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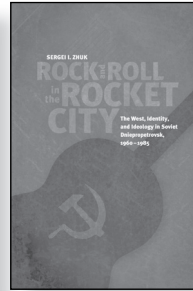
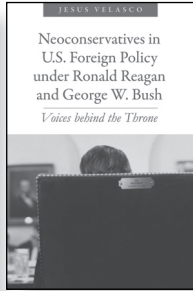
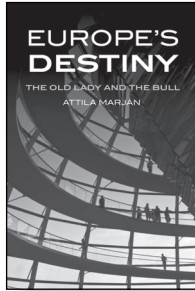
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28. Hobbes and the Social Machine
29. Locke's Newtonian Science of the Mind
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31. Hume and the Pursuit of Happiness
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47. William James's Pragmatism
48. Wittgenstein and the Discursive Turn
49. Alan Turing in the Forest of Wisdom
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52. Philosophy of Science—The Last Word?
53. Philosophy of Psychology and Related Confusions
54. Philosophy of Mind, If There Is One
55. What makes a Problem "Moral"?
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COVER STORY

**41 INSIDE ISRAEL**

Conflict often puts Israel at the world's center stage, but the country's inner life tends to go unexamined. In addition to the hostility of its neighbors, it is grappling with political gridlock and a changing population, even as it enjoys a vibrant democracy and overachieving economy.

**Israel Through Other Eyes |**

*By Galina Vromen*

**The Despair of Zion |** *By Walter Reich*

**Israel at 62 |** *By Yoram Peri*

**What Next for the Start-Up Nation? |**

*By Dan Senor and Saul Singer*

**16 The Rude Birth of Immigration Reform**

*By Katherine Benton-Cohen* | A century ago, an influential U.S. immigration commission undertook a policy overhaul whose mistakes are still with us.

**23 America: Land of Loners?**

*By Daniel Akst* | Americans have long prized self-reliance, but today that go-it-alone ethos is contributing to a serious friendship deficit.

**28 Turkey's Role Reversals**

*By Michael Thumann* | In Turkey, it's the secularists who often look backward, while pious Muslims are in the forefront of efforts to modernize the country.

**34 The Irish in Paris**

*By Max Byrd* | For centuries, Irish émigrés have found opportunity and empathy in a European capital not known for its kindness to strangers.

**ON THE COVER:** Photograph by Oded Balilty, design by Michelle Furman. Balilty's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph shows a Jewish settler struggling against Israeli security forces as they forcibly evacuate West Bank settlements in 2006.

*The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.*

# DEPARTMENTS

## 4 EDITOR'S COMMENT

## 5 LETTERS

## 8 AT THE CENTER

## 12 FINDINGS

---

### IN ESSENCE

OUR SURVEY OF NOTABLE ARTICLES FROM OTHER JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

#### 67 ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

In Defense of Capitalism, from *National Affairs*

Debt Karma, from *International Studies Quarterly*

#### 69 POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Tea Party's Short Sip, from *The New York Review of Books*

Judges for Sale, from *Harvard Law Review*

Political Generals, from *Parameters*

#### 71 FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Reaching Out to the Russians, from *Foreign Affairs*

Measuring Military Might, from *The Journal of Strategic Studies*

The Risks of Oil Independence, from *The Washington Quarterly*

#### 73 SOCIETY

Closing the Achievement Gap, from *The NBER Digest*

Toward a Post-Prison Society, from *The American Interest*

Anger Under Siege, from *The Hedgehog Review*

#### 76 PRESS & MEDIA

Localized Pain, from *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*

#### 77 RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Atheists Anonymous, from *Evolutionary Psychology*

Relax at Your Peril, from *First Things*

Modern Gods, from *The National Interest*

#### 80 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

I, Geminoid, from *IEEE Spectrum*

Cassava Rising, from *Scientific American*

Publish and Perish? from *Nature*

Off the Dolphin Deep End, from *Orion*

#### 83 ARTS & LETTERS

Chapter and Verse, from *New England Review*

The Art of Life, from *Isotope*

Michelangelo's Passion, from *Times Literary Supplement*

#### 86 OTHER NATIONS

Enterprising Apparatchiks, from *Demokratizatsiya*

Indonesia's Democracy Pie, from *Journal of Democracy*

Red, White, and Balkan, from *Virginia Quarterly Review*

---

### CURRENT BOOKS

#### 89 MADE IN AMERICA:

A Social History of American Culture and Character.

By Claude S. Fischer

*Reviewed by Daniel Walker Howe*

#### 92 MURIEL SPARK:

The Biography.

By Martin Stannard

*Reviewed by Michael Anderson*

#### 95 THE FLIGHT OF THE INTELLECTUALS.

By Paul Bertram

THE OTHER MUSLIMS:

Moderate and Secular.

Edited by Zeyno Baran

*Reviewed by Jay Tolson*

#### 99 THE OTHER WES MOORE:

One Name and Two Fates.

By Wes Moore

*Reviewed by Rich Benjamin*

#### 100 IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE:

Listening for Meaning in a World of Noise.

By George Prochnik

THE UNWANTED SOUND OF EVERYTHING WE WANT: A Book About Noise.

By Garret Keizer

*Reviewed by Megan Buskey*

#### 101 GERMANY:

In Wayward Pursuit of the Germans and Their History.

By Simon Winder

*Reviewed by Martin Walker*

#### 102 STIRRING THE POT:

A History of African Cuisine.

By James C. McCann

*Reviewed by Erica Bleeg*

#### 103 STRANGE DAYS INDEED:

The 1970s: The Golden

Age of Paranoia.

By Francis Wheen

*Reviewed by Michael Moynihan*

#### 105 BOOKS AS WEAPONS:

Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II.

By John B. Hench

*Reviewed by John Brown*

#### 106 SEEKING THE CURE:

A History of Medicine in America.

By Ira Rutkow

*Reviewed by Charles Barber*

#### 107 STUFF:

Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things.

By Randy O. Frost and

Gail Steketee

*Reviewed by Darcy Courteau*

#### 108 THE GREAT OOM:

The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America.

By Robert Love

*Reviewed by Winifred Gallagher*

#### 110 STRANGER FROM ABROAD:

Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Friendship and Forgiveness.

By Daniel Maier-Katkin

*Reviewed by Michelle Sieff*

---

#### 112 PORTRAIT

Sweating It Out

# EDITOR'S COMMENT

## No "Ands" About It

The conjunction *and* seems to be permanently affixed to Israel. Israel *and* the Palestinians, *and* the Arabs, *and* the United States. Now, in the wake of Israel's bloody clash in May with a Turkish aid flotilla trying to break the blockade of Gaza, there is Israel *and* Turkey. Such conjoining is almost unavoidable in regard to a country that is surrounded by hostile neighbors and can be crossed, at its narrowest point, in less time than it takes many Americans to get to work. But in this issue of the *WQ*, we dispense with the conjunction, insofar as it is possible, and look at Israel itself.

There is a lot to see. Yoram Peri's political portrait reveals an Israel that is blessed with extraordinary democratic vigor and cursed with paralyzing political gridlock. Dan Senor and Saul Singer, authors of the bestseller *Start-Up Nation*, show how Israel has capitalized on adversity to transform itself into a global hub of technological innovation. Walter Reich and Galina Vromen trace Israeli responses to the Arabs beyond Israel's borders—and to those within them.

I wish I could say that it was Delphic insight that led us to include in the same issue Michael Thumann's article on the rise of Turkey's Justice and Development Party and its pious Muslim supporters, but it is a subject we have long thought it important to explore. For almost a decade, Turkey has been in the midst of one of the world's most unusual and important transformations, as its devoutly secularist elite has given ground to a devoutly Islamic one that seems bent on modernizing and democratizing the country, even as it tries to win a bigger leadership role for Turkey in the Islamic world. Thumann provides an invaluable foundation for understanding what is certain to be one of the big stories to watch in the years ahead.

—STEVEN LAGERFELD



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# LETTERS

## ENTREPRENEURS IN PERIL?

ROBERT E. LITAN AND CARL Schramm correctly highlight the power of the government in shaping the business climate for start-ups [“An Entrepreneurial Recovery,” Spring ’10]. Although the government is often seen as the primary engine of economic development, significant growth is virtually always driven by the private sector (public works projects notwithstanding). Government infrastructure investments, tax breaks, and marketing campaigns are only as successful as the corporate formations or expansions they inspire.

The private sector simply won’t respond to stimuli that aren’t aligned with its needs. An entrepreneur I know in New York City once met an economic development official who excitedly touted a program that assisted firms with purchasing local real estate. The entrepreneur was perplexed. “What on earth made him think that I needed that kind of help?” he later asked me. All too often, economic development officials enact policies that bear little relation to entrepreneurs’ needs or focus on developing sectors that may be popular elsewhere but are not a good fit for their localities. After all, how many regions can realistically become biotech hotbeds?

Instead of imposing questionable solutions, intelligent economic devel-

opment policy focuses on creating opportunities across a variety of sectors. With low regulatory barriers and ample venture support, cities and regions can foster innovation and growth. The emergence of publicly supported CAPCOs (local venture-capital funds) and business plan competitions is a particularly promising trend that supports these aims.

Here in Washington, D.C., good economic development policy could foster a local economy full of companies

specializing in green energy services, technology, and tourism—or maybe something else entirely. An enlightened public sector will not presume its own wisdom, but, rather, strive for an environment in which entrepreneurs will innovate, invest, and surprise.

### David Zipper

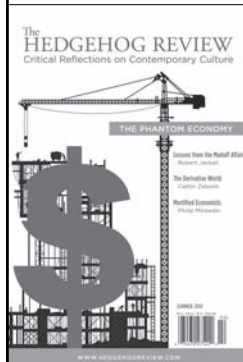
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MARGARET B. W. GRAHAM, CARL Schramm, and Robert E. Litan argue in the Spring ’10 issue that entrepreneur-

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ship has played a critical role in American economic success for centuries [“Schumpeter’s Children” and “An Entrepreneurial Recovery”]. Financial innovation has been a particularly successful subset of American entrepreneurship.

The current financial crisis suggests, however, that this form of entrepreneurship must not be embraced uncritically. The financial situation has been poisoned by years of neglect, dozens of bad decisions, and a cozy relationship between Washington and Wall Street. The recent wave of financial innovations serves not to provide financing to entrepreneurial firms, but to enrich intermediaries. Both articles cite the lack of start-up capital for young enterprises as a reason for the dearth of companies going public.

Acknowledging the present state of affairs, the writers formulate drastically different interpretations about America’s prospects. While both articles argue for “changing the rules,” Schramm and Litan want to change the rules that govern the formation of new firms, while Graham wants to change the way that such firms are financed. Without addressing the financial crisis, however, money will not flow to the new firms that create the innovations needed to fuel growth. Unless we change the incentive structure, “the best and the brightest” will continue to make the economy weaker, not stronger.

**Zoltan J. Acs**

*Director, Center for Entrepreneurship and  
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## FORECASTING CHINA’S FUTURE

INSPIRED BY HERNANDO DE SOTO’S *The Other Path* (1986), Yasheng Huang sees two different paths of development for China: one led by big capitalist corporations in metropolitan areas, and the other initiated by grassroots entrepreneurs throughout the countryside [“China’s Other Path,” Spring ’10]. He calls for China’s leadership to revive the rural entrepreneurship that enjoyed lively growth in the 1980s, because such a resurgence would boost consumption by a vast population, which in turn would correct the trade imbalance with the United States.

It helps to keep in mind the following conditions under which entrepreneurship boomed: (1) peasants, especially in poor provinces, had a very strong desire to have better material lives; (2) there were widespread shortages of even the most basic materials; (3) resources and labor were cheap and largely unprotected; (4) local politicians followed separate policies and the governance structure was in transition. It’s important to remember that grassroots entrepreneurship also grew in urban areas in the ’80s, and that after Deng Xiaoping’s South China tour in 1992, entrepreneurship in China experienced another heyday, with many much larger firms being consolidated and established.

China’s leaders know better than anybody else that local entrepreneurship is one solution to the “three *nong* problem” of agriculture, rural areas, and peasants. Rural entrepreneurship in China in the ’80s followed a productive path, but we need to think carefully about whether it is

exactly the path that the nation should follow now.

**Keming Yang**

*Lecturer in Sociology  
University of Durham  
Durham, United Kingdom*

YASHENG HUANG IS CORRECT THAT policymakers and foreign analysts should turn their attention to the nature and distribution of China’s economic growth in order to resolve its external imbalances. But returning to an older model of development would not be sufficient to substantively affect the trade balance, nor is it an entirely plausible possibility under current conditions. Nonetheless, the policy reorientation necessary to reinvigorate the rural economy is closely related to the one required to tackle China’s structural problems.

There is no question that household consumption in China must rise substantially in order to close the savings-investment gap that drives the trade surplus. Rural households consume so much less than urban ones (roughly one-fourth) that rural incomes would have to quadruple and consumption rates would have to jump significantly to make a major dent in the trade balance. Rural incomes and social services should be a major policy priority, but a boost in rural consumption will not ease Sino-American economic tensions.

With respect to repeating China’s early economic miracle for rural households and township and village enterprises, Huang is half right. Market distortions, particularly in the financial sector, as well as industry preferences for high-tech, high-value projects hinder small-scale entrepreneurship and promote over-investment at the



expense of consumption. Moreover, an insufficient social safety net combined with limited access to credit and insurance encourages excessive saving. Addressing these problems would go a long way toward improving the fortunes of small rural and urban enterprises, not to mention living standards.

The poverty-reducing boom of the 1980s cannot easily be repeated in the 2010s. In 1978, China's Communist Party essentially stopped standing in the way of market forces, unleashing a tidal wave of pent-up potential. Yet China's openness to the outside world and 30 years of entrepreneurship have eaten up many of the easier opportunities of the '80s. The main task for China's economic policymakers today is fundamentally different: They must actively foster a more hospitable environment for the types of businesses that generate greater returns to laborers, in the service sector in particular, and middle-class entrepreneurs. China's rural population will benefit, but the real progress in reorienting the economy will be made in the cities.

**Oliver Melton**

*Visiting Researcher*

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## HAS THE LOST CAUSE LOST?

CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN'S ARTICLE ["America's Changeable Civil War," Spring '10] offers a helpful overview of the influence that the Lost Cause and the broader trend of national reconciliation exercised on the nation's collective memory through the civil rights movement. Few will deny that the tendency to ignore the role of slavery and

emancipation as crucial aspects of Civil War history and public remembrance were exposed as Americans were confronted with images of bus boycotts, freedom rides, and marches. While the nation confronted its "most ignominious legacy" through legislation, it did not significantly alter the nation's Civil War memory. However, much has changed over the past 40 years, which makes me hesitant to accept Clausen's assumption that "what was actually won and lost [in the Civil War] is less settled than you might expect after 150 years."

The election of President Barack Obama has opened up numerous opportunities to discuss the history and legacy of slavery and race and our understanding of the Civil War specifically. In 2009 the president was petitioned to discontinue sending a wreath



to the Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery—a monument that glorifies the Lost Cause with images of "loyal slaves" and an emphasis on states' rights. Rather than incite further controversy, Obama chose to send an additional wreath to the African American Civil War Memorial, which celebrates the history of the United States Colored Troops. The states that have organized Civil War sesquicentennial commissions are choosing to emphasize the "emancipationist legacy" of the Civil War. Virginia, for example, will hold [Continued on page 10]



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# AT THE CENTER

## FIGHTING THE LONGER WAR

FOUR OR FIVE ONE-YEAR DEPLOYMENTS TO war zones have become the new normal for members of the U.S. Army. And their families have had to adjust to parents or spouses who are absent or are psychologically or physically transformed by the experience of combat. What should the Army do? In late April, the Woodrow Wilson Center's United States Studies program hosted a one-day conference devoted to such questions: "They Also Serve: Military Families and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Thanks to advances in medicine and emergency transport, Army fatalities have been fewer in Iraq and Afghanistan than in past wars of comparable duration, said Brigadier General Loree K. Sutton, director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. Still, the difficulties facing the more than 20,000 soldiers who have been wounded in the two wars can be tremendous, and many veterans face brutal psychological struggles even if they return home physically intact. The chances of a noncommissioned officer experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder increase with every deployment, with 12 percent exhibiting signs of PTSD after one tour, and 27 percent after three.

Family members naturally become the primary caretakers of soldiers who are healing from the wounds of war. Yet they may have trouble balancing the needs of the wounded with work, child-care commitments, and their own psychological turmoil. Audience member Kristy Kaufmann, a blonde, ponytailed Army wife of nine years, pointed out that while the Army can teach its recruits coping mechanisms, it has no comparable way to systematically reach their spouses and families. "One of my biggest concerns is that the military has relied on family members to take care of other family members, which will work—for one or two years of the war," she said. Now, "we're tired."

Jennifer Mittelstadt, a historian at Pennsylvania State University who studied military welfare as a

2008–09 Woodrow Wilson Center fellow, confirmed Kaufmann's impression, arguing that the catch phrase "The Army takes care of its own" is historically inaccurate when applied to military families. Since 1991, the Army has decreased the family-oriented benefits and social services it began to expand in the 1980s as it built an all-volunteer force. Now, Mittelstadt said, citing an Army video clip from 2007 celebrating the resilience of military families, the message is that "families are responsible for their own strength."

What feelings should family members expect to find in their returned warriors? Nancy Sherman, a psychoanalyst who is also a professor of philosophy at Georgetown University, said veterans experience powerful, sometimes contradictory, emotions: pride at having served their country, anxiety about their security, and shame, guilt, or depression at having witnessed the deaths of civilians or fellow soldiers. In her book *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers*, which she began while a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center during the 2006–07 academic year, Sherman writes that the "suck it up" mentality encouraged by the Army provides few opportunities for soldiers to emotionally process the traumas and moral conflicts encountered in zones of conflict.

Supporting soldiers returning from war "is not a private burden. It's a public, national burden," Sherman said. Her remark proved prescient. On May 5, President Barack Obama signed into law the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. Among the initiatives expanded or established by the act are robust mental health services for veterans, stipends and housing allowances for caregivers of injured warriors, and a pilot child-care program benefiting parents who are undergoing intensive medical treatment. At the signing ceremony, President Obama invoked the words of Sarah Wade, the wife of a soldier who sustained serious injuries in Iraq in 2004: "Just like he needed a team in the military to accomplish the mission, he needs a team at home in the longer war."

Lee H. Hamilton, *Director*

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THE WILSON CENTER is the nation's living memorial to Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States from 1913 to 1921. It is located at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-3027. Created by law in 1968, the Center is Washington's only independent, wide-ranging institute for advanced study where vital cultural issues and their deep historical background are explored through research and dialogue. Visit the Center at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org>.

## A VISIT WITH BERNANKE

THE WOODROW WILSON CENTER usually doesn't cause much of a stir on Wall Street, but on June 7 it had the full attention of the financial world. Following a dinner for the Center's Board of Trustees, the Wilson Council, and WilsonAlliances, famed ABC newsmen Sam Donaldson sat down with one of Washington's most powerful players, Ben Bernanke, the chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, for an hour-long colloquy that quickly made headlines on news wires and Web sites.

Donaldson, who is also the president of the Wilson Council, opened with the question that was on everyone's mind: After the most bruising economic stretch since the Great Depression, is the recovery so fragile that the U.S. economy could fall victim to a double-dip recession?

Bernanke answered with a tentative no. "The news is pretty good," he said, pointing out that spending by consumers and the private sector has risen at a steady clip in recent months. But macroeconomic forecasting is like "looking through the entrails," and "nobody knows with any certainty," he added ruefully. Even if the economy continues on the road back to health, as Bernanke anticipates, the recovery "won't feel terrific because it's not going to be fast," particularly for the eight million Americans who have lost their jobs and continue to encounter problems securing full-time employment.

"Monetary policy takes a long



**Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke**

time to work," he explained. "We can't wait until unemployment is where we'd like it to be. We can't wait until inflation gets out of control before we begin the process of normalizing interest rates." Bernanke was characteristically mum about when the Fed would raise rates, but he did say that the decision is determined by looking at employment, inflation, and the financial markets "a year and a half down the road."

Bernanke stressed the importance of getting the federal budget deficit under control, though he acknowledged that "it's really not plausible or possible for us to balance our federal budget this year or next year." He declined to say whether a tax hike or a cut in entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare would be part of the solution if a deficit reduction plan were developed. "I'm not going to make Congress's decision for them," he said, adding jokingly, "They wouldn't pay attention to me anyway."

[Continued from page 7] a daylong symposium in September on slavery and emancipation.

Finally, the recent controversy surrounding Virginia governor Robert McDonnell's Confederate History Month proclamation in April is arguably the clearest indication that we may be witnessing a shift in our collective memory of the war and its legacy. The debate and McDonnell's eventual revision suggest that a commemoration of Confederate history without any mention of slavery is now seen as a gross distortion of the past. While it is too early to tell, the interpretation of the war that the public accepts five years hence may be unrecognizable to Edward A. Pollard and other Confederate apologists.

**Kevin M. Levin**

*History Department Chair*

*St. Anne's-Belfield School*

*Author, Civil War Memory blog*

*(<http://cwmemory.com>)*

*Charlottesville, Va.*

CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN'S ARTICLE IS timely, given the approaching sesquicentennial. But Clausen could not have known when his piece went to press that Virginia's newly elected governor, Robert McDonnell, would run into a history buzz saw when he proclaimed Confederate History Month in April without mentioning slavery—thus illustrating Clausen's point that some Americans continue to suffer from historical amnesia about the causes of the Civil War.

While Clausen's thoughts on historical interpretation are generally well taken, I was quite disappointed that he did not emphasize the centrality of Abraham Lincoln in the debate over the causes of the Civil

War. Clausen does write that it was the 1860 election of an antislavery party to the White House that triggered secession, but he fails to explain the critical role played by Lincoln in both transforming the war and preventing any negotiated end to it. After all, Lincoln turned the Civil War from a conflict about the Union into a struggle over freedom. While Southerners continued to look to the Constitution as the source of their rights (and justification for their actions), it was Lincoln who understood that the true foundation of the United States was the Declaration of Independence and its promise of equality for all men. It was Lincoln, using his powers as president and commander in chief, who altered history by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. And it was Lincoln who, after transforming the war into a struggle for freedom, refused to entertain any suggestions that the war be ended by negotiation—even though he knew that the Peace Democrats might well defeat him in his bid for reelection in 1864.

Clausen also should have explained that while the majority of white Americans ultimately accepted the wisdom of ending slavery, they did not agree—whether they lived in the North or the South—that emancipation somehow meant African Americans were “equal” to whites, much less that blacks should have political power. Again, it was Lincoln who took the radical step of suggesting that the right to vote be given to some of the newly freed slaves—because he understood that if newly emancipated African Americans were to have any meaningful life in America, they had to have political

power to protect their freedom.

**Fred L. Borch III**

*Regimental Historian and Archivist*

*The Judge Advocate General's Corps*

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**Editor's Note:** You can read Christopher Clausen's comment on the Confederate History Month controversy at [http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/blog/index.cfm/From\\_the\\_Editors/](http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/blog/index.cfm/From_the_Editors/), the WQ's new blog.

## HAIL TO THE COURTS

JAMES GRANT HIGHLIGHTS WHAT he sees as the undemocratic character of judicial review, and he notes with irony that the doctrine may be the United States' most widely replicated constitutional feature [“The Rise of Juristocracy,” Spring '10]. I would temper Grant's premise that judicial review is a priori undemocratic, since—as New York University professor Ran Hirschl has argued—the particulars of historical and social context make a difference. *Lochner v. New York* (1905) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) are not the same politically. Modern judicial review in the United States is predicated on the recognition that citizens are not always protected by the political majority. In the civil rights era, for instance, a variety of impediments to voting left African Americans outside the electoral process. The line between law and politics in the United States is itself complicated by the history of rights struggles.

Cases involving economic decisions of the legislature may or may not be in a different category from cases in which individuals' civil rights are at stake. Democracy is best served not by courts

avoiding review functions altogether, but rather by courts avoiding interference with congressional statutes that take a broad societal approach to common interests such as health care. Opponents of the recent legislation hope the Supreme Court will set the act aside. Deference to the legislature is appropriate in cases such as this, in which the legislature itself has demonstrably sought to balance and reconcile broad economic claims and needs.

In some instances, some citizens can receive protection only from the courts. In those cases, judicial review plays a noble role.

**Alfred C. Aman**

*Roscoe C. O'Byrne Professor of Law  
Mauer School of Law  
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## DON'T FORGET CIVIL SOCIETY

ANDREW CURRY MAKES SOME ASTUTE observations in his article on Polish foreign aid ["Poland's New Ambitions," Spring 2010], but the role of Polish nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in democracy assistance deserves more attention.

Curry shows how important the Solidarity movement was in establishing democracy in Poland, but he overlooks the fact that many dissidents active in the Solidarity movement went on to form NGOs. These organizations have been actively engaged in democracy assistance in other post-communist countries, in part because of the encouragement of Western donors and individuals. Having been recipients of aid in the past, Polish NGOs have learned a lot from Western donors, including how to

avoid common mistakes in delivering assistance, and are in a good position to offer strong models for the successful transformation of local government, civic education, and the press. Western donors working on democracy promotion in other parts of the former Eastern bloc, such as America's National Endowment for Democracy, now regularly seek out Polish partners.

Moreover, it was NGO activists who successfully lobbied the government to establish the Polish foreign ministry's aid program. These activists believed that aid from Polish sources would make Poland a more credible democracy promoter.

Polish NGOs regularly receive funds from the foreign ministry to carry out democracy assistance projects, and they have been successful

because they are careful to gain an understanding of the domestic context in which they operate, and to engage local partners on the ground. This form of cooperation contrasts strongly with the "Marriott Brigade" model used by Western donors in the early 1990s, when international aid representatives conducted training sessions at a local hotel without setting foot on the streets of Warsaw. Curry mentions some of the key projects financed by the Polish government, but Polish NGOs are engaged in many more activities, an increasing number of which are financed with funds raised from sources that recognize the Polish third sector's unique strengths.

**Paulina M. Pospieszna**

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Bad Friedrichshall, Germany*

If Woodrow Wilson were alive today,  
he'd be blogging for the *WQ*.

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# FINDINGS

BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

## But Is It Art?

### *Nameless brands*

“Painters make paintings,” the philosopher Richard Wollheim observed, “but it takes a representative of the art world to make a work of art.” Once a year, California’s Santa Monica Museum of Art sells paintings denuded of their art-world imprimatur. You buy an eight-by-ten-inch work for \$300. Only after paying do you find out the name of the artist. Only then do you know if you’ve bought Art.

For the museum’s sixth “Incognito” fundraiser, on May 1, nearly 500 artists donated a total of 629 paintings, photographs, sketches, and other works. When signing their art, they put their signatures out of view, and many of them changed their styles for the occa-

sion. On its Web site, the museum advised, “Attendees—from sophisticated art supporters to first-time collectors—are encouraged to trust their instincts.”

Somewhere among the 629 works was an Ed Ruscha.

Ruscha’s painting *Burning Gas Station* sold for just under \$7 million in 2007, and *I Don’t Want No Retro Spective*, formerly owned by the actor Bud Cort, fetched nearly \$4 million in 2008. The Obamas have borrowed a Ruscha painting, *I Think I’ll . . .*, from the National Gallery of Art to hang in the White House residence.

“He’s considered one of the key artists of the second half of the 20th century,” Alexandra Schwartz, author of the new book *Ed Ruscha’s Los Angeles* (MIT Press), said in an interview. “He’s best known for his

works that deal with language—a lot of his paintings, drawings, and prints feature bits of slang, popular language. His career really achieved blue-chip status, as they say, within the last 10, 15 years, when his prices on the art market have gone up enormously. He’s kind of a cult figure. There’s a movie being made about him. He has done a lot of television. He’s friends with a lot of people in Hollywood who collect his work—Jack Nicholson, Warren Beatty, Lauren Hutton.”

“Some people say they can spot the artist here,” Miranda Carroll, the Santa Monica museum’s director of communications, said on the evening of the fundraiser. “But the Ed Ruscha?” She shook her head. “Never.” Ruscha hadn’t produced one of his easily recognizable, language-centered paintings. He’d done something different.

At seven o’clock, some 800 people raced into the museum. The first to reach each work had the chance to buy it by grabbing a tag hanging below. Many \$300 decisions were made in haste. Within half an hour, the crowd had thinned. Museum employees in gloves began removing pictures and slipping them into brown paper bags. The buyers stood outside, eating hors d’oeuvres and drinking margaritas, waiting to see whose works they had gotten.



The Race for the Ruscha

Although the anonymous art and the \$300 price may have been supremely democratic, not everything was leveled. General admission cost \$100, but for heftier donations—\$1,500 (“Benefactor”) or



Ed Ruscha's *Cup of Coffee* (2010)

\$5,000 (“Cognoscenti”)—you could have attended a champagne preview two days earlier and given the works a leisurely inspection. “It made an infinite difference,” said Jonathan Dayton, who, with his wife, Valerie Faris, directed the film *Little Miss Sunshine*. At the preview, Dayton chose a work and drew a map to help him find it again. “I had nightmares about this,” he said. “But I went straight for it, and I got it.”

Will Kopelman, a professional art adviser—“I create portfolios of marquee artwork for private and corporate clients”—also attended the preview, where he chose three works for his own collection and one for a gift. His top-tier ticket then put him and three guests in the initial group of people through the doors at the fundraiser. He and his friends arrived five hours early to get to the very front of the line. The first into the museum, Kopelman ran to the works he wanted and nabbed their tags. He got all four.

