The New Conservatism: One of Its Founders Asks What Went Wrong," he explained: "A scrutiny of the plain facts of the situation has forced our report on the new conservatives to be mainly negative."

That was Viereck's last formal written pronouncement on the state of conservatism. Yet more than a half-century later, his views are making a comeback among independent, "post-movement" conservatives. Even more curious, Viereck's disciples can be found not on the fringes but in the pages of *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*/The Daily Beast, and *The Atlantic*, where Viereck was first published. For a new generation of writers and conservative thinkers, it is almost as if Viereck had set the tone of 1950s conservatism instead of Buckley.

The Viereck disposition was never meant for the high-pitched fervors of movement conservatism.

Of course, the Viereck disposition was never meant for the high-pitched fervors of movement conservatism. Viereck himself accepted the New Deal and trade unions as "counter-revolutionary" measures and acknowledged the rootedness of both the American conservative tradition and our "moderate native liberalism." "The Burkean builds on the concrete existing historical base, not on a vacuum of abstract wishful thinking," he wrote. He warned against conservatism as a zero-sum political program, and he decried its adherents' stubborn ambivalence toward McCarthyism as the movement's "original sin." He was equally uncomfortable with its later fixation on Goldwater: "Fortunately, [Russell] Kirk's positive contribution sometimes almost balances such embarrassing ventures into practical national politics."

Above all, Viereck worried that a politically charged conservatism would degenerate into "a transient fad irrelevant to real needs." A static conservatism "does real harm when it … enters short-run politics conjuring up mirages to conceal sordid realities or to distract from them." He quoted a 1953 essay by philanthropist August Heckscher: "Conservatism at best remains deeper and more pervasive than any party; and a party that does claim it exclusively is likely to deform and exploit it for its own purposes."

The Rise of Post-Movement Conservatism

For his part, Buckley perpetuated Cold War frenzy in *National Review* but also published cheerful and significant conservative thinking on literature and public policy. Among some dissidents, however—openly in the case of Viereck and quietly in the case of Kirk—there had always been a certain Burkean unease about *NR*'s partisan politics. As the movement doubled down on the GOP, its legions took groupthink to new and bizarre levels, placing party loyalty at a premium and backing wholeheartedly the Republican line.

Post-movement conservatives are not political operatives. Unorthodox writers like Ross Douthat, Andrew Sullivan, and Conor Friedersdorf can be loosely described as Burkeans. A few, including former Bush speechwriter David Frum and Reagan economic adviser Bruce Bartlett, were forced out of the movement for their apostasies. Those who have eschewed built-in movement career paths—a gig on Fox News! a talk show on AM radio!—and multiplatform merchandising opportunities face a dilemma. They must forgo the movement entirely or operate carefully at its margins, working toward a conservatism that is interested in much more than electoral success.

Perhaps because of their aversion to narrow-minded activism, these writers have been adept at incorporating a broader, more nuanced conservative sensibility into the mainstream. Friedersdorf, a libertarian-leaning writer who got his start as an under-blogger for Sullivan, happily advances a critique of liberalism and contemporary conservatism

alike at *The Atlantic*'s website. His blog post "Why I Refuse to Vote for Barack Obama" (on constitutional and civil liberties grounds) was shared by 174,000 readers on Facebook.

David Frum went independent in 2009 with the now defunct website FrumForum—a "gathering place for conservatives who still believe the Earth is round," according to *The New Republic*—and was fired from AEI a year later for breaking with the party on healthcare reform. (He joined *Newsweek*/The Daily Beast after that.) In a 2011 essay for *New York*, Frum decried the "drying up" of conservative creativity and described the movement as a "going-out-of-business sale for the baby boom generation."

"The problems that generate political movements are either solved or are shown to be unsolvable or just irrelevant because of passage of time," Frum told *The American Conservative*. Continuing with the same ideas after that means "you become blind to reality around you. The conservative movement is increasingly removed from the concerns of future generations, which don't use politics to memorialize old historical conflicts."

"I don't think it makes sense to use the phrase 'conservative movement' now," he says, "when the conservative outlook almost entirely overlaps with the Republican Party, and in some ways is bigger than the Republican Party. A lot of the practices and habits that you develop when you're a small faction become inappropriate when you get big." The Procrustean movement, he wrote in *New York*, has become a "whole alternative knowledge system."

The conservative media in particular—once the vibrant repository of philosophical debate and keen wit—has become bigger, more consolidated, and corporate. As former GOP congressman Joe Scarborough, who brings concerns about the debt and perpetual war to MSNBC and *Politico*, observed at a National Review Institute event in January: "the debate has been stifled. It has been stifled because we have created this conservative groupthink over 30 years that has become more and more narrow. A conservative groupthink that would allow all of our primary presidential candidates being asked if they would take a 10-to-1 deal on spending cuts to taxes, and everybody's afraid to talk."

The groupthink is so extensive that several conservative publications seem to exist only to promote the work of other, indistinguishable movement outlets. (One typical headline from the Washington Free Beacon: "Fox News Cites Free Beacon Report.") Here the mission ranges from "use journalism to advance the movement" to "#war." As one attendee at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's annual conference told *Atlantic* reporter Molly Ball last year, "You couldn't get in an argument around here no matter how hard you tried."

Conor Friedersdorf says that much of the movement media simply feels old—"not many new ideas being batted around there"—and points to a generational conundrum: "What everyone thinks of as great moments in the conservative movement—Buckley founding *National Review*, Goldwater, Reagan getting elected—all of those things happened before Rush Limbaugh, talk radio, and Fox News," he says. "The movement is still generating revenue for its various projects but now has little to do with actually advancing conservative ideas." For instance, he asks, "what has the Heritage Foundation accomplished since the mid-1990s to justify its level of expenditure?"

The conservative media in particular has become bigger, more consolidated, and corporate.

"We need a certain amount of icebreaking to create space," Frum adds. "We're way overdue for generational change in the conservative world. … The Reagan record is not a motivator for next generation of voters."

Meanwhile, post-Reagan, post-movement conservatism has distanced itself from boomer nostalgia and isn't constantly compelled to dangle its ideological credentials out of fear of retribution from readers. These conservatives are free to explore different premises while leaving party shibboleths behind, particularly when it comes to post-Great Recession economics and foreign policy after Iraq. They are certainly not beholden to the short-term trajectory of the Republican Party.

Friedersdorf's former boss Andrew Sullivan has brought the conservatism of Michael Oakeshott to the pages of *The New Republic*, *Time, The Atlantic*, and *Newsweek*/The Daily Beast. In February he took his blog fully independent—and has raised

more than $600,000 in digital subscriptions from readers. Sullivan makes the case for a conservatism of "no party or clique." He turned to the example of Viereck in a recent blog post:

> The conservative criticism of today's GOP that I and others have engaged in is not new. It was there at the beginning of the 'movement' in the post-war period and has never really left. In other words, there is a distinctive conservative strain of non-violence, pragmatism, restraint and limited government that is at peace with the New Deal. How else to explain Eisenhower or the first Bush or Reagan in some moods?

Certainly, Viereck's comfort with "generous emotions" in the context of civil rights, and his recognition of the "shared liberalconservative base" as a rooted American reality, resonates with Sullivan, a committed Obamacon who was gay marriage's earliest and most articulate proponent.

The deeply pro-life Ross Douthat takes on philosophical and cultural questions in the *New York Times.* James Poulos, who founded the "Postmodern Conservative" blog at *First Things*, is now a producer at Huffington Post Live and contributor to *Forbes* and *Vice*. Others, like Josh Barro, a sharp policy analyst for *Bloomberg*, resist the conservative label altogether. Barro calls himself a neoliberal.

Several conservative publications seem to exist only to promote the work of other, indistinguishable movement outlets.

Friedersdorf notes that the movement itself began as a meager upstart: "Alternative or dissident conservatism has a better chance" of succeeding "than America suddenly deciding that [*National Review* writer and historian] Victor Davis Hanson has been right all along."

"A Revolt Against the Revolt Against Revolt"

Buckley's insurgency challenged a crumbling, staid liberal establishment; now the counter-establishment he founded suffers from the same large-scale intellectual decline. It's a scenario that Viereck half-foresaw in his review of *God and Man*: "some of us have preached a conservative 'revolt against revolt.' If the laboring mountain of the new campus of conservatism can turn out no humane and imaginative Churchill but merely this product of narrow economic privilege, then we might need a revolt against the revolt against revolt."

Should the present revolt, if we can indeed call it that, heed the movement's lessons and break the bondage of the Republican Party? In an essay for the Imaginative Conservative website, George Carey, a professor of government at Georgetown, put it this way:

> A Burkean based conservatism cannot be true to itself if it is aligned permanently with either of our political parties. The most obvious considerations bear out this conclusion. On what basis can loyalty to an organization, lacking any abiding principles and seeking nothing more than electoral victory, be justified? … At this level, the party is effectively brain dead, beyond repair. … Instead of worrying about the trials and tribulations of the Republican party, for instance, we ought to repudiate it and move on.

Carey elaborated in an email: "Why is there this deep concern for a political party that has abandoned us? Does this linkage to party make these ideas more attractive? If the ideas are sound, why can't they just stand by themselves?"

Indeed, conservatism is "deeper and more pervasive than any party," a sensibility that is naturally incorporated into the mainstream. In Viereck's words: "The answer is: children, don't oversimplify, don't pigeonhole: allow for pluralistic overlappings that defy abstract blueprints and labels."

While the movement may continue its political huckstering for some time—in part because it is so profitable—the Republican Party has hit a wall. Meanwhile, the conservative temperament flourishes in scattered, improbable places. Could this fugitive existence be more authentic to conservatism?

Perhaps post-movement conservatism won't accomplish much in practical political terms, but in nurturing a fertile intellectual tradition it may well do more good for the country than all the political campaigns of the last decade. ■

Maisie Allison is editorial director, digital of The American Conservative.

Why Marriage Equality Is Right

The party of Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan has now lost the popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections. The marketplace of ideas will render us irrelevant, and soon, if we are not honest about our time and place in history. Unfortunately, much of the discussion has focused on cosmetic solutions to, say, our underperformance among ethnic and young voters. This is a mistake: we cannot cross this river by feeling for stones. Instead, we need to take a hard look at what today's conservatism stands for.

Conservatives can start by examining how Republicans working with Democrats have governed in several successful states, including Utah: free-market-based healthcare reform, tax reform that eliminated deductions and closed loopholes to bring down rates, and practical education reforms that spoke to 21st-century realities.

Instead of using immigration reform as a wedge issue, like many leaders in Washington, Utah passed legislation to help manage immigration based on our real economic needs. If conservatives come to the table with solutions that put our communities first, it will go a long way toward winning elections.

But it's difficult to get people even to consider your reform ideas if they think, with good reason, you don't like or respect them. Building a winning coalition to tackle the looming fiscal and trust deficits will be impossible if we continue to alienate broad segments of the population. We must be happy warriors who refuse to tolerate those who want Hispanic votes but not Hispanic neighbors. We should applaud states that lead on reforming drug policy. And, consistent with the Republican Party's origins, we must demand equality under the law for all Americans.

While serving as governor of Utah, I pushed for civil unions and expanded reciprocal benefits for gay citizens. I did so not because of political pressure—indeed, at the time 70 percent of Utahns were opposed—but because as governor my role was to work for everybody, even those who didn't have access to a powerful lobby. Civil unions, I believed, were a practical step that would bring all citizens more fully into the fabric of a state they already were—and always had been—a part of.

That was four years ago. Today we have an opportunity to do more: conservatives should start to lead again and push their states to join the nine others that allow all their citizens to marry. I've been married for 29 years. My marriage has been the greatest joy of my life. There is nothing conservative about denying other Americans the ability to forge that same relationship with the person they love.

All Americans should be treated equally by the law, whether they marry in a church, another religious institution, or a town hall. This does not mean that any religious group would be forced by the state to recognize relationships that run counter to their conscience. Civil equality is compatible with, and indeed promotes, freedom of conscience.

Marriage is not an issue that people rationalize through the abstract lens of the law; rather it is something understood emotionally through one's own experience with family, neighbors, and friends. The party of Lincoln should stand with our best tradition of equality and support full civil marriage for all Americans.

This is both the right thing to do and will better allow us to confront the real choice our country is facing: a choice between the Founders' vision of a limited government that empowers free markets, with a level playing field giving opportunity to all, and a world of crony capitalism and rent-seeking by the most powerful economic interests.

Adam Smith was not only an architect of the modern world of extraordinary economic opportunity, he was a moralist whose first book was *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The foundation of his thought was his insight that free markets and open commerce strengthened our moral fiber by reinforcing the community of shared and reciprocal economic interests. Government, he thought, had to be limited lest it be captured and corrupted by special business interests who wanted protection from competition and the reciprocal requirements of community.

We are at a crossroads. I believe the American people will vote for free markets under equal rules of the game—because there is no opportunity or job growth any other way. But the American people will not hear us out if we stand against their friends, family, and individual liberty. ■

Jon Huntsman is a former governor of Utah and was a Huntsman Corporation executive and U.S. ambassador to China and Singapore.

Sex After Christianity

Gay marriage is not just a social revolution but a cosmological one.

by ROD DREHER

Twenty years ago, new president Bill Clinton stepped on a political landmine when he tried to fulfill a campaign promise to permit gay soldiers to serve openly. Same-sex marriage barely registered as a political cause; the country was then three years away from the Defense of Marriage Act and four years from comedian Ellen DeGeneres's prime-time coming out.

Then came what historians will one day recall as a cultural revolution. Now we're entering the endgame of the struggle over gay rights and the meaning of homosexuality. Conservatives have been routed, both in court and increasingly in the court of public opinion. It is commonly believed that the only reason to oppose same-sex marriage is rank bigotry or for religious reasons, neither of which—the argument goes—has any place in determining laws or public standards.

The magnitude of the defeat suffered by moral traditionalists will become ever clearer as older Americans pass from the scene. Poll after poll shows that for the young, homosexuality is normal and gay marriage is no big deal—except, of course, if one opposes it, in which case one has the approximate moral status of a segregationist in the late 1960s.

All this is, in fact, a much bigger deal than most people on both sides realize, and for a reason that eludes even ardent opponents of gay rights. Back in 1993, a cover story in *The Nation* identified the gay-rights cause as the summit and keystone of the culture war:

> All the crosscurrents of present-day liberation struggles are subsumed in the gay struggle. The gay moment is in some ways similar to the moment that other communities have experienced in the nation's past, but it is also something more, because sexual identity is in crisis throughout the population, and gay people—at once the most conspicuous subjects and objects of the crisis—have been forced to invent a complete cosmology to grasp it. No one says the changes will come easily. But it's just possible that a small and despised sexual minority will change America forever.

They were right, and though the word "cosmology" may strike readers as philosophically grandiose, its use now appears downright prophetic. The struggle for the rights of "a small and despised sexual minority" would not have succeeded if the old Christian cosmology had held: put bluntly, the gay-rights cause has succeeded precisely because the Christian cosmology has dissipated in the mind of the West.

Same-sex marriage strikes the decisive blow against the old order. *The Nation*'s triumphalist rhetoric from two decades ago is not overripe; the radicals appreciated what was at stake far better than did many—especially bourgeois apologists for same-sex marriage as a conservative phenomenon. Gay marriage will indeed change America forever, in ways that are only now becoming visible. For better or for worse, it will make ours a far less Christian culture. It already is doing exactly that.

When they were writing the widely acclaimed 2010 book *American Grace*, a comprehensive study of contemporary religious belief and practice, political scientists Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell noticed two inverse trend lines in social-science measures, both starting around 1990.

They found that young Americans coming into adulthood at that time began to accept homosexuality as morally licit in larger numbers. They also observed that younger Americans began more and

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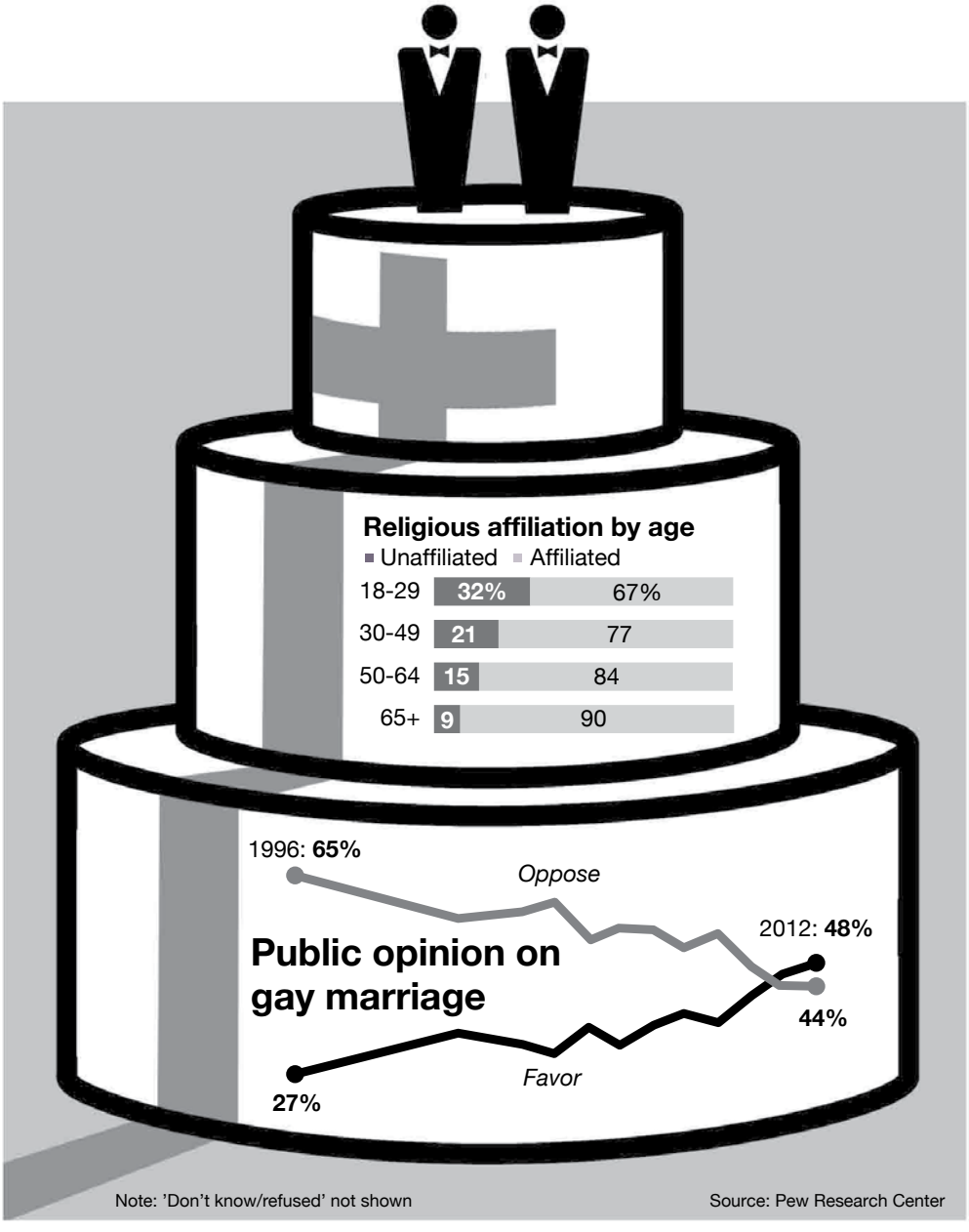

graphic by Michael Hogue

more to fall away from organized religion. The evangelical boom of the 1970s and 1980s stopped, and if not for a tsunami of Hispanic immigration the U.S. Catholic church would be losing adherents at the same rate as the long-dwindling Protestant mainline.