Kopelman paid and, an hour later, a member of the staff handed him his bags. He removed the pictures, turned each one over, then stopped and smiled. He held up a pencil drawing of a coffee mug and said, “I got the Ruscha.”

His instincts had served him well. “Ruscha has never done something iconic for this,” he said. “People look for certain telltale signs of his work, but he disguises it. I looked for something that was simple and in pencil. When I picked the coffee cup, I wasn’t positive it was his. It was just the best sketch in the room.” He would, he added, still enjoy the drawing if he’d been wrong about the creator. “But I wasn’t.”

As Kopelman showed his purchase to bystanders at the museum, many of them seemed to admire the back of the work no less than the front. It was, after all, the scrawled signature that made *Cup of Coffee*, as Ruscha had titled it, certifiable Art.

## Gospel-Size It!

### *Bad roll models*

As entrées have grown, so have waistlines. “It is common for restaurants to serve two to three times more than what is considered a standard serving size,” complains the Center for Science in the Public Interest. But the expansion of portion sizes may go back further than you think.

For the *International Journal of Obesity* (May), Brian Wansink and Craig S. Wansink examined 52 depictions of the Last Supper. They compared the sizes of bread loaves, main dishes, and plates to the aver-

age size of the heads in each painting. (They didn’t study wine because it didn’t appear in most of the works.) Between AD 1000 and 2000, they found bread grew by 23 percent, main dishes by 69 percent, and plates by 66 percent. The increase began slowly, then accelerated after 1500. There’s nothing new, it seems, about supersizing.

## Anchor Rancor

### *So that’s the way it was*

The most trusted man in America had little affection for his successor. When Dan Rather replaced him as anchor of *The CBS Evening News* in 1981, Walter Cronkite planned to appear in CBS documentaries and news specials. But his appearances soon dwindled. The network canceled the series *Walter Cronkite’s Universe* in its third season and made little use of him on the *Evening News*.

“Dan Rather and company shut me out,” Cronkite told historian Don Carleton, in an interview that appears in *Conversations With Cronkite* (University of Texas Press). Cronkite, who died in 2009, wished he had resigned from the network



No love lost: Walter Cronkite with Dan Rather at the 1981 announcement that Rather would succeed him at *The CBS Evening News*.

in protest, but he didn't. "Quite frankly, I was venal," he said. "They just bought me with a million dollars a year."

In 1986, Laurence Tisch took over CBS. "Tisch was making public statements about how he expected to return the news department to the great days of Murrow and Cronkite," the former anchor recalled. "Rather panicked. He came to see me, and we had a very interesting hour of his pleading that none of this was his fault, that he hadn't had anything to do with keeping me off the air. I felt that he was trying to get right with me because he thought I had Tisch's ear. . . . He pleaded what a great friend he'd always been of mine, what a great admirer he was of mine, and how he looked forward now that the air was being cleared [to] our working closely together. It was the biggest bunch of crap I ever heard." Rather, Cronkite added, "just reeks of insincerity."

## Comrade Colbert

*Humor, Soviet-style*

When it comes to comedy, Americans today are getting more and more like Soviets of a few decades ago, Dominic Boyer and Alexei Yurchak write in *Cultural Anthropology* (May). In the last years of the Soviet Union, many citizens embraced *stiob*, a deadpan, subversive type of parody. *Stiob* so closely mimicked what it was mocking that some people mistook it for the real thing.

In 1991, Sergei Kuryokhin gave a 90-minute televised lecture that exemplified *stiob*. Lenin had been a regular user of hallucinogenic mush-



Stephen Colbert's shtick is so good that some viewers don't get the joke.

rooms, Kuryokhin said, adding, "I have absolutely irrefutable evidence that the October Revolution was carried out by people who for many years had been consuming certain mushrooms. And in the process of being consumed by these people, the mushrooms displaced their personality. These people were turning into mushrooms. In other words, I simply want to say that Lenin was a mushroom." Hardly plausible, yet many viewers fell for the hoax. Some even called the station to learn more. One man who had been taken in said that "like a typical Soviet person," he had believed that "serious conversations in the media can be trusted."

Boyer and Yurchak see something similar today in *The Onion*, *The Daily Show*, and especially *The Colbert Report*. According to a 2009 study, Stephen Colbert's caricature of a dim right-wing commentator has some conservatives convinced he's one of them. As in the Soviet Union, Boyer and Yurchak argue, form—the rituals of the contemporary news media—can eclipse content. *Stiob* rules.

## Alliterative Illusion

*Misremembering Agnew*

Spiro Agnew famously derided reporters and commentators as "nattering nabobs of negativism." David Broder, Helen Thomas, Tom Wicker, and countless other journalists have cited the quotation as a classic example of the Nixon administration's assault on the press. But they're all wrong, Norman P. Lewis writes in *American Journalism* (Winter 2010).

Vice President Agnew did give two speeches in 1969 that condemned the national press as



Vice President Spiro Agnew's most famous line was not meant as an attack on the press.



biased and error-ridden. President Richard Nixon fine-tuned the language in one of them and declared proudly, “This really flicks the scab off, doesn’t it?” “Nattering nabobs,” however, came in a 1970 speech in San Diego, when Agnew was campaigning for Republicans in the midterm elections. The “nabobs” were opponents of Nixon administration policy, especially in Vietnam.

“You have it right—the Agnew speech in San Diego, which I wrote, criticized the defeatists in general rather than the press in particular,” speechwriter-turned-columnist William Safire e-mailed Lewis in 2006. (Safire died in 2009.) “I suppose many in the media delighted in being attacked by Agnew and so assumed they were his target in that speech. Over the years I would occasionally point this out, but it’s tough to go up against a myth.”

Press coverage at the time of Agnew’s speech placed the phrase in its correct context. But less than a year later, a *Newsday* columnist cited “nattering nabobs” as an attack on the press. *The New York Times* and *Time* soon followed.

“Journalists who wear the ‘nattering nabobs’ phrase as a badge of honor,” Lewis observes, “are merely proving that Agnew was right about their penchant for repeating inaccurate information.”

## Bad Wiring

### *Dopamine dopes*

In games of skill, a near miss can mean you’re improving. Not so

with games of chance. At a slot machine, almost hitting the jackpot doesn’t increase your odds of cashing in with the next push of the button. Our brains, however, may not recognize the distinction.

For gamblers and nongamblers alike, the same region of the mid-brain is activated by both near misses and jackpots, Henry W. Chase and Luke Clark report in *The Journal of Neuroscience* (May 5). The strength of the near-miss response in the brain correlates with the degree of gambling addiction—that is, problem gamblers exhibit a stronger response to near misses than casual gamblers do. The researchers speculate that the neurotransmitter dopamine gives gamblers a jolt of pleasure when they come close to winning. So they keep playing. And hoping.

## Marketing Cocaine

### *Redux redux*

The energy drink called Cocaine got off to a rocky start when it went on the market a few years ago. As we reported (Summer 2007), the Food and Drug Administration sent a menacing letter to the manufacturer, Redux Beverages. Illinois and Connecticut threatened to sue Redux, and Texas barred the company from selling Cocaine there. In Dallas, agents of the Department of State

Health Services raided a warehouse full of Cocaine. Street value: \$200,000.

Now, Cocaine is back. California-based Redux tweaked the typeface for the name on the cans—the origi-



Cocaine gets a makeover.

nal looked too much like white powder for regulators—and got rid of the slogan “The Legal Alternative.” In a disclaimer printed on the cans, Redux now declares, “This product is not intended to be an alternative to an illicit street drug, and anyone who thinks otherwise is an idiot.” These changes satisfied the FDA, though not Texas, which still bans the beverage.

Peru won’t allow it either, according to Jamey Kirby, president of Redux. Peruvian officials maintain that the name is misleading. To market the drink there, Redux would need to add extract of coca leaf.

—Stephen Bates

# The Rude Birth of Immigration Reform

*As America debates immigration reform, it is in danger of repeating the mistakes made a century ago when the flawed foundations of today's policies were established.*

BY KATHERINE BENTON-COHEN

IN 1908, ANNA HERKNER DONNED THE TATTERED peasant clothing of a Bohemian immigrant and boarded a crowded steamer bound for the United States. She was shocked at what she found. In steerage, women weakened by seasickness were mauled by crew members, and some were reportedly raped. Nauseated passengers lay “in a sort of stupor” in their cramped berths. “Only the fresh breeze from the sea overcame the sickening odors. The vile language of the men, the screams of the women defending themselves, the crying of children, wretched because of their surroundings, and practically every sound that reached the ear, irritated beyond endurance. There was no sight before which the eye did not prefer to close. Everything was dirty, sticky, and disagreeable to the touch. Every impression was offensive.” Herkner’s 12-day voyage offered “abundant opportunity to weaken the body and emplant there germs of disease to develop later. . . . Surely it is not the introduction to American institutions that will tend to make them respected.”

KATHERINE BENTON-COHEN is an assistant professor of history at Georgetown University and the author of *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (2009). As a 2009–10 fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, she worked on a book about the Dillingham Commission.

The overcrowding on the ship would have been even worse had the financial panic of 1907 not sharply reduced immigrant crossings from the record 1.4 million of the previous year. Eighty percent of the new arrivals were, like many of Herkner’s fellow passengers, from southern and eastern Europe. But Herkner was not counted among them. She underwent her ordeal not because she was immigrating to the New World, but because she had been hired by a federal commission to study those who were. Iowa born, she held a degree in Slavic languages from the University of California, Berkeley, and had been a social worker in a Polish neighborhood in Baltimore. After three undercover journeys by sea, she wrote a report for the commission chronicling her experiences and those of nine other agents, and calling for better enforcement of American laws regulating transatlantic vessels.

The United States was in the midst of a surge of immigration that would drive the foreign-born share of the population to 14.7 percent, a level that has been rivaled, but not surpassed, only in recent times. The “new immigrants” of the early 20th century were primarily Italians, eastern European Jews, and Slavs. As a group they tended to be darker skinned, and poorer, than



A crowd of immigrants taunts a single “last Yankee” in this 1888 anti-immigration cartoon. In reality, immigrants rather than native-born Americans were targets of discrimination in the land of the free.

“the colored races.” Secretary of State Elihu Root compared the immigrants to “the invasion of barbarians into the Roman Empire.”

In the American West, many newcomers were Japanese, and the response was even harsher, including rigid segregation and physical as well as verbal attacks. Federal barriers to almost all Chinese immigration had been erected in 1882. One California congressman declared that the arrival of Japanese immigrants posed a “race problem as menacing as the negro problem in the South.” Anti-immigrant sentiment was not confined to one region. In 1906, a third of the letters written to members of Congress called for tighter controls on immigration.

A century later, the rhetoric is directed at different groups, but sometimes sounds similar. As Arizona’s notorious new statute highlights, national

most previous immigrants. A small number were political radicals. More alarming to many in overwhelmingly Protestant America, most of the immigrants were Catholics or Jews. Critics questioned the newcomers’ “fitness for democracy.” Some worried that Italians would upend American race relations, because they lacked the “Anglo-Saxon repugnance” toward intermarriage with

immigration reform seems just as urgent now as it did to many Americans then.

Herkner’s report was part of 41 volumes produced between 1907 and 1911 by the U.S. Immigration Commission, chaired by Senator William P. Dillingham (R-Vt.). What became known as the Dillingham Commission examined almost every imaginable aspect of the

immigrant experience. Fieldworkers canvassed hundreds of factories, mills, and farms for 20 volumes of data on “immigrants in industries.” A report on “white slavery” (forced prostitution) electrified the public and prompted the passage of the Mann Act of 1910, which forbade the transport of women over state lines “for immoral purposes.” Ranging from Los Angeles to

study ultimately led to action.

The nine men appointed to the commission spanned the geographic and political spectrum. Seven were Republicans and two were Democrats, with views on immigration that were not defined by party. Roosevelt named three of the members: U.S. Commissioner of Labor Charles P. Neill, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor William

B. Wheeler, and Cornell University economist Jeremiah Jenks. Not one commissioner was an immigrant, and none were of southern or eastern European stock. There were no Jews. Neill, the only Catholic, was closest to the immigrant experience; his par-

**THE COMMISSIONERS WERE appalled  
by the large number of immigrant women  
who worked outside the home.**

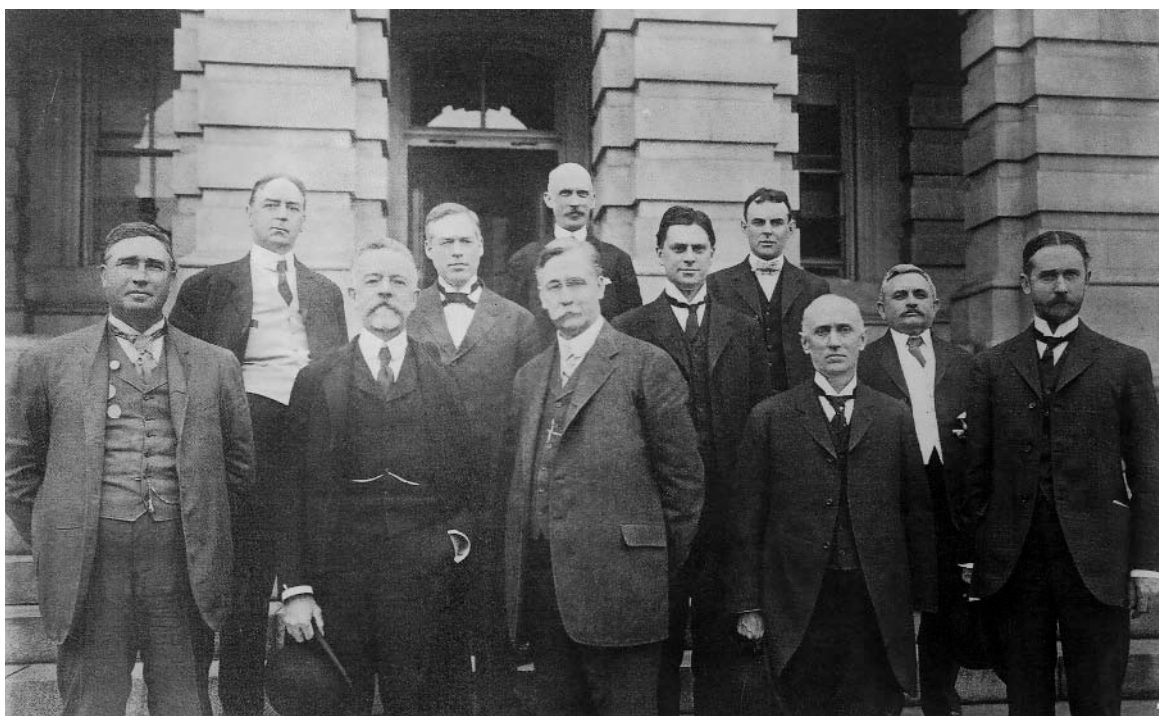
Boston, social workers and economists studied the homes, schools, and banks of immigrants, as well as the asylums and prisons that incarcerated them. Altogether, the commission spent an unprecedented \$1 million, employed 300 workers, and gathered original data on some three million people. That early experience and the legislation it led to show the importance of “getting the facts” about immigration straight, but they also warn us about the creeping biases with which we approach “facts” about immigration and the need to look beyond the passions of the day toward the potential unintended consequences of the policy choices we make.

ents had been born in Ireland. Three members held Ph.D.’s—Jenks, Neill, and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-Mass.), who had earned Harvard’s first doctorate in political science.

Advanced education and distance from the immigrant experience were supposed to ensure the commissioners’ impartiality in an era when reformers worshiped expertise and believed that finding “objective truth” would allow them to make decisions free of political and other considerations. But what did objectivity and facts mean to these men? Jenks was president of the American Economic Association but also had published a text for YMCA adult education courses titled *The Political and Social Significance of the Teachings of Jesus*. Lodge was a trained social scientist, but he was also, in the words of historian John Higham, immigration’s “most dangerous adversary.” He first introduced a literacy-test bill while serving in the House in 1892; two years earlier, he had published an article purporting to “prove” that the English “race” was superior to all others.

**T**he Dillingham Commission owed its existence to a chance act of political reaction. In 1906, the San Francisco School Board started a diplomatic firestorm when it decided to segregate Japanese students, infuriating a Japanese government that was still basking in its triumph in the Russo-Japanese War. President Theodore Roosevelt and his allies used the uproar to push the Immigration Act of 1907 through Congress, omitting a much-debated provision requiring all male immigrants to be literate but giving the president authority to deny entry to people holding Japanese passports on certain technical grounds. The idea was to reduce immigration without public embarrassment to the Japanese. The commission came as part of the package, a classic Washington promise to study the problem further. In this case, however,

More damaging to immigrants’ interests was the researchers’ steadfast commitment to the concept of the “American standard of living” which sounded scientific but invited subjective judgments about how immigrants lived. On its face, the concept assumed that all jobs should pay well enough to allow a working man to own a home and support a wife and children. This standard was supposed to demonstrate the Dillingham Commission’s commitment to carrying out a study that was “chiefly” economic in



**No jury of peers:** The eminences of the Dillingham Commission included Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (front row, second from left), with Senator William P. Dillingham to his left and U.S. Commissioner of Labor Charles P. Neill at the far right. Economist Jeremiah Jenks is second from left in the back.

character. In fact, it served mainly to let the commission recast its arguments in more seemingly acceptable terms. As one prominent magazine editor explained, “It is not the cultural deficit of a husky country lad from Croatia that threatens American standards. It is the fact that he sells his working day for less money than a family can live on.”

Cultural biases inevitably tainted the commission’s work. The “American standard of living” hid moralizing assumptions about the roles of women and men, housing choices, consumer culture, and ethics. Commission adviser H. Parker Willis, for example, said that the high percentages of immigrant women who worked for wages showed “the extent to which the immigrant has been reduced not merely personally, but in family life, to a basis of commercial exploitation.” Economist W. Jett Lauck, who oversaw the commission’s ambitious industrial studies, designed detailed surveys for his field agents to use, but left undefined such terms as “assimilation, adaptability, tractability, [and] progressiveness.” Yet one man’s assimilation can be another’s capitulation; tractability could be desirable, or synonymous with the dreaded un-American “docility” of “backward races.” Surveying the situation at a steel plant

near Pittsburgh, Lauck wrote, “As to the tractability of the Slovaks, Magyars, and Croatians, there is no apparent difference. . . . The Italians, on the other hand, are thought less of than any of the more recent immigrants, and are considered treacherous and hard to control.” At another plant, however, “a very different opinion . . . is expressed.” There, Magyars and Croatians were “tractable, but none are considered very industrious.” Instead, the “Poles are considered more intelligent and industrious.” How could objective science be fashioned from such assessments?

Lauck empathized with the “American” workingmen he saw as imperiled by Slavic and Italian newcomers in the hardscrabble coal fields and steel mills of western Pennsylvania. Such enterprises were undergoing wholesale “racial displacements,” as the commission put it. Lauck later said that he had once belonged to “the sect of conservatism and thought America was a land of great opportunities, but my impression from visiting these districts . . . led me to think that . . . our democracy was pretty much of a failure.” The poverty appalled him, as did the ill education and the divisions—geographic, cultural, linguistic, and economic—between Americans and new immigrants.



With expressions ranging from excited to weary, immigrants haul their earthly belongings through Ellis Island in the first decade of the 20th century.

Lauck had been trained as an economist at the University of Chicago, but he was also one of eight children born to a West Virginia railroad engineer. His strong identification with “American workers” like his father propelled him toward the conclusion that “our industrial system has become saturated with an alien unskilled labor force of low standards, which so far has been impossible to assimilate industrially, socially, or politically, and which has broken down American standards of work and compensation.”

Then as now, however, even apparently solid evidence that immigrants displaced large numbers of native-born workers was actually quite tenuous. In 1912, an economist and Russian Jewish émigré named Isaac Hourwich used the commission’s own data to show that Italians, Bohemians, and Slovaks were not taking native-born workers’ jobs; rather, by taking low-wage jobs, they were pushing

more-experienced American workers into better positions. Furthermore, the newcomers were making the raw materials and industrial products of a capitalist economy cheaper for consumers. In this sense, they might have been *good* for the American standard of living.

The Dillingham Commission operated under the sweeping assumption that the federal government had the right to create immigration policies enforceable on its own shores, on the open seas, and at foreign ports. At least in the domestic sphere, this assertion of authority was built on a relatively recent foundation. Until the 1880s, individual states had crafted immigration policies, though by 1907 the federal government’s right to regulate immigration was well established. The commissioners, however, had even bigger ideas. They grasped immigration’s global nature, and understood it in the framework of the

imperialistic ambition found in many quarters in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. They had no compunction about reaching far into Europe to study and shape immigration policy. Lodge was the Senate's grand lion of imperialism, and Dillingham, though a less polarizing figure, was just as fervent. The most prominent staff members of the commission had designed government programs in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, two colonies acquired as a result of the recent war. Yet some of the "immigration problem" was a direct result of imperialism: Japanese immigration had increased when Hawaii became American soil, and thus a stepping-stone between Asia and California. The world was coming to the United States, and the United States was reaching out to the world.

As the brouhaha over segregation in San Francisco illustrated, immigration could not be viewed solely in terms of its domestic implications, and the commission was willing to cast a wide net. Five members, accompanied by their wives, spent several months in Europe investigating emigrants' villages and exit ports and consulting with officials. In 1909 Dillingham sailed to Hawaii, a U.S. colony since 1898, to examine Japanese immigration there. (Not surprisingly, when the commission requested additional appropriations in 1909, these junkets were lambasted on the House floor.) Ultimately, the aim was to harmonize the laws of other nations with those of the United States. The Immigration Act of 1907 had authorized Roosevelt to create an international commission to fashion global immigration and emigration policies. But, as would occur many times in the future, the imperatives of domestic politics in the United States had already scotched any prospects for international cooperation. With their people barred from American shores, for example, the governments of Japan and China could hardly be expected to join in cooperative efforts.

The Dillingham Commission presented its massive reports to Congress in installments throughout late

1910 and 1911. Few people, if any, read them in their entirety. Instead, readers focused on the first volume, with its concise 40-page summary and recommendations. The imprimatur of objectivity gave to these recommendations the hard gleam of "fact." As *The New York Times* put it, the commission had shown that "aliens are not being, and cannot be assimilated—

**"THERE IS NO ROOM EITHER for  
the cheap man or the cheap goods,"  
declared Calvin Coolidge.**

cannot be, that is, unless some check is placed upon their continued influx."

Among the recommendations were a literacy test, a permanent bar to Asian immigration, "legislation restricting the further admission of . . . unskilled labor," and some sort of quota system. Dillingham and fellow commission member Representative John L. Burnett (D-Ala.), who chaired the Senate and House committees on immigration, respectively, immediately introduced bills based on the recommendations. The literacy test passed both houses three times. President William Howard Taft vetoed it once, Woodrow Wilson twice. Both men worried about its fairness and constitutionality, and the reactions of immigrant voters. By 1917, recession and world war had slowed immigration, but Congress finally passed the literacy test, over Wilson's second veto.

As isolationist sentiment resurged after World War I, resistance to immigration did likewise. In 1921, Vice President Calvin Coolidge addressed American housewives (who had won the right to vote only the year before) in a *Good Housekeeping* article with the telltale title, "Whose Country Is This?" His verdict was clear: "Measured practically, it would be suicidal for us to let down the bars for the inflowing of cheap manhood, just as, commercially, it would be unsound for this country to allow her markets to be overflowed with

cheap goods, the product of cheap labor. There is no room either for the cheap man or the cheap goods.”

That year, Congress passed the first quotas on immigration in U.S. history; three years later, it made the restrictions even tighter. The quotas were based on the distribution of national origins in the U.S. population found in the 1890 Census—before the rush of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. After 1929, a tiny quota of 150,000 would be shared by all Europeans (Canadians and Mexicans were exempted as were wives and children of U.S. citizens). This had the effect of cutting immigration to about one-tenth of its level in 1908 when Anna Herkner had made her voyage. For Asians, the restrictions were even more severe. The same 1917 law that had imposed a literacy test on immigrants also created an “Asiatic barred zone,” closing the door to virtually all Asians, and made those who were already in the United States ineligible for citizenship.

**I**n the heated debates during the early 20th century, few people gave much thought to the longer-term consequences of restricting immigration, but these were many and profound. African Americans had already begun what became known as the Great Migration from the South to replace immigrants in northern and midwestern factories during World War I, and their numbers increased as quotas dried up the supply of foreign-born labor. Black ghettos replaced Italian and Jewish ones. Deprived of new arrivals from the Old Country, immigrant groups retained their distinctive cultural and religious traditions, but these inevitably changed to accommodate American mores. The immigrants and their descendants began to see commonalities with people of other European origins, and contrasted themselves with African Americans. In a sense, the immigration restrictions consolidated the category of “white,” as national and ethnic labels lost their force.

At the same time, the quotas ensured an increase in Mexican immigration, an issue the Dillingham Commission had not thought important enough to address in any of its final recommendations. The United States did not even count immigrants arriving across land borders until 1908. In 1917, employ-

ers in the Southwest lobbied for an exemption for Mexicans in the literacy law, and immigrants from the Western Hemisphere were not subject to the quotas of the 1920s. Mexicans began to come in larger numbers to fill agricultural and industrial jobs once occupied by Chinese, Japanese, and European workers. Some were technically “illegal,” a status that before had applied almost solely to Chinese.

The “immigration problem” the Dillingham Commission identified and studied a century ago differs from the one the United States faces today, but the commission unwittingly did a great deal to help create our current difficulties. The strict quotas gave those who yearned to come to America few choices—a dilemma the people in steerage class with Herkner never had to face. The laws recommended by the Dillingham Commission created the United States’ modern immigration framework, which has been renovated—most comprehensively in 1965, when the national-origins quotas and literacy test were abolished, and 1986—but never dismantled.

Today, many Americans are concerned about the racial background of immigrants, their impact on political and cultural institutions, and their threat to, yes, the “American standard of living.” These concerns echo those that motivated the Dillingham study. But the results of the commission’s work—strict quotas, bad social science about “racial displacements,” and unforeseen consequences—might give us pause. The Dillingham Commission thought a lot more about how to exclude immigrants than how to incorporate them.

Many people today believe we need a quota system that can be adjusted in response to economic conditions—an idea considered but rejected during the Dillingham era. We also need a flexible frame of mind in which to understand today’s immigrants—not as “an invasion of barbarians,” as Elihu Root saw them, but as Americans in the making. The immigrants who so frightened the commission indeed became Americans; they birthed a large portion of the generation that fought in World War II and helped create the nation’s postwar prosperity.

Today, the challenge of crafting an immigration policy free of unintended consequences remains. The lessons of the Dillingham Commission suggest it will not be easy. ■



# America: Land of Loners?

*Americans, plugged in and on the move, are confiding in their pets, their computers, and their spouses. What they need is to rediscover the value of friendship.*

BY DANIEL AKST

SCIENCE-FICTION WRITERS MAKE THE BEST SEERS. In the late 1950s far-sighted Isaac Asimov imagined a sunny planet called Solaria, on which a scant 20,000 humans dwelt on far-flung estates and visited one another only virtually, by materializing as “trimensional images”—avatars, in other words. “They live completely apart,” a helpful robot explained to a visiting earthling, “and never see one another except under the most extraordinary circumstances.”

We have not, of course, turned into Solarians here on earth, strictly limiting our numbers and shunning our fellow humans in revulsion. Yet it’s hard not to see some Solarian parallels in modern life. Since Asimov wrote *The Naked*

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*Sun*, Americans have been engaged in wholesale flight from one another, decamping for suburbs and Sunbelt, splintering into ever smaller households, and conducting more and more of their relationships online, where avatars flourish. The churn rate of domestic relations is especially remarkable, and has rendered family life in the United States uniquely unstable. “No other comparable nation,” the sociologist Andrew J. Cherlin observes, “has such a high level of multiple marital and cohabiting unions.”

Oceans of ink have been spilled on these developments, yet hardly any attention is paid to the one institution—friendship—that could pick up some of the interpersonal slack. But while sizzling eros hogs the spotlight these days—sex sells, after all—too many of us overlook *philia*, the slower-burning and longer-lasting complement. That’s ironic,

because today “friends” are everywhere in our culture—the average Facebook user has 130—and friendship, of a diluted kind, is our most characteristic relationship: voluntary, flexible, a “lite” alternative to the caloric meshugaas of family life.

But in restricting ourselves to the thin gruel of modern friendships, we miss out on the more nourishing fare that deeper ones have to offer. Aristotle, who saw friendship as essential to human flourishing, shrewdly observed that it

**THE GENIUS OF FRIENDSHIP rests firmly on its limitations. Think of it as the moderate passion.**

comes in three distinct flavors: those based on usefulness (contacts), on pleasure (drinking buddies), and on a shared pursuit of virtue—the highest form of all. True friends, he contended, are simply drawn to the goodness in one another, goodness that today we might define in terms of common passions and sensibilities.

It’s possible that Aristotle took all this too seriously, but today the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and in our culture we take friendship—a state of strong mutual affection in which sex or kinship isn’t primary—far too lightly. We’re good at currying contacts and we may have lots of pals, but by falling short on Aristotle’s third and most important category of friendship, we’ve left a hole in our lives. Now that family life is in turmoil, reinvigorating our notion of friendship—to mean something more than mere familiarity—could help fill some of the void left by disintegrating household arrangements and social connections frayed by the stubborn individualism of our times.

Friendship is uniquely suited to fill this void because, unlike matrimony or parenthood, it’s available to everyone, offering concord and even intimacy without aspiring to be all-consuming. Friends do things for us that hardly anybody else can, yet ask nothing more than friendship in return (though this can be a steep price if we take friendship as seriously as we should). The genius of friendship rests firmly on its limitations, which are better understood as boundaries. Think of it as the moderate passion—constrained, yet also critical. If friendship, as hardheaded Lord Byron would have it,

really is “love without his wings,” we can all be grateful for its earthbound nature.

But we live now in a climate in which friends appear dispensable. While most of us wouldn’t last long outside the intricate web of interdependence that supplies all our physical needs—imagine no electricity, money, or sewers—we’ve come to demand of ourselves truly radical levels of emotional self-sufficiency. In America today, half of adults are unmar-

ried, and more than a quarter live alone. As Robert Putnam showed in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, civic involvement and private associations were on the wane at the end of the 20th century. Several years later, social scientists made headlines with a survey showing that Ameri-

cans had a third fewer nonfamily confidants than two decades earlier. A quarter of us had no such confidants at all.

In a separate study, Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler, authors of *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* (2009), surveyed more than 3,000 randomly chosen Americans and found they had an average of four “close social contacts” with whom they could discuss important matters or spend free time. But only half of these contacts were solely friends; the rest were a variety of others, including spouses and children.

Here, as on so many fronts, we often buy what we need. The affluent commonly hire confidants in the form of talk therapists, with whom they may maintain enduring (if remunerated) relationships conducted on a first-name basis. The number of household pets has exploded throughout the Western world, suggesting that not just dogs but cats, rats, and parakeets are often people’s best friends. John Cacioppo, a University of Chicago psychologist who studies loneliness, says he’s convinced that more Americans are lonely—not because we have fewer social contacts, but because the ones we have are more harried and less meaningful.

Developing meaningful friendships—having the kind of people in your life who were once known as “intimates”—takes time, but too many of us are locked in what social critic Barbara Ehrenreich has called “the cult of conspicuous busyness,” from which we seem to derive status and a certain perverse comfort even as it alienates us from one another. Throw in two careers and some kids, and something’s got to

give. The poet Kenneth Koch, whose friends included the brilliant but childless John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara, laid out the problem in verse:

You want a social life, with friends.  
A passionate love life and as well  
To work hard every day. What's true  
Is of these three you may have two.

If time is a problem, so is space. Although Americans have been relocating less often lately, perhaps as a result of the recession, we still move around quite a bit—for work, sunshine, retirement, or to be near family—and this process of uprooting dissolves friendships and discourages those that haven't yet formed. Few of us would turn down a tempting new job in a far-off city to stay near friends, possibly for the sensible reason that those friends might move away six months later anyway.

Divorce also takes its toll; most of us over the age of 30 are familiar with the social consequences that ripple outward from a split-up, as foursomes for dinner or bridge are destroyed and friends may find themselves having to pick sides. Marital dissolution usually costs each spouse some precious connections, including in-laws who might once have been important friends.

Our longstanding reverence for self-sufficiency hasn't helped matters. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave us a sharp shove down this road with his famous essay "Self-Reliance," and Cole Porter lyricized the uniquely American claustrophobia that danced off the tongues of a parade of popular crooners: "Let me be by myself in the evenin' breeze/And listen to the murmur of the cottonwood trees/Send me off forever but I ask you please/Don't fence me in." Frontier-oriented American mythology is studded with exemplars of the lone hero, from Daniel Boone to Amelia Earhart, to say nothing of the protagonists of Hollywood westerns such as *High Noon* (1952). Male buddy films date back to Laurel and Hardy, but their profusion in the past three decades—including box-office franchises ranging from *Beverly Hills Cop* to *Harold & Kumar*—is a strong social contra-indicator, like the lavish outfits and interiors of movies made during the Great Depression. If something desirable is missing in life, people like to see it on the screen.

Friendship has also suffered from the remorseless eroticization of human relations that was bequeathed to us by Sigmund Freud. The culture stands particularly ready to sexualize men's friendships since the gay liberation movement mercifully swept away taboos against discussing same-sex relationships. In 2005 *The New York Times* laid claim to coining the term "man date" in a story—under a woman's byline—about the anxiety two straight men supposedly experience if they brave a restaurant or museum together and run the risk that people will think they are gay. The "bro-mance" theme, once strictly a collegiate sport among scholars scouring the letters of passionate 19th-century friends for signs of physical intimacy, has since made its way into popular culture. The pathetic state of male friendship—and the general suspicion that men who seek close friends might be looking for something more—was captured in last year's film *I Love You, Man*, in which a guy decides to get married, realizes he has no one to be his best man, and must embark on a series of "man dates" to find one.

The irony is that straight men could learn a thing or two from their gay brethren, as Andrew Sullivan implied in his insightful book on the AIDS crisis, *Love Undetectable: Notes on Friendship, Sex, and Survival* (1998). Often estranged from their natural families and barred from forming legally acknowledged new ones of their own, gay men, Sullivan observed, learned to rely not on the kindness of strangers but the loyalty of friends: "Insofar as friendship was an incalculable strength of homosexuals during the calamity of AIDS, it merely showed, I think, how great a loss is our culture's general underestimation of this central human virtue."

We make this mistake in part because we've allowed our wildly inflated view of matrimony to subsume much of the territory once occupied by friendship. Your BFF nowadays—at least until the divorce—is supposed to be your spouse, a plausible idea in this age of assortative mating, except that spouses and friends fill different needs, and cultivating some close extramarital friendships might even take some of the pressure off at home. Yet the married men I know seem overwhelmingly dependent on their wives for emotional connection, even as their wives take pleasure in friends to whom they don't happen to be wed. The Beatles' immortal lonely heart Eleanor Rigby and novelist Anita Brookner's socially isolated heroines notwithstanding, the fact is that all the women I know are better at friendships—spend more time on them, take more pleasure in them, and value them more highly—than any of the straight men.

Forgive me, guys, but we are lousy at this, and while it may seem to us that our casual approach is perfectly normal, in fact it's odd. Among people whose lives are more like those of our ancestors, for example, friendship is taken far more seriously. In some cultures, close friends pledge themselves to one another in bonding rituals that involve the spilling of blood. The Bangwa people in Cameroon traditionally considered friendship so important that many families assigned a best friend to a newborn right along with a spouse.

**“FRIENDS DO NOT LIVE in harmony,”  
Henry David Thoreau said, “but in melody.”**

There was a time when platonic friendship was exalted—if not idealized—in the West, perhaps in part because of religious paranoia about sex. The myth of Damon and Pythias and the biblical story of David and Jonathan resonated across the centuries, and in the Middle Ages knights bound themselves in ceremonies to comrades in arms. Cicero, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Sir Francis Bacon, Michel de Montaigne, William Wordsworth—the list of Western luminaries who have waxed rhapsodic over friendship is long enough to fill anthologies from both Norton *and* Oxford.

In the 19th century, friendship was the subject of panegyrics by the likes of Emerson, who wrote that “the moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed: there is no winter and no night: all tragedies, all ennues vanish.” His buddy Henry David Thoreau, lamenting that to most people a friend is simply someone who is not an enemy, declared, perhaps wishfully, “Friends do not live in harmony, merely, as some say, but in melody.” Mary Wollstonecraft might have spoken for the lot when she noted that while eros is transient, “the most holy bond of society is friendship.”

**A** grain of salt is in order: Friendship, like baseball, always seems to send intellectuals off the deep end. Yet there is more biological justification for our predecessors' paeans to friendship than for our modern-day tepidity. Friendship exists in all the world's cultures, likely as a result of natural selection. People have always needed allies to help out in times of trouble, raise their status, and

join with them against their enemies. It doesn't seem much of a stretch to conclude that a talent for making friends would bestow an evolutionary advantage by corralling others into the project of promoting and protecting one's kids—and thereby ensuring the survival of one's genes.

If we evolved to make friends, we also evolved to tell them things. Humans have an irrepressible need to divulge, and often friends can tell one another what they can't tell anyone else, a function that has come in

especially handy since the Protestant Reformation put so many beyond the reach of the confessional. Less grandly, trading gossip is probably one of the main reasons people evolved into such friend

makers, since information (and reputation) have always been valuable—even in the evolutionary environment.

Alliances and inside dope are two of the ways people derive power from friendships, which is why tyrannies are sometimes so hostile to them. Private affiliations of all kinds are a countervailing force against the great weight of government, but Aristotle reminds us that friendship also maintains the state. Friendships, after all, entail mutual regard, respect for others, a certain amount of agreeableness, and a willingness to rise above the ties of kinship in order to knit society into a web of trust and reciprocity—qualities more likely, in a state, to produce Denmark than Iraq.

Living in a society of friends has many advantages. Friendship can moderate our behavior (unless, like the television mobster Tony Soprano, you happen to choose immoderate friends). Friends help us establish and maintain norms and can tell us if we're running off the rails when others don't notice, won't break the news, or lack the necessary credibility. Both our relatives and our friends, the psychologist Howard Rachlin writes, “are essential mirrors of the patterns of our behavior over long periods—mirrors of our souls. They are the magic ‘mirrors on the wall’ who can tell us whether this drink, this cigarette, this ice-cream sundae, this line of cocaine, is more likely to be part of a new future or an old past.”

Indeed, the influence of friends and associates is profound. Social scientists Christakis and Fowler, working with data from the multidecade Framingham Heart Study, found



Today's pell-mell pace leaves little chance to while away the hours with friends. But there's no substitute for sittin' a spell and making small talk.

that if you become obese, the odds increase by 71 percent that your same-sex friend will do likewise—a bigger impact than was measured among siblings. On the other hand, when you become happy, a friend living within a mile has a 25 percent greater chance of becoming happy as well—and even a friend of a friend has a 10 percent greater chance. Encouragingly for those who know a sourpuss or two, misery was not comparably contagious.

Friendship can even prolong our lives. For loneliness, the experts tell us, has to do more with the quality of our relationships than the quantity. And we now know that loneliness is associated with all sorts of problems, including depression, high blood pressure and cholesterol, Alzheimer's disease, poor diet, drug and alcohol abuse, bulimia, and suicide. Lonely people have a harder time concentrating, are more likely to divorce, and get into more conflicts with neighbors and coworkers.

But of course friends are not vitamins, to be taken in daily doses in hopes of cheating the Grim Reaper. The real reason to prize our friends is that they help us lead good and satisfying lives, enriched by mutual under-

standing. This special way of knowing one another was once exalted as "sympathy," and Adam Smith described it as "changing places in fancy." As Caleb Crain made plain in his excellent book *American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (2001), the 18th and 19th centuries were the heyday of sympathy, when the fervor of friends was evident in their letters as well as their comportment. Sympathy persisted in popular discourse and was studied as a scientific fact under various guises until, in the 19th century, Charles Darwin came along to replace cooperation with competition in the intellectual armament of the day.

Sympathy's long-ago advocates were onto something when they reckoned friendship one of life's highest pleasures, and they felt themselves freer than we do to revel in it. It's time for us to ease up on friending, rethink our downgrade of ex-lovers to "just" friends, and resist moving far away from everyone we know merely because it rains less elsewhere. In Asimov's vision, Solaria was a lonely planet that humans settled with the help of robots. People weren't made to live there. ■

# The Irish in Paris

*For centuries, the passionate and sometimes persecuted Irish have felt a peculiar sympathy with Europe's self-anointed capital of sophistication.*

BY MAX BYRD

BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE FRANCE, SURELY THE most representative Frenchman of modern times is Charles de Gaulle, World War II hero and general, founding father, and first president of the Fifth Republic. With his magnificent Gallic horn of a nose, protruding like a great scalene triangle from beneath his brown kepi, he is a symbolic figure as recognizable as the Eiffel Tower, and almost as tall and inflexible. His very surname means “of Gaul,” and it links his identity firmly to the core national identity, that original semimythic Gaul of antiquity that Julius Caesar so neatly divided *in partes tres*.

It may come as a surprise, then, to recall that when de Gaulle was finally forced, partly by his own Gallic stubbornness, to leave the presidency in April 1969, he did not simply retreat from Paris to his family home in Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, in the heart of the Haut-Marne countryside. Most French people of a certain age will recall the very dramatic photographs snapped a few weeks later, among the last official ones ever taken of de Gaulle. They are in the customary black and white of newspaper photographs of that era, and they show him rigid and stiff backed as ever, hatless, dressed in a suit and dark overcoat, walking with a cane along a beach. A bleak

gray ocean surf breaks off to his left, symbolic perhaps of his grim state of mind after his fall from power.

What most people will not remember is that the beach was near Heron Cove in West Cork, County Kerry, in the Republic of Ireland. And what almost nobody will remember is that, when asked, de Gaulle explained to a few straggling members of the press that he had come to Ireland in order to be near the cradle of his ancestors. De Gaulle himself was divided *in partes duas*: That most representative and identifiable of modern Frenchmen was part Irish.

**P**art Irish! Franco-Hibernian! It is a notably unsettling fact—as if Sir Winston Spencer Churchill had revealed that he was really Italian. But the lineage is not in doubt. De Gaulle's maternal great-grandmother bore the not-quite-Gallic name of Marie Angélique McCartan and was herself the descendant of one Patrick McCartan, who fled from Ireland to France in 1645, in self-imposed exile.

This McCartan was one of many Irish rebels of the mid-17th century who found their lands confiscated by the occupying English and who instinctively took refuge in France, the eternal enemy of perfidious Albion. In a second wave of exiles, after the victory of William of Orange in 1690, Patrick McCartan's son

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**After leaving the French presidency in 1969, Charles de Gaulle realized a lifelong ambition when he visited the land of his mother's ancestors, the McCartans. Photographers captured him walking near Heron Cove in County Kerry, Ireland.**

John would join the famous Wild Geese of Ireland (*Oies Sauvages*) who came to France, formed the Irish Brigade of the French Army, and settled more or less permanently into French life, though always with one murderous eye fixed on the conquerors across the Channel.

De Gaulle's family history, however, belongs to a much greater pageant of immigration and split national identity. The Irish had been coming to France—to Paris in particular—well before 1645. And not all of the immigrants were soldiers. As is so often the case in European transplantations, there was a religious dimension.

In 1578, well in advance of the Wild Geese, Father John Lee, a priest from Waterford, Ireland, settled in a tiny building on the rue Saint-Thomas in the Latin

Quarter of Paris. And there he welcomed six young Irishmen as students in what he rather grandly declared was the “Collège de Montaigu” in the University of Paris (the earliest “official” Irish outpost I know of in Paris). Like the McCartans, Lee and his six young men had fled their ancestral island because of English oppression, in their case a succession of brutal antipope measures known as the Penal Laws, which had effectively shut down Catholic seminaries all over Ireland. The Irish church, defying the English, had sent priests like Father Lee all over the Continent to train new priests who could return, openly or not, to Ireland. There were similar enterprises in Lisbon, Prague, and Rome. Yet for whatever mysterious reasons of affinity and social chemistry, those other institutions failed to take deep root or else simply did not

flourish. But the Irish in Paris were quite another story.

The Collège de Montaigu prospered so well that by 1677 a series of moves brought it, now as the Collège des Irlandais, to a spacious new setting, still in the Latin Quarter, on a pleasant, gently sloping street that would eventually become the rue des Irlandais. From here, the Irish priests and seminarians fanned out into Paris life

**THE IRISH IN PARIS maintained a certain recognizable, even stereotypical, national identity.**

like ducks on the Seine. They bought more and more property and rose to prestigious professorial chairs in the Sorbonne. With a cheerful disregard of the Sixth Commandment, they educated a great many young soldiers before they entered the Irish Brigade. When the Revolution came, the college's buildings were briefly confiscated (a familiar Irish fate) and turned into a school for French boys—Napoleon's brother Jerome studied there for a time. In 1790 students from the Irish College played a Christmas game of soccer on the Champs de Mars, using, with remarkably poor judgment, the new Altar of the Fatherland as a goal. When a scoring kick destroyed the Altar, angry French spectators would have lynched them, had not General Lafayette himself arrived with troops from the National Guard and a young orator named Patrick McKenna calmed the mob with an inspired paean to Ireland's quest for *Liberté*.

Through it all, the Irish in Paris maintained a certain recognizable, even stereotypical, national identity. The 18th-century political philosopher Baron de Montesquieu dryly observed that the Irish students were so poor that they came to Paris bringing "nothing with them to meet the bare necessities of life, except a formidable talent for argument." At the end of the century, in an otherwise bureaucratic report on a recalcitrant Irish-French soldier, the Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety paused to remark, with very English-like exasperation, that "republicanism

does not easily penetrate into Irish heads."

Yet argumentative and stubborn as they might be, during the latter 18th century these Irish priests and their students seemed everywhere, deeply woven into Parisian life. When the Bastille fell, there was an Irish prisoner in it, a Dubliner who had served in the Irish Brigade. The priest who ministered to its inmates, for 40 livres a month, was one Thomas MacMahon.

And when the black day came, Louis XVI was given his last Communion by a cleric from the Irish College, Father Henry Edgeworth, who then accompanied the doomed king to the place de Grève and stood a few feet behind him on the plat-

form, praying as the guillotine fell. Dr. Guillotin himself is thought to have taught briefly at the Irish College.

**T**he question of who is French and who is not originated in a little known pre-Revolutionary law known as the *droit d'aubaine*, which can be translated roughly as the "law of windfall or good luck." It grew out of the absolutist nature of the French monarchy in the Old Regime, and it simply stated that if a resident foreigner died on French soil, his money and property belonged thenceforth to the king. (Confiscation was not exclusively an English appetite.) The way around this was to become a naturalized citizen, but the process was long and expensive; of the tens of thousands of foreigners in France, only about 50 a year were naturalized before 1789.

The Revolution would eventually repeal the *droit d'aubaine*—not for nothing was the term "citizen" so resonant in those tumultuous years—but even earlier, beginning in 1684, the *droit* had been waived by royal decree for Irish priests and soldiers, because all of them were presumed to be Jacobites (supporters of James II and his descendants, longtime Catholic pretenders to the English throne). Throughout the 18th century, Irish merchants, the third great class of refugee immigrants, were also drawn to Paris in





An Irish cleric, Henry Edgeworth, prayed with doomed Louis XVI before his execution in 1793.

impressive numbers, especially in banking and the wine trade. They too were given waivers from the *droit d'aubaine*, not to mention numerous other concessions and benefits prompted by the reflexive financial support of the crown for all things anti-English. By the end of the century Paris had become, if not precisely a little Dublin, the de facto place of asylum for Irish patriots of every kind, one anchor of a great political and intellectual bridge that united two very different countries against a common enemy.

**F**rom this point on, it is astonishing how often Irish names begin to appear in the history of Paris. On my desk sits a densely printed book called *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France*,

by Richard Hayes, which contains several hundred short biographies of Irish men and women who settled in and around the capital in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. (Outside Paris, their greatest concentration may have been in the wine country of Bordeaux.) In military matters, a thick and entertaining volume by the same writer, rather suggestively titled *Irish Swordsmen of France*, recounts the lives of six notable Irish generals who fought in the *Grande Armée* during the Napoleonic wars.

In politics, there is the famous Irish revolutionary Daniel O'Connell—"The Liberator"—who came to France as a schoolboy. O'Connell had a wide puritan streak in his makeup and was one of the rare Irishmen who did not take to the free and easy morals of Paris ("a proud but filthy city," he called it). He left it for good on the same day that Louis XVI was guillotined, but his blazing passion had already made such an impression that many years later the great 19th-century chronicler of Parisian life Henri Balzac remarked, "I would like to have met three men only in this century: Napoleon, Cuvier, and O'Connell." (O'Connell was the subject of a biography by Charles de

Gaulle's grandmother, this time on his father's side.)

Equally distinguished is the career of Patrice MacMahon, whose grandfather fled to France from Limerick in 1691 for the usual reasons. He would reach the rank of general in the Crimean War—and enter both French history and French literature with his immortal reply to the commander at Sebastopol who advised him to retreat: "*J'y suis. J'y reste.*" ("Here I am. Here I stay.") For a later victory, in Italy, MacMahon was named Duke of Magenta. And in 1873 he moved into the Hotel de Matignon on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, as president of France. He would hold the office for the next six years. Today, you can stroll from the Arc de Triomphe up the broad and elegant avenue MacMahon, stop in a pub, and raise a glass of Hennessy cognac (Richard Hennessy,

royal patent 1765) in his honor.

Not only generals and politicians have represented the Irish in Paris over the past two centuries. Long before the American “Lost Generation” of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald in the 1920s, Irish bohemians and artists cleared a Parisian space for themselves. The great-grandmother of such bohemians, one might say—were she not the subject of one of the most erotic paintings in all of French art—was a spectacular royal courtesan named Marie-Louise O’Murphy, commonly known as La Petite Morphil. Born in 1737, she was the fifth daughter of an Irish cobbler in Rouen. At the age of 14 or 15 she became a dancer in the Opéra in Paris, where Casanova spotted her and introduced her to the painter François Boucher. Boucher thereupon painted her lying on her stomach, legs spread wide in invitation, ripe as an apple. Casanova is said to have left the painting, as a calling card, in a place where Louis XV would happen upon it. He did, and for two years La Petite Morphil held a special place in the king’s favor, until she spoiled things by trying to displace Louis’ official mistress and one of the great sexual generals of all time, Madame de Pompadour

(who might also have remarked, “*J’y suis. J’y reste*”).

More memorable still are the three great modern Anglo-Irish writers who, though astonishingly different from one another, each sought out Paris at an early age and made it their home. The first, Oscar Wilde, followed a classic trajectory and came to Paris shortly after leaving Oxford—“For Irishmen,” remarks Wilde’s biographer Richard Ellmann, “Oxford is to the mind what Paris is to the body”—and there Wilde was to live, on and off, for the rest of his life. He spent his honeymoon in the Hotel Wagram in a room overlooking the Tuileries Gardens. In sad and ironic symmetry, he returned to Paris for good after his scandalous affair with Lord Douglas and died in another hotel, the Alsace, in 1900, at the age of 46. He lies buried in the cemetery Père Lachaise.

The allure of Paris for Wilde—and for James Joyce and Samuel Beckett afterward—was not only its sensuality. Their instinctual Irish distrust of England was never far below the surface. To them, Paris was the most civilized possible place of exile, one that—unlike certain other cities—properly valued art and artists and gave them both freedom and *tolerance*. Or to put it another way, when else have three

such splendid writers felt such repulsion from their natural literary magnet? Paris was not London—Paris was the very opposite of London. “He came to Paris to stay a week,” Ellmann writes of Joyce, “and remained for 20 years.” “I am not English,” Wilde liked to say. “I am Irish, which is quite another thing.”

Beyond these writers’ heavy-lidded, frowning distrust of the English nation lies something else: their deeply conflicted attitude toward the English language, which was at once their glorious inheritance, burden, and spur. One of



Soon after young Irish beauty Marie-Louise O’Murphy posed for this provocative portrait by the painter François Boucher, she came to King Louis XV’s attention and he took her as his mistress.

the indisputable masters of our tongue, Wilde nonetheless insisted that there were only two languages in the world worth learning, French and Greek. Like Beckett, he wrote almost as often in French as English. And he once described himself with a complex irony that both Beckett and Joyce would have understood: "*Français de sympathie, je suis Irlandais de race, et les Anglais m'ont condamné à parler le langage de Shakespeare.*" ("French by sympathy, I am Irish by race, and the English have condemned me to speak the language of Shakespeare.")

**T**he Irish are still in Paris, a boisterous, prosperous, fully accepted presence. There may be between 10,000 and 15,000 permanent residents, according to the Irish Embassy. The casual tourist is struck by their voices on the streets and by the number of Irish pubs scattered throughout the city. Father Lee's ancient college on the rue des Irlandais sits just a few blocks southeast of the Pantheon and serves now as the Irish Cultural Center, with a busy "multimedia center," a chapel, and a large dormitory for students. A reader who runs his eye down the pages of the Paris equivalent of the social register will still pause in surprise at names such as O'Gorman and MacCarthy. (My own French teacher on an early visit was a native Parisian named Alice Mahoney.)

Why this should be remains a mystery, to me at least. Beyond religion and a certain Celtic admixture, do the Irish and French share something else? The same sensual and tragic view of life? Does the Irish gift for language—no small part of de Gaulle's inheritance—fit them especially well for the passionate and lyric power of French at its best? Or is it perhaps simply no great surprise that, with the help of a common enemy, the two most talkative and argumentative races in Europe should find each other so compatible?



**Samuel Beckett, at work at the Odeón Theater in Paris in 1966, often wrote in French, perhaps agreeing with fellow Irishman Oscar Wilde that English was a burden.**

Quite possibly, however, I am looking from the wrong end of the telescope. Paris, incomparable Paris, makes its siren call not only to the Irish. One of its earliest visitors from the New World was that most representative and symbolic of the Founding Fathers, as completely American as de Gaulle was French. Thomas Jefferson came to Paris in 1784 and left it, reluctantly enough, in 1789 to take up his post as George Washington's first secretary of state (reluctant in part, perhaps, because of his affair with the artist Maria Cosway—said to be Irish-Italian!—whom he had met at the Paris grain market in 1786). As a buffer against the wilderness, Jefferson carried much of the City of Light home with him—some 86 great crates of wine, mirrors, armchairs, curtains, even wallpaper, so that afterward, in Virginia, Paris glowed in his mind. "I do love this people with all my heart," he wrote a friend in 1785. French by sympathy as much as anyone could be, he might have been speaking on behalf of four centuries of the Irish in Paris. ■



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# Inside Israel

David Ben-Gurion, the State of Israel's founding father, once said that in order to be a realist in Israel, one "must believe in miracles." The miracles have come—military victories, economic success, scientific achievement—but after years of conflict and growing international isolation, the belief is being put to the test as Israelis contemplate their future.



GALINA VROMEN on her life in an Arab town ..... p. 42

WALTER REICH on the despair of Israeli Jews ..... p. 48

YORAM PERI on the impasse in politics ..... p. 56

DAN SENOR and SAUL SINGER on the start-up culture ..... p. 62

# Israel Through Other Eyes

*In an Arab town, an Israeli Jew finds friendship—and its limits.*

BY GALINA VROMEN

SOME JEWS THINK I'M BRAVE. SOME THINK I'M stupid. I am an Israeli Jew who lives in an Arab Israeli town because I want to get to know the 20 percent of my compatriots who are Arabs and learn their language. No one thinks this is normal. There must be another motive. Maybe I am married to an Arab? Maybe I want to make a political statement? Maybe my work brings me here? The answer on all counts is "no." Just curiosity? How crazy!

Once Israeli Jews get over the shock, they almost always ask: "How do people treat you? Are you accepted?" The assumption is that I am shunned at best, attacked at worst. Nothing could be further from the truth.

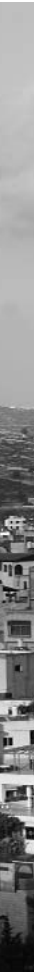
For almost two years I have lived with my husband, also an Israeli-born Jew, in the northern Israeli town known as Shfaram in Hebrew and Shafa 'Amr in Arabic, population 40,000—60 percent Muslims, 26 percent Arab Christians, 14 percent Druze, and a smattering of Bedouin. To the best of my knowledge, we are the only Jews. Located about 15 miles inland from the port city of Haifa, Shafa 'Amr is in the hilly Galilee region that has been part of the State of Israel since its creation in 1948. We hadn't planned to stay this long. We came for just a year, prompted by my husband's research on *sulha*, a traditional Arab mediation process, and our desire to learn Arabic. But it is a harder language to learn than we

thought and we enjoy life in the town and are in no rush to leave.

I have grown fond of my tiny herb garden—the one our friend Sayid helped me plant when my husband and I first arrived so I could make herbal tea. I love the view from our windows of the ruins of the Crusader fortress on the highest of the town's seven hills, the smell of coffee in the air that greets me when I hang my laundry off my porch, the tolling of the church bells that mingles on Sunday mornings with the *muezzins'* calls from the mosques. I love harvesting olives in autumn with the family that has adopted us.

It no longer strikes me as exotic when a pickup truck equipped with a megaphone winds its way through the narrow streets to announce a wedding. Funerals are also announced by megaphone. Among the first words I learned in Arabic were the ones for "wedding" and "funeral," in order to decipher whether the invitations, issued to one and all, were to share a joy or a sorrow. Most of the weddings take place outdoors in the summer, and I have come to expect summer months filled with fireworks bursting in the air in celebration. I no longer jump at the sound of sub-machinegun fire, tut-tut-tutting at the slightest excuse for joy among the Druze. (Followers of a secretive faith that separated from Islam in the 11th century, the Druze are the only Arabs who are conscripted into the Israel Defense Forces. This gives them access to army weapons, whose use to celebrate weddings and holidays is, of course, a patent

GALINA VROMEN, a former international news correspondent, directs a preschool reading and Jewish values program in northern Israel.





**Shafa 'Amr is also called "Little Rome" because of its seven hills, the tallest of them capped by a fortress built on the ruins of a Crusader castle.**

violation of military regulations.)