Over time, the data showed, attitudes on moral issues proved to be strong predictors of religious engagement. In particular, the more liberal one was on homosexuality, the less likely one was to claim religious affiliation. It's not that younger Americans were becoming atheists. Rather, most of them identify as "spiritual, but not religious." Combined with atheists and agnostics, these "Nones"—the term is Putnam's and Campbell's—comprise the nation's fastest-growing faith demographic.

Indeed, according to a 2012 Pew Research Center study, the Nones comprise one out of three Americans under 30. This is not simply a matter of young people doing what young people tend to do: keep church at arm's length until they settle down. Pew's Greg Smith told NPR that this generation is more religiously unaffiliated than any on record. Putnam—the Harvard scholar best known for his best-selling civic culture study *Bowling Alone*—has said that there's no reason to think they will return to church in significant numbers as they age.

Putnam and Campbell were careful to say in *American Grace* that correlation is not causation, but they did point out that as gay activism moved toward center stage in American political life—around the

time of *The Nation's* cover story—the vivid public role many Christian leaders took in opposing gay rights alienated young Americans from organized religion.

In a dinner conversation not long after the publication of *American Grace*, Putnam told me that Christian churches would have to liberalize on sexual teaching if they hoped to retain the loyalty of younger generations. This seems at first like a reasonable conclusion, but the experience of America's liberal denominations belies that prescription. Mainline Protestant churches, which have been far more accepting of homosexuality and sexual liberation in general, have continued their stark membership decline.

It seems that when people decide that historically normative Christianity is wrong about sex, they typically don't find a church that endorses their liberal views. They quit going to church altogether.

This raises a critically important question: is sex the linchpin of Christian cultural order? Is it really the case that to cast off Christian teaching on sex and sexuality is to remove the factor that gives—or gave—Christianity its power as a social force?

Though he might not have put it quite that way, the eminent sociologist Philip Rieff would probably have said yes. Rieff's landmark 1966 book *The Triumph Of the Therapeutic* analyzes what he calls the "deconversion" of the West from Christianity. Nearly everyone recognizes that this process has been underway since the Enlightenment, but Rieff showed that it had reached a more advanced stage than most people—least of all Christians—recognized.

Rieff, who died in 2006, was an unbeliever, but he understood that religion is the key to understanding any culture. For Rieff, the essence of any and every culture can be identified by what it forbids. Each imposes a series of moral demands on its members, for the sake of serving communal purposes, and helps them cope with these demands. A culture requires a *cultus*—a sense of sacred order, a cosmology that roots these moral demands within a metaphysical framework.

You don't behave this way and not that way because it's good for you; you do so because this moral vision is encoded in the nature of reality. This is the basis of natural-law theory, which has been at the heart of contemporary secular arguments against same-sex marriage (and which have persuaded no one).

Rieff, writing in the 1960s, identified the sexual revolution—though he did not use that term—as a leading indicator of Christianity's death as a culturally determinative force. In classical Christian culture, he wrote, "the rejection of sexual individualism" was "very near the center of the symbolic that has not held." He meant that renouncing the sexual autonomy and sensuality of pagan culture was at the core of Christian culture—a culture that, crucially, did not merely renounce but redirected the erotic instinct. That the West was rapidly re-paganizing around sensuality and sexual liberation was a powerful sign of Christianity's demise.

It is nearly impossible for contemporary Americans to grasp why sex was a central concern of early Christianity. Sarah Ruden, the Yale-trained classics translator, explains the culture into which Christianity appeared in her 2010 book *Paul Among The People*. Ruden contends that it's profoundly ignorant to think of the Apostle Paul as a dour proto-Puritan descending upon happy-go-lucky pagan hippies, ordering them to stop having fun.

In fact, Paul's teachings on sexual purity and marriage were adopted as liberating in the pornographic, sexually exploitive Greco-Roman culture of the time—exploitive especially of slaves and women, whose value to pagan males lay chiefly in their ability to produce children and provide sexual pleasure. Christianity, as articulated by Paul, worked a cultural revolution, restraining and channeling male eros, elevating the status of both women and of the human body, and infusing marriage—and marital sexuality—with love.

Christian marriage, Ruden writes, was "as different from anything before or since as the command to turn the other cheek." The point is not that Christianity was only, or primarily, about redefining and revaluing sexuality, but that within a Christian anthropology sex takes on a new and different meaning, one that mandated a radical change of behavior and cultural norms. In Christianity, what people do with their sexuality cannot be separated from what the human person is.

It would be absurd to claim that Christian civilization ever achieved a golden age of social harmony and sexual bliss. It is easy to find eras in Christian history when church authorities were obsessed with sexual purity. But as Rieff recognizes, Christianity did establish a way to harness the sexual instinct, embed it within a community, and direct it in positive ways.

What makes our own era different from the past, says Rieff, is that we have ceased to believe in the Christian cultural framework, yet we have made it impossible to believe in any other that does what culture must do: restrain individual passions and channel them creatively toward communal purposes.

Rather, in the modern era, we have inverted the role of culture. Instead of teaching us what we must

deprive ourselves of to be civilized, we have a society that tells us we find meaning and purpose in releasing ourselves from the old prohibitions.

How this came to be is a complicated story involving the rise of humanism, the advent of the Enlightenment, and the coming of modernity. As philosopher Charles Taylor writes in his magisterial religious and cultural history *A Secular Age*, "The entire ethical stance of moderns supposes and follows on from the death of God (and of course, of the meaningful cosmos)." To be modern is to believe in one's individual desires as the locus of authority and self-definition.

Gradually the West lost the sense that Christianity had much to do with civilizational order, Taylor writes. In the 20th century, casting off restrictive Christian ideals about sexuality became increasingly identified with health. By the 1960s, the conviction that sexual expression was healthy and good—the more of it, the better—and that sexual desire was intrinsic to one's personal identity culminated in the sexual revolution, the animating spirit of which held that freedom and authenticity were to be found not in sexual withholding (the Christian view) but in sexual expression and assertion. That is how the modern American claims his freedom.

To Rieff, ours is a particular kind of "revolutionary epoch" because the revolution cannot by its nature be institutionalized. Because it denies the possibility of communal knowledge of binding truths transcending the individual, the revolution cannot establish a stable social order. As Rieff characterizes it, "The answer to all questions of 'what for' is 'more.'"

Our post-Christian culture, then, is an "anti-culture." We are compelled by the logic of modernity and the myth of individual freedom to continue tearing away the last vestiges of the old order, convinced that true happiness and harmony will be ours once all limits have been nullified.

Gay marriage signifies the final triumph of the Sexual Revolution and the dethroning of Christianity because it denies the core concept of Christian anthropology. In classical Christian teaching, the divinely sanctioned union of male and female is an icon of the relationship of Christ to His church and ultimately of God to His creation. This is why gay marriage negates Christian cosmology, from which we derive our modern concept of human rights and other fundamental goods of modernity. Whether we can keep them in the post-Christian epoch remains to be seen.

It also remains to be seen whether we can keep Christianity without accepting Christian chastity. Sociologist Christian Smith's research on what he has termed "moralistic therapeutic deism"—the feelgood, pseudo-Christianity that has supplanted the normative version of the faith in contemporary America—suggests that the task will be extremely difficult.

Conservative Christians have lost the fight over gay marriage and, as we have seen, did so decades before anyone even thought same-sex marriage was a possibility. Gay-marriage proponents succeeded so quickly because they showed the public that what they were fighting for was consonant with what most post-1960s Americans already believed about the meaning of sex and marriage. The question Western Christians face now is whether or not they are going to lose Christianity altogether in this new dispensation.

Gay marriage signifies the final triumph of the Sexual Revolution and the dethroning of Christianity.

Too many of them think that same-sex marriage is merely a question of sexual ethics. They fail to see that gay marriage, and the concomitant collapse of marriage among poor and working-class heterosexuals, makes perfect sense given the autonomous individualism sacralized by modernity and embraced by contemporary culture—indeed, by many who call themselves Christians. They don't grasp that Christianity, properly understood, is not a moralistic therapeutic adjunct to bourgeois individualism—a common response among American Christians, one denounced by Rieff in 2005 as "simply pathetic"—but is radically opposed to the cultural order (or disorder) that reigns today.

They are fighting the culture war moralistically, not cosmologically. They have not only lost the culture, but unless they understand the nature of the fight and change their strategy to fight cosmologically, within a few generations they may also lose their religion.

"The death of a culture begins when its normative institutions fail to communicate ideals in ways that remain inwardly compelling," Rieff writes. By that standard, Christianity in America, if not American spirituality, is in mortal danger. The future is not foreordained: Taylor shares much of Rieff's historical analysis but is more hopeful about the potential for renewal. Still, if the faith does not recover, the historical autopsy will conclude that gay marriage was not a cause but a symptom, the sign that revealed the patient's terminal condition. ■

What Texas Won't Teach

U.S. history takes a back seat to race, class, and gender

by WILLIAM MURCHISON

We know, axiomatically, how it is with victors in one cause and another—they claim the spoils and write the history; in the latter case, untangling heroism from villainy, assigning significance to the outcomes, defining challenges still to come.

Why wonder (to the extent anyone does these days) that from many a seat in the modern classroom, America seems strikingly different from the star-spangled nation generally on view during—oh, I don't know, the early '60s might do as point of departure. That was the era in which I occupied my own seat in the history classrooms of the University of Texas (currently called, due to system expansion, the University of Texas-Austin).

A few years after my graduation, with a history B.A., followed by study at Stanford for the history Master of Arts, came the tempests and upheavals of the Vietnam war-counterculture era, whose victors were… guess who?

No point leaving readers in suspense. A study by the National Association of Scholars, an organization of counter-countercultural academics in various disciplines, dedicated to "the tradition of reasoned scholarship and civil debate," raises the timely question, "Are Race, Class, and Gender Dominating American History?," meaning history as presently taught on college campuses. The verdict as rendered would appear to be yes; unquestionably; positively.

Race, class, and gender (formerly spelled "s-e-x") appear to be undermining the narrative of America we once upon a time received as coherent and connected: the story of disparate colonies welding themselves into a nation of largely positive achievements, with a generally positive vision of itself and its place in the world. The newly emerging narrative concerns a nation of far more complex origins and ambitions than formerly taught, harder to understand and interpret, with darker corners, lacking the old teleology, the old sense of purpose and fulfillment.

I beg the reader: hold it right there. What's wrong, from the standpoint of scholarship, with complexities and dark, or just darkish, corners? Is there no right or need to study and know about such? I plan to return to this matter. Meanwhile, what did the NAS report—titled "Recasting History"—actually do and say?

Quite a bit. A team of NAS-affiliated scholars singled out one of my alma maters—UT—and its formidable academic rival Texas A&M University for a detailed study of institutional responses to a 1971 state law meant to spread and entrench historical knowledge among students at publicly funded colleges and universities. I invite contemplation of the date—1971, when countercultural rage at "fascist pig Amerika" was all the rage. Lawmakers thought it sensible, even moral, to require six semester hours in American or Texas history for graduation from a publicly funded college or university. A certain kind of instruction, I can only assume at this chronological remove, was implied. To put it in simplest terms, the teaching of fascist pig Amerikan history was out.

In 2013, UT and A&M continue to enforce the legislative requirement, through survey courses but also, as options, certain specialized classes. So far so good. But what comes after "so far" turns out not to be very good at all, according to the report. When

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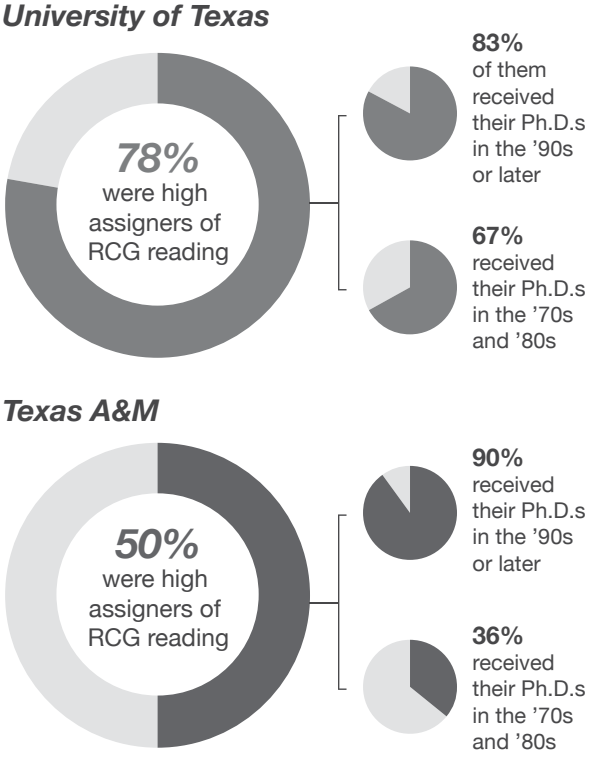
NAS researchers looked at the courses, the reading lists, and the research interests of the teachers, they saw that

> all too often the course readings gave strong emphasis to race, class, or gender (RCG) social history, an emphasis so strong that it diminished the attention given to other subjects in American history (such as military, diplomatic, religious, intellectual history). The result is that these institutions frequently offered a less-than-comprehensive picture of U.S. history.

The researchers found that "78 percent of UT faculty members were high assigners of RCG readings." By contrast, just 50 percent of A&M faculty assigned similar readings. Hmmmm. Could it be, this sort of emphasis came naturally to certain faculty members? So one might think. "More recent Ph.D.s," says the report, "are more likely to focus research on race, class, and gender. 83 percent of UT faculty members teaching these courses who received their Ph.D.s in the 90s or later had RCG research interests," versus just 67 percent of UT faculty members who got their doctorates in the '70s and '80s. At A&M the imbalance was more pronounced yet. Nine in 10 of the '90s Ph.D.s who were scrutinized "had RCG research interests." Not so the '70s and '80s contingent, just 36 percent of whom were attached.

Teaching that gives strong emphasis to race, class, or gender (RCG)

When NAS researchers looked at courses, reading lists and research interests of teachers, here's what they found:



A good thing? A bad thing? Which, or what? According to the NAS report:

> As RCG emphases crowd out other aspects and themes in American history, we find other problems setting in, including the narrow tailoring of 'special topics' courses and the absence of significant primary source documents [e.g., Tocqueville, the Mayflower Compact, the Federalist Papers]. Special topics courses used by students to fulfill the history requirement lack historical breadth; they seem to exist mainly to allow faculty members to teach their special interests.

They threaten, accordingly, to give race, class, and gender issues "precedence over all others."

Here, precisely, we get down to brass tacks. "What did you learn?" is the basic end-of-semester question for whoever completes a course of any sort, having earned a grade of any kind. What you learn, almost inevitably—putting aside the possibility of a rare personal obsession with the impartial acquisition of knowledge—is what you soaked up in the classroom or imbibed from assigned readings. The authors of the NAS report apply the principle to American history: "for most students"—i.e., non-history majors—"these courses provide the only exposure they will ever get to college-level American history…" What do they learn from a course heavy on racial considerations? They learn about race. And from a course on "gender"? Uh-huh. And so on. They grasp inadequately, if at all, in the report's words, "the larger political conflicts, institutional frameworks, and philosophic ideals that have governed the course of American history"—hardly what Texas legislators

could have had in mind four decades ago when they came up with and imposed the U. S. history requirement.

A few illustrations. During the 2010 fall semester—the period covered by the NAS study—UT offered, in fulfillment of the U.S. history requirement, "History of Mexican Americans in the U.S.," "Introduction to American Studies," "Black Power Movement," "Mexican-American Women, 1910–Present," "Race and Revolution," and "The United States and Africa."

Among reading assignments at UT: "Africanisms in American Culture," "Chicana Feminist Thought," "Lakota Woman," "Little X: Growing Up in the Nation of Islam," "The Shawnees and the War for America," "When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in Colonial New Mexico, 1500–1800"—shall I go on?

It occurred to the NAS researchers that some modest reforms in the curriculum might not go amiss. The report calls for, inter alia, hiring faculty "with a broader range of research interests," and designing better courses, not to mention basically depoliticizing history. A&M, in the critique, fared better—largely, I would bet, due to its more military-agrarian culture. (The school was founded as Texas Agricultural & Mechanical College. Until the 1960s of baneful memory every student belonged to the Corps of Cadets.) Snootier, livelier UT, in the state's capital city, has long assumed it was of a different order entirely from the Farmers at Aggieland, privileged by nature to take chances, to flaunt its intellectual stuff.

The history faculty during my own time at UT—the early to late '60s—wore their liberalism lightly, such liberalism as actually pertained to them, which was of a generally genial sort. I said, laughingly, to my "U. S. Since 1865" teacher, who had become a jovial sparring partner: "Are you going to grade my paper as a liberal, or as a fair man?" I got a good laugh from him—and an "A" to boot. There were even conservatives in the department. O.H. Radkey, an acclaimed expert on the Soviet Union, was staunchly anticommunist; he liked referring to FDR as "that American president reputed to be great."

It was another day, another age, as UT's pushback against the NAS report quickly made clear. Why didn't NAS just call for stringing up the history faculty from lampposts? A serious, meticulous, carefully crafted report got no more respect at UT than it would have if accompanied by just such a summons to retribution.

Ka-BOOM! The student newspaper went after NAS for insulting students fully able, thank you, to appreciate the complexity of American history. The university itself called the report "narrowly defined and largely inaccurate," bestowing no attention on how the report had been narrowly framed to test compliance with a legislative mandate nor acknowledging that the university's own website had provided all the information. Never mind: "Teaching race, class, and gender topics," UT went on, "… helps broaden our understanding of American society by adding new voices and perspectives to the American story."

Would it not help to have some understanding of the processes by which even societies founded on the dead ideas of dead men have their origins and fruitions?

NAS had acknowledged as much, the point of the report being to counsel against examining the superstructure of history by recent demographic add-ons. What if you don't understand the architecture of the whole on account of overemphasizing new and comparatively unconventional features? Would it not help to have some understanding of the processes by which even societies founded on the dead ideas of dead men have their origins and fruitions? Does it not help to know how we got to such-and-such a place under such-and-such circumstances? You would not suppose so to hear the academic yowlers, angry at criticism, fearful of seeing their loves and attachments fall from present favor.

The academic ladies and gentleman don't want discussion, it appears. That would be too much like free speech. What they want is the rostrum to announce their contempt for those who don't see things exactly as they themselves see them.

The possibility of driving race and women's rights away into academic obscurity is the merest joke. Who wants to displace vital knowledge? On the other hand, isn't that what goes right now, from the other direction? "Broadly integrative approaches to core subjects and comprehensive surveys have been

displaced by narrow, specialized, and ideologically partisan approaches, largely driven by faculty research agendas." Such was the burden of NAS's criticism, from which UT recoils as from a snake.

Upon the authors of the report, UT's alumni association sicced a professor named Jeremi Suri, who proceeded to come emotionally unglued. He called the report "frankly dumb"—a sovereign judgment he managed to form and administer in advance of the report's actual release. (Whoever said historians' eyes are forever trained on objects to their rear?) It appeared to Suri, an international affairs scholar, newly arrived at UT from Wisconsin, that NAS was demanding "a simple and one-sided history of just a few people"—a point NAS had gone out of its way to refute in the unreleased report concerning whose contents Suri seemed so intimately informed. In an exchange on the alum association's blog with NAS's Richard Fonte, Suri, in characteristically open-minded fashion, ripped the "reckless and self-serving critics" who seem to populate our country's history, "most of whom ended as discredited malcontents." "What is driving this report?", Suri demanded of Fonte. "Why should we believe a word you say?"

Because it might be true? Or worth a moment of conversation? What about just worth hearing for the sake of exposure to a contrasting viewpoint?

A UT-educated attorney, who for some odd reason found Suri's language "offensive and intolerant," responded on the same blog: "As the first native born American son of immigrants, I have no desire to see American history taught solely as an homage to dead white males. But dead white males and the texts they crafted had the predominant role in the nation's founding and for much of its history," creating "an adaptable system that has provided countless millions of immigrants opportunity."