My biggest predicament in the first few months was that I could not venture out my door to dump my trash into the garbage bin without being invited for a friendly coffee I usually had no time to enjoy. Most of my neighbors have given up on me and assume I am unfriendly, when actually I am just busy directing a Hebrew-language parent-child reading program—a job that keeps me wedded to my computer for most of the day or away visiting nearby Jewish towns. However unintentionally, I am sure I have insulted many of my neighbors in Shafa 'Amr with my reluctance to interrupt my day for hours of socializing. But I have been treated with unremitting warmth and respect, even though my behavior is freer than what is

acceptable for women in the Druze part of town where I live: I take business trips unescorted by relatives; I rarely cook, in a community where women take pride in providing delicious and abundant food constantly; I have only one (grown) child; I expect my husband to wash floors and do the laundry, chores thought of exclusively as women's work.

Above all, I have come to appreciate how enveloping, comforting, and binding extended-family ties are among my Arab friends, and to be grateful for their willingness to allow my husband and me into their orbit. Throughout their lives they spend evening after evening together, sitting amiably on rooftop patios in the summer, watching the moon rise over their twinkling town, and clustering indoors during the winter, talking and drinking endless cups of tea

and coffee as the flames lap the olive-wood logs in their stoves. They consider my life pitifully unentwined in the lives of others, devoid of substance and interest because I live far from my son, my parents, and my brother.

I suspect that it is this sense of family—its love, its power, its all-encompassing cushioning against the world—that helps them contend with Israeli society, that often hostile, sometimes-compelling, always-conflicting world in which they find themselves. Unlike Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Israel captured in the Six-Day War of 1967, the Arabs of Shafa'Amr and other areas inside Israel's pre-1967 borders—about 1.2 million people in all—are Israeli citizens with full voting rights. But though they may study with Jews at universities, work with them in

**LIVING IN AN ARAB TOWN has meant acquiring bifocal vision that is often uncomfortable.**

offices and hospitals, service their cars, tend their gardens, and clean their homes, they rarely socialize with Jews.

Moreover, Arabs in Israel have a strong sense of being second-class citizens, a perception that is supported by the meagerness of the national resources dedicated to Arab schools and municipal infrastructure compared with those devoted to the Jewish sector. Arabs are underrepresented in the civil service and in universities; they cannot get the security clearances needed for jobs in Israel's large industrial security sector. I feel inadequate to speak about what Israel looks like through their eyes. I only know that living in an Arab town has meant acquiring a bifocal vision that is often uncomfortable. Above all, there is the feeling that a whole world exists that is simply ignored by the majority culture.

I remember walking around a big shopping mall in a Jewish town 10 minutes from Shafa'Amr. I was shopping there one day with my neighbor Bediya, and wanted to go into the record store to buy a CD by Mira Awad, an Israeli Arab singer. The shop is part of Israel's largest record-store chain. "You won't find Mira Awad here.

These stores don't carry our music," Bediya said simply. Nonsense, I thought to myself. But she was right. Not only was there nothing by Awad (other than a recording she had done with an Israeli Jewish artist), there were no Arabic recordings to be had at all, despite the fact that the mall was frequented by many Arabs from surrounding towns.

Watching the news with my Arab friends, many of whom tune in daily to Israeli state television news in Hebrew, has become an experience in altered perception. Even the weather report can be annoying. For example, the weatherman may say, "We're expecting rain tomorrow. But it will be over before the holiday on Tuesday." That rainy tomorrow is actually a Muslim/Druze holiday, which goes totally unacknowledged. Only the Jewish holiday later in the

week exists on Israeli television. It bothers me suddenly that the weatherman—and hence his listeners—does not know or does not acknowledge that a substantial portion of the population will care if it rains tomorrow and their feasts are ruined.

Then there was the report last year that Israel's transport minister, Israel Katz, had decided to gradually remove Arabic from road signs throughout Israel, despite the fact that Arabic is one of the country's official languages. This riles my neighbors. What is to be gained by such a policy? What will be its effect other than further disenfranchisement? Election after election, Arab voting rates go down—53 percent of Arab citizens went to the polls in the 2009 elections compared with 65 percent overall in the country, down dramatically from Arab voting rates of about 80 percent some 50 years ago. (Most give their votes to three small Arab parties, but about a third vote for mainstream Israeli parties.)

Katz's attitude is reflective of sentiment across a great swath of the Jewish population. In a 2008 poll by the Washington-based Center Against Racism, 75 percent of Israeli Jewish respondents said they would not agree to live in a building with Arab residents, about 40 percent believed that Arabs should be stripped of the right to vote, and more than 50 percent agreed that Israel should encourage the emigration of its Arab citizens. In a 2007 study by Haifa University sociologist Sami Smooha, 60 percent of surveyed Arab citizens of Israel expressed concern about a possible





Weddings and funerals loom large in the intense communal life of Shafa 'Amr's Druze community, with its close-knit and deeply rooted families.

mass expulsion, 76 percent considered Zionism to be racist, and 41 percent did not believe the Holocaust happened.

Israeli Arabs' alienation is palpable on Israeli Independence Day, which fell on April 19 this year. There were very few Israeli flags hanging in Shafa 'Amr, except on the post office and other official buildings. It's not that the residents don't like flags. There were lots of them—Brazilian, Italian, Argentine, varying according to each person's affinity for soccer teams contending in the World Cup. On Memorial Day, when Israel's war dead are honored, most people in Shafa 'Amr do not stand still during the minute-long wail of memorial sirens that is heard throughout the country. Unlike in Jewish towns, the traffic in Shafa 'Amr continues as normal. The same is true on Holocaust Memorial Day, when there are the same memorial sirens and the same responses. It saddens me, dismays me, but I cannot say that I don't understand.

When an item about Arabs buying land in the Galilee

was featured on television recently, I happened not to be in Shafa 'Amr, and I was relieved not to watch the report with my neighbors. The issue of land in tiny Israel is fraught with tension. "Judaizing" parts of Israel, such as the Galilee, where I live, has been the goal of most Israeli governments. Jewish suburban communities, with their rows of single-family homes and peaked red-tile roofs, have been deliberately placed between Arab towns, characterized by much more haphazard buildings and flat roofs that make it possible for sons to build homes on the roofs of their parents' houses. While dozens of new Jewish communities have mushroomed in the region over the past few decades, there are no new Arab townships—only the ever more sprawling existing ones. It is asserted in this particular news item that Jewish farmers are selling land to Arab buyers. Whether they are local citizens or foreigners is not made clear, but the tone of the piece conveys that it is shameful for Jews to sell land to Arabs. My Arab neighbors get the



Yet another glass of tea brings the author (left) together with her Arab friend and neighbor Bediya. But some topics remain hard to discuss.

message. How are they supposed to feel? They are not going to up and leave, of that I am certain. Not only do family ties root them here, but those family relations are deeply connected to land and hometown. The fact that I have lived in half a dozen places is cause for amazement, not admiration. Why would anyone go so far away from home?

One day I got into a discussion with my neighbors about Iran. What would they do if it used nuclear weapons against Israel? The answers were unanimous. They would stay right where they were, as they and their families did when Hezbollah attacked northern Israel from Lebanon in 2006, when Saddam Hussein sent his Scud missiles in 1990, in every Arab-Israeli war since 1948, and through all the ordeals dating back to the time when the Ottomans ruled the region. They are here, they are staying. The responses of our friends in Shafa 'Amr are consistent with polls showing

that most Israeli Arabs would rather reside in Israel than anywhere else—and most would not leave to move to a Palestinian state in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. This place is theirs, for better and for worse. Lots of things make them angry about Israel but some things make them grateful.

I remember the evening I invited Bediya to go see the Israeli antiwar film *Waltz With Bashir* in the nearby Jewish town of Tivon. As we waited for the movie to begin, she looked around the hall and murmured, “I bet I am the only non-Jew here.”

“Probably,” I answered. I hadn’t thought about it before.

When we walked out of the movie, which depicts the psychic costs of Israel’s 1982 invasion of Lebanon, her first comment was, “There isn’t another country in the Middle East that would allow a movie like this to be made about it.”

The evening highlighted the reality of an educated Arab wishing to embrace the advantages of the West while remaining essentially marginalized. Arabs can go to

such movies, but by and large they don't. The majority culture is not theirs; they remain outsiders in a country where they have lived for generations.

For Arab women who want to embrace Western freedoms, the situation is particularly complex. It can even be dangerous. A few months after we arrived in Shafa 'Amr, a young Arab woman in a nearby town became yet another victim of honor killing when her father and brother set fire to her car while she was in it. There are at least half a dozen such killings reported each year in Israel, and probably many more that go unreported. In this case, as in most others, the cause of the young woman's dishonor was that she had gone out with a young man not of her family's choosing. The murderous father and brother turned themselves in to the police and acknowledged responsibility. The incident came up in conversation one evening at a celebration of the birth of a baby.

I asked those in the room what they thought of the incident.

"The father had no choice but to act as he did," ventured one elderly friend.

He was of the older generation. Just old-fashioned, I assumed. So I turned to his nephew, who is in his twenties. "Do you think so too?" I asked him.

"Of course," he answered, without hesitation. "The father had no choice."

"Why?" I asked. "Why did he have to do it?"

"Well, it's like when you have a weed around your olive tree. You have to pull it out, you have to get rid of it. Or it can eventually destroy the tree."

I turned to the young man's sister, also in her twenties, who had gone to school with the dead woman. "Do you agree?" I asked.

"That girl was always trouble," she answered.

I sipped my drink to hide my dismay. I was sitting among people I consider friends. Two little girls, sisters of the newborn, played at our feet. I worry for these girls; I wonder how they will navigate between the freedom of the modern world and family expectations.

**M**y friend Bediya lives with that tension every day. She is a feminist, holds a master's degree in public administration, and works full time. She fought with the men in her family for 20 years to win the right to learn to drive. "The women who were

outraged when I first wanted to take driving lessons now all drive," she laughs.

Bediya is no less outraged by honor killings than I am. "People say one has to understand why the men do it. I say there are some things one should never understand because to say it's understandable is to allow it to continue."

A natural leader, she is often invited by Jewish groups to speak about the status of Arab women. She does it, but uncomfortably. She revels in the freedom of living in a Western democratic country, but she also recognizes that living in Israel carries with it the gnawing sense that she will always remain on the margins of society by virtue of not being Jewish. She will never be just herself for the Jewish majority. She will always be representative of something—of how far Arabs have come, of how far Arab women can go, of the possibility that Jews and Arabs can be friends.

I am not so naive as to think that by living in an Arab town, by getting to know my Arab compatriots, I am helping to resolve the tensions Israel faces. Knowing and understanding one another is good, certainly better than ignorance. But it does not, in and of itself, create a common vision of the future. At heart, I remain a Zionist. I believe in the desirability of a Jewish state, of there being one place in the world where Jewish culture prevails. I also believe in democracy as the best form of government. This entails not only majority rule but—no less important—a country of all its citizens and the protection of the civic and cultural rights of minorities. I favor greater acknowledgment of the multicultural nature of Israel, of its Arab minority, of its foreign workers, of the ethnic diversity of its Jewish population, which hails from every corner of the world. But what if the minority becomes the majority someday, and Bediya's culture prevails? For me, the whole purpose of the Jewish enterprise would be negated.

When Bediya and I discuss this, as we occasionally do, we inevitably arrive at an impasse. We find ourselves staring at each other, knowing that the futures we dream of are not the same. They probably never will be. Bediya pours water from the kettle, peels an orange and divides it in two. We return to talk of children, husbands, work, and the latest episodes of our favorite Turkish soap opera, and sip tea flavored with the herbs I have brought from my garden. ■

# The Despair of Zion

*Any effort to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians must reckon with the fact that bitter experience has taught many Israelis to doubt that their foes want a lasting concord.*

BY WALTER REICH

MEETING A FRIEND IN A COFFEE SHOP IN AN OLD Jerusalem neighborhood, once the home of Jews who had escaped Germany before the Holocaust, I asked him what he wanted most in life. One of the giants of Israel's academic and intellectual life, my friend has challenged some of the central tenets of his country's national narrative but is deeply committed to the necessity and justice of Israel's existence as a Jewish state.

With no hesitation, but with obvious despair, he answered, "I want my children to emigrate."

Just then his daughter happened to stop by with her husband, greeting her father with a warm hello before hurrying off. He shrugged, and said, "She doesn't want to go. What can I do?"

My friend's despair is shared, in one way or another, by many of the Israelis with whom I've spoken. It's a despair based largely on what they believe is a realistic assessment of Israel's situation in the world and of the ultimate intentions of many, and probably most, Palestinians.

To be sure, lots of Israelis don't share this despair,

don't talk about it, or use every coping mechanism they can to set it aside and live a normal life. Yet it's a feeling that, at some level and to some degree, permeates all things in much of the population, and that has frequently emerged in the many conversations I've had in recent years with Israelis.

American officials in past administrations have tried—sometimes, as one of them put it recently, religiously, and often blindly and self-deceptively—to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty. But the failure of each effort has deepened Israeli despair.

The Obama administration, too, seems intent on brokering such a peace treaty. For the administration to have any chance to succeed, it will not only have to show Israelis that it understands their despair but convince them that the kind of treaty it wants Israel to accept will be worth the cost because it will result in a real peace—one that will actually last, that's less threatening than the situation they're now in, and that will truly and finally end the conflict with the Palestinians. Few Israelis still fantasize that some day Palestinians will accept them with any warmth as neighbors; but they want to live—and to be, at least, left alone.

Certainly, there's much in their country's experience that provokes in Israelis pride rather than

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A family member grieves at the funeral service for eight Jewish yeshiva students killed in a 2008 attack by a Palestinian gunman.

despair. After all, following two millennia of forced dispersions, during which they prayed three times a day to return to Zion, and during which some Jews persisted in living there, they've finally returned, so that today half the Jews in the world—a population much diminished by the Holocaust—live in the place from which their forebears were exiled.

And they've accomplished a lot there. They've revived a language—Hebrew—for everyday use that, throughout their years in exile, was used primarily

for religious and literary purposes. They've created a modern country and a democratic society in a vast zone of despotic rule. Jews who were once utterly defenseless in foreign lands and repeatedly massacred—most recently in the greatest massacre of all, the Holocaust—can now defend themselves. And, despite its small population—some 7.5 million, about 80 percent of them Jews—Israel has become a dynamo of scientific and cultural innovation.

Yet the challenges that face Israel are immense—

and growing. Increasingly, Israelis are convinced that no concessions they make to the Palestinians will ever be enough—that each concession will be followed by another demand, that each new demand that isn't conceded will be a pretext for more violence, and that each response to that violence will provoke international condemnations of Israel for using disproportionate force, no matter what forewarnings are given and what precautions are taken

**INCREASINGLY, ISRAELIS are convinced that no concessions they make to the Palestinians will ever be enough.**

to prevent civilian casualties. Israelis watch as efforts are made around the world to demonize, isolate, and delegitimize their country. They're stunned especially by the successful strategy, employed by Palestinians and their allies, of having Israel labeled an "apartheid state." They feel beset by what they see as biased media campaigns and human rights organizations that focus obsessively on Israel even as they ignore massive violations elsewhere. They feel increasingly and unfairly under attack by, among others, a Europe with a growing Muslim population, the United Nations, the political Left on university campuses and elsewhere, and even some Jews around the world, including some in Israel, who find themselves embarrassed that the Jewish state has used military force.

**T**o be successful, those who want to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace—one that lasts more than a few weeks or months—will have to be able to glimpse the world through Israeli eyes. They'll have to understand the beliefs and fears that are the sources of much Israeli despair—and take them into account no less than they take into account the sources of Palestinian despair. Ten of these beliefs and fears seem particularly salient:

**The Palestinians will never accept the existence of Israel, and systematically teach their children that they must never do so, either.**

It's this belief, probably more than any other, that causes Israeli despair.

Israelis have grown accustomed to being pilloried in the most crude and violent terms in Palestinian mosques. And they've grown accustomed to media controlled by the Palestinian Authority in the

West Bank that regularly undermine the readiness to accept Israel alongside a future Palestinian state—that glorify suicide bombers, quote Muhammad as saying that Jews must be killed, accuse Israelis of poisoning and spreading AIDS among

Palestinians, deny that the Holocaust happened, claim that Jews never had a history in the land and that there was never any Temple in Jerusalem, and insist that Jews should leave the area and go back to their "original" homelands—Europe and Ethiopia.

Israelis might feel reassured that peace is possible if it were promoted in the Palestinian Authority's education system; even if the current Palestinian generation isn't ready to accept the Jewish state, maybe a future one will. But they know that Palestinian students study maps in their textbooks on which Israel doesn't exist and watch television programs aimed at young people that identify cities in Israel as being part of Palestine.

Moreover, the *other* Palestinian territory—Gaza—is governed by a group, Hamas, that is forthright in declaring that it will fight until Israel is gone, and that promotes this ideology in every way it can in its own media and education system. Even if the Palestinian Authority were to foster the ideal of coexistence among its students, what about the students in Gaza?

**Palestinians will always demand more concessions until there is no Israel.**

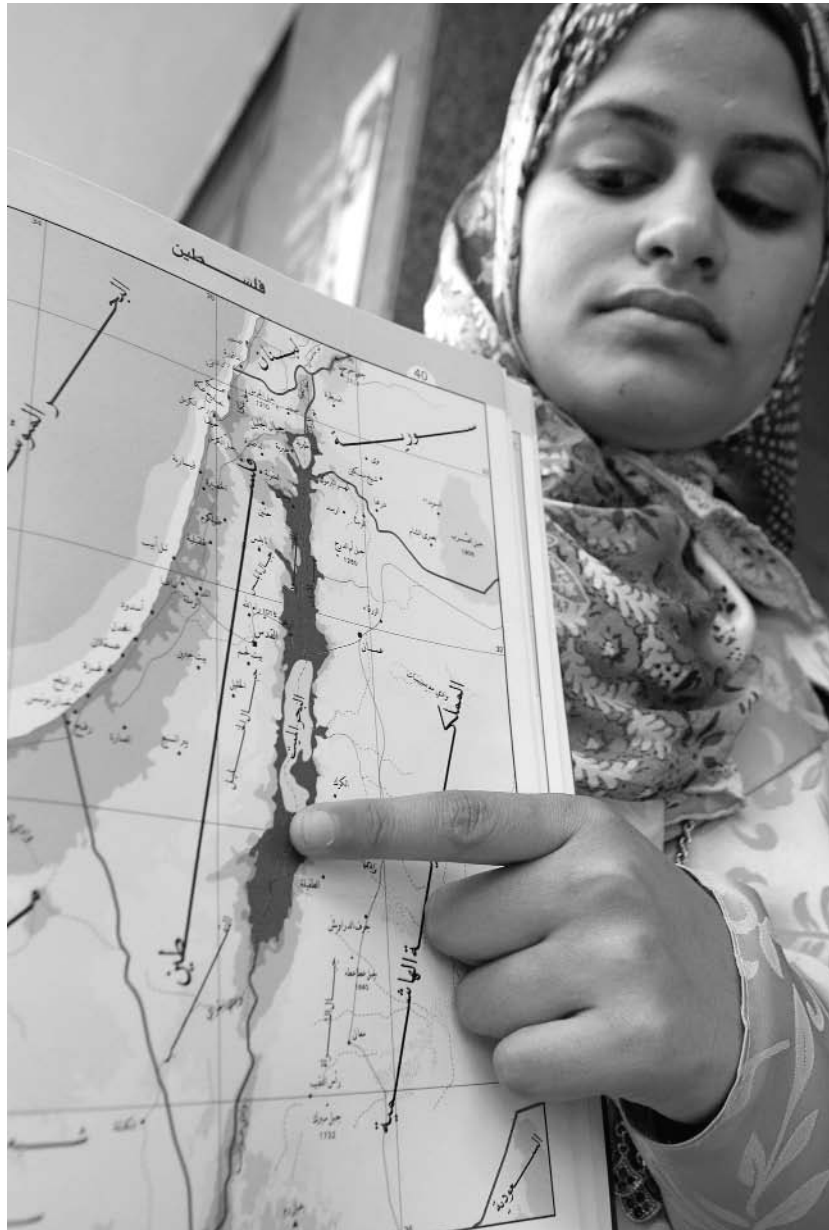
This is a conclusion many Israelis have reached as a result of many years of failed peacemaking.

After the Oslo Peace Accords, signed in 1993 on

the White House lawn, the Israeli consensus, fragile but determined, and led by Yitzhak Rabin, was that peace would be painful, would require massive concessions involving land and the control of Jerusalem, and would require the removal of most settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. But for most Israelis, these concessions were worth the achievement of a real and lasting peace.

After years of Israeli buses being blown up, after the refusal by Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, to accept a peace in which nearly all of the West Bank and Gaza would become a Palestinian state, and after Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, refused concessions that were even more generous, many Israelis concluded that no concession would ever be enough. Always there was an insistence that the Palestinian refugees—including the millions of children, grandchildren, and other descendants of the original refugees from the 1948 fighting—would be able to “return” to the homes of the actual refugees in what became Israel. For most Israelis this is a strategy aimed at ending the Jewish state, and is the poison pill of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy.

**Palestinians attack Israel from behind civilian human shields, but any response by Israel, however careful, that harms those civilians is condemned, while the tactic itself, which is a crime of war, is ignored.**



**Throughout the Arab world, there is no Israel on maps used to instruct the young, only Palestine.**

Israelis have concluded that this new form of warfare has undercut the effectiveness of the military strength on which they long relied. They know they have a powerful army—the Israel Defense Forces, or IDF—that faces, in the cases of the Palestinians and Hezbollah in Lebanon, adversaries that lack tanks or planes. But Israelis have discovered that their military superiority is blunted, even useless, when their

adversaries are willing to use the very people whose cause they claim to champion as shields behind which to fire rockets. That's what happened during Israel's three-week incursion into Gaza in the winter of 2008–09, which it launched after being bombarded by thousands of rockets. And that's what happened during the 2006 war with Hezbollah, the Palestinians' ally on Israel's northern border, which hid its rockets in schools, mosques, and hospitals, so that Israel couldn't target the rockets without also destroying those schools, mosques, and hospitals—and killing civilians. Like the United States and other countries fighting in the Middle East, Israel doesn't know how to fight such a war. And when it tries, it's accused of war crimes. Israelis worry that the military they built to defend their country can't do it without bringing upon Israel international condemnation.

**Increasingly, the military war against Israel, in which Israel can defend itself, is being replaced by a public relations war, in which Israel invariably loses.**

As frustrating as it is for Israelis to fight an enemy that uses its own population as human shields, it's even more frustrating to fight an enemy that designs every encounter to turn into a public relations disaster for Israel. In May, when Israel tried to stop the Free Gaza flotilla—which included militant Islamist activists ready for a fight—it fell into a trap. If it allowed the blockade of Gaza to be breached, then Hamas might get more rockets to shoot at Israel. But if it tried to stop the ships, it would risk a confrontation that would further damage its reputation. It risked that confrontation, was met with violence, ended up killing activists, and created an anti-Israel furor in the world news media. Now, more such flotillas—and more PR-aimed provocations—are surely coming.

**The worldwide campaign to delegitimize Israel is selective and hypocritical, but is finding increasing support.**

The growth of anti-Israel sentiment around the world has left Israelis feeling increasingly isolated. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, and a great number of Israelis see themselves as liberals.

They know that, in the last century, the spasm of murder aimed at annihilating all Jews in Europe and anywhere else they could be found was carried out on the basis of a rightist ideology. So they're amazed that so much antagonism toward Israel is expressed by intellectuals on the political left. They don't understand why they're attacked for even minor confrontations with Palestinians or for erecting checkpoints to deter suicide bombers, while far more extensive human rights violations are glossed over. Ignored, for example, is the gross violation of the most basic human rights, to the point of enslavement, of the half of the population of Saudi Arabia made up of women, or the banning of worship there that isn't Muslim. Ignored, too, are the populations that lack basic freedoms—in Syria, say, or Iran, or Sudan, or Somalia, as well as the victims in Chechnya, Tibet, and Kurdistan.

Moreover, some of the greatest human rights violators in the world—most recently Libya—sit on the UN Human Rights Council, whose condemnations, Israelis note, are relentlessly focused on Israel. Permanent bodies in the UN, several with large staffs, have been established solely to advocate on behalf of Palestinians, such as the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Israelis find the worldwide anti-Israel campaigns by other groups isolating and frightening. Critics have tried to persuade academic and professional organizations to sever ties with Israeli groups. In Britain, the University and College Union, an educators' organization, passed a boycott resolution last year only to be warned by lawyers that such a boycott would be illegal. Others have campaigned to get universities and churches to remove companies that do business with Israel from their endowment portfolios. On a few occasions, Israeli scientists have even been denied visas to countries that were hosting professional conclaves. In June, Spain's Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals, and Bisexuals banned Israel from participating in its gay pride parade in Madrid—even though Israel is one of the few coun-



tries in the Middle East in which homosexuality is protected, while homosexuals elsewhere in the region face execution.

**The most vicious canard of all—that Israel is a Nazi state—is, with increasing frequency, hurled against the Jewish state.**

Fighting between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank in 2002 provoked a chorus of accusations by Europeans that the Israelis were doing to the Palestinians exactly what Nazi Germany did to the Jews. “What is happening,” the late Portuguese Nobel laureate José Saramago said, “is a crime that may be compared to Auschwitz.”

Later, during the fighting in Gaza in the winter of 2008–09, demonstrators carried signs with slogans such as “Israel: The Fourth Reich” and “Stop the Nazi Genocide in Gaza.” Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan president, said, “The Holocaust, that is what is happening right now in Gaza.” And a Norwegian foreign diplomat wrote, “The grandchildren of Holocaust survivors from World War II are doing to the Palestinians exactly what was done to them by Nazi Germany.”

For many Israelis, who are Holocaust survivors or their descendants, such accusations provoke horror and shock. Either these allies of the Palestinians have a profound misunderstanding of what the Holocaust was or are hurling the most vicious canard they can against the Jewish state. Some Israelis are convinced that, by accusing Israelis of being Nazis, Europeans are trying to free their continent from the burden of its history. After all, if Jews in Israel are no different from Nazi murderers, then the continent’s history can be seen as normal. For some Israelis, in fact, this European phenomenon represents anti-Semitism’s return.

**Even if there is a two-state solution, what will happen the day after tomorrow?**

This question keeps many Israelis awake at night. The main peace plan to end the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict aims at a “two-state solution”—an Israel behind its pre-1967 borders alongside a Palestinian state in what is now the West Bank and, if Hamas can somehow be converted or defeated, Gaza. But, Israelis ask, why would any sane person, Israeli or otherwise, believe that, two weeks or two months after a Palestinian state were to come into being—a state that would abut the length of Israel’s narrow waist as well as Jerusalem—rockets wouldn’t be flying over its border and blowing up in every Israeli city and airport?

**ISRAELIS FIND THE worldwide anti-Israel campaigns by other groups isolating and frightening.**

And why not? Even if Hamas were to retain control of Gaza and refuse to participate in a treaty with Israel, meaning that the Palestinian state would consist only of what is now the West Bank, and even if that state’s leaders wanted peace at least as long as it would take to establish their country, wouldn’t there also be, in that state, Hamas members and others who didn’t want peace, who had never wanted it, and who would use it as a springboard for launching attacks so as to achieve the ultimate objective of eliminating Israel? Wasn’t that Yasir Arafat’s goal even before the Six-Day War? Isn’t that Hamas’s goal now? And if the leaders of the Palestinian state who didn’t want war got in the way, wouldn’t they be ignored—or killed?

The Israelis who have this nightmare cite a small experiment to buttress their fear—Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. This action was followed by a coup in which Hamas brutally killed members of its Palestinian rival, Fatah, took over Gaza, and continually lobbed rockets into Israel.

In this nightmare of rockets bombarding Israel from the Palestinian state, that state’s Hezbollah allies in Lebanon launch their own war of rockets against Israel. In 2008, Hezbollah’s rockets had enough range

to target Israel's north. Now that Hezbollah's store of rockets has been vastly upgraded and expanded, it can target nearly all Israeli cities.

With tens of thousands of rockets and missiles flying out of the Palestinian state and Lebanon—and, in this nightmare, from Gaza as well—it might be impossible for Israelis to live anywhere other than in bomb shelters, and the devastation would be immense. But if Israel were to respond by attacking the sources of those rockets in the newly declared Palestine, this time they would be attack-

probability of such an attack significant, especially if Palestinians and Hezbollah are firing rockets into Israel, and Israel is responding.

**The idea is spreading that U.S. support for Israel is the root cause of America's problems in the Middle East.**

In the years after 9/11, the most common American explanation for Islamic terrorism was poverty. Even after numerous studies proved that this wasn't true, this

reason continues to be cited by politicians and academics.

Now, Israelis fear, their country's conflict with the Palestinians is becoming the simple—and false—explanation for America's unpopularity in the Middle East. When they heard President Barack Obama remark at an April press

**ISRAELIS' CHOICE IS between the physical destruction wrought by war and the moral destruction wrought by dominating a people that would destroy them.**

ing not a territory or a faction but a sovereign member of the UN, one that would call on—and instantly receive—the support not only of its fellow Muslim states but also the world at large, including most of Europe. And since the same tactic that was used in Gaza and Lebanon would no doubt be used in Palestine—rockets fired from hospitals, schools, and mosques—any retaliation would provoke multiple critical reports, from UN bodies as well as human rights groups, of war crimes that would make the excoriations of Israel in the Goldstone Commission report, which was issued after the fighting in Gaza, sound, by comparison, like allegations of traffic violations.

**Meanwhile, Iran is readying its nuclear warheads.**

This is, for Israelis, the most frightening scenario of all. They have no doubt—and intelligence services around the world tend to confirm—that Iran will have one or more usable nuclear weapons within a couple of years. Reportedly, Iran already has enough nuclear material to enable it, once the material is purified, to make two weapons. Israelis take seriously the Iranian argument that it's worth being damaged by an Israeli counter-strike if, in the process, the Zionist entity, as well as all or most of its Jews, are destroyed. They consider the

conference that regional conflicts such as that in the Middle East end up “costing us significantly in terms of both blood and treasure,” they assumed from the context that he was referring to America's support for Israel. In the view of these Israelis, no one who understands radical Islam imagines that America would cease being its target even if the United States were to cut off all ties with Israel—indeed, even if Israel were to disappear.

As some Israelis see it, the naive notion that their country is a root cause of the problems the United States is experiencing in the Middle East has been adopted by a large number of Americans—and America might, as a result, abandon the Jewish state.

**Not pursuing a two-state solution leaves only a one-state solution—an alternative that is profoundly anti-Zionist.**

If a two-state solution is seen by most Israelis as existentially dangerous and possibly unattainable, then all that's left is maintenance of the status quo. And Israelis understand that an endless status quo could result in a one-state solution—a state in which they would be politically dominant but demographically a minority. The Zionist dream of a democracy of Jews in



**A rocket streaks toward Israel from the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip in January 2009, amid an Israeli incursion designed to end the steady rain of attacks.**

the land of their people's birth would be destroyed. The vast majority of Israelis I know don't want to have power over the lives of Palestinians. But deeper than their empathy with the Palestinians is their desperate hope to survive. What Israelis see before them is a choice between the physical destruction wrought by war and the moral destruction wrought by forever dominating a people that, if allowed, would destroy them. For these Israelis, it's a choiceless choice.

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Which makes it easy to understand why my Zionist friend, who believes in the justice of a Jewish state, wants his children to emigrate.

Which makes it necessary that the Obama administration address my friend's despair if it hopes to broker a real and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

And which leads me, as his friend—and as someone whose murdered family in Europe probably would have remained alive had Israel existed seven decades ago—to my own state of Zionist despair.

The United States' attempts at making peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have failed for many reasons. If the Obama administration really wants to broker a treaty—one that has any chance of yielding a lasting peace—then it will have to understand Israel's nightmares even as it recognizes Palestinian yearnings, and find ways of addressing them. And it had better do so soon. ■

# Israel at 62

*Israelis are increasingly unhappy with a political system that seems to deliver nothing but strife and division.*

BY YORAM PERI

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN ISRAEL IS ALWAYS marked by a news media outpouring of reviews of the year. It is a reliably upbeat affair replete with heartening economic statistics and the good deeds of upstanding citizens. The 62nd anniversary of Israel's founding this past April was in many ways no different. Certainly there was much to celebrate. Compared with previous years, this one was relatively quiet. Only two Israeli civilians (and one foreign worker) were killed by terrorists, and, thanks to Israel's incursion—amid international condemnation—into the Gaza Strip little more than a year earlier, residents in nearby communities were no longer forced to sleep in shelters to avoid the steady rain of rockets once launched by Hamas militants. The northern Galilee was teeming with tourists, the cafés and cinemas were packed with customers, and many establishments no longer bothered to employ security guards to check entering patrons.

The economy has been growing briskly for years; Israel barely lost a step in the global financial crisis, handily outperforming the United States and Europe. On a pound-per-pound basis, Israel is hard to match as a center of innovation and creativity, as the current bestseller about the country, *Start-Up Nation*, well illustrates. (See the article by the book's authors, Dan Senor and Saul Singer, on p. 62.) Israel ranks third in the world in the output of scientific arti-

cles per capita, and Israeli companies are the number-one foreign presence on America's technology-dominated NASDAQ stock exchange. Thank the Israelis for USB plugs and countless other indispensable pieces of modern technology. Even their cows are winners, outproducing American and European animals by wide margins.

Yet for all this, Independence Day in Israel was tinged by a deep sense of unease. While the newspaper supplements maintained their upbeat tradition, darker stories dominated the news. Banner headlines proclaimed yet another political scandal, this time involving former prime minister Ehud Olmert and a former mayor of Jerusalem, as well as more than a dozen government officials and leading members of Israel's business community. The bribery scandal—involving allegations that hundreds of thousands of dollars changed hands in connection with a real estate project in the 1990s—is the largest in Israeli history, and it came on the heels of other revelations that have caught up a foreign minister, a former treasury minister, and even a former president. This new wave of corruption was for skeptical Israelis an additional illustration that something fundamental is wrong with the entire political system.

Ultimately, though, the unease has deeper roots. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. Herzl embraced the idea that the Jews' assimilation into European societies would bring an end to anti-Semitism until the Dreyfus affair in late-19th-century France persuaded him that threats to Jews' security would end only if they established their own state. Yet 62 years after the birth of Israel,

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Palestinians mark Israel's founding, or what they call "the catastrophe" (al Nakba), with demonstrations. Israelis celebrate with picnics and barbecues.

threats still abound. Since the collapse of the Oslo peace process at the Camp David summit in 2000, more than a thousand Israelis and thousands of Palestinians have been killed. Anti-Semitism is on the rise worldwide, in some cases as a result of Israel's own policies, such as Operation Cast Lead, the Gaza incursion in the winter of 2008–09 that stopped the Hamas rocket attacks, and the bungled commando attack on Gaza-bound Turkish supply ships this past May. Rather than provide security for Jews, it appears that Israel has occasionally produced the opposite result.

And now the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran looms. What appears to the United States to be a strategic problem, observes Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak, is an existential threat for Israelis, many of whom acutely remember huddling in sealed rooms with gas masks pulled over their heads when Saddam Hussein's Iraq launched missile strikes at Israel during the first Gulf War in 1991. Nine years after

that, during the second intifada, a wave of suicide bombers attacking cafés and buses in the heart of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv led Israelis to the chilling conclusion that peace was unattainable, or at least very far away. "There is no one to talk to," they said—no effective leadership on the Arab side willing or able to discuss peace seriously.

That gloomy conclusion has been reinforced by Hezbollah's launching of thousands of missiles and rockets from Lebanon into Israel's northern towns and by the rocket attacks of the Gaza-based Hamas, suppressed for the time being, against the country's southern communities. Both groups are backed by Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who does not hide his intention "to wipe the Zionist entity off the map."

Disappointment with the peace process, existential anxieties, and a sense of uncertainty about the future have wrought major changes in Israel's political life. After the fail-

ure of Camp David and the outbreak of the second intifada, the left-of-center political parties began a sharp decline. The presence of the once powerful Labor Party was reduced to only 13 of the Knesset's 120 seats in the 2009 elections, and that of the Meretz Party, to Labor's left, to just three. Liberal and left-wing non-parliamentary movements such as Peace Now are virtually silent, and civil and human rights activists commonly face accusations of treason.

The nationalist-religious right wing has enjoyed a renaissance. The parties in this camp hold a majority in the Knesset, their think tanks (such as the Shalem Center in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs) dictate the public discourse, their worldview prevails in the mass media, and their spokespersons dominate cyberspace.

**ISRAEL'S LEFT-OF-CENTER political parties have shrunk, and its civil and human rights activists are often accused of treason.**

This Weltanschauung is based on distrust of non-Jews, a conviction that "the entire world is against us," and a deep belief that only power will determine the outcome of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Since the elections last year, more attempts have been made to limit the rights of Israeli Arabs and even to expel them from Israel, restrict the operations of civil rights organizations, limit freedom of expression, and curtail judicial review by the Supreme Court. Jewish settlements in the West Bank have been steadily thickening.

Israeli politics are also being reshaped by new demographic realities. Perhaps a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union arrived during the 1990s, and they have tended to adopt a nationalist view of the world. From their native land they have brought the attitudes of homo sovieticus and translated them into an Israeli context: hatred of the other (i.e., Arabs), insensitivity to human rights, and a preference for strong leaders over the complexities of parliamentary democracy. They don't understand how a state that can be crossed in half an hour by car would be willing even to talk about relinquishing territories

to its seemingly perpetual enemy. Last year, many of them voted for the radical-right party of Avigdor Lieberman, Israel Is Our Home. More than half of the 15 seats this party won were the products of the Russian-speaking community's votes.

Add to these immigrants the ever-growing ranks of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews, whose birthrate is almost three times that of their more secular-minded compatriots. Once mostly in the moderate camp, they have become the avant-garde of the settlers' movement and the leading force in the occupied territories, believing that "the Land of Israel" is a divine gift bestowed on the Jewish people and that the Jews are forbidden to transfer any part of it to others.

The other major group on the right consists of Jews with origins in Morocco and Middle Eastern countries outside Israel, many of whom are followers of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the absolute leader of the Shas party. It too has moved to the right as many of its constituents,

encouraged by government subsidies, have moved to settlements in the West Bank.

Finally, there are the nearly one million young people, the so-called millennials, who voted for the first or second time in 2009. Their political socialization occurred during the first decade of the century, when the peace process collapsed and with it the belief that peace is possible at all. At the same time, they came of age without any memory of Israel inside its pre-1967 borders and find it difficult to conceive of returning to them. They tend to believe, with Moshe Ya'alon, a former chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) who is now a superhawkish member of the government's inner cabinet, that "peace will only come in the next generation." Ya'alon says, "We are a society at war. Our sword must remain unsheathed."

Even more serious than the move to the right is the widespread disengagement from politics among the young. This sort of alienation is not unique to Israel, but it is qualitatively different there, where the disaffected see a system that is not merely flawed but has failed to deliver the goods for the last 43 years—a real end to the Six-Day War and a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Disaffected Israelis see politicians

who serve their own interests first, then those of narrow interest groups. Politics to them “has become something essentially negative and revolting,” says political scientist Tamar Hermann of the Israeli Democracy Institute in Jerusalem. “What is left is to flee from public affairs to their private gardens.”

The disenchantment is partly a byproduct of the structure of Israel’s electoral system—a political scientist’s dream, but one that has tied Israel in knots for decades. Under Israel’s proportional voting scheme, voters do not cast ballots for a specific local representative but for a national political party. (Voters have little role in selecting the parties’ candidates: Some parties hold primaries, in which turnout is generally light, while others, such as Shas and Israel Is Our Home, have the leader simply choose the parliamentary list himself.) Parties are awarded seats in the Knesset according to the proportion of votes they receive in the national tally. Even the tiniest group can hope to win seats by going it alone, with the result that more than two dozen parties compete in any given election. About half succeed. No party in the country’s history has ever won enough seats to form

a government on its own, and it is the rare government that lasts more than two years.

Last year, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s conservative Likud Party won only 27 of the 120 Knesset seats, finishing second to the more centrist Kadima, which won 28. The government Netanyahu formed is a coalition of six parties, including some, such as Labor and Shas, that have diametrically opposed views on the central issue of how to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict. Other coalition members are chiefly interested in advancing their parochial interests. For example, the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism, with five seats, is bent on strengthening its independent religious schools and safeguarding privileges, such as the exemption of religious students from mandatory military service. In such a coalition, sectarian interests often trump national needs, the coalition partners compete on a daily basis, and the prime minister is reduced to the role of a balancer, whose main task is merely to preserve the coalition.

Netanyahu, who previously served as prime minister from 1996 to ’99, has gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure the stability of his government. The price is significant. His



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) with a leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, one of six parties in the government he struggles to lead.



**Disowned even by many Israeli nationalist and settler organizations, the Hilltop Youth movement has taken advantage of Israel's weak and divided government. Members erect illegal outposts in the West Bank that they hope will become permanent, and often clash with Palestinians and Israeli police.**

administration has 30 full and deputy ministers, more than any in the country's history, and many of them lack specific portfolios. While a quarter of the Knesset's members now enjoy the power and perks of office, it is difficult to administer such a government efficiently or lead it effectively.

During the 1990s, similar frustrations spurred a reform drive that was blunted by the parties' unwillingness to relinquish any power. The result was a complex, unworkable system, with the Knesset elected as before but the prime minister chosen by the people in direct elections. (Netanyahu, who had supported reform, was the victor.) The result was the polar opposite of what was intended: Larger parties were reduced in size while the number of small parties increased, making the governing coalition even more unstable. No wonder that in 2001 the Knesset voted to restore the former system. Since then, there has been little interest in discussing electoral changes advocated by academics and reformers.

A more modest reform may still be possible. There is

strong public support for the idea of dividing Israel into 20 or 30 districts, which would each elect several members. In this way, citizens would know who their representatives were and the legislators would be directly accountable to the voters. So far, however, the Knesset has been noticeably unenthusiastic about the idea, for the obvious reason that it would limit members' freedom of action.

After decades in which Israeli politicians were national heroes and role models for the young, the nation faces a severe leadership drought. Amid the prevailing atmosphere of futility and disgust, many Israelis do not even recognize their elected officials. The average Israeli mother would have nightmares if one of her children declared a desire to pursue politics as a vocation. Political parties across the spectrum have turned to celebrities to bear the party standard at the polls—some with substantive agendas, such as Labor's Shelly Yachimovich, a radio commentator, but many others who are simply attractive media personalities with no political back-



ground or agenda whatsoever. The Americanization of Israeli politics in the 1990s, which introduced political consultants and the media circus, has been followed by its Italianization. How long will it be before Israeli politicians follow the example of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi by choosing beauty queens for their party lists?

The leadership vacuum has also drawn retired military officers into politics. In the past, popular commanders such as Moshe Dayan and Ariel Sharon entered the political arena after winning wars; now it is almost a routine career path. Three of Netanyahu's Likud cabinet ministers are former generals, and many more retired officers have appeared on party lists or currently serve in high civilian posts. Critics link this influx with what they see as Israel's increasing militarization and right-wing direction, but this is a simplistic view. Some of Israel's greatest peacemakers have been generals—Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a former chief of staff of the IDF, signed the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan and the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords with the Palestinians—and today's generals are a politically diverse lot. Yet the critics are correct to point out that the vision of many of these former officers tends to be too narrow. Left to them, security matters become not just the most important issue but the sole issue, and they often see Israel's international relations mainly through a military prism. The uproar over Israel's interception of relief ships bound for Gaza is only the most recent illustration of the fact that scoring tactical victories can be counterproductive when the struggle is essentially about securing international political legitimacy.

What remains remarkable is that Israel, despite its travails and the fact that it has never known a single day of peace, enduring a full-scale military confrontation in every decade of its existence, has not lost its democratic nature and ethos. Its public life remains lively, teeming with activist organizations and civic groups. There is freedom of speech, and the news media are strong and biting. An independent, aggressive judiciary has overruled Knesset legislation it judged anti-democratic and has protected the rights of minorities—for example, by ruling in favor of Palestinian farmers who objected to the positioning of the security fence between Israel and the West Bank because it cut them off from their land. These are noteworthy achievements in a society engaged in a seemingly intractable war.

Still, the never-ending conflict has exacted a high price. It absorbs Israel's material and mental resources. Anxiety and testiness increasingly permeate Israeli society, and the kind of aggressiveness once seen on the country's notorious roadways is now visible everywhere in daily life, including on the floor of the Knesset, where members' tongues are sharp and even injurious to a degree that makes America's polarized atmosphere seem tame.

The social solidarity that was a hallmark of Israel through its formative years is sadly diminished today. All Israelis were shocked in 1995 when a right-wing assassin infuriated by the Oslo agreement killed Rabin, but the hoped-for sobering effect in the wake of Rabin's death never came. Historian Emmanuel Sivan of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has compared contemporary Israel to France during the Algerian War of 1954–62. France's bloody occupation of its rebellious colony, Sivan says, bred social and political schisms within France that its political system simply could not contain. The solution was not just to change the system, as Charles de Gaulle did when he became prime minister in 1958, but to eliminate the key source of division: the occupation. It is a lesson Israel must heed.

**H**erein lies Israel's Catch-22: In order to reform the political system, the three major parties (Likud, Kadima, and Labor) will need to join forces. Yet before they can do that, they must come to an agreement on how to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. But the nature of the political system makes such consensus very difficult to achieve. Most Israelis still believe the nation will muddle through, while others believe new leadership will emerge and break the gridlock. An increasing number, however, argue, as former foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami does, that only a friendly outside power, namely the United States, can assist Israel by pushing it to resolve the conflict.

If the last decade of the 20th century was one of optimism about the prospects for peace, the first decade of the current century was one of disillusionment and despair, both of achieving peace and of reforming Israel's ailing political system. Will the Israel of the new decade be a repeat of the past dark decade, or of the hopeful one that preceded it? The answer to this question depends to a large extent on the resolution of this Catch-22. ■

# What Next for the Start-Up Nation?

*Adversity, like necessity, is often the mother of invention.*

BY DAN SENOR AND SAUL SINGER

A GLANCE AT THE HEADLINES GIVES LITTLE cause for optimism about Israel's future. Growing tensions between Washington and Jerusalem, a rising nuclear threat from Iran, and an intensifying campaign to isolate Israel internationally seem to bode ill for the Jewish state. Some warn that Israel is facing its toughest constellation of threats ever. Yet we believe that Israel is poised to play a central role in world affairs, not as a flashpoint for conflict but as a global innovation leader.

Geopolitical analysts and economists are used to taking snapshots of a world moving at a certain pace, but that pace is changing. Radio took 38 years to acquire 50 million users. Television took only 13 years to reach the same milestone, the Internet four years, and the iPod three years. But even these rapid rates of adoption have been dwarfed by Facebook and the iPhone. Within a stretch of nine months, Facebook added 200 million users; it now has a larger "population" than any country except India and China. In the same amount of time, one billion iPhone applications were downloaded.

We have no clue what the world will be like when cell phones are not only ubiquitous but can translate human

speech from one language to another in real time, during a conversation. Or when doctors perform surgery noninvasively using focused ultrasound (a technique being developed by an Israeli company called InSightec). Just as those who invented the Internet did not anticipate how it would come to be used, we cannot know how a generation born into a society shaped by social networking technologies will use them and change their world.

What we do know is that the decades ahead will put a premium on the ability of nations to shape and cope with rapid technological change. The United States is at the forefront of this wave of change, since it not only has the world's largest economy but is also home to industry leaders such as Google, Apple, and Intel. Every technology center compares itself to Silicon Valley, and every tech-oriented university takes its own measure alongside the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At the same time, however, America's sheer size and complexity pose the dilemma facing almost every large successful company: how to remain as lean, flexible, and innovative as a start-up.

Small countries, like small companies, have an edge on this front, and Israel has made the most of its advantages. Consider the case of an Israeli company called Bet-

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**No marching in lockstep for these Israeli soldiers, patrolling the Negev in 1959. Adversity has bred a national emphasis on improvisation and teamwork.**

ter Place. Company founder Shai Agassi, born and raised in Israel, is a graduate of Israel's MIT, the Technion. In 2001, he sold his company, TopTier Software, to German business software giant SAP, and, even though he was the only non-German among SAP's top executives, he was soon in the running to become CEO. A few years ago, he was one of a handful of "young global leaders" tapped by the Davos World Economic Forum to present ideas for how to make the world a better place by 2020.

Agassi decided to meet the Davos challenge by devising a way for a single country to dramatically reduce its dependence on oil, on the theory that if one country could do it, the whole world could. After looking into various exotic technologies, he realized that the answer

was much more obvious. Even without any breakthroughs, electric cars had already become cheaper than gasoline-powered ones, but this development had been obscured by the fact that buyers are forced to purchase the "fuel" (in the form of a battery that costs roughly \$10,000) at the same time they buy an electric car. Agassi's key innovation was to design a system based on fully electric cars with swappable batteries. If electric cars had batteries that could be easily separated from the vehicles, then the battery could be treated like fuel and paid for over the life of the car. Better Place would continue to own the batteries and would sell its customers mileage plans, much as cell phone providers charge customers for a certain number of minutes per month.

Build cars with swappable batteries and a network of swap stations, and suddenly the vehicles would be cheaper to buy and run than conventional cars, while the swap stations would give them the unlimited range they currently lack.

In 2007, Agassi left SAP and founded the company now known as Better Place to pursue this idea. The scheme has been met with much skepticism, but at the same time major corporate players are making large bets on it, including Renault-Nissan, which is building cars with the requisite technology. It is projected that by late 2011 the infrastructure will be in place, and the Israeli public will start buying electric Renaults and driving them throughout the country.

**ISRAEL HAS DEVELOPED a knack for one of the most challenging elements of the global technology ecosystem: start-ups.**

Almost simultaneously with Israel, Denmark will build and adopt the same system, and Better Place has already established an Australian presence, with plans to begin putting infrastructure in place next year. If the model works, Israel will be the first country to begin the mass replacement of cars powered by internal combustion. Paving the way for bigger countries, it will be the innovator and the pilot program at the same time.

The same nimbleness and adaptability extend into other realms of Israeli existence. On the governmental and economic levels, Israel has shown an ability to pivot quickly and dramatically. The Six-Day War of 1967, the 1976 hostage rescue at Entebbe, the 1981 attack on Iraq's Osirak reactor, the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, and the 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza may be viewed with varying degrees of approval in hindsight, but all demonstrate a capacity for bold decision making. On the economic front, faced in 1985 with the near collapse of the economy under the burden of hyperinflation, Israel introduced a dramatic stabilization plan that paved the transition from a quasi-socialist to a market economy.

Likewise, on the company level, Israeli start-ups, like their counterparts in Silicon Valley, often overhaul their business models unceremoniously and in full stride.

Israel has developed an unusual specialty: an ability not only to cope with but to leverage all sorts of adversity—a lack of local and regional markets, a scarcity of physical resources, and a barrage of boycotts and attacks. Israel's success can be seen not only in the fact that it has the highest number of start-ups per capita in the world. Even more significantly, in 2008 Israel attracted 2.5 times more venture capital per capita than the United States and 30 times more than Europe.

Israelis, ironically, often show little appreciation of their adaptive capacity. Many ask wistfully, "Where's

*our* Nokia?"—a shorthand critique of the national propensity to start and sell companies at a frenetic pace rather than build large, long-lived ones. What they do not fully realize is that people from countries as varied as Brazil, Finland, China,

South Korea, and Singapore have been coming to Israel to look for answers to a question of their own: "Where are *our* start-ups?"

It turns out that Israel, in becoming a start-up specialist, has somewhat inadvertently developed a particular knack for one of the most challenging and essential elements of the global technology ecosystem. Technology start-ups do not have much in the way of revenue, employees, or customers; what they represent is concentrated innovation. This formative stage is harder than it looks, partly because it is romanticized as a few people tinkering in a garage, but also because the essence of innovation is often misconceived.

A search for "innovation" on Google Images produces a deluge of light bulbs. This is because we tend to think that innovation is about brilliant ideas. Our study of the Israeli model, however, indicates that ideas are only the beginning of innovation, and perhaps not the most essential part. Judging by the number of patents per capita, Israel leads the world in the design of medical devices, but countries such as South Korea and Finland are ahead in other patent categories. If other coun-

tries have achieved greater patent density, why does Israel, for its size, have more start-ups?

Evidently, patents—a fair quantification of the “light bulb” part of innovation—are not the whole story. We found that Israel has two other essential characteristics: mission orientation and an entrepreneurial culture.

A sober analysis of success rates would lead almost no rational person to launch a start-up. It takes a tremendous amount of determination and willingness to risk failure to transform a great idea into a viable company. In Israel, such characteristics originate from many sources. It is significant that Israel is not just a country with many start-ups but is itself a start-up. The Zionist idea was at least as improbable as many of the business plans that today’s entrepreneurs are seeking to launch. Many of those entrepreneurs say they see themselves as doing the 21st-century equivalent of what their grandparents did—if not draining the swamps and greening the desert, they are building companies that lead the economy and help shape a global wave of technological change.

In more direct terms, determination comes from an experience that is unusually long, intensive, and widely shared in Israel: military service. Service in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is mandatory for virtually all non-Arab Israeli citizens. The military tries to teach a lot of different skills and values, but above all is the mission. There always is one, and it must always be accomplished, regardless of the resources available. Indeed, military training, whether in the U.S. Marines or the IDF, often attempts to simulate the challenges of the battlefield by throwing missions with varying constraints at soldiers, forcing them to improvise and innovate.

It is often assumed that the most important connection between the military and high-tech industry occurs when military innovations are given civilian applications. But the connection is broader and deeper than that. The military contribution to the tech scene is cultural as much as or more than it is technological. Young Israelis who achieve junior officer rank or higher are taught leadership and teamwork skills in an intensive way, regardless of their



Shai Agassi is the high-profile founder and CEO of Better Place, an Israeli company with ambitious plans to make wide use of electric cars feasible.

direct exposure to technology. They learn that completing missions often requires improvisation, innovation, and sacrifice. This happens in the armed forces of some other countries, notably the United States, but in those cases a much smaller portion of society goes through the military, so the cultural impact on those societies is much slighter.

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of such skills and values in a business environment, particularly in one as demanding as a start-up. In the United States, *Fortune* reports, major companies such as Home Depot and Merck have begun to recruit former junior officers with combat experience in Iraq and Afghanistan as managers. As Jennifer Seidner, a senior recruiting manager at Wal-Mart, put it, “The thinking was that we could bring in world-class leadership talent that was already trained and ready to go.” While corporate America is slowly coming around to an appreciation of the connection between military and business leadership, in Israel it is a truism.

Another reason Israel has more start-ups is that it is a country of immigrants, and newcomers tend to be enterprising people. More than half the companies in Silicon Valley were started by immigrants, as Richard T. Herman and Robert L. Smith note in *Immigrant, Inc.* (2009). In Israel, almost everyone is an immigrant, or their parents or grandparents were. The country remains a melting pot of languages and cultures.

The intermingling of cultures spurs creativity, and the immigrant mindset accepts and appreciates risk taking. In a *Time* essay, “In Defense of Failure,” published earlier this year, economics writer Megan McArdle pointed out that more than two-thirds of Americans report that they have considered starting their own business, while in Europe only 40 percent do so. “America allows its citizens room to fail—and if they don’t succeed, to try, try again,” she wrote. Israel has a similar appreciation of failure, and the start-up culture to show for it. Like other countries, Israel is rich in human capital. But it is these added elements—determination and willingness to take risks—that have led many of Israel’s talented people to found start-ups than to seek careers in established companies.

Why, though, does this penchant for start-ups

position Israel particularly well to thrive in the decades ahead? As the pace of change accelerates, the premium on nimbleness and innovation rises.

It is an open question how long it will take before India, China, and other countries are able to produce clusters of start-ups as Silicon Valley and Israel do. The Asian emphasis on producing sheer quantities of engineers in order to pursue incremental improvements to existing technologies, rather than on entrepreneurship and creating new industries, may mean that the U.S.-Israeli comparative advantage will remain for some time. Even if new countries join the innovation club, there should be plenty of room at the top.

The silver lining in the array of threats facing Israel right now is that coping with adversity is a big part of what has forced Israelis to be innovative. The connection between creative energy and adversity has been so strong that when we write or speak about the Israeli start-up phenomenon, we are often asked the perverse question, “What happens if there is peace?”

The answer is that peace, which could advance significantly once the rickety jihadist regime in Tehran implodes, would be a boon to Israel. Mountains of defense spending could be shifted to more productive purposes, and Israel would have access to a regional market for the first time. The toughest challenge for Israel’s start-up culture would be finding a way to infuse young people with a sense of mission-orientation and improvisatory skills in a civilian framework. We do not know how that challenge would be met, but we suspect that the key would lie in the second half of the term “military service.” Other forms of service could provide the crucial third experience—between studying and working—that forges the spirit and maturity that distinguish start-up culture.

A start-up culture is not easy to develop or maintain. There are no guarantees that Israel—or Silicon Valley—will maintain its edge. But the evidence from the two major economic downturns of the past decade, during which Israel increased or maintained its share of global venture-capital flows, bodes well for the Jewish state. Whether operating in a climate of greater adversity or less, Israel could well become an even more influential global technology player in the years to come. ■

# IN ESSENCE

REVIEWS OF ARTICLES FROM PERIODICALS AND SPECIALIZED JOURNALS HERE AND ABROAD

67 Economics, Labor & Business // 69 Politics & Government // 71 Foreign Policy & Defense // 73 Society // 76 Press & Media // 77 Religion & Philosophy // 80 Science & Technology // 83 Arts & Letters // 86 Other Nations

## ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

### In Defense of Capitalism

**THE SOURCE:** “Recovering the Case for Capitalism” by Yuval Levin, in *National Affairs*, Spring 2010.

THE PAST TWO YEARS HAVE NOT been easy ones for capitalism. First, a crisis that seemed “almost designed to confirm the worst” about free enterprise shook the global economy. Then Washington’s efforts to prop up banks erased long-standing boundaries between the public and private sectors. By last summer, the federal government essentially owned the nation’s largest bank, insurance company, and automaker, and was creating winners and losers in massive business deals on a seemingly ad hoc basis. Capitalism is under attack, “not by socialist ideologues but by misguided technocrats,” the ruling class of experts who think they can outsmart the collective wisdom of the market, argues Yuval Levin, editor of *National Affairs*.

The technocrats are the archi-

fects of two rising threats to capitalism: the decades-old cozy relationship between Washington and big finance and a welfare state expanded far beyond its core purpose of helping the needy, Levin writes. A case in point: Social Security benefits, once meant only to prevent poverty in old age, now flow in vast quantities to relatively affluent Americans. The debts racked up by the welfare state today mean that citizens tomorrow will have less freedom to use their own earnings as they see fit.