The '60s, the '60s! The sheer nuttiness of the age! The credulousness of 50- and 60-year-olds today, conditioned by the zeitgeist to see the American procession as shaped by the crafts and wiles of dead, slave-owning, probably wife-beating patriarchs! The desire to relaunch the narrative—start telling people what America's really all about! A survivor of the '60s thinks, and fears, that's what mainly goes on here.

Unfortunately, it doesn't go on just at Texas's two major public universities. The infection is pretty widespread. As, ironically, a retired University of Texas professor of intellectual history, Richard Pells, wrote soon after the report came out. "These issues," he said in an op-ed column for the *Austin American-Statesman*, "are by no means unique to UT—they describe the situation at most history departments in America ever since the 1960s and 1970s."

I should think pretty much everyone by now knows academia to be in the grip of aging '60s types who manage, by sheer power likely as not—power over promotion, power over tenure, power over grants and sabbaticals—to set the tone among younger scholars. The obsessions of the '60s types are race, class, and gender, as was the case 40 years ago. The mainspring idea is that the sins of the pre-counterculture United States, dominated by clueless white males, should be eradicated, that the former victims (including those unborn when the original offenses were committed) should be made whole somehow, at any rate through having their "stories" told by the academic bien-pensants, the enlightened ones.

The obsessions of the '60s types are race, class, and gender, as was the case 40 years ago.

How can anyone criticize such a goal? Hence what Professor Pells calls the "almost oppressive orthodoxy and … lack of intellectual diversity among the UT history faculty." It's what you get when you close down discussion; when you cut off critics at the knees. Everybody believes the same. Everyone comes to love Big Brother.

I hate being hard on the University of Texas, which treated me well enough in the old days. Four generations, and multifarious members, of my family have attended school there since 1886, when the school was a mere three years old and hopes were high for general access to knowledge and wisdom. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," according to the immortal words engraved on UT's famous Tower. The place will survive—and more than that—even if the history department should ultimately go down the tubes, having resisted self-examination to the point of laughability. I was pleased all the same to read that *Newsweek* and the Daily Beast list UT among the country's top 25 party schools—an honor to fall back on if all else fails. ■

How Social Darwinism Made Modern China

A thousand years of meritocracy shaped the Middle Kingdom.

by RON UNZ

During the three decades following Deng Xiaoping's 1978 reforms, China achieved the fastest sustained rate of economic growth in human history, with the resulting 40-fold rise in the size of China's economy leaving it poised to surpass America's as the largest in the world. A billion ordinary Han Chinese have lifted themselves economically from oxen and bicycles to the verge of automobiles within a single generation.

China's academic performance has been just as stunning. The 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests placed gigantic Shanghai—a megalopolis of 15 million—at the absolute top of world student achievement. PISA results from the rest of the country have been nearly as impressive, with the average scores of hundreds of millions of provincial Chinese—mostly from rural families with annual incomes below $2,000—matching or exceeding those of Europe's most advanced and successful countries, such as Germany, France, and Switzerland, and ranking well above America's results.

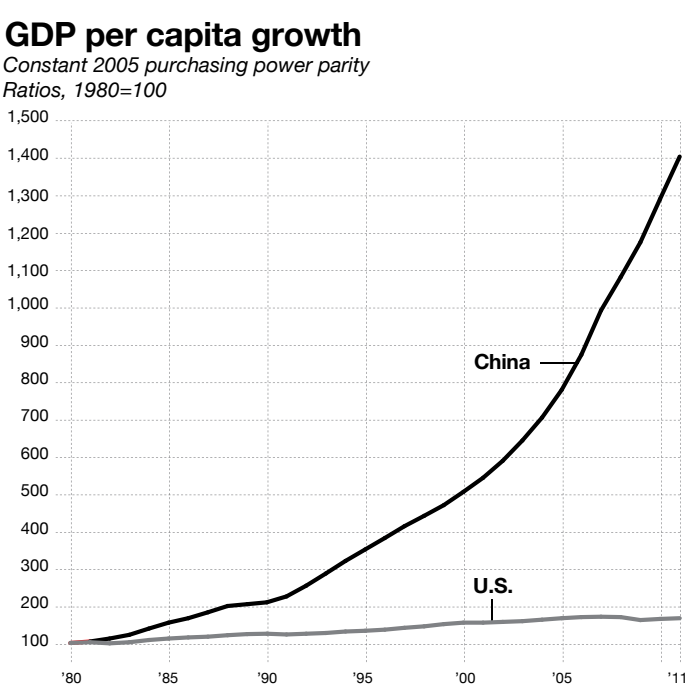
These successes follow closely on the heels of a previous generation of similar economic and technological gains for several much smaller Chinese-ancestry countries in that same part of the world, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and the great academic and socioeconomic success of small Chinese-descended minority populations in predominantly white nations, including America, Canada, and Australia. The children of the Yellow Emperor seem destined to play an enormous role in Mankind's future.

Although these developments might have shocked Westerners of the mid-20th Century—when China was best known for its terrible poverty and Maoist revolutionary fanaticism—they would have seemed far less unexpected to our leading thinkers of 100 years ago, many of whom prophesied that the Middle Kingdom would eventually regain its ranking among the foremost nations of the world. This was certainly the expectation of A.E. Ross, one of America's greatest early sociologists, whose book *The Changing Chinese* looked past the destitution, misery, and corruption of the China of his day to a future modernized China perhaps on a technological par with America and the leading European nations. Ross's views were widely echoed by public intellectuals such as Lothrop Stoddard, who foresaw China's probable awakening from centuries of inward-looking slumber as a looming challenge to the worldwide hegemony long enjoyed by the various European-descended nations.

The likely roots of such widespread Chinese success have received little detailed exploration in today's major Western media, which tends to shy away from considering the particular characteristics of ethnic groups or nationalities, as opposed to their institutional systems and forms of government. Yet although the latter obviously play a crucial role—Maoist China was far less economically successful than Dengist China—it is useful to note that the examples of Chinese success cited above range across a wide diversity of socioeconomic/political systems.

For decades, Hong Kong enjoyed one of the most free-market, nearly anarcho-libertarian economic systems; during that same period, Singapore was governed by the tight hand of Lee Kuan Yew and his socialistic People's Action Party, which built a one-party state with a large degree of government guidance and control. Yet both these populations were overwhelmingly Chinese, and both experienced al-

Ron Unz is publisher of The American Conservative.



most equally rapid economic development, moving in 50 years from total postwar destitution and teeming refugee slums to ranking among the wealthiest places on earth. And Taiwan, whose much larger Chinese-ancestry population pursued an intermediate development model, enjoyed similar economic success.

Despite a long legacy of racial discrimination and mistreatment, small Chinese communities in America also prospered and advanced, even as their numbers grew rapidly following passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. In recent years a remarkable fraction of America's top students—whether judged by the objective winners' circle of the Mathematics Olympiad and Intel Science competition or by the somewhat more subjective rates of admission to Ivy League colleges—have been of Chinese ancestry. The results are particularly striking when cast in quantitative terms: although just 1 percent of American high-school graduates each year have ethnic Chinese origins, surname analysis indicates that they currently include nearly 15 percent of the highest-achieving students, a performance ratio more than four times better than that of American Jews, the top-scoring white ancestry group. Chinese people seem to be doing extremely well all over the world, across a wide range of economic and cultural landscapes.

Almost none of these global developments were predicted by America's leading intellectuals of the 1960s or 1970s, and many of their successors have had just as much difficulty recognizing the dramatic sweep of events through which they are living. A perfect example of this strange myopia may be found in the writings of leading development economists Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, whose brief discussions of China's rapid rise to world economic dominance seem to portray the phenomenon as a temporary illusion almost certain soon to collapse because the institutional approach followed differs from the ultra-free-market neoliberalism that they recommend. The large role that the government plays in guiding Chinese economic decisions dooms it to failure, despite all evidence to the contrary, while America's heavily financialized economy must be successful, regardless of our high unemployment and low growth. According to Acemoglu and Robinson, nearly all international success or failure is determined by governmental institutions, and since China possesses the wrong ones, failure is certain, though there seems no sign of it.

Perhaps such academics will be proven correct, and China's economic miracle will collapse into the debacle they predict. But if this does not occur, and the international trend lines of the last 35 years continue for another five or ten, we should consider turning for explanations to those long-forgotten thinkers who actually foretold these world developments that we are now experiencing, individuals such as Ross and Stoddard. The widespread devastation produced by the Japanese invasion, World War II, and the Chinese Civil War, followed by the economic calamity of Maoism, did delay the predicted rise of China by a generation or two, but except for such unforeseen events, their analysis of Chinese potential seems remarkably prescient. For example, Stoddard approvingly quotes the late Victorian predictions of Professor Charles E. Pearson:

> Does any one doubt that the day is at hand when China will have cheap fuel from her coal-mines, cheap transport by railways and steamers, and will have founded technical schools to develop her industries? Whenever that day comes, she may wrest the control of the world's markets, especially throughout Asia, from England and Germany.

A People Shaped by Their Difficult Environment

Western intellectual life a century ago was quite different from that of today, with contrary doctrines and taboos, and the spirit of that age certainly held sway over its leading figures. Racialism—the notion that different peoples tend to have different innate traits, as largely fashioned by their particular histories—was dominant then, so much so that the notion was almost universally held and applied, sometimes in rather crude fashion, to both European and non-European populations.

With regard to the Chinese, the widespread view was that many of their prominent characteristics had been shaped by thousands of years of history in a generally stable and organized society possessing central political administration, a situation almost unique among the peoples of the world. In effect, despite temporary periods of political fragmentation, East Asia's own Roman Empire had never fallen, and a thousand-year interregnum of barbarism, economic collapse, and technological backwardness had been avoided.

On the less fortunate side, the enormous population growth of recent centuries had gradually caught up with and overtaken China's exceptionally efficient agricultural system, reducing the lives of most Chinese to the brink of Malthusian starvation; and these pressures and constraints were believed to be reflected in the Chinese people. For example, Stoddard wrote:

> Winnowed by ages of grim elimination in a land populated to the uttermost limits of subsistence, the Chinese race is selected as no other for survival under the fiercest conditions of economic stress. At home the average Chinese lives his whole life literally within a hand's breadth of starvation. Accordingly, when removed to the easier environment of other lands, the Chinaman brings with him a working capacity which simply appalls his competitors.

Stoddard backed these riveting phrases with a wide selection of detailed and descriptive quotations from prominent observers, both Western and Chinese. Although Ross was more cautiously empirical in his observations and less literary in his style, his analysis was quite similar, with his book on the Chinese containing over 40 pages describing the grim and gripping details of daily survival, provided under the evocative chapter-heading "The Struggle for Existence in China."

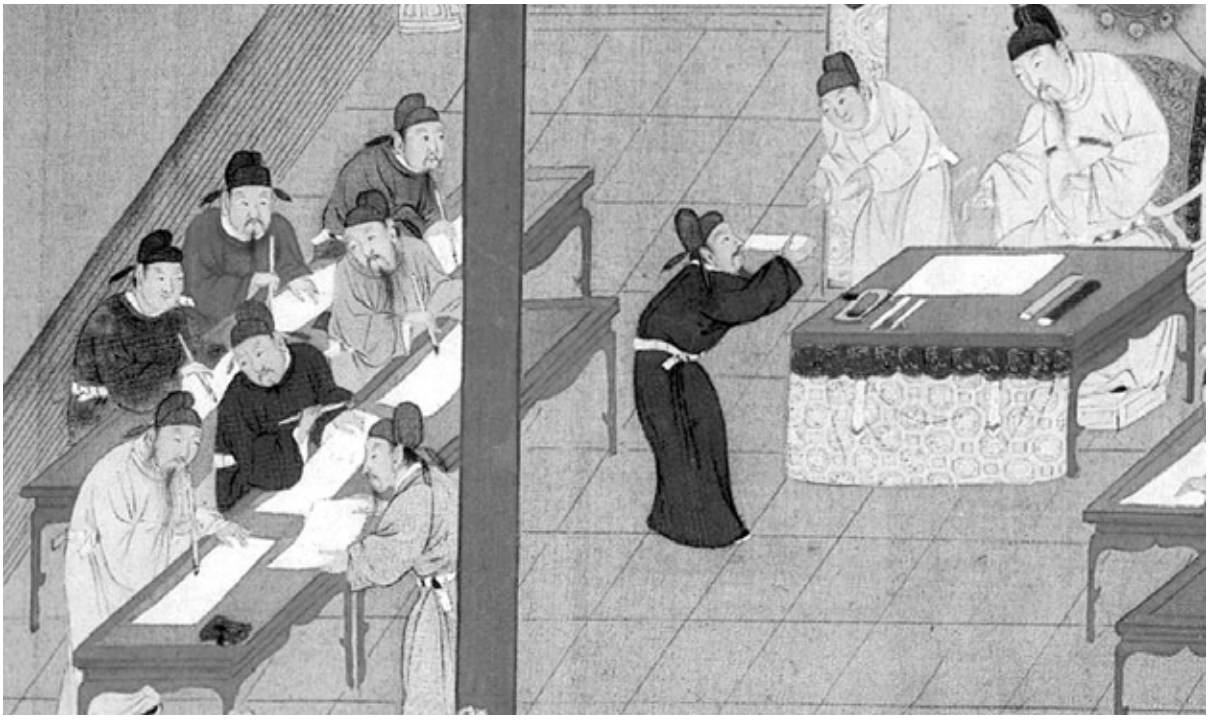
During the second half of the 20th century, ideological considerations largely eliminated from American public discourse the notion that many centuries of particular circumstances might leave an indelible imprint upon a people. But with the turn of the new millennium, such analyses have once again begun appearing in respectable intellectual quarters.

The most notable example of this would surely be *A Farewell to Alms*, Gregory Clark's fascinating 2007 analysis of the deep origins of Britain's industrial revolution, which was widely reviewed and praised throughout elite circles, with *New York Times* economics columnist Tyler Cowen hailing it as possibly "the next blockbuster in economics" and Berkeley economist Brad DeLong characterizing it as "brilliant."

Although Clark's work focused on many different factors, the one that attracted the greatest attention was his demographic analysis of British history based upon a close examination of individual testaments. Clark discovered evidence that for centuries the wealthier British had left significantly more surviving children than their poorer compatriots, thus leading their descendents to constitute an ever larger share of each generation. Presumably, this was because they could afford to marry at a younger age, and their superior nutritional and living arrangements reduced mortality rates for themselves and their families. Indeed, the near-Malthusian poverty of much ordinary English life during this era meant that the impoverished lower classes often failed even to reproduce themselves over time, gradually being replaced by the downwardly mobile children of their financial betters. Since personal economic achievement was probably in part due to traits such as diligence, prudence, and productivity, Clark argued that these characteristics steadily became more widespread in the British population, laying the human basis for later national economic success.

Leaving aside whether or not the historical evidence actually supports Clark's hypothesis—economist Robert C. Allen has published a strong and fairly persuasive refutation—the theoretical framework he advances seems a perfectly plausible one. Although the stylistic aspects and quantitative approaches certainly differ, much of Clark's analysis for England seems to have clear parallels in how Stoddard, Ross, and others of their era characterized China. So perhaps it would be useful to explore whether a Clarkian analysis might be applicable to the people of the Middle Kingdom.

Interestingly enough, Clark himself devotes a few pages to considering this question and concludes that in contrast to the British case, wealthier Chinese were no more fecund than the poorer, eliminating the possibility of any similar generational trend. But Clark is



A Song-dynasty depiction of a civil-service examination

not a China specialist, and his brief analysis relies on the birth records of the descendents of the ruling imperial dynasty, a group totally unrepresentative of the broader population. In fact, a more careful examination of the Chinese source material reveals persuasive evidence for a substantial skew in family size, directly related to economic success, with the pattern being perhaps even stronger and more universally apparent than was the case for Britain or any other country.

Moreover, certain unique aspects of traditional Chinese society may have maintained and amplified this long-term effect, in a manner unlike that found in most other societies in Europe or elsewhere. China indeed may constitute the largest and longest-lasting instance of an extreme "Social Darwinist" society anywhere in human history, perhaps with important implications for the shaping of the modern Chinese people.

The Social Economy of Traditional China

Chinese society is notable for its stability and longevity. From the gradual establishment of the bureaucratic imperial state based on mandarinate rule during the Sui (589-618) and T'ang (618-907) dynasties down to the Communist Revolution of 1948, a single set of social and economic relations appears to have maintained its grip on the country, evolving only slightly while dynastic successions and military conquests periodically transformed the governmental superstructure.

A central feature of this system was the replacement of the local rule of aristocratic elements by a class of official meritocrats, empowered by the central government and selected by competitive examination. In essence, China eliminated the role of hereditary feudal lords and the social structure they represented more than 1,000 years before European countries did the same, substituting a system of legal equality for virtually the entire population beneath the reigning emperor and his family.

The social importance of competitive examinations was enormous, playing the same role in determining membership in the ruling elite that the aristocratic bloodlines of Europe's nobility did until modern times, and this system embedded itself just as deeply in the popular culture. The great noble houses of France or Germany might trace their lineages back to ancestors elevated under Charlemagne or Barbarossa, with their heirs afterward rising and falling in standing and estates, while in China the proud family traditions would boast generations of top-scoring test-takers, along with the important government positions that they had received as a result. Whereas in Europe there existed fanciful stories of a heroic commoner youth doing some great deed for the king and consequently being elevated to a knighthood or higher, such tales were confined to fiction down to the French Revolution. But in China, even the greatest lineages of

academic performers almost invariably had roots in the ordinary peasantry.

Not only was China the first national state to utilize competitive written examinations for selection purposes, but it is quite possible that almost all other instances everywhere in the world ultimately derive from the Chinese example. It has long been established that the Chinese system served as the model for the meritocratic civil services that transformed the efficiency of Britain and other European states during the 18th and 19th centuries. But persuasive historical arguments have also been advanced that the same is even true for university entrance tests and honors examinations, with Cambridge's famed Math Tripos being the earliest example. Modern written tests may actually be as Chinese as chopsticks.

In China, even the greatest lineages of academic performers almost invariably had roots in the ordinary peasantry.

With Chinese civilization having spent most of the past 1,500 years allocating its positions of national power and influence by examination, there has sometimes been speculation that test-taking ability has become embedded in the Chinese people at the biological as well as cultural level. Yet although there might be an element of truth to this, it hardly seems likely to be significant. During the eras in question, China's total population numbered far into the tens of millions, growing in unsteady fashion from perhaps 60 million before AD 900 to well over 400 million by 1850. But the number of Chinese passing the highest imperial exam and attaining the exalted rank of *chin-shih* during most of the last six centuries was often less than 100 per year, down from a high of over 200 under the Sung dynasty (960–1279), and even if we include the lesser rank of *chu-jen*, the national total of such degree-holders was probably just in the low tens of thousands, a tiny fraction of 1 percent of the overall population—totally dwarfed by the numbers of Chinese making their living as artisans or merchants, let alone the overwhelming mass of the rural peasantry. The cultural impact of rule by a test-selected elite was enormous, but the direct genetic impact would have been negligible.

This same difficulty of relative proportions frustrates any attempt to apply in China an evolutionary model similar to the one that Gregory Cochran and Henry Harpending have persuasively suggested for the evolution of high intelligence among the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe. The latter group constituted a small, reproductively isolated population overwhelmingly concentrated in the sorts of business and financial activity that would have strongly favored more intelligent individuals, and one with insignificant gene-flow from the external population not undergoing such selective pressure. By contrast, there is no evidence that successful Chinese merchants or scholars were unwilling to take brides from the general population, and any reasonable rate of such intermarriage each generation would have totally swamped the selective impact of mercantile or scholarly success. If we are hoping to find any rough parallel to the process that Clark hypothesizes for Britain, we must concentrate our attention on the life circumstances of China's broad rural peasantry—well over 90 percent of the population during all these centuries—just as the aforementioned 19th-century observers generally had done.