Government encroachments upon the free market are “expressions of a long-standing technocratic distaste on the left for the market economy, and especially for the democratic character of capitalism.” To understand this “democratic character,” Levin turns to capitalism’s foremost explicator, Adam Smith (1723–90). Smith understood the free market as a system shaped by consumers pursuing

their individual interests to the benefit of all—the opposite of the old mercantile economies, which served the needs of a few producers. In this sense, Smith’s free-market ideal is inherently democratic, and has a profound moral purpose. Prosperity, in Smith’s philosophy, isn’t just an incidental convenience, but a “precondition for a decent society,” Levin writes. A free market could put a comfortable life within the reach of most, thus fostering more generous behavior and “sympathy” among neighbors. “If our own misery pinches us very severely,” Smith wrote, “we have no leisure to attend to that of our neighbor.”

Capitalism is often criticized for being unjust to the poor, pushing inequality to an intolerable level. Levin allows that markets inevitably produce inequality, but unless you believe that “an equality of conditions is the essence of justice,” it just doesn’t make sense to dismantle an economic system that has provided more material progress for the poor (and the rich too, of course) than any other in human history.

A more serious criticism, according to Levin, is that capitalism “empties social life of any higher meaning.” Our society is not one characterized by restraint

but rather by excess. Smith believed that a free market could instill certain virtues—prudence, restraint, industry, and frugality—by making those virtues profitable. But Levin says that Smith “understated—and perhaps underestimated—the challenges of sustaining moral norms amid economic dynamism.” Capitalism cannot provide sufficient moral authority on its own. Instead, we must rely on “deeper wells”: family, religion, and tradition.

Levin’s prescription: The government must take an aggressively pro-market approach, not to be confused with its current pro-business disposition, in which technocrats aid favored firms and sectors. Ultimately, the fight over capitalism is a struggle over democracy. Technocrats claiming authority based on science and expertise are bent on overturning the democracy of the marketplace. If they have their way, they’ll undo our prosperity and the society built upon it.

## ECONOMICS, LABOR &amp; BUSINESS

## Debt Karma

**THE SOURCE:** “Political Institutions and Foreign Debt in the Developing World” by Thomas Oatley, in *International Studies Quarterly*, March 2010.

POOR COUNTRIES AND ENORMOUS foreign debt go hand in hand—that is, except for the one-third of all developing countries that regularly borrow from abroad and haven’t wound up with a serious debt problem.

What enables these all-stars to escape owing huge sums to foreign creditors? Democracy, theorizes Thomas Oatley, a professor of international political economy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

The 40 most heavily indebted developing countries entered the 1990s owing an average of 220 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP). Research into why some countries ended up so

far underwater has suggested that the key factor was simply bad luck: oil price shocks, recessions in industrial countries, weak commodity prices, high interest rates. But in his study of 78 developing countries from 1976 to 1998, Oatley sees little evidence that such factors have significant long-term effects. Political institutions, he finds, provide a much better explanation. Over a 20-year period, an average autocracy would rack up twice as much debt as a percentage of GDP as an average democracy.

What accounts for the variation? Autocracies, perhaps because of doubts about their long-term survival, borrow recklessly and spend unwisely, often wastefully. Their economies stagnate, leaving little tax base from which to draw revenue to pay back the debt. One such country, Zambia, increased its foreign indebtedness as a percentage of GDP by an average of nine points per year

## EXCERPT

## Keynes’s Club

“Keynes is back.” It is a familiar cliché, but also an enigma. Enigmatic, first, because [John Maynard] Keynes, the most influential economist of the 20th century, never really left. Like it or not, we live in a macroeconomic world elucidated by Keynes and those who followed in his footsteps. Even Robert Lucas, who won a Nobel Prize for his criticisms of conventional Keynesianism, said in response to the financial crisis:

“I guess everyone is a Keynesian in a foxhole.”

But enigmatic also because Keynes himself was never with us. From his vast writings, a few ideas were quickly distilled into analytical tools and policy prescriptions that became known as “Keynesianism.”

This produced some stark differences between Keynes’s ideas and those that bore his name. Once, after a wartime meeting with American economists, Keynes observed, “I was the only non-Keynesian in the room.”

—JONATHAN KIRSHNER, author of *Appeasing Bankers: Financial Caution on the Road to War*, in *Boston Review* (May–June 2010)



from 1975 to 1991, when it hit 210 percent.

Democratic regimes, by contrast, tend to invest their borrowed money, which over time ensures a more stable, growing economy, and, as a result, debt shrinks as a percentage of GDP. With reasonable tax rates, they

are able to service their loans. Democratic Botswana, for example, saw its foreign debt burden fall by 1.6 percentage points per year from 1975 to 1991.

Oatley says that the results of his study provide some basis for optimism. Countries “are not driven ever deeper into poverty by

a hostile global economy over which they have little influence,” he writes, and political reform can help push societies toward better policies. But those who promulgate widespread debt forgiveness should be wary: Their policies may help autocracies most.

## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

# The Tea Party's Short Sip

**THE SOURCE:** “The Tea Party Jacobins” by Mark Lilla, in *The New York Review of Books*, May 27, 2010.

POPULIST MOVEMENTS OF days past aimed to seize political power and use it for the benefit of “the people.” Not so with today’s Tea Party, observes Columbia University humanities professor Mark Lilla. It seeks to neutralize, not use, political power. It has only one thing to say: “I want to be left alone.”

Such “radical individualism” is not new to the American scene. It was the driving force behind both the 1960s-era shift to the left on social issues (sexual liberation, divorce, casual drug use) and the ’80s-era move to the right on economic issues (individual initiative, free markets, deregulation). Today’s Tea Partiers, “the new Jacobins,” as Lilla calls them, are characterized by two classic American traits: “blanket distrust of institutions and an astonishing—and unwarranted—confidence in

the self. They are apocalyptic pessimists about public life and child-like optimists swaddled in self-esteem when it comes to their own powers.”

These attitudes drive the large numbers of Americans who choose to homeschool their children, who refuse to get vaccinated, and who spend “over \$4 bil-

lion a year on unregulated herbal medicines, despite total ignorance about their effectiveness, correct dosage, and side effects.” Lilla writes, “Americans are and have always been credulous skeptics. They question the authority of priests, then talk to the dead; they second-guess their cardiologists, then seek out quacks in the jungle. Like people in every society, they do this in moments of crisis when things seem hopeless. They also, unlike people in other societies, do it on the general principle that expertise and



Most populist movements demand government action. Not so with today’s Tea Party. Its supporters have one simple message: Leave us alone. Above, an April rally in Boston, home of the original Tea Party.

authority are inherently suspect.”

Lilla suspects that the Tea Party will peter out after a few symbolic victories, because it has “no constructive political agenda. . . . [It] only exists to express defiance against a phantom threat behind a real economic and political crisis.” But though it may not last, its libertarian, anti-government underpinnings are here to stay.

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

## Judges for Sale

**THE SOURCE:** “Economic Crisis and the Rise of Judicial Elections and Judicial Review” by Jed Handelsman Shugerman, in *Harvard Law Review*, March 2010.

IT’S ONE OF THE UGLIEST warts on the U.S. body politic: About 90 percent of America’s state judges are chosen in elections. Inevitably, some of them wander into the political swamps. One successful candidate for the West Virginia Supreme Court in the 1990s accepted \$3 million in contributions from a corporate executive seeking to overturn a multimillion-dollar verdict. Elected magistrates also tend to be reluctant to enforce principles that antagonize the voting public. The irony is that when it swept the nation in the 19th century, the movement to make state judgeships elected positions was seen as a way to create a more independent judiciary.

The movement gained strength after the Panics of 1837 and 1839 sent many heavily indebted state governments reeling and exposed the often corrupt ways of state leg-

About 90 percent of America’s state judges are chosen in elections.

islatures at a time when states were spending heavily on canals, roads, and other “internal improvements.” Populists were already clamoring to subject judges to the people’s will, according to Jed Handelsman Shugerman, a professor at Harvard Law School, but now they were joined by moderates and conservatives, who wanted to make judges independent of the legislatures in order to “embolden [them] and legitimize judicial review by connecting them to ‘the people.’” New York led the way in 1846, when a state constitutional convention approved a switch from appointed to elected judgeships. (Only Mississippi elected its state judges at the time.) By 1853 most of the other states—19 in all—had followed New York’s example.

The reformers got at least one of the results they wanted: “Elected judges in the 1850s struck down many more state laws than had their appointed predecessors,” Shugerman writes. The shift toward elected judges was “a turning point in establishing a more widespread practice and acceptance of judicial review in America.”

In other respects, however, things did not go as the reformers had intended. Far from defending “the people,” the judges took an increasingly counter-

majoritarian tack, defending individual rights against what one court called the “hasty and ill-advised zeal” of the voting public. In 1856, for example, a New York court struck down a ban on liquor sales as an infringement of individual rights. Shugerman says there is a straight intellectual line from this decision to broader U.S. Supreme Court decisions that sharply restricted government efforts to regulate business before the New Deal, such as *Lochner v. New York* (1905).

What motivated the counter-majoritarians? Chiefly, Shugerman believes, they wanted to fend off “legislative encroachment” on their domain and carve out a distinct role for the judiciary. He likens the state constitutional conventions of 1844–53 to the wave of democratic revolutions that swept Europe in 1848. One heartening lesson of that era, in Shugerman’s view, is that badly needed judicial reform can occur with surprising speed.

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

## Political Generals

**THE SOURCE:** “The Role of the Military in Presidential Politics” by Steve Corbett and Michael J. Davidson, in *Parameters*, Winter 2009–10.

THE AMERICAN MILITARY HAS a proud and long-standing tradition of political neutrality, but in recent presidential elections a “disturbing trend” has emerged: Retired generals have taken to endorsing candidates, write retired

Army officers Steve Corbett and Michael J. Davidson. If this continues, the military risks “legitimizing the spread of partisan politics within the active-duty force.”

The culture of a politically neutral military took hold in the years following Reconstruction. After the presidential election of 1880, no professional military officer was nominated for the presidency until 1952. By custom, most officers did not even vote. General George C. Marshall epitomized the ethos of the era—he never voted, avoided all political participation, and upon becoming secretary of state in 1947, foreswore ever running for office. He discouraged General Dwight D. Eisenhower from pursuing the presidency, but, of course, Eisenhower did not heed his advice. Eisenhower’s election was “a water-

shed event,” marking the start of an era of increased military involvement in politics.

Since then, the deterioration of the military’s political neutrality has only continued. President Ronald Reagan actively courted military voters in the 1980s. The Clinton administration politicized the senior officer selection process. Today, officers regularly vote, and usually for Republicans. Endorsements by retired officers, once considered bad form, are run of the mill (two prominent examples: Tommy Franks’s backing of George W. Bush in 2004 and Colin Powell’s of Barack Obama in 2008).

The authors say that within the military today there is no consensus on the propriety of such endorsements. They quote one retired Army colonel as saying, “A retired

four-star general represents the institution that produced him and by definition should remain apolitical.” In contrast, others argue that once they leave active duty, officers should be free to participate in politics like any other citizen.

Corbett and Davidson would like to see this problem fixed, but all approaches are fraught with difficulty. Expanding restraints on active-duty members to retired officers in an attempt to quiet political speech would run up against the protections of the First Amendment. For now, they say, the best that can be done is for the military itself to try to create a consensus that endorsements by retired officers are out of bounds. Anyone who achieved flag rank would be sensitive to a stronger institutional taboo against getting involved in politics.

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

# Reaching Out to the Russians

**THE SOURCE:** “NATO’s Final Frontier” by Charles A. Kupchan, in *Foreign Affairs*, May–June 2010.

LORD HASTINGS ISMAY, THE first secretary-general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, reportedly once said that the organization’s purpose was “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” But times have changed. Today, NATO is making a strategic mistake by not integrating Russia into the alliance,

argues Charles A. Kupchan, a professor of international affairs at Georgetown University.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has embraced the countries of Central and Eastern Europe but has “treated Russia as an outsider.” The West needs to be sure it has Russia squarely on its side, Kupchan asserts, particularly as it attempts to tackle global concerns such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, cybersecurity, and inter-

national crime. Moreover, Russia’s help will be crucial in negotiations with Iran and North Korea; Moscow also has considerable sway with Beijing.

Europe could reach out to Russia through a variety of other means, such as a treaty between NATO and the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, but NATO’s formidable size (28 member-states) and its military strength mean that other international collaborations are “merely strategic sideshows”—what matters is whether a country is a NATO insider or outsider.

A complicating factor is that protecting the allied European-Atlantic countries from external threats such as terrorism is only

one element of NATO's purpose. The other is blunting internal rivalries, and in this regard a seat for Russia at the NATO table might not prove quite as advantageous. Some newer NATO members, particularly former Soviet satellites in Eastern and Central Europe, feel that letting Russia join the club is a bit like letting the fox into the henhouse. "Admittedly," Kupchan writes, inviting Russia into NATO "strikes a dissonant chord due to the alliance's Cold War mission, Russia's backsliding on democratic reform, and its heavy-handed approach to its 'near abroad.'" In the past, the alliance has stipulated that new entrants be democratic, have market economies, treat minorities fairly, and be committed to peaceful conflict resolution—none of which exactly describes Russia. But, as Kupchan points out, NATO has made exceptions in the past (Portugal, for example, was an original signatory in 1949 but did not become a democracy until 1974), and strategic concerns certainly warrant making one for Russia now.

In February, Russia identified the expansion of NATO as a primary external threat. The alliance is contemplating extending membership to Georgia and Ukraine, a move that could provoke a crisis with Moscow. One way to avoid such a situation: Admit Russia first.

It's not as though NATO's overtures to Russia would be irreversible. If Russia tried to splinter the alliance or block decision making,

the outreach could quickly come to an end. Of course, even if NATO does invite Russia to join, Moscow may reject its offer due to the constraints entailed by membership. But let any absence be on Russia's head, Kupchan argues, and not the result of the Atlantic democracies' failure "to demonstrate the vision or the will to embrace Russia in a pan-European order."

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

## Measuring Military Might

**THE SOURCE:** "Economic Development and Military Effectiveness" by Michael Beckley, in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Feb. 2010.

IT'S THE MILLION-DOLLAR question of international relations scholarship: Why are some states stronger than others? The prevailing theory says that military power is the direct result of material resources—size of the defense budget, number of soldiers, or stockpiles of materiel. But in empirical studies, material resources are no better than a coin toss at predicting victory in battle. Other theories have sprung up to compensate: Perhaps "nonmaterial" factors such as democratic institutions, Western culture, or good civil-military relations are the keys to military power. Try again, says Columbia University political scientist Michael Beckley: In 381 battles fought since 1900, the single best measure for predicting which side emerged victorious was a country's income per capita.

Could it really be so simple? Beckley says that the problem with the material resources theory is that it doesn't account for economic development and its bedfellows—technology, infrastructure, and human capital. An undeveloped nation can pour all the money it wants into its military, but without the right tools and educated leaders, it's no match for a rich country's force. (America's loss in Vietnam is the most obvious counterexample; Beckley suggests it is the exception that proves the rule.)

Democracy, Western culture, and other intangibles serve as good proxies for economic development, but Beckley finds that when he holds gross domestic product per capita constant, those other measures fail to explain variations in military power. Democracy actually seems to substantially weaken nations on the whole. It just so happens that democracy has gone hand in hand with economic development, which has masked the negative effects of democracy on military power. That relationship may not last forever, and in the next century, economic (and therefore military) powerhouses may rise that are anything but democratic.

Beckley says that having a tool for accurately predicting a victor could help forestall "foolish" incursions. "Wars," he writes, "are fought over a variety of issues, but most share a fundamental cause: false optimism." When both states think they can win, they'll take up arms. Perhaps if they have a hard measure of their chances of success, weaker countries won't be so quick to sound the trumpets.

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

## The Risks of Oil Independence

**THE SOURCE:** “The Security Costs of Energy Independence” by Gregory D. Miller, in *The Washington Quarterly*, April 2010.

AMERICA MUST WEAN ITSELF from foreign oil—that’s the common wisdom on both sides of the political aisle. Entanglement with Middle Eastern oil kingdoms is a “source of strategic vulnerability,” and policymakers have spent “lives and treasure” defending America’s access to foreign reserves. But here’s a thought experiment: If the United States and the rest of the developed world no longer needed foreign oil, what would become of oil-exporting countries? Gregory D. Miller, a political scientist at the University of Oklahoma, says it would not be a pretty picture, nor would the ramifications for the United States be pleasant. Many

If the United States and the rest of the developed world no longer needed foreign oil, what would become of oil-exporting countries?

of the oil powers are unstable, and may spiral into crisis if revenues from oil disappear.

As the only current nuclear state with a significant oil sector (eight to 20 percent of its economy), Russia is one potential trouble spot. “Neither the United States nor Russia’s neighbors can afford the risk of a nuclear Russia suffering economic instability,” Miller writes. And, of course, oil-rich Iran is likely to join the nuclear club soon. For five countries—Angola, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia—oil exports make up more than one-

half of gross domestic product. All five already suffer from internal tensions and border conflicts.

Some oil-producing states could try to make up for lost income by trafficking in narcotics and arms, with massive implications for global security if countries with ties to groups such as Al Qaeda and Hezbollah got involved. In Venezuela, Miller says, many poor people may try to make some money by trading in drugs, even if the government stays clean.

None of this is to suggest that the United States ought to remain hooked on oil for the sake of stability. Instead, it should encourage oil-exporting countries to diversify by promoting greater foreign direct investment in non-oil industries. The United States isn’t going to reduce its consumption of foreign oil overnight. Policymakers should use their time wisely, and make sure the process is smooth both here and abroad.

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## SOCIETY

## Closing the Achievement Gap

**THE SOURCE:** “Are High-Quality Schools Enough to Close the Achievement Gap? Evidence From a Social Experiment in Harlem” by Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer Jr., in *The NBER Digest*, March 2010.

THE AVERAGE AFRICAN-AMERICAN 17-year-old today reads at the level of the typical white

13-year-old. That is only one manifestation of the racial achievement gap, one of the deepest and most intractable American social problems. Unveiling the results of the first empirical test of school performance in the highly publicized

Harlem Children’s Zone, Harvard economist Roland G. Fryer Jr. and doctoral candidate Will Dobbie say that a successful strategy for closing the gap may be at hand.

The Harlem Children’s Zone is a 97-block area in Manhattan boasting a supercharged web of city- and foundation-backed community services “designed to ensure the social environment outside of school is positive and supportive for children from birth to college graduation.” Established in 1997, it offers upwards

of 20 programs serving more than 8,000 youths and 5,000 adults, including Promise Academy, a group of public charter schools with approximately 1,300 students.

Anecdotal evidence in recent years has provided cause for optimism. And now initial data are in: The average Promise Academy sixth grader arrives at the school outperforming just 20 percent of white New York City public school students in the same grade in math. After three years, the academy's students outperform 45 percent of white students. In other words, they achieve near parity. And when their math scores are adjusted for factors such as gender and eligibility for the school lunch program, the black students outperform their white peers in the city. (Reading scores ticked up but not as dramatically.)

What makes the difference? To begin with, Promise Academy has an extended school day and year, with coordinated afterschool

Promise Academy has an extended school day and year, with coordinated afterschool tutoring and weekend remedial classes.

tutoring and weekend remedial classes. The authors estimate that students who perform below grade level spend twice as many hours in school as traditional New York City public school students. Those who are at or above grade level spend 50 percent more time in the classroom.

Promise Academy also goes to incredible lengths to recruit and retain top-quality teachers, and it spares them many administrative tasks so they can spend more time with their pupils. In addition, its schools provide a host of supplementary services, such as free medical, dental, and mental

health care; nutritious meals; and support for parents. The authors say it's possible that student achievement gets an extra boost from the community services Harlem Children's Zone offers beyond Promise Academy.

Of course, such intensive efforts come at a cost, but to Dobbie and Fryer the \$19,272 per student price tag looks quite reasonable. Though higher than the median expenditure per student among school districts in New York State (\$16,171), it's far below what top-notch districts lay out. It's an investment that will pay off in the years to come.

## SOCIETY

## Toward a Post-Prison Society

**THE SOURCE:** "The Outpatient Prison" by Mark A. R. Kleiman, in *The American Interest*, March–April 2010.

THE UNITED STATES HAS A REMARKABLE total of 1.7 million criminals behind bars, but that's nothing compared with the number who are on probation (4.3 million) and parole (700,000). More people go to jail each year for violating such "community supervision" than for committing fresh crimes—and the same group also accounts for a large share of the new crimes.

In 2005, Steven Alm, a judge on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, concluded that there must be a better way. Tired of hearing probation revocation cases only after the offenders had repeatedly failed to show up for meetings and drug

## EXCERPT

## The Food Network

*Daily life is full of anonymous encounters: the Internet, the airport, the subway, the supermarket. Crowds to jostle, forms to fill out. E-mails greet you with mass-produced individuality. Dining out is the antidote: the host, the waiter, the chef with his pat on your shoulder, the season's first acorn squash grown by farmers closer than your commute. You sit down to dinner and you have joined a community, a gastronomic Facebook.*

—PHYLLIS RICHMAN, a former *Washington Post* restaurant critic, in *Gastronomica* (Winter 2010)



**Judge Steven Alm promised probation violators in Hawaii something rare: certain punishment. They were arrested far less frequently than those who received vague warnings.**

tests without suffering any consequences, he demanded that officers act on the first violation. But the caseload is too big for that to be feasible. In fact, the entire U.S. “community corrections” system is swamped, writes Mark A. R. Kleiman, a professor of public policy at UCLA. As a result, not only do criminals on parole or probation get away with a lot, but, because of the lax supervision, they get no clear signals about what constitutes going too far—so inevitably that’s what many do, winding up in courtrooms such as Alm’s. Yet one of the most important things we know about using punishment as a deterrent, accord-

ing to Kleiman, is that its severity is not nearly as important as its “swiftness and certainty.”

Knowing this, Alm picked 35 of the worst probation violators (mostly methamphetamine users) and gave them a clear warning: Miss your next drug tests and meetings with probation officers, and you’re going to jail. It worked. After a year, Alm’s group had half as many arrests as average (i.e., less troublesome) offenders, and “a third as many probation revocations and prison terms for new offenses.” And they didn’t soak up any more precious courtroom time than their better-behaved peers.

Alm’s success in changing con-

victs’ behavior could be the foundation for a national revolution, Kleiman argues. Pilot projects based on the Alm model have already been launched.

Two keys to success in going national are to keep the focus on the worst cases and ensure the “swiftness and certainty of . . . sanctions.” The types of monitoring could be expanded. For \$5 per day, an offender on probation could be equipped with an “anklet” containing a Global Positioning System monitor. Software could compare his location to that of any reported crime; officers could monitor his movements, including appearance at work and adherence to curfews. Probation violations would result in swift punishment. Such a system holds the potential to reduce new arrests among probationers and parolees by 75 percent, Kleiman believes.

Ultimately, we could begin emptying the prisons, reserving them for violent and repeat offenders. Says Kleiman: “If we can make this work—a big ‘if’—we ought to be able to cut the crime rate and the incarceration rate in half” after a 10-year effort.

#### SOCIETY

## Anger Under Siege

**THE SOURCE:** “Anger Management, American-Style: A Work in Progress” by Peter N. Stearns, in *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring 2010.

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, ANGER was a minor but indispensable attribute of the ideal American

man. He could hold his temper like a gentleman during petty disputes “but [was] implacable when legitimately roused,” writes Peter N. Stearns, a historian at George Mason University.

By the 1920s, though, corporate capitalists had linked anger with inefficiency, and the emotion lost its luster. Anger was found to lead to labor disruptions, frazzled coworkers, and weakened sales in the service and retail industries. A spate of anger restrictions was imposed on the country’s workers. The preference for restraint soon extended to social interactions of all kinds. Boxing fell out of favor among the middle

class, and trendy “fair fighting” handbooks counseled frustrated spouses to scream their displeasure into an empty closet, rather than at each other. A United Auto Workers pamphlet from the 1940s admonished union activists that a “lost temper means a lost argument.”

Studies show that today Americans are more likely to want to conceal their anger than the Chinese, heirs of Confucius, the great master of self-control. Even so, American cultural critics continue to diagnose anger as the country’s “leading emotional problem.” While he does not decry the virtues of cheerfulness,

Stearns believes that the emphasis on suppressing anger can “create real confusion about one’s own authentic emotions,” make one more susceptible to distress when encountering anger, and diminish the public’s willingness to protest wrongs.

Some groups, whether corporate executives, high school basketball coaches, or right-wing pundits, ignore or reject the “pressure to keep the fires of emotion banked,” Stearns says, and may easily intimidate—even control—the mild-mannered. A more nuanced approach to anger control might teach the “uses as well as abuses of anger.”

## PRESS & MEDIA

# Localized Pain

**THE SOURCE:** “Citizens’ Local Political Knowledge and the Role of Media Access” by Lee Shaker, in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Winter 2009.

**HAND-WRINGING ABOUNDS** over the future of newspapers. With advertising revenues shrinking, how will they manage to stay in business? Who will fill their role of reporting on political affairs? Lee Shaker, a researcher in Princeton University’s Department of Politics, cautions that the issues are different for national and local news—and the outlook for local coverage is particularly bleak.

Many citizens get their local news from friends and neighbors, not from newspapers directly, but the news circulated in social net-

works tends to trace back to published papers, Shaker writes. A shuttered local paper could silence much of that chatter. Already, several major local newspapers have shut down completely (e.g., *The Rocky Mountain News* in Denver) or moved to an online-only business model (e.g., *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*).

The people who follow local news tend to have a slightly different demographic profile than those who are knowledgeable about national affairs. While both groups tend to be more educated, older, and wealthier than the average citizen, national-news aficionados are also disproportionately male and white. Using data

from a survey of 1,001 Philadelphians in the weeks following the 2007 mayoral race, Shaker found that on matters of local concern, men and women, blacks and whites, all tended to have roughly equivalent levels of knowledge.

It’s not just local newspapers that are threatened by the changing media environment. Shaker writes that the “near-infinite array of media choices” forces local television news “into constant and direct competition with better-funded, more polished options,” including, of course, the bounty of non-news entertainment available. In 1993, more than three-quarters of survey respondents reported regularly watching local television news, but in 2008 just over half did. Among Philadelphia residents, those with cable television (more than three-quarters of respondents) tended to know less about local pol-



EXCERPT

## Without a Paddle

No industry in living memory has collapsed faster than daily print journalism. You can still buy a buggy whip, which is more than can be said for a copy of *The Rocky Mountain News*, *Cincinnati Post*, or *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. One would think that a business in such dire condition would be—for desperation's sake—wildly innovative. But newspapers exhibit a fossilization of form and content that's been preserved in sedimentary rock since the early 1970s when the "Women's Pages" were converted to the "Leisure Section." *General Motors* itself showed more inventive origi-

nality on its way to Chapter 11, as the two people who bought Pontiac Azteks can attest.

Readers are fleeing newspapers. What are newspapers offering to lure them back? Out-of-register color photographs have replaced blurry black-and-white pics. More working women and black people appear in comic strips. (Although comparisons to Walt Kelly's *Pogo* and Al Capp's *L'il Abner* show, if anything, a decline in the social relevance of the funny pages, *Marmaduke* always excepted.) Various versions of "Dr. Gridlock" have been instituted so that when you get to work and open your morning paper you can see why you didn't get to work.

—P. J. O'ROURKE, author of, most recently, *Driving Like Crazy*, in *The Weekly Standard* (June 7, 2010)

itics than those without such access, presumably because of cable TV's many alluring alternatives to local news broadcasts. Cable did

not have the same negative effect on viewers' knowledge about national political issues.

The first order of business for local

news media outlets is simply staying alive. But even if they manage to survive, Shaker warns, it's possible no one will pay them much attention.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

# Atheists Anonymous

**THE SOURCE:** "Preachers Who Are Not Believers" by Daniel C. Dennett and Linda LaScola, in *Evolutionary Psychology*, March 2010.

GENERATIONS OF QUESTIONING churchgoers have struggled to accept the teachings of Christianity, as have, inevitably, some clergy. The stakes are certainly higher for the latter. What does it mean to be a nonbelieving pastor?

Daniel C. Dennett, a philosophy professor at Tufts University, and social worker Linda LaScola discreetly identified and interviewed

five "closeted" nonbelieving ministers to better understand this "invisible phenomenon." The pastors, all Protestant men (Dennett and LaScola couldn't identify any nonbelieving Catholic or Orthodox priests), expressed skepticism about a host of fundamental Christian teachings, including the virgin birth of Jesus, the existence of heaven and hell, and the status of the Bible as the inerrant word of God. Some admitted that their religious stance might be best described as atheist. "The whole grand scheme of Christianity, for me,

is just a bunch of bunk," said Jack, a Southern Baptist minister of 15 years.

Three of the five pastors felt stuck in a purgatory of sorts: They wanted to leave the church, but felt they lacked options. "If I had an alternative, a comfortable paying job, something I was interested in doing, and a move that wouldn't destroy my family, that's where I'd go," said Adam, a Church of Christ minister with a very religious wife and children. He regularly chided himself, "Just stick with what you're doing; it pays good. . . . You're doing good in your community; you're respected. But it's just gnawing away inside."

Most of the pastors had no sense of their impending change of heart when they entered religious life. Their first stirrings of doubt

## RELIGION &amp; PHILOSOPHY

“You can’t go through seminary and come out believing in God!” joked one pastor.

occurred when they encountered arguments against the truthfulness of Christianity in seminary. (“You can’t go through seminary and come out believing in God!” joked one pastor.) Some, though, had entertained skepticism from a much earlier point. Rick, a contented minister in the liberal United Church of Christ who attended seminary in part to avoid the Vietnam War-era draft, never had to formally embrace conventional Christian doctrine.