Absence of Caste and Fluidity of Class

In fact, although Western observers tended to focus on China's horrific poverty above all else, traditional Chinese society actually possessed certain unusual or even unique characteristics that may help account for the shaping of the Chinese people. Perhaps the most important of these was the near total absence of social caste and the extreme fluidity of economic class.

Feudalism had ended in China a thousand years before the French Revolution, and nearly all Chinese stood equal before the law. The "gentry"—those who had passed an official examination and received an academic degree—possessed certain privileges and the "mean people"—prostitutes, entertainers, slaves, and various other degraded social elements—suffered under legal discrimination. But both these strata were minute in size, with each usually amounting to less than 1 percent of the general population, while "the common people"—everyone else, including the peasantry—enjoyed complete legal equality.

However, such legal equality was totally divorced from economic equality, and extreme gradations of wealth and poverty were found in every corner of society, down to the smallest and most homogenous village. During most of the 20th century, the traditional Marxian class analysis of Chinese rural life divided the population according to graduated wealth and degree of "exploitative" income: landlords, who obtained most or all of their income from rent or hired

labor; rich, middle, and poor peasants, grouped according to decreasing wealth and rental income and increasing tendency to hire out their own labor; and agricultural laborers, who owned negligible land and obtained nearly all their income from hiring themselves out to others.

In hard times, these variations in wealth might easily mean the difference between life and death, but everyone acknowledged that such distinctions were purely economic and subject to change: a landlord who lost his land would become a poor peasant; a poor peasant who came into wealth would be the equal of any landlord. During its political struggle, the Chinese Communist Party claimed that landlords and rich peasants constituted about 10 percent of the population and possessed 70-80 percent of the land, while poor peasants and hired laborers made up the overwhelming majority of the population and owned just 10–15 percent of the land. Neutral observers found these claims somewhat exaggerated for propagandistic purposes, but not all that far from the harsh reality.

Complete legal equality and extreme economic inequality together fostered one of the most unrestrained free-market systems known to history, not only in China's cities but much more importantly in its vast countryside, which contained nearly the entire population. Land, the primary form of wealth, was freely bought, sold, traded, rented out, sub-leased, or mortgaged as loan collateral. Money-lending and food-lending were widely practiced, especially during times of famine, with usurious rates of interest being the norm, often in excess of 10 percent per month compounded. In extreme cases, children or even wives might be sold for cash and food. Unless aided by relatives, peasants without land or money routinely starved to death. Meanwhile, the agricultural activity of more prosperous peasants was highly commercialized and entrepreneurial, with complex business arrangements often the norm.

Feudalism had ended in China a thousand years before the French Revolution, and nearly all Chinese stood equal before the law.

For centuries, a central fact of daily life in rural China had been the tremendous human density, as the Middle Kingdom's population expanded from 65 million to 430 million during the five centuries before 1850, eventually forcing nearly all land to be cultivated to maximum efficiency. Although Chinese society was almost entirely rural and agricultural, Shandong province in 1750 had well over twice the population density of the Netherlands, the most urbanized and densely populated part of Europe, while during the early years of the Industrial Revolution, England's population density was only one-fifth that of Jiangsu province.

Chinese agricultural methods had always been exceptionally efficient, but by the 19th century, the continuing growth of the Chinese population had finally caught and surpassed the absolute Malthusian carrying-capacity of the farming system under its existing technical and economic structure. Population growth was largely held in check by mortality (including high infant mortality), decreased fertility due to malnutrition, disease, and periodic regional famines that killed an average of 5 percent of the population. Even the Chinese language came to incorporate the centrality of food, with the traditional words of greeting being "Have you eaten?" and the common phrase denoting a wedding, funeral, or other important social occasion being "to eat good things."

The cultural and ideological constraints of Chinese society posed major obstacles to mitigating this never-ending human calamity. Although impoverished Europeans of this era, male and female alike, often married late or not at all, early marriage and family were central pillars of Chinese life, with the sage Mencius stating that to have no children was the worst of unfilial acts; indeed, marriage and anticipated children were the mark of adulthood. Furthermore, only male heirs could continue the family name and ensure that oneself and one's ancestors would be paid the proper ritual respect, and multiple sons were required to protect against the vagaries of fate. On a more practical level, married daughters became part of their husband's household, and only sons could ensure provision for one's old age.

Nearly all peasant societies sanctify filial loyalty, marriage, family, and children, while elevating sons above daughters, but in traditional China these tendencies seem to have been especially strong, representing a central goal and focus of all daily life beyond bare survival. Given the terrible poverty, cruel choices were often made, and female infanticide, including through neglect, was the primary means of birth control among the poor, leading to a typical shortfall of 10-15 percent among women of marriageable age. Reproductive competition for those remaining women was therefore fierce, with virtually every woman marrying, generally by her late teens. The inevitable

result was a large and steady natural increase in the total population, except when constrained by various forms of increased mortality.

Remarkable Upward Mobility But Relentless Downward Mobility

The vast majority of Chinese might be impoverished peasants, but for those with ability and luck, the possibilities of upward mobility were quite remarkable in what was an essentially classless society. The richer strata of each village possessed the wealth to give their most able children a classical education in hopes of preparing them for the series of official examinations. If the son of a rich peasant or petty landlord were sufficiently diligent and intellectually able, he might pass such an examination and obtain an official degree, opening enormous opportunities for political power and wealth.

For the Ming (1368–1644) and Ch'ing (1644–1911) dynasties, statistics exist on the social origins of the *chin-shih* class, the highest official rank, and these demonstrate a rate of upward mobility unmatched by almost any Western society, whether modern or premodern. Over 30 percent of such elite degree-holders came from commoner families that for three previous generations had produced no one of high official rank, and in the data from earlier centuries, this fraction of "new men" reached a high of 84 percent. Such numbers far exceed the equivalent figures for Cambridge University during all the centuries since its foundation, and would probably seem remarkable at America's elite Ivy League colleges today or in the past. Meanwhile, downward social mobility was also common among even the highest families. As a summary statistic, across the six centuries of these two dynasties less than 6 percent of China's ruling elites came from the ruling elites of the previous generation.

The founding philosophical principle of the modern Western world has been the "Equality of Man," while that of Confucianist China was the polar opposite belief in the inherent inequality of men. Yet in reality, the latter often seemed to fulfill better the ideological goals of the former. Frontier America might have had its mythos of presidents born in log cabins, but for many centuries a substantial fraction of the Middle Kingdom's ruling mandarins did indeed come from rural rice paddies, a state of affairs that would have seemed almost unimaginable in any European country until the Age of Revolution, and even long afterward.

Such potential for elevation into the ruling Chinese elite was remarkable, but a far more important factor in the society was the open possibility of local economic advancement for the sufficiently enterprising and diligent rural peasant. Ironically enough, a perfect description of such upward mobility was provided by Communist revolutionary leader Mao Zedong, who recounted how his father had risen from being a landless poor peasant to rich peasant status:

> My father was a poor peasant and while still young was obliged to join the army because of heavy debts. He was a soldier for many years. Later on he returned to the village where I was born, and by saving carefully and gathering together a little money through small trading and other enterprise he managed to buy back his land.
>
> As middle peasants then my family owned fifteen mou [about 2.5 acres] of land. On this they could raise sixty tan of rice a year. The five members of the family consumed a total of thirty-five tan—that is, about seven each—which left an annual surplus of twenty-five tan. Using this surplus, my father accumulated a little capital and in time purchased seven more mou, which gave the family the status of 'rich' peasants. We could ten raise eighty-four tan of rice a year.
>
> When I was ten years of age and the family owned only fifteen mou of land, the five members of the family consisted of my father, mother, grandfather, younger brother, and myself. After we had acquired the additional seven mou, my grandfather died, but there came another younger brother. However, we still had a surplus of forty-nine tan of rice each year, and on this my father prospered.
>
> At the time my father was a middle peasant he began to deal in grain transport and selling, by which he made a little money. After he became a 'rich' peasant, he devoted most of his time to that business. He hired a full-time farm laborer, and put his children to work on the farm, as well as his wife. I began to work at farming tasks when I was six years old. My father had no shop for his business. He simply purchased grain from the poor farmers and then transported it to the city merchants, where he got a higher price. In the winter, when the rice was being ground, he hired an extra laborer to work on the farm, so that at that time there were seven mouths to feed. My family ate frugally, but had enough always.

Mao's account gives no indication that he regarded his family's rise as extraordinary in any way; his father had obviously done well, but there were probably

many other families in Mao's village that had similarly improved their lot during the course of a single generation. Such opportunities for rapid social mobility would have been almost impossible in any of the feudal or class-ridden societies of the same period, in Europe or most other parts of the world.

However, the flip-side of possible peasant upward mobility was the far greater likelihood of downward mobility, which was enormous and probably represented the single most significant factor shaping the modern Chinese people. Each generation, a few who were lucky or able might rise, but a vast multitude always fell, and those families near the bottom simply disappeared from the world. Traditional rural China was a society faced with the reality of an enormous and inexorable downward mobility: for centuries, nearly all Chinese ended their lives much poorer than had their parents.

The strong case for such downward mobility was demonstrated a quarter century ago by historian Edwin E. Moise, whose crucial article on the subject has received far less attention than it deserves, perhaps because the intellectual climate of the late 1970s prevented readers from drawing the obvious evolutionary implications.

In many respects, Moise's demographic analysis of China eerily anticipated that of Clark for England, as he pointed out that only the wealthier families of a Chinese village could afford the costs associated with obtaining wives for their sons, with female infanticide and other factors regularly ensuring up to a 15 percent shortfall in the number of available women. Thus, the poorest village strata usually failed to reproduce at all, while poverty and malnourishment also tended to lower fertility and raise infant mortality as one moved downward along the economic gradient. At the same time, the wealthiest villagers sometimes could afford multiple wives or concubines and regularly produced much larger numbers of surviving offspring. Each generation, the poorest disappeared, the less affluent failed to replenish their numbers, and all those lower rungs on the economic ladder were filled by the downwardly mobile children of the fecund wealthy.

This fundamental reality of Chinese rural existence was certainly obvious to the peasants themselves and to outside observers, and there exists an enormous quantity of anecdotal evidence describing the situation, whether gathered by Moise or found elsewhere, as illustrated by a few examples:

> 'How could any man in our village claim that his family had been poor for three generations? If a man is poor, then his son can't afford to marry; and if his son can't marry, there can't be a third generation.'
>
> … Because of the marked shortage of women, there was always a great number of men without wives at all. This included the overwhelming majority of long-term hired laborers… The poorest families died out, being unable to arrange marriages for their sons. The future generations of poor were the descendants of bankrupted middle and rich peasants and landlords.
>
> … Further down the economic scale there were many families with unmarried sons who had already passed the customary marriage age, thus limiting the size of the family. Wong Mi was a case in point. He was already twenty-three, with both of his parents in their mid-sixties; but since the family was able to rent only an acre of poor land and could not finance his marriage, he lived with the old parents, and the family consisted of three members. Wong Chun, a landless peasant in his forties, had been in the same position when he lived with his aged parents ten years before, and now, both parents having died, he lived alone. There were ten or fifteen families in the village with single unmarried sons.
>
> … As previously mentioned, there were about twenty families in Nanching that had no land at all and constituted the bottom group in the village's pyramid of land ownership. A few of these families were tenant farmers, but the majority, since they could not finance even the buying of tools, fertilizer, and seeds, worked as "long-term" agricultural laborers on an annual basis. As such, they normally were paid about 1,000 catties of unhusked rice per year and board and room if they owned no home. This income might equal or even exceed what they might have wrested from a small rented farm, but it was not enough to support a family of average size without supplementary employment undertaken by other members of the family. For this reason, many of them never married, and the largest number of bachelors was to be found among landless peasants. Wong Tuen, a landless peasant working for a rich peasant for nearly ten years, was still a "bare stick" (unmarried man) in his fifties; and there were others in the village like him. They were objects of ridicule and pity in the eyes of the villagers, whose life [sic] centered upon the family.

Furthermore, the forces of downward mobility in rural Chinese society were greatly accentuated by *fenjia*, the traditional system of inheritance, which required equal division of property among all sons, in sharp contrast to the practice of primogeniture commonly found in European countries.

If most or all of a father's property went to the eldest son, then the long-term survival of a reasonably affluent peasant family was assured unless the primary heir were a complete wastrel or encountered unusually bad fortune. But in China, cultural pressures forced a wealthy man to do his best to maximize the number of his surviving sons, and within the richer strata of a village it was not uncommon for a man to leave two, three, or even more male heirs, compelling each to begin his economic independence with merely a fraction of his father's wealth. Unless they succeeded in substantially augmenting their inheritance, the sons of a particularly fecund rich landlord might be middle peasants—and his grandchildren, starving poor peasants. Families whose elevated status derived from a single fortuitous circumstance or a transient trait not deeply rooted in their behavioral characteristics therefore enjoyed only fleeting economic success, and poverty eventually culled their descendents from the village.

The members of a successful family could maintain their economic position over time only if in each generation large amounts of additional wealth were extracted from their land and their neighbors through high intelligence, sharp business sense, hard work, and great diligence. The penalty for major business miscalculations or lack of sufficient effort was either personal or reproductive extinction. As American observer William Hinton graphically described:

> Security, relative comfort, influence, position, and leisure [were] maintained amidst a sea of the most dismal and frightening poverty and hunger—a poverty and hunger which at all times threatened to engulf any family which relaxed its vigilance, took pity on its poor neighbors, failed to extract the last copper of rent and interest, or ceased for an instant the incessant accumulation of grain and money. Those who did not go up went down, and those who went down often went to their deaths or at least to the dissolution and dispersal of their families.

However, under favorable circumstances, a family successful in business might expand its numbers from generation to generation until it gradually squeezed out all its less competitive neighbors, with its progeny eventually constituting nearly the entire population of a village. For example, a century after a couple of poor Yang brothers arrived in a region as farm laborers, their descendents had formed a clan of 80-90 families in one village and the entire population of a neighboring one. In a Guangdong village, a merchant family named Huang arrived and bought land, growing in numbers and land ownership over the centuries until their descendants replaced most of the other families, which became poor and ultimately disappeared, while the Huangs eventually constituted 74 percent of the total local population, including a complete mix of the rich, middle, and poor.

The Implications for the Chinese People and for American Ideology

In many respects, the Chinese society portrayed by our historical and sociological sources seems an almost perfect example of the sort of local environment that would be expected to produce a deep imprint upon the characteristics of its inhabitants. Even prior to the start of this harsh development process, China had spent thousands of years as one of the world's most advanced economic and technological civilizations. The socioeconomic system established from the end of the sixth century AD onward then remained largely stable and unchanged for well over a millennium, with the sort of orderly and law-based society that benefited those who followed its rules and ruthlessly weeded out the troublemaker. During many of those centuries, the burden of overpopulation placed enormous economic pressure on each family to survive, while a powerful cultural tradition emphasized the production of surviving offspring, especially sons, as the greatest goal in life, even if that result might lead to the impoverishment of the next generation. Agricultural efficiency was remarkably high but required great effort and diligence, while the complexities of economic decision-making—how to manage land, crop selection, and investment decisions—were far greater than those faced by the simple peasant serf found in most other parts of the world, with the rewards for success and the penalties for failure being extreme. The sheer size and cultural unity of the Chinese population would have facilitated the rapid appearance and spread of useful innovations, including those at the purely biological level.

It is important to recognize that although good business ability was critical for the long-term success of a line of Chinese peasants, the overall shaping constraints differed considerably from those that might have affected a mercantile caste such as the

Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe or the Parsis of India. These latter groups occupied highly specialized economic niches in which a keen head for figures or a ruthless business sense might have been all that was required for personal success and prosperity. But in the world of rural Chinese villages, even the wealthier elements usually spent the majority of the lives in backbreaking labor, working alongside their families and their hired men in the fields and rice paddies. Successful peasants might benefit from a good intellect, but they also required the propensity for hard manual toil, determination, diligence, and even such purely physical traits as resistance to injury and efficiency in food digestion. Given such multiple selective pressures and constraints, we would expect the shift in the prevalence of any single one of these traits to be far slower than if it alone determined success, and the many centuries of steady Chinese selection across the world's largest population would have been required to produce any substantial result.

The impact of such strong selective forces obviously manifests at multiple levels, with cultural software being far more flexible and responsive than any gradual shifts in innate tendencies, and distinguishing between evidence of these two mechanisms is hardly a trivial task. But it seems quite unlikely that the second, deeper sort of biological human change would not have occurred during a thousand years or more of these relentlessly shaping pressures, and simply to ignore or dismiss such an important possibility is unreasonable. Yet that seems to have been the dominant strain of Western intellectual belief for the last two or three generations.

Sometimes the best means of recognizing one's ideological blinders is to consider seriously the ideas and perspectives of alien minds that lack them, and in the case of Western society these happen to include most of our greatest intellectual figures from 80 or 90 years ago, now suddenly restored to availability by the magic of the Internet. Admittedly, in some respects these individuals were naïve in their thinking or treated various ideas in crude fashion, but in many more cases their analyses were remarkably acute and scientifically insightful, often functioning as an invaluable corrective to the assumed truths of the present. And in certain matters, notably predicting the economic trajectory of the world's largest country, they seem to have anticipated developments that almost none of their successors of the last 50 years ever imagined. This should certainly give us pause.

Consider also the ironic case of Bruce Lahn, a brilliant Chinese-born genetics researcher at the University of Chicago. In an interview a few years ago, he casually mentioned his speculation that the socially conformist tendencies of most Chinese people might be due to the fact that for the last 2,000 years the Chinese government had regularly eliminated its more rebellious subjects, a suggestion that would surely be regarded as totally obvious and innocuous everywhere in the world except in the West of the last half century or so. Not long before that interview, Lahn had achieved great scientific acclaim for his breakthrough discoveries on the possible genetic origins of human civilization, but this research eventually provoked such heated controversy that he was dissuaded from continuing it.

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Yet although Chinese researchers living in America willingly conform to American ideological restrictions, this is not the case with Chinese researchers in China itself, and it is hardly surprising that BGI—the Beijing Genomics Institute—has become the recognized world leader in cutting-edge human genetics research. This is despite the billions spent by its American counterparts, which must operate within a much more circumscribed framework of acceptable ideas.

During the Cold War, the enormous governmental investments of the Soviet regime in many fields produced nothing, since they were based on a model of reality that was both unquestionable and also false. The growing divergence between that ideological model and the real world eventually doomed the USSR, whose vast and permanent bulk blew away in a sudden gust of wind two decades ago. American leaders should take care that they do not stubbornly adhere to scientifically false doctrines that will lead our own country to risk a similar fate. ■

An electronic version of this article, including a bibliography and endnotes, can be found here: www.theamericanconservative.com/pdf/darwinism-china.pdf

Will Britain Secede?

Horseburgers are on the menu as the UK loses its taste for globalism.

by EAMONN FINGLETON

DUBLIN—International politics offers many case studies for believers in chaos theory. Just as the flapping of a butterfly's wings in a Brazilian rainforest may trigger a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, seemingly minor political developments in one nation can have unexpectedly large knock-on effects elsewhere.

Just think how different things might have been if a chauffeur in Sarajevo in June 1914 had not turned into the wrong street. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand would have dodged a bullet, World War I would never have happened, Russia would have been saved from Communism, and without the Treaty of Versailles to rail against, Hitler would probably never have come to power.

In our own time, a few hanging chads in the 2000 presidential election have had a lot to answer for. If the Florida count had gone slightly differently, George W. Bush would never have been president, the "Vulcans" would never have had their shot at Saddam Hussein, the U.S. Treasury would be $2 trillion richer, and nearly a million Iraqis would still be alive.