For those tormented by doubt, the meaningfulness of the profession was a solace. “I can be with somebody and genuinely have empathy with them, and concern and love and help them get through a difficult situation,” Jack acknowledged. Wes, a Methodist pastor who felt comfortable continuing to serve his parish even with his doubts, spoke of how much he valued the opportunity to encourage progressive values in the Methodist Church.

The men rarely, if ever, discussed their lack of conviction with others, even though some believed that many fellow ministers experienced similar deficits of faith. “We all find ourselves committed to little white lies,” write Dennett and LaScola. “But these pastors—and who knows how many others—are caught in a larger web of diplomatic, tactical, and, finally, ethical concealment.”

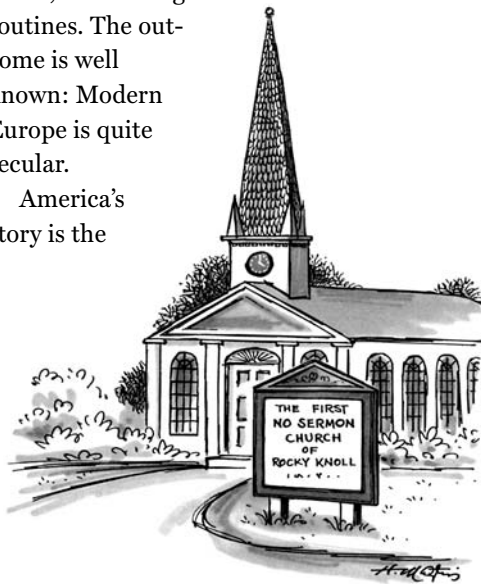
## Relax at Your Peril

**THE SOURCE:** “The Prophet Motive” by John Lamont, in *First Things*, April 2010.

FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH to stay relevant in the 21st century, it needs to stop accommodating modern life and revive a more fundamentalist, demanding approach, proclaims University of Notre Dame Australia philosophy professor John Lamont. Take a lesson from history: If you don’t want to go the way of the dodo, make your religion more extreme.

Over time, churches throughout Europe became too secure in their cozy relationship with the state in their home countries. Operating more or less as monopolies, they did little to compete for new believers, and lapsed into bland, unaffectioning routines. The outcome is well known: Modern Europe is quite secular.

America’s story is the



**A church that asks little of the faithful may get exactly that.**

opposite. Without state support of any particular faith, religions competed and innovated and, over time, Americans grew more observant. During the Revolution, less than one-fifth of Americans claimed church membership. By the mid-19th century, one-third did so. Today, more than half are church members, and approximately 40 percent attend church once a week (a number that has remained fairly constant since at least the 1930s). The American example contradicts Max Weber and Émile Durkheim’s secularization thesis, which holds that as societies industrialize and advance technologically, populations abandon religion—if you know how to irrigate, you don’t pray for rain.

Competition among faiths does not explain all. There are plenty of examples of societies with state-supported religions and a high degree of religiosity, from the Byzantine Empire to present-day Saudi Arabia. But although demanding religions can exist without competition, when faiths must vie for followers, the more extreme ones will benefit: Potential adherents are attracted to religions that have greater “costs” (such as intense worship or high moral standards) because the

future rewards are perceived to be proportionately greater. Further, Lamont observes, “there is no sociological theory or sociological evidence to support the claim that religions can preserve or increase their influence while lowering their standards and submitting to the society around them.”

In contemporary America, “mainstream Protestant churches that make few demands of their members are declining, and more demanding evangelical or Pentecostal churches are growing,” Lamont says. He contends that the Catholic Church today is losing members because the changes following the Second Vatican Council have erased many of the distinctions between Catholics and non-Catholics, including “rules and distinctive dress for clergy,” and traditional liturgy. Moreover, the church has allowed for and legitimized dissent from its moral teachings. According to Lamont, Catholicism could not have taken steps better calculated to ensure a diminished presence.

## RELIGION &amp; PHILOSOPHY

## Modern Gods

**THE SOURCE:** “Rush Hour for the Gods” by William Dalrymple, in *The National Interest*, May–June 2010.

MODERNIZATION BODES CHANGE for country dwellers. In India, even the provincial Hindu gods are not immune to the forces of standardization and commercialization, observes travel writer William Dalrymple, who just

published *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*. But the extinction of tree sprites and snake gods does not mean that India is going the way of Europe and becoming more secular. Rather, religion is becoming uniform, politicized, and, often, fundamentalist—a menace to the pluralism and tolerance that have long characterized the country’s religious life.

Hinduism—a religion with no founder and no single founding text—is by its nature diffuse and multifaceted. As Dalrymple points out, individual deities were long believed to “regulate the ebb and flow of daily life,” right down to the needs of village livestock and the sweetness of well water. It was colonial scholars who “organized the disparate, overlapping multiplicity of non-Abrahamic religious practices, cults, myths, festivals, and rival deities that they encountered across South Asia into a new world religion that they dubbed ‘Hinduism.’”

DVDs, television channels, and the bustle of modern life—who has time to listen to five nights’ worth of a medieval epic poem when the highlights are available on CD?—are “destroying the local and varied flavors of Hinduism.” Local gods and goddesses are giving way to “the national hyper-masculine hero deities, especially Lord Krishna and Lord Rama,” and a national brand of Hinduism is being cultivated by what one scholar describes as “the emerging state-temple-corporate complex.”

Especially among the rising middle class, pilgrimages are extremely popular, and an appetite for new and elaborate rituals has created a shortfall of qualified priests. Aside from the overtly Hindu nationalism purveyed by the Bharatiya Janata Party, religion has infiltrated the state—firmly secular for years after its birth—in subtle ways. Political campaigns for all parties feature mass *pujas* (prayers) and public *yagnas* (fire sacrifices), and state funding for *yagnas*, yoga camps, temple tourism, ashrams, and training schools for Hindu priests has increased dramatically.

In the eyes of India’s urban middle class, Hinduism’s provincial incarnations are nothing more than the superstitions of peasants. This intolerance extends to other religions—most notably, Islam, the faith of some 150 million Indians. As in neighboring Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia, the mystical version of Islam, Sufism, is under attack, “as the cults of local Sufi saints—the warp and woof of popular Islam in India for centuries—lose ground to a more standardized, middle-class, and textual form of Islam, imported from the Gulf and propagated by the Wahhabis, Deobandis, and Tablighis in their madrassas.”

Though Dalrymple holds out hope that the tradition of syncretic mysticism will remain alive in India, he concedes that in mosques and temples around the country, “identities are hardening.”

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

## I, Geminoid

**THE SOURCE:** "The Man Who Made a Copy of Himself" by Erico Guizzo, in *IEEE Spectrum*, April 2010.

SUBTLY BUT SURELY, ROBOTS are making their way into our everyday lives. By some estimates, 8.5 million service robots are already in use worldwide, doing a wide range of

accepted in these roles, robots may have to behave less like machines and more like us."

Osaka University engineer Hiroshi Ishiguro has been a pioneer in the humanization of robots. Early in his career, he built one robot that "looked like a trash can with arms" and another that "resembled an over-



Hiroshi Ishiguro (left) with his "geminoid," a robot he designed to look exactly like him. Ishiguro thought that a more human-looking machine might be easier for people to interact with.

tasks such as performing surgery, milking cows, and handling meat. They don't resemble the friendly characters promised by science fiction, such as C-3PO from *Star Wars* and Rosie the Robot Maid from *The Jetsons*. But in a not-too-distant future, that may change. Robots will serve up our daily java at Starbucks and assist people with physical therapy. "But," writes Erico Guizzo, associate editor of *IEEE Spectrum*, "to be

grown insect." People did not react well to these creations, Guizzo reports; they couldn't relate to them.

To better understand the role appearance plays in communication, Ishiguro, who is 46, built an android to look exactly like himself. His "mechanical doppelgänger" is made of silicone rubber, pneumatic actuators, powerful electronics, and hair from his own head. The "geminoid" (derived from *geminus*, the Latin

word for twin) has no autonomy; Ishiguro controls it remotely from his computer. When Ishiguro speaks, the android reproduces his speech. It blinks, twitches, and appears to breathe. It can even attend meetings for him on campus (though it can't get to the meetings on its own, and the university won't pay Ishiguro for his geminoid's time). Unlike the human Ishiguro, however, it doesn't smoke.

Robots may one day be indistinguishable from humans, but as Ishiguro's creation shows, the "uncanny valley" (as one robotocist put it) between life and lifelike remains. The technology blog Gizmodo included Ishiguro's Frankenstein in its list of "10 Creepy Machines From Robot Hell." Nonetheless, as the technology improves and people spend more time with androids, the machines may lose their unnerving edge. Ishiguro has found that at first people seem uneasy around his geminoid, but they quickly warm to it. Pet owners are particularly adept at reading its nonverbal cues. "Humankind is always trying to replace human abilities with machines. That's our history," Ishiguro says. "I'm doing the same thing. Nothing special."

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

## Cassava Rising

**THE SOURCE:** "Breeding Cassava" by Nagib Nassar and Rodomiro Ortiz, in *Scientific American*, May 2010.

TO MANY AMERICANS, CASSAVA root is a stranger in the produce aisle. But for 800 million people around the world, the starchy tuber (also called manioc, tapioca, and

yuca) is the main staple of their diets. Globally, it accounts for more calories consumed than any crop besides rice and wheat. Unfortunately for those who subsist on it, it's not particularly nutritious, containing little protein, vitamins, or minerals. A new and improved cassava could go a long way toward alleviating malnutrition in the developing world, and that's just what University of Brasília geneticists Nagib Nassar and Rodomiro Ortiz have set out to create.

Cassava originated in Brazil, but in the 16th century Portuguese sailors brought it to Africa, which today produces more than half the world's supply. From there it spread across tropical Asia as far as Indonesia. It can be fried, boiled, turned into flour, even consumed raw. In some parts of Africa and Asia, people eat the plant's leaves as well. Yet despite its widespread reach and versatility, the lowly cassava has never attracted much attention from scientists. Average yearly yields are low, leaving plenty of room for improvement.

Along with their colleagues, Nassar and Ortiz are cross-breeding the common, domesticated plant with its wild relatives in the hopes of creating hybrids that are more nutritious, hardier, and more drought resistant. Wild varieties of cassava are rich in essential amino acids, iron, zinc, and, importantly, beta carotene, which helps ward off eye diseases, a major problem in countries with high malnutrition rates. One new variety of cassava has 50 times as much beta carotene as the common plant.

Despite such advances, the authors and other cassava researchers have their hands full: *The New York Times*

recently reported that a new and damaging virus is destroying crops around Lake Victoria, and may soon spread across Africa. Scientists will need to develop a resistant variety and distribute it quickly, or widespread food shortages will be on the horizon.

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

## Publish and Perish?

**THE SOURCE:** "Open Sesame" by the editors of *Nature* and "U.S. Seeks to Make Science Free for All" by Declan Butler, in *Nature*, April 9, 2010.

IN THE 1990S, THE ADVENT OF the Internet sparked calls for science journals to provide their content online for free. How to raise the revenue needed to produce the journals?

Charge the authors!

The "authors-pay" model—no mincing words here—has proven successful for a handful of publications. When the nonprofit Public Library of Science (PLOS) launched in 2003, it aimed to charge authors just \$1,500 per paper, but the fee for its top journals has risen to \$2,900, which is often covered by grants or university funds. The organization's finances are highly dependent on the papers published in its online journal *PLOS ONE*, which reviews articles for technical soundness but does not make judgments about their importance. As a result of its light editorial touch, *PLOS ONE* has low costs and can get by charging authors \$1,350 per paper.

Print journals such as *Science* and *Nature* rely on subscription fees to support the hefty costs of their editorial content, which includes reviews, sidebars, and supplementary materi-

als online. (Subscribing to *Nature* costs a library upwards of \$3,000 a year—not exactly chump change.) If such journals were to switch to an authors-pay model, the price per paper would need to be incredibly high. The editors of *Nature* say that research agencies would have to be willing to make more funding available to their scientists in order to help defray the fees.

The Internet is not the only source of pressure on science publishers. Washington is insisting that research

A handful of online science journals offer free content by charging their authors hefty fees for publication.

funded by federal dollars be made public, particularly in fields with great public interest such as biomedicine. A 2007 law requires researchers at the National Institutes of Health to make all papers available in the agency's PubMed Central repository within 12 months of publication. A bill introduced in the Senate by Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) and John Cornyn (R-Texas) would create a comparable requirement for all research backed by federal agencies with research budgets greater than \$100 million. It's also possible that the White House will issue a similar executive order.

If PubMed Central is any indication, such policies would have a large impact. Reporter Declan Butler writes that the archive now holds nearly two million articles. On an average weekday, some 420,000 visitors download a total of 750,000 articles.

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

## Off the Dolphin Deep End

**THE SOURCE:** "A Mind in the Water" by D. Graham Burnett, in *Orion*, May–June 2010.

WITH LESS THAN FIVE MILES between them, San Diego's SeaWorld and the Bayside campus of the U.S. Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SPAWAR) present sharply contrasting pictures of *Tursiops truncatus*, better known as the bottle-nosed dolphin. At SeaWorld, visitors can feed little fish to this "mainstay of aquatic ecotourism, beloved water-park performer, smiling incarnation of soulful holism . . . a cetacean version of our better selves." Just down the road at SPAWAR, the Navy manages a pod of about 75 dolphins trained to perform military functions. But as different as these two dolphin personas may seem, they both trace their roots back to one man, John Cunningham Lilly, "the spiritual grandfather of both the new age dolphin and its military alter ego," writes D. Graham Burnett, a historian at Princeton University.

In the 1950s, before Lilly's work found its way to the limelight, no one thought of dolphins as intelligent, peaceful,

or "erotically uninhibited." If they were thought of at all, it was by fishermen who saw them as a nuisance. But in May 1958, Lilly presented a paper before the American Psychiatric Association in which he made "dramatic claims for the intelligence and linguistic abilities" of bottle-nosed dolphins. Despite "small and entirely anecdotal evidence," newspapers on both coasts ran with the story. In short order, Lilly received a string of prestigious federal research awards with which he built a dedicated dolphin laboratory on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands and founded the Communications Research Insti-

tute. At the peak of his renown, Lilly received upwards of half a million dollars a year in grant money.

In 1961 he published *Man and Dolphin*, which included "headline-ready" claims about the future of human-dolphin interactions alongside passages of "startling weirdness . . . buttressed by pseudo-technical appendices on neuroanatomy and illegible sonographs of [dolphin] phonation." A photo spread in *Life* magazine followed, and Lilly's fame grew. America swooned with full-fledged dolphin fever with the 1963 release of the movie *Flipper*. Dolphin mania reached across

the Atlantic as well: British anthropologist Gregory Bateson theorized in a letter to Lilly that because dolphins lacked hands and were therefore unable to manipulate the material world, they hadn't developed the same petty concerns as humans. Bateson continued, "If I am right, and they are mainly sophisticated about the intricacies of interpersonal relationships, then of course (after training analysis) they will be ideal psychotherapists for us."

The Navy too got on board with dolphin enthusiasm, establishing research programs to train the smiley swimmers to work as

### EXCERPT

## Einstein Absolved

*According to a recently discovered diary kept by a female friend of Albert Einstein, late in life the physicist felt deep disappointment at his personal mistakes. His theories pointed to an expanding universe, but Einstein himself refused to believe it; to keep the universe static in his model, he concocted the cosmological constant, a force that counteracts gravity. Later, when expansion was definitely proven by Edwin Hubble, Einstein renounced this constant as "my biggest blunder." And yet, notes physicist Igor Klebanov, since 2000 the cosmological constant has bounced back—as dark energy. "It's an incredible reversal of fortune, Einstein's big failure, and it now accounts for 70 percent of the energy density in the universe."*

—W. BARKSDALE MAYNARD, an architectural historian, in *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (April 7, 2010)

undersea messengers. A Navy promotional film depicted researchers using a “Human-Dolphin Translator,” which shifted human voices into higher registers better suited to dolphin hearing. Burnett smirks, “The Navy scientists ultimately decided to try speaking to them in Hawaiian, on the grounds that this language seemed likely to be closest to their own.”

Lilly also approached NASA,

suggesting that a breakthrough in human-dolphin communication could be used as a model in future encounters with aliens.

Spending more and more time in a flotation tank high on LSD trying to commune with dolphins, Lilly soon fell out of favor in scientific circles. He defiantly released his dolphins back into the wild, claiming they had finished “reprogramming” him. He then set off for the West Coast, where he resided

until his death in 2001. Lilly may have lost his credibility, but dolphins have held their own. Scientists now consider them the second-smartest creature on the planet, after humans.

Today, the site of Lilly’s research station is slated to become “64 villas, 36 condos, 4 bungalows, swimming pool, tennis court,” and a variety of other facilities. It will be called “Dolphin Cove.”

## ARTS & LETTERS

# Chapter and Verse

**THE SOURCE:** “American Literary Style and the Presence of the King James Bible” by Robert Alter, in *New England Review*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2009–10).

THAT THE 1611 KING JAMES Bible once exerted a profound influence on American literature is as inarguable as observing, along with Robert Alter, that there has been a “general erosion of a sense of literary language.” He suggests no causal connection, simply noting that serious literature and a literary voice once honed by letter writing have given way to novels that are “flat and banal” and “the high-speed shortcut language of e-mail and text messaging.” Alter writes that we are losing “one of the keen pleasures in the reading experience.”

Consider one of the more exhilarating passages from Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* (1851), in which the doomed Captain Ahab rails

against savage nature but ultimately acknowledges his unbreakable connection to the sea: “Then hail, for ever hail, O sea, in whose eternal tossings the wild fowl finds his only rest. Born of earth, yet suckled by the sea; though hill and valley mothered me, ye billows are my foster-brothers.” Though Melville marshals other influences (there is more than a touch of *King Lear* in the passage’s sensibility, for instance), his rhythm and syntax—“born of earth, yet suckled by the sea,” “ye billows”—are borrowed

A diminishing sense of literary style, poet Robert Alter writes, is depriving us of “one of the keen pleasures in the reading experience.”

from the formal language of the Bible.

Another great 19th-century stylist, Abraham Lincoln, understood how using deliberately archaic flourishes such as “four score and seven years ago” could not just heighten oratory but lend what Alter calls “a strong note of biblical authority.” Although only one phrase in the Gettysburg Address is a direct quotation from the King James Bible—“shall not perish from the earth”—its inclusion lends Lincoln’s American English reach and resonance. In his second inaugural address, Lincoln speaks of how strange it may seem “that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not, that we may be not judged.” Linking a reference to slavery to a modified quotation of Luke 6:37 (from the Beatitudes) that occurs just after Jesus’ injunction to “love your enemies” underscores for Alter how much the moral authority of the 1865 Lincoln speech was made possible by the language of the Bible. “At a cultural moment when the biblical

text . . . was a constant presence in American life, the idioms and diction and syntax incised in collective memory through the King James translation became a wellspring of eloquence.”

Alter, who teaches Hebrew and comparative literature at the University of California, Berkeley, identifies William Faulkner as the last major American writer to be strongly influenced by the King James Version, though more thematically than linguistically. In such novels as *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) and *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner’s biblical allusions not only provide signposts to the morality of key characters in fictional Yoknapatawpha County but also add allegorical weight to his contemporary dramas.

Has appreciation of the literary style of writers such as Faulkner or Melville vanished forever? Alter laments that “teachers of literature and their hapless students have tended to look right through style to the purported grounding of the text in one ideology or another.” They

and others are missing the “deep pleasure” of the “play of style in fiction,” and the fine mental connections and discriminations it affords.

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS

## The Art of Life

**THE SOURCE:** “The Art Is Alive” by Emily Voigt, in *Isotope*, Fall-Winter 2009.

A DINNER PARTY IN PARIS.

Frog on the menu. It sounds pretty straightforward until the catch: In attendance is the frog himself, still alive. The meal being served—coincidentally frog steaks—is tissue cloned from the guest of honor. It’s not the future; it’s a piece of performance art titled *Disembodied Cuisine*. Welcome to the weird world of bioart.

“The idea of manipulating life in the name of aesthetics is nothing new,” says Emily Voigt, a writer based in New York City, but recently, art in which biological materials are used “has been growing rapidly in popularity and ambition.” *Bioart* is the catchall label for works of this kind,

which range from bacteria that have been genetically engineered to glow in bright colors to a torn leaf repaired with grafted-on human scab cells. Many artists who 10 or 20 years ago were tinkering with silicon and circuits are today playing with cells and DNA.

Many bioartists present their work as a critique of what they see as the recklessness of modern science. Oron Catts, the man behind *Disembodied Cuisine*, directs SymbioticA, an “artistic laboratory” at the University of Western Australia, where participants can attend “workshops on how to build a home lab for no more than the cost of a laptop” and receive instruction in DNA extraction, genetic engineering, and selective breeding. Catts gives voice to the question raised by bioart: “Should [artists] be allowed to work with life?” But to him, the question is just as relevant for science as it is for art; in his view it’s science, not art, that has produced “the most challenging images of the 20th century.”

Another bioartist Voigt profiles, Adam Zaretsky, believes that even if

## EXCERPT

## Public Property

*This “Oates”—this quasi-public self—is scarcely visible to me, as a mirror reflection, seen up close, is scarcely visible to the viewer. “Oates” is an island, an oasis, to which on this agitated morning I can row, as in an uncertain little skiff, with an unwieldy paddle—the way is arduous not because the water is deep but because the water is shallow and weedy and the bottom of the skiff is endangered by rocks beneath. And yet—once I*

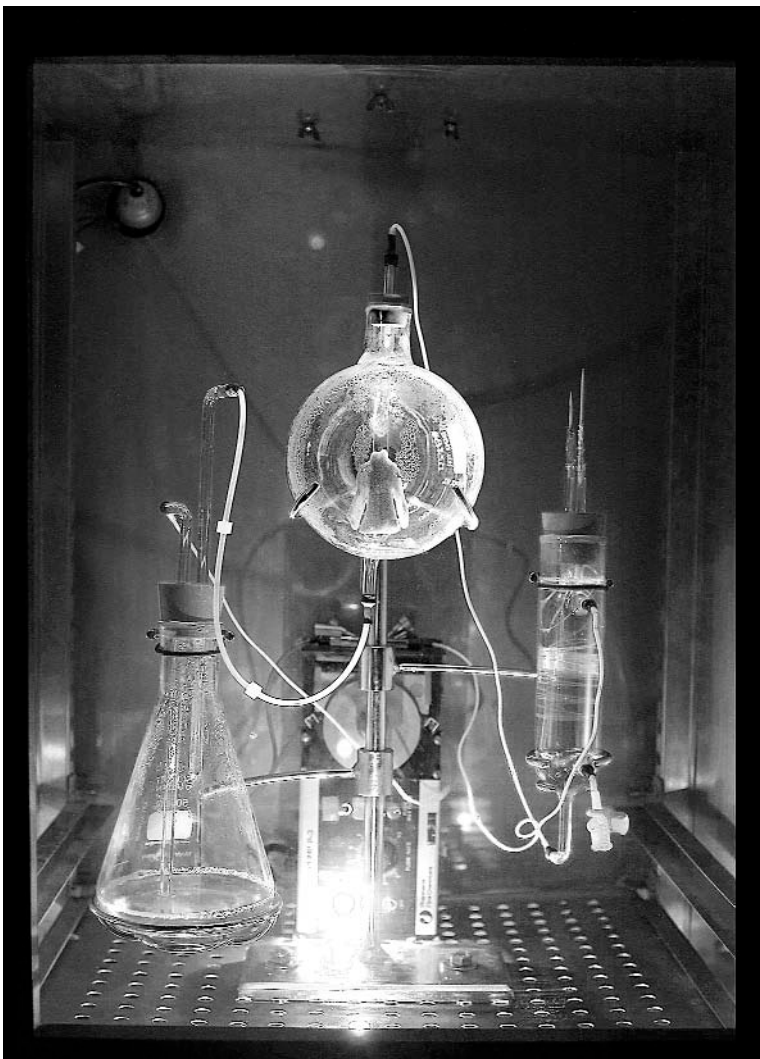
*have rowed to this island, this oasis, this core of calm amid the chaos of my life—once I arrive at the university, check my mail, and ascend to the second floor of 185 Nassau where I’ve had an office since fall 1978—once I am “Joyce Carol Oates” in the eyes of my colleagues and my students—a shivery sort of elation enters my veins. I feel not just confidence but certainty—that I am in the right place, and this is the right time. The anxiety, the despair, the anger I’ve been feeling—that has so transformed my life—immediately fades, as shadows on a wall are dispelled in sunshine.*

—JOYCE CAROL OATES, author of, most recently, *In Rough Country*, in *The Atlantic* (2010 Fiction issue)



## Michelangelo's Passion

**THE SOURCE:** "Loving Strokes" by James Fenton, in *Times Literary Supplement*, April 9, 2010.



***Victimless Leather*, a tiny jacket "grown" from mouse stem cells, "deconstruct[s] our cultural meaning of clothes as a second skin by materializing it and displaying it," its creators explain.**

his experiments with *E. coli* or other bacteria cause harm or suffering, they are also "introducing important questions into the public consciousness." He admits, "My art is ethically suspect. . . . My friend sat down with me and said, 'Well, you know, you say you're critiquing it and then you're actually doing it.' And I was like, 'You might be kind of right.'"

The first major bioart exhibition was held in 2000 in New York's Hell's

Kitchen neighborhood. Eduardo Kac, a Brazilian artist credited with naming the genre, had a piece on display in which he translated a verse from the Bible into Morse code, then used the resulting dots and dashes to write DNA code. Which verse? Genesis 1:28, in which God commands that man "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

ART HISTORIANS HAVE LONG speculated whether a set of drawings Michelangelo Buonarroti made for his friend and patron Tommaso de'Cavalieri in 1532 reveal a not-so-secret love. In one of the drawings, "Ganymede," an eagle's talons grip a young man around the shins as it bears him aloft. "To many," James Fenton writes, "this looks like buggery—buggery, to be sure, of an exceedingly unusual kind . . . but buggery nevertheless." Also fueling the gossip are a number of passionate love sonnets the artist wrote to the young nobleman. "The artist protests a chaste love," Fenton says, "but he does so with a passion that, for a modern sensibility, can only with difficulty be conceived as chaste." At the time Michelangelo presented the drawings, he would have been 57; Tommaso may have been as young as 12, though he was more likely at least in his teens.

During his life, Michelangelo (1475–1564) fastidiously guarded access to his drawings. "*Non mostra cosa alchuna ad alchuno*," his agent wrote to the Marquis of Mantua: He doesn't show anything to anybody." Rival artists often sought out such sketches for clues about techniques they could appropriate—indeed, 50 sketches

were stolen from Michelangelo's workshop in 1529. The artist burned all drawings still in his possession shortly before his death.

But the drawings Michelangelo presented to intimates, such as the ones given to Tommaso, were very different from working sketches. Fully finished, these works were presented, according to Giorgio Vasari, Michelangelo's contemporary and early biographer, to teach the young man how to draw. (At the least they sparked in Tommaso a collecting interest: He eventually amassed an impressive body of works by Giotto, Donatello, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci.) Their content, however, at

least to modern eyes, is blatantly sensual, even improper, though it seems clear—if the emotionally tortured texts of some of Michelangelo's sonnets are taken as evidence—that the pictures don't represent reality. Michelangelo is thought to have been homosexual, but he publicly expressed aversion to coitus, and advised others “not to indulge in it, or at least as little as possible.”

But did Michelangelo have any qualms about his relationship with Tommaso? The two remained lifelong friends, even as the younger man married, had children, and became a widower, and Tommaso was with Michelangelo when he died. Fenton speculates that

Michelangelo “would have been horrified” by the innuendoes about his relationship with Tommaso, “not least by the equanimity with which we say this kind of thing.”

Fenton, a poet and critic, believes that the very publicness of the courtship belies the possibility that it had a physical component. Michelangelo knew he “was acting nobly and openly, not as a sodomite in a dark alley.” To modern scholars, Fenton says, “the experience of the desire is crucial to the diagnosis; whether we act on such desires is almost irrelevant. But this kind of thinking was quite foreign to Michelangelo.”

## OTHER NATIONS

# Enterprising Apparatchiks

**THE SOURCE:** “Beyond Corruption: An Assessment of Russian Law Enforcement's Fight Against Human Trafficking” by Lauren A. McCarthy, in *Demokratizatsiya*, Winter 2010.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION monitors estimate that 10,000 people are trafficked out of Russia for sex work every year, while thousands more—most hailing from impoverished parts of the former Soviet empire—are trafficked into the country to toil at Russian construction sites, textile factories, and agricultural concerns. As with other social problems, the Russian legislature has been slow to respond: There wasn't a law on the

books criminalizing human trafficking until December 2003. Of the 350 cases of human trafficking registered with the authorities through 2007, only 10 have made it to the courts.

Those familiar with post-Soviet Russia's struggles with poverty and graft would likely attribute these disheartening statistics to corruption. But Lauren A. McCarthy, a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, contends that the explanation is more complicated.

Exhibit A: Russia's byzantine criminal justice system. During the investigation and prosecution of human traffickers, a case may pass

through four departments in various federal ministries, and “no link in the chain really has any incentive to follow a case through.” Add to that the fact that Russian law enforcement officials are a cautious breed, immured in a Soviet-style hierarchy that penalizes those who work on cases that don't advance. Officials are particularly reluctant to apply the new human trafficking law, as they fear they will get tripped up by its complicated provisions and harm their careers.