The chaos-theory case study of the moment is the European Union's horsemeat scandal and what it means for the UK's future. The episode started on an apparently small scale when hamburgers sold in Irish supermarkets were found to contain horse DNA. Further discoveries were made in the UK, and suddenly much of the European food industry was engulfed in obloquy. Horsemeat sourced from places like Romania and Poland had been used in products sold across Europe by everybody from Nestlé in Switzerland to Findus in Sweden. A key role seems to have been played by a company called Draap Trading—an interesting choice of name, given that draap spelt backward is *paard*, the Dutch word for horse. Nominally Cyprus-based and owned by a holding company in the British Virgin Islands, Draap does much of its business in the Netherlands. In the view of many Europeans, the company's byzantine ownership structure and apparent contempt for the public interest illustrate much of what is wrong with globalism.

For British voters in particular, the horsemeat shenanigans may prove to be the last straw in their relationship with globalism. They have long voiced exasperation with the European Union and in many polls have indicated that they want out. Thus, in mid-January, even before the horsemeat saga had become a Europe-wide cause célèbre, the UK's pro-EU prime minister, David Cameron, felt obliged to promise the British electorate a straight in-out referendum on EU membership. Cameron probably didn't realize it, but he may have touched off a geopolitical avalanche. Certainly the horsemeat revelations have strengthened the hand of those in the UK who revile the EU and all its works.

If the British turn their backs on the EU, the knock-on effect in fanning anti-globalist feeling in the United States may prove far from negligible. In the face of East Asia's relentless pursuit of one-way free trade, Washington's vaunted strategy of "global leadership" has amounted to borrowing from China to save the world from China. British withdrawal from the EU—the likely result of any honestly structured referendum—may well jolt policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic into rejoining the reality-based community.

The mother country has often been a harbinger of change in the tides of U.S. politics. In the busy

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parliamentary year of 1967, for instance, the British legalized both abortion and homosexual behavior—six years ahead of *Roe* v. *Wade* and more than three decades before remaining anti-gay laws in the United States were struck from the statute book. Similarly, the British were earlier to embrace the fashion for financial and economic deregulation. The ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman had struck root among the British media and political establishment as early as 1976, and Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister 18 months ahead of Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential victory.

The irony today is that Cameron is hardly central casting's idea of a bomb-thrower, and the parliamentarians who have forced his hand hail mainly from the right of his Conservative Party and see themselves as enthusiastic supporters of global free trade.

The cause of globalism is now thoroughly discredited in the UK. Even Cameron does not conceal his disgust with some of its aspects, not least its role in undercutting the British tax base. Feelings have not been soothed by the release of a report documenting how major U.S. corporations minimize their British tax liabilities by channeling their British revenues through tax havens. Among those cited were such household names as Starbucks, Google, and Amazon, which despite doing huge business in the UK pay hardly any tax there. Some homegrown British corporations such as Vodafone and Barclays have also been pilloried. Much of the criticism has come from media organizations like the *Telegraph* and *Mail* that have traditionally been pro-business pillars of the Conservative Party establishment.

Top Conservatives generally hope the UK will remain in the EU. Yet while they believe in maintaining close trade links with the Continent, few of them identify with Brussels's push for "ever closer union"—political union, that is. Thus Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones, a Conservative member of the House of Lords and a former intelligence chief, cites the European justice agenda as a major source of friction. A key issue is the so-called European Arrest Warrant which renders the British government powerless to second-guess extradition requests from other EU nations. As a result, several British citizens have suffered scarifying legal misadventures in, among other places, Greece.

"The problem is that the system is based on the fiction that police, courts, and prisons are all equally good inside all EU countries," says Neville-Jones. "That is patently not the case, and the result is anomalies which, given UK political culture and the activities of constituency MPs, cannot be shoved under the carpet."

Douglas Carswell, a Hayekian who counts as one of the Conservative Party's most passionate Eurosceptics, cites the EU's anti-democratic character as another bone of contention. "My American friends have no idea how anti-democratic the EU really is," he says. "It has been calculated that between 70 percent and 80 percent of our laws are now coming from the EU bureaucracy. In American terms, it is as if federal agencies were able to make laws without reference to Congress or to the states."

The cause of globalism is now thoroughly discredited in the UK.

Unfortunately, as the prominent Labour Party Europhile Denis MacShane points out, any effort now by the UK to roll back the less welcome aspects of the European "project" comes a little late. "Cameron needs to persuade 26 other governments and parliaments that opening a major treaty revision to satisfy Britain is something to be desired," he recently commented. "A new treaty would require a nightmarish ratification process involving referendums in countries like Denmark, France, and Ireland that would plunge Europe into years of inward-looking rows at a time when it still hasn't emerged from the worst economic crisis in its history."

In terms of British party politics, however, Cameron's gambit is a Machiavellian masterstroke. He has promised that the referendum will be held only *after* the Conservative Party is returned to power in a general election expected in 2015. As Labour Party leader Ed Miliband has already ruled out a referendum, this leaves countless anti-EU Labour voters high and dry. Even the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), an anti-EU group, has been cunningly sidetracked. Drawing its support mainly from the right, UKIP had loomed as an ever larger threat to the Conservatives' traditional base. Now the Conservatives can credibly allege that a UKIP vote will merely divide Euroskeptics and let in the Labour Party, a majority of whose leaders are dyed-in-the-wool

Europhiles. UKIP stalwarts like Godfrey Bloom, a member of the European Parliament, splutter that Cameron will in the end renege on a straight in-out vote. This might be a correct reading of Cameron's instincts, but the pressure on Conservative leaders to follow through with an honest referendum—not least from their own rank-and-file—is now intense.

The immediate consequence of Cameron's initiative has been to bolster Conservative cohesion. Thus, as prominent a Euroskeptic as Liam Fox, a once and possibly future contender for leadership of the Conservatives, immediately came out strongly in Cameron's support in a *Daily Mail* commentary. In an interview, he was cock-a-hoop at the Labour Party's marginalization. "Miliband has made a major mistake" in promising not to hold a referendum, he told me. "What he has done is like buying a ticket on the Titanic while knowing the outcome in advance."

Training his guns on the Conservatives, Denis MacShane sums things up with a different metaphor. Cameron, he says, has opened a Pandora's Box. Because it is preordained that the EU will not offer significant concessions, Cameron has set the UK on the road to exit. This looks like a solid bet to me. MacShane sees this as a tragedy, but the UK would suddenly be free to set its own agenda again and would hardly be more isolated than it was in the 1950s and 1960s, years that older Britons remember with fondness. In the longer run, the UK would surely move closer to the United States and Canada, and the result might be a new Anglophone trading bloc—one where horsemeat would not be on the menu. ■

DEEPBACKGROUND *by* PHILIP GIRALDI

A great deal of reporting on the political unrest in Egypt offers simple explanations fully comprehensible to readers in London, Paris, or New York, couched in the political expressions that those audiences are accustomed to hearing. Egyptian President Muhammad Morsi has been depicted as an Islamist with an Islamist agenda who is also an inept leader unable to solve any of Egypt's manifold problems, most particularly its shrinking economy. This in turn is producing a revolt of the middle class—which supported genuine reform after the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak—as well as of the proletariat and working class, which have seen declines in already marginal standards of living and have been on the receiving end of brutal police crackdowns that have included well-documented instances of torture both in Cairo and in the economically significant governorates adjacent to the Suez Canal.

But the conventional wisdom may not be completely accurate. Washington has evidence that as much as a billion dollars has been clandestinely introduced into Egypt since the June presidential election. The money has gone to some organizers of the riots taking place, including junior Army officers in mufti, to force the regime to react with excessive force and lose what little legitimacy it retains—which is precisely what has happened. A fatally weakened Morsi government might well have to accept a new regime of national unity that would include the military, which would become the dominant force in the arrangement without having to risk the opprobrium involved in actually forming a government. The primary objective of the new alignment would be to restore order, further enhancing the military's status. On January 29, the Egyptian Army's commanding general, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, not surprisingly suggested that the army might have to intervene if the civilian government proves incapable of suppressing the rioting.

So who is behind the unrest? The money fueling the confrontation comes from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, none of which are enamored of the Muslim Brotherhood or Morsi. They fear that the untidy democracy, such as it is, in Egypt and elsewhere amid the Arab Spring could spill over to their states, and they desire a return to something like the military-backed regime of Mubarak, which was politically reliable and dedicated to suppressing political extremism and even dissent in all forms. A government of national unity, backed by the army, that would give lip service to democratic institutions would be just fine.

The U.S. government is aware of how the money flowing into Egypt is being used, and it too disapproves of the messy democracy in Egypt. There is some sentiment on the U.S. National Security Council and in the White House favoring a return to something like the Mubarak rule in Egypt, if that could be arranged "democratically," without sparking a wider conflagration. ■

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Look Homeward, Devil

Thomas Wolfe, the adjectival Tar Heel, not the dandified Virginia expositor of *The Right Stuff*, philosophized in his execrably titled *You Can't Go Home Again* that "A man learns a great deal about life from writing and publishing a book."

He can say that again… and again.

(I'll always love Wolfe, who meant a great deal to me when I was younger, but one of my favorite stories about the logorrheic author is that he prefaced the manuscript that became *Look Homeward, Angel* with an assurance that "I do not believe the writing to be wordy, prolix, or redundant.")

March 2013 marks the tenth anniversary of the simultaneous launching of the Iraq War and my memoirish tale of going home again (and what I found there), *Dispatches from the Muckdog Gazette*.

I guess there just wasn't enough space in the American attention span to accommodate both these events, so despite the best efforts of the good folks at Henry Holt, shock and awe hogged all the headlines. Those bastards Bush and Cheney—what infernal timing they have!

I did, however, learn a bit about life from that experience.

Honesty is not just the best but the only policy for a writer. As Thoreau counseled, "Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe." Given that this book's subject was my hometown of Batavia, New York, there was no way to be honest without bruising feelings. To have been cautious or solicitous would have caused severe anemia and crashing boredom.

A month or so before publication I came down with the usual auctorial premonitions of disaster. There was a good deal of anticipation around town surrounding publication, to which my reaction was "Holy Crow—people here are actually going to *read* this." What, I wondered, was the modern equivalent of being run out of town on a rail?

For in *Dispatches*, I treated with wit (half-wit, if you don't like it) and gleeful scatter-sprayed invective the ethno-religious conflicts that once rived—and, in a way, fortified—my town. As a typical American mongrel, with mixed bloodlines and a shambling sympathy for all sides of the American divide, I claimed an exemption from oppressive sensitivity codes. I wrote about the faded WASP ruling class from the point of view of the once déclassé Italian and Irish Catholics, and I wrote about the latter from the p.o.v. of the former. After all, I'm dago, mick, limey, kraut, papist, Prot… that's a pretty wide free-fire zone.

Wolfe described "with bitter chagrin" the reception of *Look Homeward, Angel* by his hometown of Asheville, North Carolina. The vitriol fell like acid rain. But then Wolfe had fled North Carolina for exile in the Vampire City.

He wrote of a tormentor: "One venerable old lady, whom I had known all my life, wrote me that although she had never believed in lynch law, she would do nothing to prevent a mob from dragging my 'big overgroan karkus' across the public square."

I heard through the grapevine of—mercifully few—people who were offended by my Italian jokes. (My Stella lineage provided insufficient protection—but then my grandmother always said we were "northern Italian, almost Swiss.") From the other side, I was taken to task by the octogenarian grande dame of our city, who had grown up in pre-sprawl Long Island and still sounded like it.

She confronted me after a concert at St. James Episcopal Church. "I'm baaah-lee speaking to you," she announced.

Wolfe-like, I had known my venerable critic since I was a boy. I threw my hands up in mock surrender.

"Sorry… sorry," I stammered, certain that I knew the source of her displeasure: my raillery about upper-crust Protestants.

"How *could* you say that I have an ox-cent?" she asked in her inimitable accent.

I laughed. "Is that all?"

"Yes. And why must you use so much profanity?"

I acknowledged my literary Tourette's. Within the month she was speaking to me again. As I write this she is 92 and we're still pals.

Various outlets sold upwards of 800 copies of the book in Batavia—an extraordinary number for a rural working-class burg of 15,000 souls. As for sales in the rest of the good old USA… I blame Bush.

I had used as an epigraph this line from Sinclair Lewis's *Cass Timberlane*: "To its fugitive children, Grand Republic will forgive almost anything, if they will but come back home."

You can go home again. And if they'll forgive me, they'll forgive anyone. ■

Greatness Visible

by ROBERT DEAN LURIE

Selected Letters of William Styron, R. Blakeslee Gilpin and Rose Styron, eds., Random House, 704 pages

Given that letter writing is a dead art form, there are probably not many more books of this ilk waiting in the wings. Certainly authors and other notable figures will continue to correspond with each other, but changes in technology have wrested much of the poetry from the enterprise. I can't see myself working up a lot of enthusiasm for *The Collected Emails of Michael Chabon*. Can you?

Happily, this collection of William Styron's letters is an impressive—albeit incomplete—masterpiece of the genre. Unlike many of his contemporaries, the author of *Sophie's Choice* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner* did not save carbon copies of his correspondence for posterity, and that made tracking down Styron's casually cast-off longhand missives an exceptionally daunting task. The editors were unable to locate, for example, any of the letters Styron wrote to the novelist and civil rights activist James Baldwin—letters that would certainly have proven illuminating given Styron's complicated relationship with the African-American intellectual community in the wake of the publication of *The Confessions of Nat Turner.*

The book begins with some dispatches from the young author-to-be to his father, while Styron was at Duke University as a member of the Marines' V-12 officer training program in 1943. Precociousness distinguishes these early epistles; in one example, composed at the tender age of 19, Styron grapples with what he perceives to be unresolvable conflicts within the Protestant Christianity of his upbringing. While this is far from an unusual predicament for a young, curious soul feeling its way in the wider world, Styron's musings are on an altogether different plane from the typical "I'm not going to church anymore; it's boring" complaint. He writes:

> In parts the Bible is a literary masterpiece. Nothing finer has been written than the story of Job and the sermon of Ecclesiastes, and I believe that if Christ was not the son of God, he approached such a divine kinship as nearly as any man ever born. But it is impossible for me to cling to a Faith which attempts, and succeeds in too many cases, in foisting upon the multitude a belief in so much which is utter fantasy.

Many years later, after he had reconciled somewhat with Christianity, or at least with the idea of Christianity, Styron found himself in his father's position: patiently listening to and counseling his child (daughter Susanna) through her own crisis of faith. His response to this challenge is one of the high points of the collection:

> It may or may not be a consolation to you that your intense wonder and turmoil about the meaning of the human condition is, in fact, *a part* of the human condition—or at least as it is experienced by sensitive and questing souls like yourself. ... A fisherman in the Arabian Gulf finds purpose in life by fishing, a Wyoming sheepherder by tending his sheep and remaining close to Nature and that big sky. On a somewhat higher level intellectually, a person like James Joyce, a profoundly pessimistic man at bottom, could find reason and purpose through these moments termed 'epiphanies'—instances of intense revelation (through love, or a glimpse of transcendental

Michael Hogue

> beauty in the natural world) which gave such a sense of joy and self-realization that they justified and, in effect, ratified the existence of him who experienced them. In other words, the existential anguish becomes undone; through moments of aesthetic and spiritual fulfillment we find the very reason *for* existence.

A span of almost 30 years separates these letters. Yet the same keen, questing intelligence informs both dispatches.

Another character trait apparently in place from the beginning was Styron's burning desire to be an important, capital-A Author. From the evidence of the letters, Styron never in his life wrote anything for fun. Every novel had to be big, game-changing, Zeitgeist-defining. One would think he set himself up for a fall with such lofty aspirations but, remarkably, Styron came pretty close to fulfilling his ambition: three of his four published novels—*Lie Down in Darkness, The Confessions of Nat Turner,* and *Sophie's Choice*—were greeted by most critics as major works. Even the difficult second book—*Set This House on Fire*—had an improbable second act in France, where it came to be regarded as one of the most important English-language novels of the post-World War II period.

Styron liked to quote Flaubert: "Be regular and orderly in your life like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your works." While he was only partially successful at embodying the first half of this axiom, no one can doubt his follow-through on the second. Right out of the gate, he clashed with editors and critics over explicit passages in *Lie Down in Darkness.* With *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, the white, Virginia-born author unintentionally provoked the ire of some prominent black intellectuals with his decision to write the slave insurrectionist's story in the first person. In *Sophie's Choice* he had the audacity to cast his titular Auschwitz survivor as a Polish Catholic, a decision that angered some Jewish critics who felt Styron had muddied the waters in his attempt to emphasize the universal,

rather than explicitly Jewish, tragedy of the Holocaust. Through all of these controversies, Styron barreled onward, unwilling to constrain himself.

There was, however, a dark side to this purity of vision: William Styron could be an insufferable snob. The letters reveal a man who seemed to derive no pleasure from any form of entertainment below the level of high art. He listened almost exclusively to classical music, disdained (during the early part of his career at least) popular films, eschewed sports, and was utterly contemptuous of popular writers he felt were dumbing down the masses. The hacks in question? Leon Uris and Herman Wouk. Neither could be mistaken for Flaubert, but I suspect I'm not the only soul who pines for that beguiling era in which Wouk was considered an appropriate beach read. In light of all the rarefied bitchiness on display, Styron's gradual revelations—beginning in his letters from abroad during the 1950s—of his lecherous streak and taste for hard liquor come as something of a relief: at least he had some common appetites.

Styron spent much of his career actively striving for, and for the most part attaining, literary greatness.

The capital-A Author was also consumed, to the point of distraction, by worries over his position vis–à–vis the other "important writers" of his time: Bellow, Updike, Vidal, etc. He was particularly obsessed with the accomplishments of his erstwhile friend Norman Mailer. After several years of boisterous camaraderie, the two had a bitter falling out in 1958 over comments Styron allegedly made about Mailer's wife. Yet the real problem may have been that the men were too much alike: both were status-obsessed, both actively jockeying for the position of Greatest Living American Writer. "I have not seen hide nor hair of Norman," Styron writes James Jones in a letter from 1959,

> except to hear that he has coming out soon an anthology of his work called *Advertisements for Myself*, a characteristically self-effacing title, which includes a 75,000 word essay, heretofore unpublished, about the problems facing a man who wishes to become a 'major writer in our time.' The sad, sad thing is that Norman *could* be a major writer, but I don't see how he can be one if all his energy is thrown into crap like this.

The cogency of Styron's argument is undercut by the fact that, in many of his letters (as well as in interviews at the time) he too threw all of his energy into "crap like this": jockeying for position and slandering his contemporaries. The only difference between Styron and Mailer is that Mailer figured out how to profit from his ruminations.

Styron spent much of his career actively striving for, and for the most part attaining, literary greatness. Yet his true defining moment—the one that, I believe, will secure his place in the firmament—came as the result not of calculated ambition but of setback. At the tail end of 1985, crippled by suicidal depression, Styron admitted himself to Yale-New Haven Hospital for intensive treatment. What happened next was extraordinary, at least in the annals of literature: instead of shooting himself à la Hemingway or drinking himself to death à la Fitzgerald, Styron channeled his struggle with mental illness into a searing memoir, *Darkness Visible,* which became one of the most acclaimed books of his career. It was a surprising twist indeed that an author famous for his tragic endings sent forth into the world a cathartic document that gave many sufferers of depression the strength to avert tragedy.

In her 2011 memoir *Reading My Father,* Alexandra Styron reveals that her famous dad could be a terror at home. Certainly his struggle with depression did not end with the publication of *Darkness Visible*, and his family often bore the brunt of his roiling mood swings. Yet she and others have recounted how Styron would patiently spend hours on the phone talking complete strangers out of committing suicide. Tellingly, in his letters Styron glosses over these acts of compassion. He seemed to understand intuitively that, in this area of his life at least, larger forces were at work.

The final letter in the collection is addressed simply "To Readers" and accompanied by the instructions "To be made public at my death." "Everyone must keep up the struggle," Styron writes, "for it is always likely that you will win the battle and nearly a certainty you will win the war. To all of you, sufferers and non-sufferers alike, I send my abiding love." Thus the lifelong pessimist bequeaths a legacy of hope.

The *Selected Letters of William Styron* reflect the man. They can be warm, transcendent, and sublime, as well as vindictive, profane, and petty. Yet they are never anything less than a joy to read. Rose Styron, co-editor of the collection, is to be commended for her big-heartedness in allowing her late husband's turbulent soul to shine forth in all its complicated glory. It is indeed a blessing that this man lived in the bygone era of pen-and-paper correspondence—a quirk of timing that has enabled this accidental autobiography to be clawed back from dusty shelves and special collections around the world. As his beautiful, heart-baring letters make clear, William Styron needn't have spent so much of his life fretting over his status. Almost from the beginning, his greatness was assured. ■

Robert Dean Lurie is the author of No Certainty Attached: Steve Kilbey and The Church.

Whole Foods' Better Business

by MARK SKOUSEN

Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business, John Mackey and Raj Sisodia, Harvard Business Review Press, 368 pages

Ever since the robber barons stalked the earth and Balzac expostulated that "behind every great fortune is a crime," the media has attacked Wall Street, Madison Avenue, and anything to do with corporations. In the latest Gallup poll on the trustworthiness of various professions, business executives come out little better than lawyers and used-car salesmen, far below the ethical standings of medical doctors, engineers, and police officers.

Even as the global marketplace has raised the standard of living a hundredfold in the past century, the accusations keep pouring in—that capitalism promotes inequality, materialism, greed, environmental degradation, and short-termism on Wall Street, and that fraud, deception, and corporate welfarism would run rampant if it weren't for Sarbanes-Oxley, Dodd-Frank, and a host of government regulatory agencies.

But corporate management has come a long way since the dark days of Carnegie, Morgan, Gould, and Rockefeller. The first glimmer of hope came when Henry Ford instituted the $5-a-day wage in 1913 and recognized that workers deserved to participate in the company's fortunes. Ford's decision to more than double their daily pay allowed employees for the first time to buy the cars they were making and helped toward dispelling the Marxist charge of exploitation and alienation.

Still, battle lines have been drawn between labor and capital, and between consumers and producers, into the 21st century. Workers live in constant fear of being underpaid, overworked, or unemployed thanks to the upper hand of management, while consumers are deceived by "hidden persuaders" into buying "bads" rather than "goods." All this despite the Herculean efforts by such management gurus as Frederick Taylor, Alfred Sloan, Edward Deming, Louis Kelso, Peter Drucker, Steve Covey, and Jim Collins. Big government and nonprofit organizations seem a necessary countervailing power to a deeply flawed private enterprise system.

In response, utopian visionaries have sought to transform capitalism into a system that is "humane," "social," "enlightened," "good," and even "better." But after countless how-to books and MBA courses on business ethics, leadership, and corporate culture, the question remains: can the business world develop a system beneficial to all the stakeholders in a firm—owners, consumers, workers, investors, suppliers, and the community at large?

Enter John Mackey, cofounder and co-CEO of Whole Foods Market. He and his co-author, Raj Sisodia, a professor at Bentley University, have created solutions they call "conscious capitalism" and "firms of endearment." The authors offer a balanced score card, with chapters on "loyal, trusting customers"; "passionate, inspired team members"; "patient, purposeful investors"; "collaborative, innovative suppliers"; "flourishing, welcoming communities"; and "a healthy, vibrant environment." Mackey and Sisodia conclude that business is not a sporting event, "a zero-sum game with a winner and a loser. It's a win, win, win, win game."

Yet skepticism abounds. Capitalism may be cooperative, but it can also be ruthlessly competitive. How can one avoid being labeled a "selfish and greedy businessman," exploiting customers with high prices and misleading advertising and employees with low wages and high turnover?

Having read dozens of business books over the years, I can say with considerable authority that *Conscious Capitalism* is the most ambitious management model ever conceived, and if implemented it could catapult the world of business to what Adam Smith described eloquently as the "highest degree of opulence." Indeed, if Mackey's application of higher consciousness had been in the boardroom a generation ago, I like to think that we could have avoided the suffocating regulations of Sarbanes-Oxley and Dodd-Frank and the dire straits of companies like GM, Sears, and Citibank (even Enron).

Mackey denies Milton Friedman's view that the only responsibility of capitalist firms is to maximize profits to their shareholders.

Mackey wants firms to stop focusing exclusively on the bottom line—he would replace the traditional "shareholder" philosophy with a "stakeholder" philosophy. "Business is not about making as much money as possible," he asserts. "It's about creating value for stakeholders." Companies must develop sterling reputations to attract loyal customers, employees, and suppliers and to generate community goodwill. If they do, superior returns can be achieved in earnings and the stock price, but as a byproduct, not as a primary goal.

Conscious capitalism is not just high theory: the book contains numerous case studies, starting with the $16 billion grocery-store chain that Mackey has been directing since the early 1980s. In the grocery business, traditionally known for its low margins,

John Mackey speaks at the 2013 Students for Liberty conference

Whole Foods has achieved high margins and does so with little advertising: customers are the stores' best advocates. Despite volatility, its stock has handily outperformed every index, has a return on equity of 13.7 percent, and is near an all-time high.

Whole Foods has been listed on the *Fortune* 100 Best Companies to Work For rankings since 1998. Employees—"team members"—receive above-average wages and benefits, including medical savings accounts and "wellness centers." There are lots of built-in incentives to improve performance and earn more.

Whole Foods has created some of the most innovative labor policies anywhere, including a.) a cap on total compensation, including bonuses, for any employee at 19 times the average pay of all workers; b.) total transparency in salaries and wages; and c.) the same benefits, including stock options, for all full-time employees. This radical approach seems to be working: the company has a turnover rate of less than 10 percent a year.

Throughout the book, Mackey and Sisodia highlight other companies with a similar philosophy and equal success, such as Starbucks, The Container Store, the Tata Group, Costco, Google, Southwest Airlines, Panera Bread, Twitter, Trader Joe's, and Waste Management.

Mackey and Sisodia don't pull any punches. They are critical of Wall Street's short-term quantitative metrics. They express reservations about Jim Collins's list of "good to great" companies, such as Circuit City, Fannie Mae, and Altria (formerly Philip Morris), all of which Mackey says have embraced "unconscious" policies. Under his definition of good capitalism, some companies might have to change their product line or their corporate culture, or simply disappear. Mackey is critical of big pharma for its unethical and aggressive promotion of drugs with dangerous side effects. And he rejects out of hand GE's policy under Jack Welch of firing the bottom 10 percent of its workforce each year.

Although he calls free enterprise and entrepreneurship the source of "unprecedented prosperity for humanity," Mackey challenges the philosophical vanguards of capitalism, Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman. He rejects the Randian notion that "selfishness" and "greed" are virtues and denies Friedman's view that the only responsibility of capitalist firms is to maximize profits to their shareholders.

If there's one undeveloped section in the book, it's how to deal with failure. How do owners, workers, and suppliers respond to the creative-destructive nature of global capitalism—downturns in the economy, failed product selection, heavily unionized industries, foreign competition, and sectors in secular decline? Most companies go through tough times where they must downsize, turn around, or go bankrupt, leaving workers unemployed and bills unpaid. How would conscious capitalism apply to their situation?

The authors only briefly address this. Are they suggesting that if business leaders follow the tenets of conscious capitalism they will never fail, that they can always adjust to the new demands of fickle customers, obsolete technology, and government regulations, that firms will seldom if ever have to lay off workers in mass or close stores? The authors seem uncomfortable with the idea of firing anyone. How would they advise a company going bankrupt like Hostess, which faced entrenched union demands? Most importantly, how do companies avoid the danger of stakeholder imbalance, giving too much control to executives, team members, or the wider community?

In an appendix, Mackey and Sisodia compare their model with other philosophies of capitalism, such as Bill Gates's "creative" capitalism. They distance themselves from the "corporate social responsibility" plan adopted by many companies—they claim it is often more PR than an integrated model—and warn against "charismatic" leadership. Unfortunately, they don't discuss Charles Koch's market-based management (MBM), which has catapulted Koch Industries into being the second largest private company in the

world, or John Allison's Objectivist model that transformed BB&T into the fastest growing regional bank in the country. It would be fun to have Koch, Allison, and Mackey compare notes in a public forum, especially with regard to whether a successful company should be public or private. (Koch Industries is private.)

Mackey's conscious capitalism faces an uphill battle to satisfy everyone, including union bosses—Whole Foods workers remain non-union—environmentalists, and animal-rights activists (despite Whole Foods' advanced policies). His ideal manager can't completely avoid such troubles as store closings, layoffs, and other inevitable effects of a dynamic global economy. But he's gone further than anyone to build a better world: as Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "it is incredible the quantity of good that may be done in a country by a single man who will make a business out of it."

In sum, Mackey appears to have discovered how business can achieve the goal that Peter Drucker described as the "ideal non-revolutionary social welfare institution." For Mackey, it's not the state, church, alma mater, or nonprofit organization but the place most people spend most of their waking hours working and developing their closest relationships—the private company. Mackey cites a Gallup world poll indicating that the number one determinant of happiness is "a good job." He steadfastly believes that business, the voluntary shared passion of individuals, "can create a world in which all people live lives full of purpose, love, and creativity—a world of compassion, freedom, and prosperity."

That's a rather an ingenious discovery for a kid who never took a business class in college. ■

Mark Skousen is the editor of Forecasts & Strategies *and the producer of Freedom Fest.*

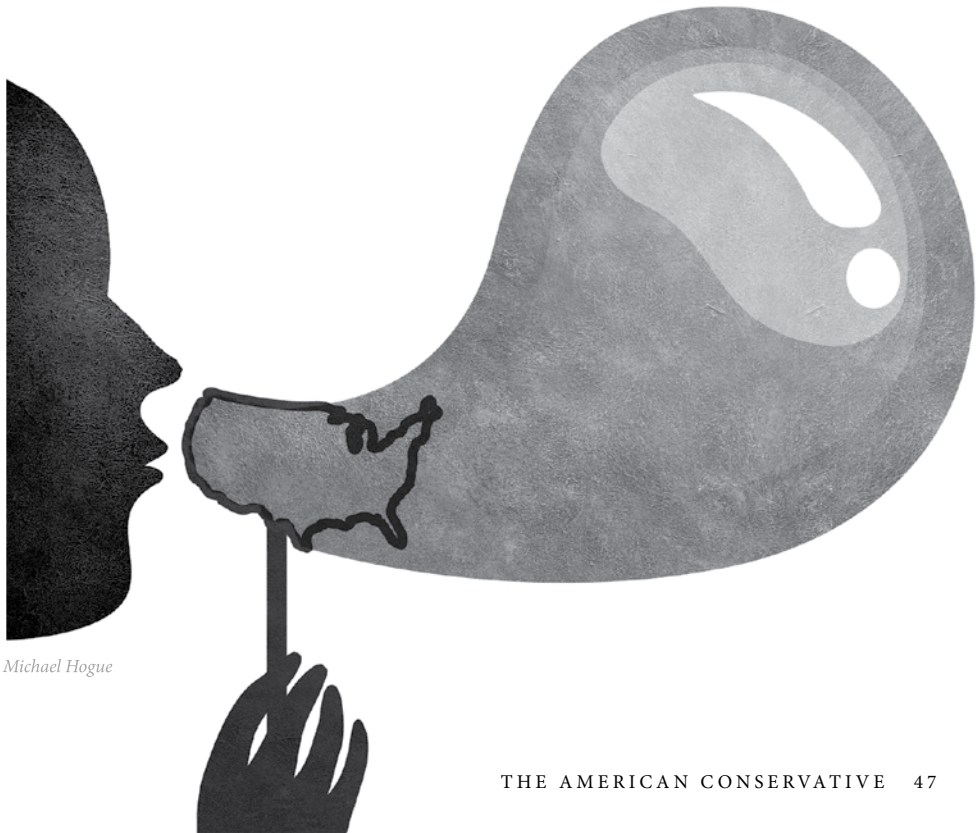
Austrians Don't Blow Bubbles

by JOHN ZMIRAK

It Didn't Have to Be This Way: Why Boom and Bust Is Unnecessary—and How the Austrian School of Economics Breaks the Cycle, Harry C. Veryser, ISI Books, 328 pages

Remember the golden days of 2007, when we were all investment prodigies? Though I couldn't balance a checkbook or drive a car, I had raked in 25 percent increases each year on my 401k since 2001, so I felt like a bookish Donald Trump. While I worked as a college English teacher at a school with 70 students, the nice man from Fidelity showed me how I could retire in 20 years with a nest egg of $1 million—heady stuff for a doorman's son who'd never checked his credit rating. Dinesh D'Souza had published a helpful book, *The Virtue of Prosperity*, which explained to America's Christians how to gather a spiritual harvest through our era of endless prosperity, and Karl Rove was counting the chickens who would build the Republicans' "permanent majority." Of course, we were also bringing modern constitutional freedoms to the whole Islamic world, so news was good from the colonies. All this, in the reign of a president for whom English was a second language. (Bush, sadly, had no first.)

We know now that all those paper profits that puffed our portfolios were as solid as tsarist rubles and that the "compassion" which briefly infused conservatism was a bribe to get a few thousand seniors to vote Republican once—in return for leaving their grandchildren eyeball-deep in debt. But wasn't it fun while it lasted? Who could have possibly predicted that all the experts who carefully managed the investment boom, and the technocrats in academia and government who enabled and cheered them on, would wind up as deeply discredited as Bernie Madoff's word of honor?



Michael Hogue

Harry Veryser's lively and readable new book has the answer: the Austrian economists, that's who. In *It Didn't Have to Be This,* this economist and entrepreneur shows how the current morass was the unavoidable outcome of specific policy decisions, some of which reach back decades—and how thinkers of the Austrian school of economics, exiled from academia and ignored by policymakers, accurately predicted how the crisis would come.

The basic narrative is not in dispute: banks, under pressure for short-term profits and goaded by regulators who wanted to enforce racial equality in home ownership, made hundreds of thousands of loans to people who… had never checked their credit ratings. Some of them had gone bankrupt. Others earned less in a month than the monthly mortgage payments they'd soon have to make. Many were middle-class people who'd already mortgaged the homes they actually lived in; they bought additional properties they could never pay for but hoped to "flip," on the theory that real estate prices never go down. Such loans, which any sane accounting would tally as worthless, were sliced up, repackaged, and granted AAA ratings, then sold as securities—and our retirement plans duly purchased them, which is why you and I will be working until we are 80. We all know this much.

What happened in 2008, Austrians know, was nothing new; in fact, such artificial booms pervade our history.

What boggles the mind is how Harvard MBAs, Wharton professors, Federal Reserve chairmen, and other types who convene at places like Davos to plan the global future could have believed things would turn out differently. What would make someone think that worthless loans, all mooshed together then sliced thin and sold, would somehow acquire value? Did these people believe in magic? Statists like Paul Krugman and Alan Blinder who failed to see this catastrophe coming are emerging from the woodwork now to explain in retrospect that this implosion was the result of too little regulation—the natural outcome of free-market greed, unguided by the visible hand of Uncle Sam. Veryser shows that this diagnosis is pristinely, perfectly wrong, like an autopsy report that blames a lung cancer death on "not enough cigarettes to kill the tumor."

What in fact tanked our economy was something quite simple that Veryser explains in satisfying detail: politicians eager to win votes tried to keep the economy hyperstimulated by feeding it with ever more money. As a result, there was too much money floating around with no good place to go, so banks lowered their standards and made ever riskier loans. Such "mal-investments" were doomed from the get-go, and the longer government policies tried to keep the pyramid scheme standing, the higher the tab would get. What happened in 2008, Austrians know, was nothing new; in fact, such artificial booms pervade our history, from the ultra-low interest rates Alan Greenspan gave President Clinton—which puffed up share prices for the dotcoms of the 1990s—to the stock and real estate bubbles of 1927-28. Because they direct resources to places where they don't belong, investment bubbles amount to little more than paying people on your credit card to dig a bunch of holes, then borrowing still more to have them all filled in. Yes, this does boost employment, for a while. But what are you left with in the end?

Veryser points to such key Austrian theorists as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Wilhelm Röpke, who predicted that bubbles and subsequent crashes were the unavoidable result of politicizing the currency—of cutting the last ties between the money supply and tangible assets such as gold. It should sober boosters of the Republican Party that the last such link to gold—and hence to real-world discipline on politicians—was severed by Richard Nixon in 1971. Veryser also shows how economic, political, and international turmoil can be traced, in part, to the meddling of politicians in the otherwise self-correcting mechanism of the market: it is no accident, he says, echoing Röpke, that the collapse of international trade in the wake of the Great Depression coincided with the rise of aggressive nationalism. Either goods will cross borders or armies will; the golden age of free trade in the 19th century made possible the "long peace" that ended in 1914.

There is much more in this book than a stark diagnosis of economic crashes and a solid case for restoring some kind of gold standard; Veryser shows how most of the key principles that mainstream academics use to understand microeconomics were lifted—often without giving credit—from Austrian theorists, whose faithful disciples are frozen out of universities as "cranks." We see how the Austrians predicted the implosion of the Soviet Union even as Harvard professors issued textbooks explaining how the Soviet model "worked." Best of all, Veryser shows how the insights of Austrian economics can be uncoupled from the "anarcho-capitalist" politics with which they are often bundled. Ludwig von Mises didn't favor restoring medieval Icelandic anarchy, but rather the Habsburg monarchy. There is plenty of room, in other words, for social and religious conservatives to learn from the sober analyses of the Austrians—the only school of empirical economic thought that takes seriously human dignity, personal responsibility, and the role of the natural virtues in promoting the common good. ■

John Zmirak is author of Wilhelm Röpke *and* The Bad Catholic's Guide to the Catechism.

How Do You Say "Quagmire" in French?

by LEON HADAR

Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam, Fredrik Logevall, Random House, 839 pages

Graham Greene's novel *The Quiet American*—adapted into films in 1958 and 2002—was inspired by the author's experiences as a war correspondent in French Indochina in the early 1950s, in particular by his conversations with American aid worker Lee Hochstetter while the two were driving back to Saigon from a tour to Ben Tre province in the countryside in October 1951.

As the Swedish-born historian and Cornell University professor Fredrik Logevall recounts in *Embers of War*, during their ride to the city Hochstetter, who had served as the public-affairs director for the U.S. Economic Aid Mission in Saigon, lectured Greene about the need for a "Third Force" in French-ruled Vietnam, one not beholden either to the French colonialists or to their main adversaries, the guerilla forces led by Ho Chi Minh.

Ho's fighters—the Viet Minh, a nationalist and communist movement—operated from Hanoi in the north of the country and were resisting French attempts to re-establish control over Indochina after the end of Japanese occupation in 1945, part of a wider strategy of restoring the French empire in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

But as Hochstetter explained to Greene, French efforts to defeat the Viet Minh militarily while denying the non-communist Vietnamese real independence were doomed to fail. The Vietnamese fighting on the side of the French against Ho had to be convinced that they were advancing the cause of democracy for their own country, the young American aid worker insisted. "The only way to make them so convinced was to build up a genuine nationalist force that was neither pro-Communist nor obligated to France and that could rally the public to its side," writes Logevall.

In *The Quiet American*—set in 1952, and which Greene started writing that year in his hotel room in Saigon—the character of Alden Pyle was modeled after Hochstetter (and not, as some have speculated, after the legendary Cold War-era counterinsurgency strategist Edward Lansdale). Pyle's views are described to the novel's protagonist, a British war correspondent named Thomas Fowler (based on Greene himself), as follows: "There was always a Third Force to be found free from Communism and the taint of colonialism—national democracy, he called it; you only had to find a leader and keep him safe from the old colonial powers."

That Logevall devotes an entire chapter to Greene's experiences in Vietnam—beginning with the French occupation and ending with a similarly disastrous effort by the United States to pacify that Southeast Asian country—demonstrates his skills and creativity as a writer and historian.

The chapter about the writing of *The Quiet American* makes for a powerful narrative-inside-a-narrative. Greene's novel not only foreshadowed the collapse of the remnants of the French empire in Indochina and the making and the unmaking of America's Vietnam in the years to come; more importantly, and not unlike Logevall's *Embers of War*, it highlighted the tragedies of trying to use military power to overcome the most potent political force in the modern era: nationalism. Both books tell of costly and futile efforts on the part of the French and the Americans—one could as well substitute the British or the Soviets—to advance fanciful universal ideologies (such as liberal democracy or international socialism) in the face of intractable local realities.

In a way, Alden Pyle is the tragic hero of an historical epoch that has not yet ended. In Logevall's final chapter, against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, neoconservatives and liberal internationalists continue to fantasize about a Third Force, one that rejects pro-Western military dictators and the anti-Western Muslim Brotherhood alike and is expected to promote liberal-democratic values in Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and right now in Syria.

Alden Pyle is the tragic hero of an historical epoch that has yet not ended.

Substitute "Iraq" or "Syria" for "Vietnam," and "American" for "French," and the arguments that Logevall quotes from journalist Sol Sanders, writing in *The New Republic* in 1951, would sound familiar to readers of *The New Republic* today: "Beneath the layers of opportunists, French spies, and hangers-on, there is a hard nucleus of patriots who are fighting for an independent, libertarian Vietnam." Before Ahmad Chalabi in Iraq, there was Bao Dai (the westernized Emperor of Vietnam) or Trình Minh Thế (a flamboyant colonel with ties to an exotic religious

sect) in Indochina—favorites of the democracy-promoters in Paris and Washington.

Another effective way in which Logevall lays out his historical investigation is by introducing a series of "What if?" suppositions. History is "full of alternative political choices, major and minor, considered and taken, reconsidered and altered, in Paris and Saigon, in Washington and Beijing, and in the Viet Minh's headquarters in the jungles of Tonkin," explains Logevall, who insists that his narrative is "a reminder to us that to decision makers of the past, the future was merely a set of possibilities."

Genuine nationalists in Vietnam or Syria see in America a foreign power motivated mostly by its own interests.

Logevall's starts his account in 1940, with the fall of France to Nazi Germany and implications that would have for France's empire in Southeast Asia. He concludes that the decline and fall of European hegemony in Indochina was inevitable, and the pressing question for all major players in the region's drama—for the French and the British, for the Chinese and the Soviets, for Ho Chi Minh and the noncommunist Vietnamese—was from the start: what were the Americans going to do?

Indeed, according Logevall, the United States had been a key part of the story going back to the Paris peace conference of 1919, when Ho—an admirer of America's political ideals and of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—tried in vain to approach President Woodrow Wilson, present him with "The Demands of the Vietnamese People," and convince the Americans that he represented a group of rebels fighting for liberty against colonialism.

Wilson's notion of making the world safe for democracy did not extend to the Vietnamese and other colored peoples. But Ho stuck to his conviction that the Americans would eventually support him in his quest for independence—and some, in spirit at least, did, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

This is where Logevall's alternate history comes in. FDR and some of his leading foreign-policy advisors were staunch anti-colonialists who believed that the goal of World War II was to liberate everyone—Europeans and non-Europeans—from foreign occupation: Britain should be forced out of India, and France should not reclaim Indochina. So imagine if FDR had not died in 1945, and he and his anti-imperialist allies provided support for Ho, who had actually based Vietnam's declaration of independence on the American one.

Logevall believes that history would have turned in a different direction if Roosevelt had been responsible for drawing the outlines of Washington's post-1945 global strategy instead of President Harry Truman and the architects of the Cold War. In the case of Indochina, the Americans would have prevented the return of French rule, and Ho and other leaders of independence movements in the region would have allied with the United States.

Instead, thanks to Truman, U.S. policy in Southeast Asia became an integral part of Washington's Cold War strategy for the next 20 years, with American policymakers propping up French efforts to maintain control of Indochina while fighting Ho—who was, after all, a self-proclaimed Communist. The Americans needed the French to help contain the Soviet menace in Europe, and so the restoration of the French empire in Southeast Asia was seen as advancing struggle against Communism.

The United States played a critical role in assisting the French in what became known as the First Indochina War, which ended with France losing and Vietnam being divided into a pro-Western state in south and a northern one led by Ho and backed by the Soviet Union and China. That was the turning point: thereafter, America's policy blueprint vis-à-vis Vietnam did not really change until the fall of Saigon in 1975.

Yet there may have been a few opportunities to reverse U.S. policy and change history, according to Logevall. Rejecting French requests for support in the First Indochina War would have been one alternate scenario. (As it happened, however, President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles were eager to help the French and draw the U.S. directly into the war. "Eisenhower actively contemplated taking the United States directly into the war and sought a blank check from Congress to free his hands," Logevall notes.)

Or Washington could have pulled its support from Ngo Dinh Diem, South Vietnam's staunchly anti-communist Catholic president, whose authoritarian methods—along with the corrupt practices of his family and political supporters—alienated Vietnam's Buddhist majority.

Yet even if one agrees with Logevall's assumption that Ho was first and foremost a nationalist for whom Communism was only an ideology that helped promote economic development and social cohesion, the context of the Cold War made it dif-

ficult for the U.S. to pursue policies that amounted to betraying real or imagined allies.

If historical outcomes are not predetermined, what accounts for the recurrence of certain glaring foreign-policy mistakes? "Somehow, American leaders for a long time convinced themselves that the remarkable similarities between the French experience and their own were not really there," Logevall argues. "It was, for the most part, self delusion."

At the center of this delusion lies the notion that in going abroad "in search of monsters to destroy" America is different from everyone else: the U.S. supposedly is not practicing cynical forms of Realpolitik, like the French and others, but making the world safe for liberal democracy and free markets. This explains the never-ending search for that elusive Third Force in Vietnam or Syria, a foreign faction that will of its own accord take up America's most cherished values.

But genuine nationalists in Vietnam or Syria see in America a foreign power motivated mostly by its own interests. They may want the United States to assist their political struggles, but they don't imagine America's objectives are synonymous with their own freedom and independence.

And when Americans try to pretend otherwise—that ideals and not interests are what drive the U.S. to send troops to foreign lands for "regime change"—those on the receiving end of this generosity are not moved. As a young congressman who had visited Saigon in 1951 wrote in his journal: "We are more and more becoming colonialists in the minds of the people." Unfortunately, John F. Kennedy as president would become one of the architects of U.S. intervention in Vietnam. ■

Leon Hadar, a Washington-based journalist and foreign-policy analyst, is the author of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East.

The Man Who Put Europe in Order

by DANIEL LARISON

Castlereagh: A Life, John Bew, Oxford University Press, 722 pages

There is nothing worse for the reputation of a major historical figure than to be reduced to the status of a cartoon villain. That is the fate to which the memory of Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh (1769-1822), has often been consigned. Instead of simply rehabilitating his subject, John Bew's generally sympathetic *Castlereagh* aims to understand his thinking and motives more completely than previous studies have done.

Challenging the caricature drawn by the likes of Byron and Shelley, Bew carefully reconstructs Castlereagh's private and public lives through extensive investigation of his personal correspondence, as well as that of his relatives and colleagues. Bew treats Castlereagh's statesmanship as a unified whole, rather than reducing it to his role in shaping Britain's foreign policy in the last decade of his career. Above all, this new biography tries to explain how Castlereagh came to form his distinctive view of world affairs.

The major theme of Castlereagh's career was his support for a foreign policy guided by the British national interest.

Castlereagh began his political career with excellent credentials as an Irish "patriot." Raised as a Presbyterian and influenced by the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, Castlereagh pursued a course as a moderate reformer in Ireland's own parliament, before being elected to the British House of Commons in 1794. Bew does an excellent job of demonstrating how Castlereagh's Irish background had an enduring impact on his ideas. As Bew concludes, "Ireland was the crucible of his political thought."

The rebellion of 1798—the rising of the United Irishmen against British rule—convinced Castlereagh that the status quo was unsustainable and led him to support Ireland's full integration into the United Kingdom over the strenuous objections of his former political allies. As a facilitator of the 1801 Act of Union, which abolished the Irish parliament, Castlereagh became a hate-figure among Irish nationalists. That was the beginning of his alienation from the people of his native country.

Meanwhile, Castlereagh's support for Catholic rights, which he maintained throughout his career, earned him the distrust of many in the Anglican establishment, including George III himself. Despite being a genuine supporter of Catholic emancipation, he fell short of seeing it enacted into law because of continued resistance in Parliament and was viewed as a sell-out on this issue as well.

In many respects, Castlereagh's record on Irish issues presaged later periods of his career in which he was a lonely moderate caught between ultra-conservatives and radicals. A case in point is his reaction to the French Revolution, which was hostile but not nearly as polemical as that of Edmund Burke; or his position on end of the slave trade, which was a gradualist one that repeatedly put him at odds with the abolitionist William Wilberforce. Whenever faced with two starkly opposed positions, Castlereagh's instinct was to avoid both and find a compromise.

The major theme of Castlereagh's career was his support for a foreign policy guided by the British national interest, a principle that caused him to be a stalwart supporter of war against France before and after Napoleon's rise to power but that also led him to abjure postwar policies that would leave France too weak and Russia too strong in Europe. After the Congress of Vienna, Castlereagh was wary of anything that would open the door to a Russian military presence in Western Europe—including the universal pretensions of the Holy Alliance, the czar's coalition with fellow monarchist powers Austria and Prussia—but he also aimed to keep Russia as a member of the European system to prevent it from disturbing the peace. He saw Britain's role in Europe as both mediator and balancer, and he hoped to maintain equilibrium among the great powers so that none would pose the threat to stability that France had posed in the two decades before the congress.

Having prevailed over Napoleon, Britain under Castlereagh's guidance was not bent on an ideological project of restoration.

When he had perceived British interests to be threatened by French hegemony in Europe, Castlereagh had been reliably hawkish—he routinely supported enormous expenditures for war and worked to increase greatly the size of the British army. He was instrumental in Wellington's rise to command and unfailingly backed him in all of his military campaigns. Restoring the balance of power and ending Napoleon's threat to France's neighbors were Castlereagh's foreign-policy priorities. As a partner with Austria's Prince Metternich, he would be co-architect of the congress system created at Vienna in 1814-15. To his credit, the alliance system that he helped to usher in and to sustain during its early years preserved general peace in Europe for decades after his suicide in 1822.

But after Vienna he was unwilling to commit Britain to new conflicts for the purpose of propping up or restoring local rulers. Because of his desire to keep the postwar system from falling apart, he didn't oppose the other powers when they acted to suppress revolutions, but he had no enthusiasm for the Holy Alliance—which he called "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense"—and he understood that the British public had no interest in supporting the eastern monarchies in this way. His policy toward the interventions of other governments was by his own admission "passive," but he also laid out strictures against entangling Britain in the internal conflicts of other states. Only when there was a major threat to European security and the balance of power would he countenance renewed hostilities.

Many of Castlereagh's critics at times adopted even stricter non-interventionist positions than he did, and there was broad public consensus that Britain shouldn't involve itself in new European conflicts. One of his Whig opponents, Sir James Mackintosh, argued for a non-interventionist policy that also ruled out humanitarian justifications for intervention, in reaction to Austria's use of reports about rebel atrocities to justify military action in Naples. This position reflected the fear that Britain's allies through the Troppau Protocol of 1820 were creating a dangerous precedent for endless interference in the affairs of other states.

Mackintosh's argument works just as well as a refutation of today's liberal-interventionist appeals for military action in support of foreign insurgents. Remarkable as it may seem, at the time the Whigs were defenders of the inviolability of state sovereignty against the meddling of European conservatives. Castlereagh, as ever, was stuck with the unenviable task of supporting a European system that made these interventions possible while working to keep Britain out of them.

On many occasions Castlereagh expressed his aversion to empty rhetoric in the conduct of foreign policy. During a debate over British aid for Spanish rebels in 1816, he said: "If we begin to assume a dictatorial function towards other powers, we should become an object of deserved hatred. The mind of man could not devise a mode of interference more calculated utterly to ruin the unfortunate persons on whose behalf it was intended." He saw little value in public moralizing if it were not going to be followed by concrete action. As he said to critics of Britain's response to the Austrian suppression of Naples, "He should deem it most pusillanimous conduct on our part, if, after interfering on a question of this nature, we limited our interference to the mere delivery of a scroll of paper, and did not follow it up with some more effectual measures." Nothing would have seemed more useless to him than merely "speaking out" in support of a rebellion.

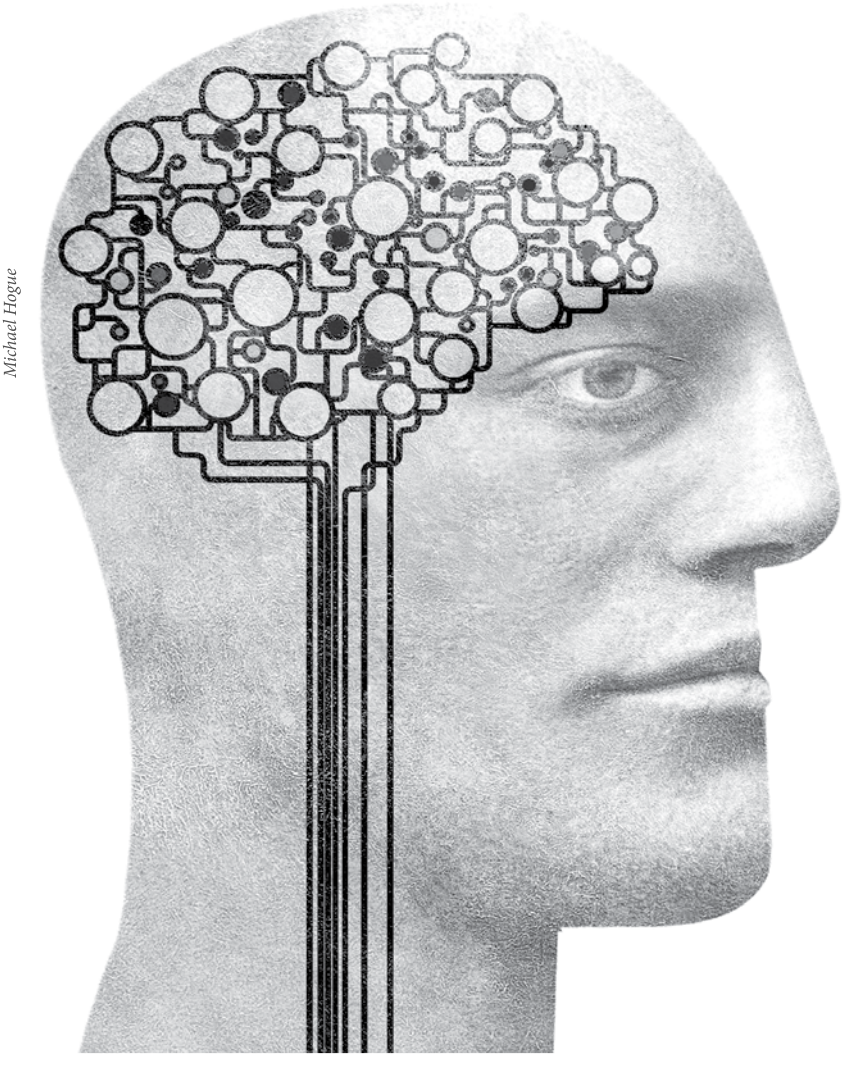
As foreign secretary, Castlereagh was unwilling to involve Britain in Restoration-era military campaigns, but after two decades of war against France he was even more unsympathetic to uprisings against established governments than he had been earlier in his career. Bew criticizes his subject for short-term, unimaginative thinking in this case—one of the few times when Bew strongly takes Castlereagh to task for his shortcomings—but in

light of Castlereagh's experience it would have been extraordinary for him to have adopted any other view of liberal revolutions in Europe. Even when it came to the Greek War for Independence, for which he felt more sympathy, he could not endorse Russian support for the Greek cause, and he invoked the same principles of stability and order that had defined the postwar allies' settlement as his justification. He also feared that the Greek revolt would provide Russia with a pretext for expanding its influence to the detriment of the balance of power in Europe—and therefore to the detriment of British interests.

The principle of nonintervention that Castlereagh outlined in his State Paper of May 5, 1820 reflected his thinking at that point in the postwar period. It rejected the option of supporting the re-establishment of monarchical governments in Spain and Portugal and reaffirmed that Britain's interest was in collective European peace and security. As the paper put it, Britain did not belong to an alliance "intended as an Union for the Government of the World, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other States." Having prevailed over Napoleon, Britain under Castlereagh's guidance was not bent on an ideological project of restoration, and it had nothing at stake in internal political conflicts elsewhere in Europe.

Castlereagh was not opposed to intervention in all instances, but as a pragmatic realist he was able to distinguish between foreign conflicts that imperiled British interests and those that did not. Though Bew makes no argument for using Castlereagh's record as a template for responding to today's foreign-policy problems, his book nonetheless provides a case for Castlereagh's continued relevance as a guide to prudent statesmanship in world affairs. ■

Daniel Larison blogs at www.theamericanconservative.com/larison.



Michael Hogue

Never Mind Humanity

by ARI SCHULMAN

How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed, Ray Kurzweil, Viking, 352 pages

One might think that if someone ever figured out how to create a mind—if the secret of human thought were ever revealed—explaining it would take more than a normal-sized book. But such is the promise of Ray Kurzweil's new volume, which tackles the most perplexing riddle in the history of scientific investigation in a mere 282 pages (plus endnotes). The book might be dismissed on the bluster of its title alone, were it not the latest work from the famed futurist, inventor, and artificial-intelligence pioneer Ray Kurzweil, who was hired as a director of engineering at Google the month after the book's release.

Kurzweil's theory begins with the premise that the basic function of the mammalian brain is pattern recognition. Backed by scattered empirical evidence, he suggests that neurons are bunched into small groups, each of which can recognize very simple patterns in raw information from the senses. With hundreds of millions of these units working in concert, a simple, uniform learning method can build up to progressively more complex features and so tackle complicated cognitive tasks. Like our own perception, Kurzweil's system is sensitive to context: for instance, it is more likely to recognize a smudged character as an "E" when it is preceded by the characters "appl" than by "banan."

In contrast, early AI research began by assuming that the mind is inherently formal and computer-like, even in its most immediate manifestations—for example, that our perceptions strictly precede our interpretations of them because our eyes are like video cameras. Cognitive scientists have only recently begun to reverse this view, documenting the ways that our perceptions are intertwined with our interpretations of them, as in the apple/banana example. Although Kurzweil still views cognition as ultimately reducible to computation, his insistence on starting from intuitions about the mind itself, rather than about computers, is a welcome corrective to many of the dogmas of early AI.

The argument, however, is weakened by its exposition, which inadvertently demonstrates Kurzweil's claim that simple ideas can come across as much more complicated than they really are. Kurzweil describes the formulas behind his ideas mainly through text and poorly labeled diagrams, avoiding almost any math, which is surely safe to use when accompanied by proper verbal explanations. Because the book tries to split the difference between lay readers and those who are already somewhat versed in AI, it leaves many question marks for both.

That much of the latter half of the book is little more than a quick-and-dirty rehash of his earlier work does not help. Kurzweil's monograph on thought seems curiously thoughtless in places, and the prose is sprinkled with odd, flat sentences that ape the "Deep Thoughts" segments from "Saturday Night Live" of yore: "A common aphorism is, 'You are what you eat.' It is even more true to say, 'You are what you think'." "If you haven't actually experienced ecstatic love personally, you have undoubtedly heard about it." "The neocortex is a great metaphor machine, which accounts for why we are a uniquely creative species." Later, immediately after reciting the dictionary definition of "metaphor," Kurzweil abruptly asks, "Do you see any metaphors in Sonnet 73 by Shakespeare?", then reproduces the sonnet. (In case you were wondering, yes, the sonnet does turn out to have some metaphors.)

The sophomoric attempts to describe metaphor point to the ultimate failings of what Kurzweil describes as his unified theory of mind—a theory whose power of explanation he repeatedly compares to those of Darwin and Einstein. He gives no account, for example, of a basic feature of perception, described elegantly by Emily Dickinson in a poem Kurzweil makes the opening epigraph to the book but does not seem to have fully thought through: "The Brain—is wider than the Sky— / For—put them side by side— / The one the other will contain ... " Perceptions do not simply categorize the world, as Kurzweil suggests, but experientially grasp it. But disembodied information, no matter how sophisticated, is not enough to create this experience—which is why computers today are no more capable of grasping the world than inert books or scrolls have been for the past three millennia.

Kurzweil simply waves this concern aside, arguing that qualities like these are "emergent properties" of the brain, and so will presumably arise from an emulation of human thought. The trouble is that, like mathematics, all of computation is already a way of formalizing and thus mimicking portions of thought, but that is not enough to allow computers to feel themselves thinking those thoughts. Perhaps Kurzweil's system, which mimics a different portion of human thought, will somehow change this—but he offers no argument for why it will. His descriptions of his system as "symbolic" and "metaphorical" depend on the very leap his theory needs

to explain: how does the brain move from being merely a piece of matter in the world, extending the organism's ability to behave there in sophisticated ways, to a piece of matter that contains the world—or at least has the sense that it does?

The fact that Kurzweil ignores or even denies the great mystery of consciousness may help explain why his theory has yet to create a mind. In truth, despite the revelatory suggestion of the book's title, his theory is only a minor variation on ideas that date back decades, to when Kurzweil used them to build text-recognition systems. And while these techniques have produced many remarkable results in specialized artificial-intelligence tasks, they have yet to create generalized intelligence or creativity, much less sentience or first-person awareness.

Perhaps owing to this failure, Kurzweil spends much of the book suggesting that the features of consciousness he cannot explain—the qualities of the senses and the rest of our felt life and their role in deliberate thought and action—are mostly irrelevant to human cognition. Of course, Kurzweil is only the latest in a long line of theorists whose attempts to describe and replicate human cognition have sidelined the role of first-person awareness, subjective motivations, willful action, creativity, and other aspects of how we actually experience our lives and our decisions.

Yet the kicker is that Kurzweil's ultimate goal is to apply his theory not simply to creating intelligent machines but to our own minds, bringing them within the purview of computer engineers. The very world of feeling and experience that Kurzweil suggests has little relevance to understanding why we humans are the way we are is the same world he promises to deliver to us in ways faster, deeper, stronger, more vibrant, and more intense and mind-blowing than we can possibly imagine. In a series of books, lectures, and websites that have formed a sort of global Kurzweil brand, he has spelled out his vision of a future in which advances in biotechnology expand our lifespans indefinitely while neural implants enhance our cognitive abilities and gradually replace our meat-based brains.

With computers manipulating our neurons, he argues, we can experience anything we imagine. For instance, Kurzweil writes in his 2005 book *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* of the possibilities of virtual sex, in which you could download a program to instruct "nanobots in and around your nervous system [to] generate the appropriate signals for all of your senses: visual, auditory, tactile of course, even olfactory," stimulating your nervous system into feeling a complete sensory experience as if you were having sex with your favorite celebrity or any other object of your desire. What's love got to do with it?

Perhaps because Kurzweil sees fantasies like these as the greatest objects of our aspiration, it is not surprising to find in *How to Create a Mind* that his descriptions of the human nature he seeks to perfect seem so passionless and dreary. Despite paying lip service to artistic depictions of love and other elevated experiences, he refers to attraction as a "program," says that love "exists to meet the [evolutionary] needs of the neocortex," and explains the accompanying experiences of euphoria and yearning as "account[ed] for" by "high levels of dopamine and norepinephrine." His descriptions of creativity and spirituality are even less inspiriting than this.

This very paltriness is the real secret of Kurzweil's theory, which promises to create a mind without really having to describe what it is like to have one. Perhaps the most important feature of human thought missing from Kurzweil's theory is language. Describing it as but a useful "invention," he gives no account of language's distinctive role in human cognition—not simply in communicating our experiences and perceptions but in fundamentally shaping them, even constituting them.

Rather than flowing from some grand reflection about human nature, Kurzweil's project begins from a conception of that nature whittled down to near nothing. Even for poets, words are always finally inadequate to our depths. Yet engineers whose views of human nature are the shallowest have anointed themselves as designers of the next stage in human evolution.

How does the brain move from being merely a piece of matter in the world to a being a piece of matter that contains the world?

All of this might amount to nothing were it not for the fact that Kurzweil cannot be dismissed as a crank. Building on his previous AI innovations, he has a large audience for his prophecies, including prominent figures in industry and academia. In the end, these followers of "transhumanism" might just figure out how to pull off some of their goals. What some critics fear about this effort by Kurzweil and others to reengineer our bodies and minds is that, plagued by unintended consequences, the results could turn out quite other than predicted. Indeed—but should we be any more comforted by the possibility that the post-human nature they create might turn out just as they describe it? ■

Ari N. Schulman is a senior editor of The New Atlantis.

Spain's Leftist Civil War

by PAUL GOTTFRIED

The Spanish Civil War, Stanley Payne, Cambridge, 268 pages

Stanley Payne's study of the Spanish Civil War and the events leading up to that cataclysm is the latest work by one of America's premier historians of Europe. A longtime professor at the University of Wisconsin, Payne has distinguished himself for decades as the dean of 20th-century Spanish history and as a dispassionate analyst of interwar fascist movements. Payne incorporates into his fact-packed monographs careful, balanced research—and unlike most academic historians, he approximates Herbert Butterfield's view of what a historian should be, a practitioner of a craft that aims at objectivity.

For all these reasons, Payne's new study of what the left considers a classic confrontation of good against evil will not sit well with the academic establishment. Payne does not view the Socialists or their Anarchist and Communist allies during the Spanish Civil War as admirable or more "democratic" than the Nationalist coalition—including monarchists and the Catholic right—on the other side. He shows that from the time the Spanish Republic was proclaimed in 1931 until the coup of July 1936, which precipitated the civil war that lasted almost three years, the Spanish left was knee-deep in conspiracies against the country's constitutional government. In 1932 and 1933, the Socialist General Confederation of Labor (GCT) attempted three abortive uprisings against a leftist government in which their own party was a participant. Payne argues that the Spanish left was not only destructively impetuous but hopelessly divided: its parties not only fought with each other but were often engaged in factional strife with their own ranks.

On the eve of the Nationalist insurgency, the Worker Party of Marxist Unification (POUM)—which Payne describes as a "hyperrevolutionary" party of the left, and which George Orwell joined during his adventures as a Republican volunteer—was trying to overthrow Spain's leftist government, presumably to replace it with a more radical dictatorship. Payne emphasizes that the Spanish left was far more extreme than any other European left of the period. This he ascribes not to the "backwardness" of Spain but to the political instability of a rapidly modernizing country that had no strong tradition of parliamentary compromise. Even more important, Spain was cursed with Europe's largest anarcho-syndicalist organization, a political faction that happily killed and pillaged—far more than did the relatively phlegmatic Muscovite Communists in the Partido Comunista de España, a subject Payne has discussed in depth in a separate work.

One might question in what sense the Republicans represented the "legitimate" regime, which the "fascists" overthrew. From the time the Spanish left took power in 1931—losing control in 1934 but then regaining it in February 1936—it persecuted the Catholic Church, permitted and even abetted the seizure of ecclesiastic and other non-state-owned property, and for several months before the military uprising did nothing significant to prevent armed violence and the killing of parliamentary opponents. The Assault Guard, to which the leftist government conceded constabulary power after its victory in 1936, murdered among many others Jose Calvo Sotelo, the leader of the monarchist party, and narrowly failed to kill Jose Maria Gil Robles, the head of the Spanish Catholic Confederation of Autonomous Rightists (CEDA), the largest bloc within the right-of-center National Front.

In February of that year the NF had lost in a very close, widely disputed election. The winning side did nothing to stop the well-organized assassinations of opposition leaders and what turned rapidly into the mass murder of Catholic clergy. It was not General Franco and his fellow insurgents who overthrew a functioning constitutional regime; the Republican side and its president, Manuel Azana, brought about the upheaval even before the military stepped in.

Payne does not evince any sympathy for the man who became the Nationalists' commander in chief, the pudgy and far from charismatic Francisco Franco. Although good at husbanding resources in the zones under his control, and a deft politician who ended up absorbing his quasi-fascist Falangist supporters into a coalition that removed their effective influence (except as window dressing for his regime), Franco nonetheless is shown to have been severely deficient as a commander and as a unifier after the struggle. He dithered for years before cutting off Catalonia from the rest of Spain and before taking Barcelona and finally marching on Madrid. His strategic ineptitude only served Stalin and Hitler—Stalin tried to use the confusion in the Republican camp to take charge of the Spanish left, and Hitler hoped to see the war prolonged to provide diversion while he annexed Central and Eastern Europe. Then, at the end of the war, Franco supported the execution of at least 28,000 of his one-time armed enemies. This brought the total of those executed by the Nationalists somewhat above the staggering number butchered by the other side.

Payne puts Franco's actions after the war in a stark light; clearly he does not follow Michael Burleigh, Brian Crozier, and other historians who depict Franco as an able leader in difficult times. This, however, makes Payne's case against the Republican side all the more damning.

The Republican orgy of murders came mostly at the beginning of the struggle and involved the torture and murder of about 7,000 Catholic clergy, as well as the wholesale desecration and dynamiting of churches. Had the Republicans won, it is likely this slaughter would have continued, albeit in a less systematic fashion than the way in which the Nationalists disposed of their enemies. The Republicans felt an implacable hatred for the Church, the ferocity of which Payne never hides. Even in those territories belonging to their Basque separatist allies—who were anti-Nationalist but devoutly Catholic—Republicans went around killing clergy and destroying churches.

This, as Payne stresses, had no rational basis whatever. By 1936 the Church had been separated from the state, and religious freedom seemed firmly established. At the beginning of the war, Franco and his fellow insurgent leaders were quite willing to accept this. And the Nationalist side was not without its own form of multiculturalism: Franco landed in Spain with a large Muslim force he raised in Spanish Morocco, and as many as 80,000 Muslim volunteers—constituting 7 percent of his army—fought in the Nationalist ranks. Only after the Republicans unleashed their violence did it become useful for the Nationalists to present themselves as champions of Spain's Catholic past. Before that, the military leaders of the uprising had no interest in dumping the Republic or waging a Catholic crusade.

Payne also correctly observes that the Spanish civil war, far from being the "dress rehearsal for World War II" that it has become in standard textbooks, had little effect on the European-wide conflict. Mussolini supported the Nationalist side (while Nazi Germany sent far more limited aid to Franco), and the Soviets sent massive arms shipments and troops to the Republicans. Churchill, initially supportive of Franco, later leaned toward the Republican side because of his fear that a Nationalist victory would give Hitler access to Spanish ports. But Franco stayed out of World War II, except in a limited, very calculated way.

In 1941, he permitted volunteers to form the Blue Division, a military cadre that aided the German "struggle against Bolshevism." Nonetheless, these anti-Communist volunteers, who eventually numbered as many as 50,000, were prohibited from fighting against Hitler's Western adversaries. In 1943, Franco tried to withdraw the volunteers, with only some success, and began to display benevolent neutrality toward the U.S. and England. Despite pressure from Hitler, he would not allow the Germans to occupy Spanish territory for military purposes and was adamantly opposed to having the Wehrmacht stationed in Spanish Morocco as a base of operations against the Allies in North Africa. Hitler's observation was correct: trying to negotiate with the Spanish Caudillo—the title Franco took for himself—was like "having one's teeth pulled." In the latter part of the war, Franco and his ambassadors also granted Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews in Greece and other areas under German control, the effect of which was to save those being targeted by Hitler from deportation and death.

One might cavil with Payne on a few minor points. The Polish presidential dictatorship established under General Josef Pilsudski in 1926 was not, as Payne suggests, a "nationalist insurrection with a rightist character." Pilsudski was a centrist in Polish politics. His most notable opponent was the head of the expansionist-minded, anti-Semitic and anti-German National Democrats, Roman Dmowski. The French Radical Republicans, pace Payne, were not moderate anti-clericals. Although not murderously violent like the Spanish left in the 1930s, the French anti-Catholics got their turn to be nasty after the Dreyfus Affair, when they took over the government. During the preceding three decades, the anti-clerical Radical Republicans had to restrain themselves, while dealing with an assortment of monarchists, clericalists, and the Republican right in the French Assembly. But once totally in power, the French anti-Catholic left expelled religious orders, seized church property, imposed a thoroughly laicized public educational system, and purged churchgoers from the officer corps.

Payne's new study of what the left considers a classic confrontation of good against evil will not sit well with the academic establishment.

Finally, one might question Payne's tributes to "liberal democracy" as a regime that exalts lawfulness and tolerance. A look at the Spanish government since the 1980s, with its multicultural Socialist administrations, might well belie this view. Liberal democracy is far from the gold standard for good government in all times and places; it may sometimes be a slippery slope leading to the politics of envy and enforced political correctness. One may be allowed to contrast the last 20 years of the Franco government, with its economic growth and relaxation of censorship, with the wave of political correctness and Socialist mismanagement that has befallen liberal democratic Spain since then. ■

Paul Gottfried is the author of Leo Strauss and the Conservative Movement in America.

Taki

Escape from the EU

Oh, to be in England! The weather is bad, the cities are crowded with bearded Pakistanis, and the Human Rights Act of 2007 shields foreign criminals under the dubious right to family life. All a foreign criminal in Britain has to do once he's convicted and about to be deported is get a British girlfriend. I kid you not. An army of ambulance-chasing lawyers makes sure the criminals know their rights.

So, to be or not to be in the European Union, that is the question for most British today. I decided to move from London, where I lived for close to 40 years, once the place was overrun by EU rules that remain wedded to an unworkable idea that one size fits all. The unelected bureaucrats of Brussels envision a Franco-German empire that stretches from Seville to Sylt and from Sligo to Salzburg, a 230-million bloc run by these same unelected boobies, with high taxes and strict censorship of free speech.

These boobies are now pushing further with flagrant attacks on press freedom, giving draconian powers to control the media and even sack journalists. What Uncle Joe Stalin managed to do in the Soviet Union generations ago, the Brussels gang is about to impose on Europeans, with "media councils" in the place of the dreaded Cheka. These "independent" so-called councils would be monitored by the European Commission, which as yet does not have the right of the midnight knock on our doors.

Prime Minister David Cameron recently gave a speech that assuaged British fears concerning the power play by Brussels. It was bold and strong, articulating the anxieties of a people who have enjoyed freedom for the last 800 years. He pledged a referendum by 2017, if he is re-elected in 2015. This is a very big if. And it involves the kind of deceptive rhetoric that has become so depressingly familiar in the European debate. The Brits joined the EU under a deceitfully worded referendum which led the people to believe they were joining a free-trade bloc. Ever since, there has been a stream of directives from a sclerotic Brussels bureaucracy paralyzing free enterprise and firms' ability to compete with a booming wider world. Brussels is bloated, monstrously costly, ineffectual, and totally corrupt.

So what are the British people to do? Europe lurches from one crisis to the next, first Greece, then Spain, followed by Portugal, and now Italy. The Germans are pouring vast loans into a bottomless pit, with Chancellor Angela Merkel exposing her Eastern European upbringing's idea that the state and its servants know best. Many observers think that sooner or later the German people will revolt against the crazy price they are paying for keeping the eurozone afloat. I'm not so sure.

The European dream is chiseled in stone in most northern European minds, and while the southern Europeans refuse to blame themselves for the state of their finances—they blame the Germans for the austerity measures they've imposed—the Brussels machine keeps rolling along, making it almost impossible to leave the common currency without leaving Europe altogether.

Britain, unlike small economies like those of Greece and Portugal, could easily go at it without Brussels. If I had ten dollars for every time I've heard responsible people say that the eurozone is doomed, I could buy a new yacht. And some of those have been members of Parliament and even ministers. Yet nothing is happening. As my friend Charles Moore wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, "the biggest error of European history has been the idea that some new order—a Holy Roman Empire, a Napoleonic system, a Reich, a United States of Europe—can dissolve the dangerous rivalries of Europeans." Hear, hear!

I've said it before and will say it to my dying day, a Greek is as different from a Swede in culture and way of thinking as it is possible to be. A Texan has more in common with a Connecticut Yankee than a German has with his French neighbor. And when it comes to the Brits, fuggedaboutit. Yet this one-size-fits-all alchemy is being cooked by the tin pot crooks in Brussels, who vote themselves extraordinary salaries. The same old bunch of politicians have been in power since the war, with a sheep-like electorate voting them as if in a trance. My hope is the Brits will say no one day, but if a were a gambler, which I am, my money is on the crooks in Brussels. There is no Maggie Thatcher to save the country. ■

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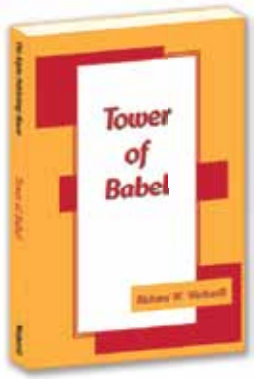

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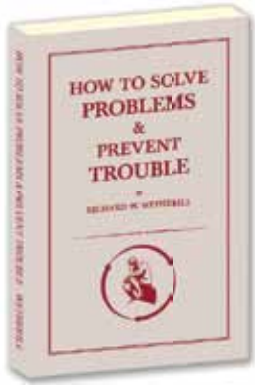

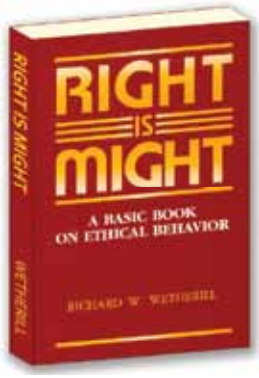

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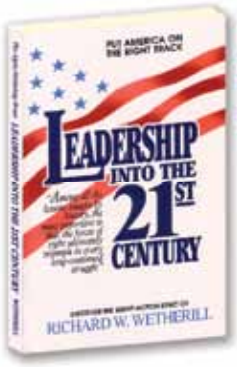

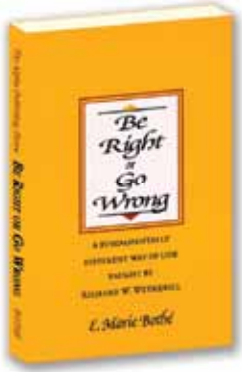

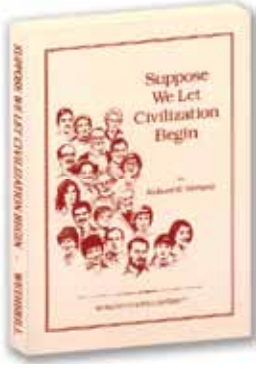

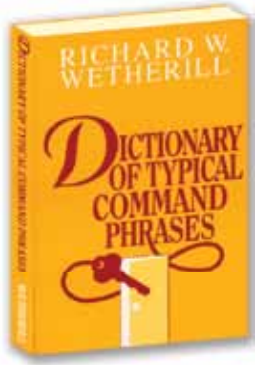

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