Trafficking is a particularly difficult and resource-intensive charge to pursue. One federal anti-trafficking official told McCarthy that his unit could investigate 10 cases of prostitution in the time it would take to investigate one case of trafficking. Like law enforcement personnel throughout the world, “the majority of Russian law enforcement are honest and hard-

working, trying to do their jobs within a set of institutional constraints,” McCarthy writes. Often that involves applying articles of the criminal code that require less evidence than the articles on trafficking but are more likely to result in conviction. Altogether, Russian law enforcement is more successful at jailing human traffickers than the low number of cases suggests. “After adding up all the disincentives to work on trafficking,” McCarthy observes, “it is a wonder that Russian law enforcement has managed to do anything at all.”

## OTHER NATIONS

## Indonesia's Democracy Pie

**THE SOURCE:** “The Irony of Success” by Edward Aspinall, in *Journal of Democracy*, April 2010.

INDONESIA IS ALTERNATELY hailed as one of the great democratic success stories or bemoaned for its corruption and ineffectiveness. Actually, both judgments are justified, explains Edward Aspinall, a senior fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra.

A decade ago, Indonesia was an unlikely candidate to become a stable democracy. Following the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, the multi-island Southeast Asian nation's early steps toward representative government were threatened by three “potentially powerful spoilers”: the military, which had amassed great political power during the 32-year dictatorship; separatist, ethnic, and religious

Indonesia's stable democracy did not come cheaply: It was won by compromising on quality.

violence; and Islamist movements. In just over 10 years, Aspinall holds, Indonesia has “dealt effectively” with these challenges. Topping off the accomplishments are a flourishing news media market and freely contested multiparty elections. But the young democracy's stability did not come cheaply: It was won by compromising on quality—accommodating spoilers and giving them power in the political process.

Before 1998, it was conventional wisdom that the military would have a central role in any post-Suharto government. Things have worked out quite differently, an achievement Aspinall calls “perhaps the greatest . . . of Indonesian democratization.” After the Suharto regime's collapse, the military's leadership, suffering “a crisis of political confidence,” articulated a “new paradigm” under which it withdrew from political affairs: Police and military were separated, active officers were no longer allowed to occupy political posts, and parliamentary seats reserved for military officers were phased out by 2004. Though the current president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was a senior military officer during the Suharto regime, he had a reputation as a reformer.

Despite the reforms, civilian leaders still fear the soldiers. Gross

human rights violations that occurred under Suharto remain unpunished. A “territorial command structure,” which “distributed troops throughout the country” and “shadowed civilian government at every level,” continues to operate.

Another threat to Indonesia's stability in the years after Suharto was the prospect that local and ethnic violence would spread throughout the country. But Indonesia has seen most of the conflicts sputter out or get resolved through peace deals. The decentralization of power has eased tensions between the central government and lower-level jurisdictions and has enabled “a blossoming of local democracy that is rightly lauded as one of the signature achievements of Indonesia's reform.” In Aceh Province, the “site of Indonesia's bloodiest post-Suharto separatist insurgency,” a 2005 peace agreement signed in Helsinki has rendered conditions “almost miraculously peaceful.” Aspinall says that the key to the success of the agreement was allowing the creation of local political parties (banned elsewhere in Indonesia). Former guerrilla leaders have now been elected to govern the province and to head subprovincial districts—and they've “overnight transformed themselves into wealthy construction contractors” who have an interest in preserving the peace.

Finally, Islamist movements have never attracted much support in Indonesia, and consequently have been forced to moderate their messages. The government has made “superficial” accommodations to the Islamists in order to maintain their

support. For example, in 2008 an anti-pornography law was passed, and in some regions local governments have imposed dress restrictions, curfews for women, and stricter Islamic education requirements. Aspinall says such developments “arguably point to the early stages of a long-term struggle to Islamize the state from within.”

Today Indonesia is grappling with second-tier reforms aimed at improving the quality of governance, which suffered because so many challengers were given “a piece of the democracy pie.” Aspinall warns, “Poor governance is often the midwife of authoritarian reversals, and while Indonesia has yet to produce its Alberto Fujimori, Thaksin Shinawatra, or Vladimir Putin, [it] is not yet out of the danger zone.”

## OTHER NATIONS

## Red, White, and Balkan

**THE SOURCE:** “Unapproachable Light” by Dimiter Kenarov, in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring 2010.

PICTURE A PREDOMINANTLY Muslim city where residents celebrate Thanksgiving and Old Glory flies above storefronts. Pipe dream? Not in Ferizaj, Kosovo, home of the largest American military installation in the Balkans. As Dimiter Kenarov, a doctoral student in English at the University of California, Berkeley, tells it, “To walk around Ferizaj is to move through a weird fantasy that never came true in the Middle East.”

Before the disintegration of

Yugoslavia during the 1990s, Ferizaj was a small rural outpost that had grown around a train station built during the Ottoman era. (Eight thousand Christian Orthodox Serbs lived in the town. Now, one Serbian resident estimates they number just eight.) The vast majority of Ferizaj’s 165,000-odd inhabitants are Muslim Albanians.

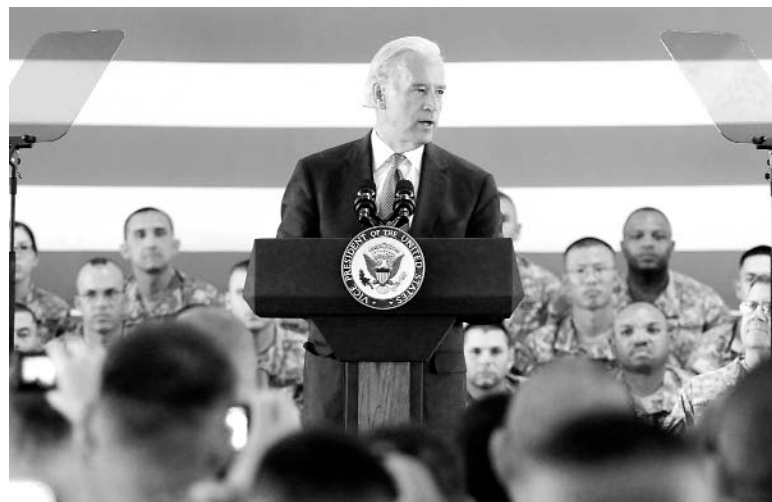
Today, the town has the “frenzied atmosphere of a frontier settlement,” thanks to Camp Bondsteel—a 955-acre facility containing 50 helipads, two chapels, a Burger King, and a Taco Bell, along with three gyms and volleyball and basketball courts. It was created in less than 90 days in 1999.

Kenarov explains that Camp Bondsteel was ostensibly built to house the U.S. contingent of the United Nations’ peacekeeping mission in the region, but he thinks that the American planners had a longer-term commitment in mind. If the United States plays things right, he says, “Kosovo could become the strongest card in the

ideological campaign for hearts and minds among Muslim nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.” Yet this corner of the earth is not on the radar of most Americans.

The base provides more than 1,000 jobs, which endears it to locals, particularly given an unemployment rate close to 60 percent. As a member of the Ferizaj city council told Kenarov, “In Kosovo we are known as a city of America. Ferizaj is more stable, we have a better economy than other cities, and everyone knows this is thanks to America.”

The warm and fuzzy feelings aren’t limited to Ferizaj. Kosovars resoundingly supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the capital, Pristina, one of the main drags is called Bill Clinton Boulevard and a replica of the Statue of Liberty sits atop Hotel Victory. Of a recently discovered Kosovar Al Qaeda fighter, the mayor of Ferizaj speaks plainly: “The whole Kosovo community is ashamed of him. We shit on him.”



Vice President Joe Biden addresses troops at Camp Bondsteel, a large but little-known U.S. military outpost, complete with Burger King, in pro-American Ferizaj, Kosovo, in 2009.

Also in this issue:

Michael Anderson  
on Muriel Spark

Jay Tolson on  
Islamism

Rich Benjamin on  
fatherless black  
men

Megan Buskey on  
noise

Martin Walker on  
Germany

Michael Moynihan  
on 1970s paranoia

Erica Bleeg on  
African cuisine

Charles Barber on  
America's medical  
history

Winifred Gallagher  
on yoga

# CURRENT BOOKS

REVIEWS OF NEW AND NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

## Pulse of the People

Reviewed by Daniel Walker Howe

LAST YEAR, THE BRITISH PRODUCTION company that made what has become the popular series *America: The Story of Us* for the History Channel invited me to review the script, which treats the invention of America across 400 years. I advised against the use of the term “American national character” on the grounds that it was misleading, since all Americans don’t have the same character, and the term elides variations in race, class, region, religion, ethnicity, gender, and politics. In any case, it was academically unfashionable. Now, Claude S. Fischer’s *Made in America* has rehabilitated the expression “American character,” at least for me.

*Made in America* deliberately provides a view from Middle America. There is little about such academically fashionable subgroups as African Americans and organized labor, nothing about Hispanics or gays. There is some women’s history, but it’s more about the pioneer spirit than the suffrage movement or glass ceilings. The book describes a culture of abundance that took its start from the exploitation of a vast, rich continent whose previous occupants had just been (all too conveniently) decimated by unfamiliar diseases introduced by the settlers. Americans have

always been a “people of plenty,” as the great historian David Potter characterized them in his 1954 book of that name: eager for material possessions and lucky enough to have them widely available.

The book is a sociologist’s take on American social history, a distillation of Fischer’s vast reading. The copious notes, extensive index, and list of works cited take up as much space as the text itself. But Fischer, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, is not overwhelmed by his ambitious undertaking. He writes not only for his fellow academics but also for the general literate public.

One of Fischer’s major arguments is that mainstream American culture has not changed fundamentally in 400 years. From the settlement of Jamestown to today, America has been about seizing opportunity and trying to make it big. Fischer favors the term “voluntarism” to describe this aspect of the American character. It is predicated on individualism—the assumption that each individual is sovereign and self-directed (in

**MADE IN AMERICA:**  
A Social History of  
American Culture  
and Character.

By Claude S. Fischer.  
Univ. of Chicago Press.  
511 pp. \$35

Thomas Jefferson's language, possessed of "inalienable rights," including "the pursuit of happiness") rather than defined—and confined—by group memberships. But individuals find that they can most effectively pursue happiness by voluntarily associating with one another, a model that influenced not only the creation of local, state, and federal governments, but also the churches of the Protestant majority, innumerable political and reform movements, social and professional societies, charities, and clubs. At length, voluntarism even redefined marriage as a companionate association between equals, subject to severance by mutual consent.

The "American character" began life in colonial times, confined to a minority of the population. Only white, male property owners over the age of 21 were accounted full citizens and responsible agents. They alone could vote, because they alone were self-directed individuals capable of rendering independent judgment on public issues. All others—women, employees, servants, and slaves—were dependents. Gradually, more and more groups and classes have been admitted into this circle of American privilege and responsibility and have adopted its outlook and perks. One by one, employees, women, blacks, and people between the ages of 18 and 21 have been granted civic participation and allowed to function as sovereign individuals. Immigrants from other cultures have usually willingly assimilated into the voluntaristic American one.

Fischer's insight into American culture and character just about demolishes the interpretation, popular with some historians in the 1980s and '90s, that production for the market was somehow forced upon America's contented subsistence farmers during the first half of the 19th century. In fact, we know that Americans participated extensively in global markets as early as colonial times, importing, for example, porcelain and steel in return for American timber and tobacco. Indeed, colonial Americans protested parliamentary taxation without representation by boycotting their accustomed purchases from British merchants. So great was the American market for British imports that these

merchants invariably interceded with Parliament to placate the colonists.

Later, industrialization and related economic diversification aided the development of the American character by providing a much wider range of occupational choices. Nineteen out of 20 Americans lived on farms or in villages of less than 2,500 persons when the first census was taken in 1790. Economic opportunity beckoned from the new cities and towns of the 19th century. Young people, male and female, jumped at the chance to leave the farm and their fathers' control for the excitement and diversity of urban life.

**T**oward the end of his book, Fischer devotes a chapter to the American "mentality," in which he discusses American self-determination. The archetypal American, of whom Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln are good examples, engaged in a process of deliberate self-construction. Such persons set out to cultivate personal qualities including conscientiousness, prudence, and sensibility while suppressing unworthy passions such as anger. To be a "self-made" American in their sense meant something far more profound than just success in business. Outsiders such as women and African Americans legitimated their right to inclusion by engaging in the same kind of self-construction, as Margaret Fuller and Frederick Douglass did in the 19th century. Modern self-help enthusiasts the likes of Dale Carnegie and Oprah Winfrey are the heirs to this once-proud tradition.

Fischer says little about religious sects, although they illustrate his point about voluntarism. Religious pluralism has flourished in America largely because Catholics and Jews opted into the American culture that was originally shaped by voluntaristic Protestantism. Religious groups that don't fit into the mainstream do pose problems. Should American Muslims have the right to arrange their daughters' marriages? Should Christian Scientists be allowed to deny their children medical care? Should young-earth fundamentalists be able to wedge their views into the teaching of science in public schools?

Fischer quite deliberately avoids party politics in



**Marching to the American beat: A high school band parades through Butte, Montana, during the summer of 1939.**

his treatment of American history. He does, however, address the decline in voter participation during the 20th century that is so often deplored by commentators on American society. In the 19th century, as much as 80 percent of the qualified electorate might participate in elections, whereas during the 20th century a 60 percent turnout came to be the best one could hope for. Fischer interprets this as a reassertion of Americans' self-seeking individualism. The corrupt, boisterous local machine politics of the late 19th century gave voters a personal interest in elections. The politics of today seems remote and boring, especially in comparison with the alternative excitements available from professional sports and the mass media. The reformers of the Progressive Era, who made American politics more honest and less violent, deprived it of much of its appeal.

A continuing preoccupation of individualistic Americans, according to Fischer, has been their quest for security. This sounds surprising, given his emphasis on their eager capitalism, but he makes a persuasive case. A focus on physical health and longevity is one form this obsession takes, and of

course these have improved over time with advances in cleanliness, medicine, and public health. Another form of security is personal safety. Nineteenth-century American society was very violent; murders, riots, lynchings, duels, and the chronic brutality associated with slavery, wife beating, and the corporal punishment of children were all common. Life became safer in the 20th century, as it did elsewhere in the West. Even the upward turn in crime that began in the 1960s has been reversed, and, at its worst, still did not equal the violence of the 19th century. (Oddly, Fischer does not address Americans' current fear of terrorists.) Material abundance helped provide another form of security: a comfortable old age. The benefits available from the New Deal's Social Security program as well as private insurance companies have largely substituted for the support adult children once provided to their dependent elderly parents.

Much as I admire Fischer's achievement, he has not convinced me of one of his other major threads of argument: that America is "exceptional," with a culture like no other country's. Acquisitiveness and conspicuous consumption are by no means pecu-

liar to the United States and its colonial precursors. Indeed, when early Americans aspired to commercialism and refinement, they imported European goods and tastes. The quest for security, which Fischer makes a major component of the distinctively American culture, seems to me common to most human societies. And the story Fischer tells of people migrating away from rural areas to industrializing cities in search of job opportunities, far from being peculiar to the United States, is repeated today in virtually every developing country. Fischer emphasizes that the hold of religion—with the exception of Roman Catholicism—has not declined overall in America the way it has in most Western societies. But he does not distinguish evangelical Protestantism, which has boomed, from the traditional denominations of mainline Protestantism, which have waned considerably.

Having taught in both American and English universities, I am struck by the international quality of student life and culture. To be sure, this similarity is no doubt the result of American popular culture's eager embrace by young people overseas. But it doesn't leave America quite as exceptional as it was in the days when Alexis de Tocqueville visited and recorded its ways with wonder.

Whether or not the United States is unique, there does seem to be an American character type, and the belief that one can make it however one will—to become rich, popular, healthy, smart—seems a major feature of it. The British students I knew laughingly described their American counterparts: "Americans think death is optional."

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## Prime Mover

Reviewed by Michael Anderson

MURIEL SPARK IS THE MISTRESS of mystification of postwar British fiction. She is best known for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, her slim 1961 novel about the influence of an Edinburgh teacher on her young female pupils, which made her a literary star following its publication in *The New Yorker* and adaptation for stage and screen. Born to working-class Edinburgh parents in 1918, Spark became a jet setter, with residences in London, New York, and Rome, before settling in Tuscany, where she died in 2006. She wrote 22 novels, in which the inexplicable and fantastic are presented as commonplace, with an airy, supercilious insinuation that the truth is unknown and unknowable. The *New York Times* book critic Michiko Kakutani once

### MURIEL SPARK: The Biography.

By Martin Stannard.  
W.W. Norton.  
627 pp. \$35

described Spark's formula: "Take a self-enclosed community (of writers, schoolgirls, nuns, rich people, etc.) that is full of incestuous liaisons and fraternal intrigue; toss in a bombshell (like murder, suicide, or betrayal) that will ricochet dangerously around this little world; and add some allusions to the supernatural to ground these melodramatics in an old-fashioned context of good and evil."

It is those allusions to the supernatural that have earned Spark critical cachet. She forms, with Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene, "a grand triumvirate of Catholic-convert novelists," in the words of her biographer, Martin Stannard. Like Waugh and Greene, Spark took Catholicism as a very sometime thing. All three seem to have embraced the religion for what might be called its secondary advantages, without the



inconveniences of observance: faith without belief. (Tellingly, the older writers were early and consistent supporters of Spark's work.) As Frank Kermode, the eminent English academic critic (and Spark partisan), once commented, "Mrs. Spark's kind of religion seems bafflingly idiosyncratic." She did not regularly attend Mass or go to confession. A remark by a character in her novel *Territorial Rights* (1979) is emblematic of her glib snarkiness, both stylistic and theological: "I don't know why the Catholic Church doesn't stick to politics and keep its nose out of morals." She proclaimed herself "only interested in God."

The remark is revelatory, as is Stannard's observation that Jesus "had never appealed" to Spark. But just as he fails to follow up on the odd phenomenon of a Christian who rejects Christ, Stannard ignores the other suggestive material about her life that he unearthed in a decade of research and writing. Undertaken at Spark's invitation and with her cooperation, the book is an oddly subversive hagiography. Stannard engages in endless special pleading (on her sexual provocation: "As an attractive woman, she was plagued by men, particularly married men, who misread her gaiety as sexual invitation"), snide cheerleading (on Gore Vidal's disparaging comments: "Failing powers? Mr. Vidal could think again"), and inane glorification ("To lesser mortals the near-permanent postal strike might have presented an obstacle. Muriel made other arrangements." Having a friend act as courier—gosh, who'd a

think it?). However, as a professor of modern literature at the University of Leicester and the author of a highly regarded two-volume biography of Evelyn Waugh, Stannard is too conscientious not to offer chapter and verse to undercut his overstated admiration for Spark. She is presented as madly self-

centered, arrogant, a social-climbing snob (Ved Mehta, a fellow *New Yorker* writer, told Stannard, "She went through people like pieces of Kleenex"), and emotionally ruthless. Stannard's book is a hard sell on a witch.

Like Graham Greene, Spark professed an eccentrically personal version of Catholicism. Kermode is surely correct to say that she "is a theological rather than a religious writer." The



Muriel Spark, on the cusp of literary stardom, strikes a pose in 1960.

question is what of substance her work has to say on matters spiritual. Her characteristic outré stylistic devices—"fun-house plots, full of trapdoors, abrupt apparitions, and smartly clicking secret panels," in the words of her admirer John Updike—are putatively redeemed by intimations of the numinous. A typical Spark novel ends rather than concludes; irresolution is offered as a supernatural conundrum, with the author throwing dust in the reader's eyes and calling it mystical. (The enduring popularity of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* probably is due to Jay Presson Allen's deft script adaptation, which junked Spark's typically implausible Catholic transformation—Brodie's nemesis, the student Sandy, winds up becoming a nun.) Contrast Spark with Flannery O'Connor, whose eccentrics and grotesques are vehicles for profound meditations on the mysteries of her Catholic faith.

The differences in commitment, ethical engagement, and moral seriousness are stark.

Spark's religious obscurantism is as one with her famously pitiless style. She observes what fools mortals be with a cool un-Puckish glee. This is the source of Spark's acclaim as a comic satirist, but a very little of it goes a very long way, and it is chilling to read of real-life instances of her flip-pant heartlessness. Of her mentally unstable former husband, she recalled, "He became a borderline case, and I didn't like what I found on either side of the border." In place of Greene's famous "sliver of ice" in the heart of a writer, Spark substituted a glacier.

Spark believed that it was "the will of God that she should be a Christian and a writer," Stannard writes. Thus were justified her earthly transgressions: the abandonment (and eventual disinheritance) of her son, the rejection of friends, the arbitrary and outrageous demands on her publishers, the self-serving evasiveness. ("Sometimes she was unable to believe that she had ever said or done things that contradicted what she wanted to appear in the authorized version of her life," Stannard writes, all too gingerly.) Spark's autobiography gives little detail about her conversion—she became a Catholic in 1954—an omission Stannard, astonishingly, mimics. "Her pen was a key to an alternative reality from which the imperfect form of her own existence could be excluded," he writes. "In this universe she was God, omnipotent, and, while there, she wanted not to be disturbed."

**H**owever, truth will out, and can be found far closer to the ground. Spark was unwittingly self-revelatory when she told an interviewer in 1987 that the fundamental sin was "this propensity of the human spirit for self-justification." Stannard repeatedly writes of Spark's sense of threat, her need to protect herself against "emotional blackmail," her "suspicion of betrayal." He spews bombast about Spark's "tortured life" (which, of course, transforms into triumph over adversity) but ignores what he himself presents.

For example, what role did Spark's Jewish heritage play? Her adolescence, in the Edinburgh of the 1930s, was a "period of open anti-Semitism," Stannard writes. "We were probably the only Jewish family in that whole area," Spark's brother told him. "You can feel it like you can feel the rain coming on." Spark's relation to this heritage was, not to put too fine a point on it, troubled: She repressed anti-Semitic slurs and disinherited her son over his adamant embrace of Judaism. (Stannard squeamishly acknowledges that the younger Spark may well be correct in his assertion that Muriel was Jewish not just on her father's side, as she claimed, but also on her mother's—traditionally, the side through which Jewish identity is passed on.)

Stannard writes that the death of Spark's father, a year after the publication of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, devastated her. "The sustaining fiction of her childhood—the supportive family—had died with her father. . . . The last shadow of its unqualified love had faded." He also writes that for her the age of God the Father "was over." She strove to become "immaculate, and thus free from the world's attempts to impose guilt." It would appear that Spark sought divine apotheosis to elude the all-too-human. Her desperate need for transcendence at any cost may well have been the source of her desperate need to validate herself as a writer (hence the book-a-year productivity) and her celebrated coolly observational writing style, as well as her restlessness, pretensions to divinity, frightened arrogance, and inability to make equitable human connections. But these attributes receive no consideration in this biography.

"Find the lady?" Stannard writes. "A difficult proposition when she was in ceaseless movement." But the traveler takes herself wherever she goes. If Martin Stannard missed Muriel Spark, it was because he refused to look clearly at what he found.

MICHAEL ANDERSON is finishing a biography of the playwright Lorraine Hansberry.

# Islam's Political Problem

Reviewed by Jay Tolson

IN THE ANNALS OF WELL-meaning ineptitude, Western efforts to locate and support moderate Muslim voices deserve a place of distinction. The story begins in the smoky rubble of Manhattan's Twin Towers and the dawning awareness that Islamist zealots who styled themselves holy warriors were the masterminds of this startling act of mass murder. Such acts had to be understood either as something frightfully sick about Islam or as a radical distortion of Islam. Most reasonable people chose to see them as the latter. But if Islam was being hijacked, who within the Islamic world would resist?

Voices of moderation were hastily sought. Understandably, mistakes were made. Even among the Muslims mustered to stand in solidarity with President George W. Bush at the 9/11 memorial service in Washington National Cathedral were a couple whose credentials as champions of moderate, mainstream Islam were questionable. But if that was forgivable because of haste, later missteps were less so.

*Wall Street Journal* reporter Ian Johnson deftly recounts one such fiasco in a recent issue of *Foreign Policy*. In 2005, the U.S. State Department cosponsored a conference with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) that brought American Muslims to Brussels to meet with 65 European Muslims. The State Department followed up by bringing European Muslims, many of whom had connections to the Muslim Brotherhood—the world's oldest and arguably most influential Islamist organization, dedicated to making Islam a political program—to the United

## THE FLIGHT OF THE INTELLECTUALS.

By Paul Berman.  
Melville House.  
299 pp. \$26

## THE OTHER MUSLIMS: Moderate and Secular.

Edited by Zeyno Baran.  
Palgrave Macmillan.  
211 pp. \$30

States for an ISNA-led summer program and imam training. The rationale was that European Muslims, thought to be less integrated into their adopted countries than American Muslims, would learn something valuable about assimilation. All well meaning, of course, but comically misguided. As Johnson notes, "ISNA was founded by people with extremely close ties to the European leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood."

This initiative was only the beginning of protracted efforts by U.S. officialdom to court a number of Brotherhood or Brotherhood-related Islamist organizations and leaders. Instant experts on political Islam from both liberal and conservative Washington think tanks advocated the idea of engaging Islamists who eschewed violence (except, in some cases, violence against Israelis) and endorsed the democratic process, if not liberal values. European officials were wary of this approach, but even the CIA gave a go-ahead.

The folly of this kind of thinking is a major concern of the books under review. In an essay in *The Other Muslims*, Yunis Qandil, a Jordan-born Palestinian and a lecturer at the Institute of Contemporary Intellectual Studies in Beirut, goes to the heart of the problem: "In the long term, the strengthening of ideological Islam and the granting of official recognition to its 'moderate' organizations against jihadism create more problems for us than solutions." Moderate as these Muslim groups in Europe and America may seem, Qandil explains, they represent what moderate, traditional Muslims fight against in their countries of origin: "the instrumentalization of our religion through a totalitarian ideology." While paying lip service to the values of

Western societies—notably, the tolerance that allows them to operate—these Islamists fundamentally view such societies as the “archenemy of Islam.” So why, Qandil reasonably asks, are European governments “still selecting the adherents of this particular type of Islam as their privileged partners and the recognized representatives of all Muslims”? The same question applies in the case of America.

The answers are many, ranging from ignorance of political Islam to a resigned cynicism that throws up its hands and says, “Well,

The Muslim leaders who are most likely to speak for all Muslims are those with a political agenda.

maybe these really are the spokespersons for most Muslims around the world.” Such cynicism reflects an ignorance of one of Islam’s great virtues: the diversity

within the religion. The fact is that most traditional Muslims practice varieties of the faith that are highly inflected by sectarian differences (Sunni or Shia, for example), local traditions and practices, and their interaction with other religions. Indeed, the only thing unifying most Muslims is adherence to their core beliefs, the Five Pillars of Islam. Lacking a clergy in the Christian sense of the term, Islam is truly a faith of believers. To be sure, a scholarly hierarchy exists within both the Sunni and Shia traditions, but scholars themselves adhere to many schools of theological jurisprudence and are generally modest about their authority.

Broadly speaking, the Muslim leaders who are most likely to speak for all Muslims are those with a political agenda: that is, the Islamists. (Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, of al-Jazeera fame, a noted Muslim Brotherhood leader who once praised Adolf Hitler for doing God’s work by putting Jews “in their place,” epitomizes this presumptive authority to speak for all Muslims.) And the contempo-

rary brand of Islam most strongly under the influence of Islamism is a deracinated and homogenized species, dubbed “globalized Islam” by the French scholar Olivier Roy. Possibly more prevalent in non-majority-Muslim countries than in most Muslim-majority ones, globalized Islam often claims the second or third generation within Muslim immigrant families. These mostly youthful purists of the faith (some of whom call themselves Salafists, after the first Muslim followers of the Prophet Muhammad) claim that they are the only correct and true Muslims. Many view their own parents as apostates or innovators who have lost touch with the true way. To the children of Islamism, sharia (Qur’anic law) is not so much an ethical code informing man-made laws as it is a set of divinely ordained rules governing every aspect of life.

This is a simplification, of course, but not a distortion. Many, if not all, of the contributors to *The Other Muslims* have been on the receiving end of attacks from self-styled “true” Muslims in prominent organizations such as ISNA and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). I personally heard a spokesperson for CAIR’s Florida branch describe some of these contributors, who were attending a conference on secular Muslims in Tampa, as “not real Muslims.” In certain parts of the world, such words are tantamount to a death sentence. Even in the West, they carry a sting.

Some of the best essays in *The Other Muslims* are testimonies of Muslims who have passed through Islamist phases themselves. Cosh Omar, a British playwright and actor of Turkish Cypriot origins, nicely details his passage from the broad-minded Sufi orientation of his father through involvement with Hizb ut-Tahrir (an international group dedicated to reinstituting the caliphate) through his restoration to something close to his father’s faith. Omar does not call for banning Islamist organizations. That

would only drive them underground and possibly make them more violent. Instead, he insists on letting the zealots defend their beliefs in the marketplace of ideas, where their views will “be subject to denunciation by the very people that are targeted.”

One can only hope that Omar’s confidence is well placed. Unfortunately, much 20th-century history testifies to the seductive power of bad ideas. And Islamism is particularly seductive, because there is often a fine line between a serious dedication to Muslim values and practices and a more strictly political ambition to make Islam the constitutional basis of the civil-political order—between religion and a religion-based ideology. To be sure, there has always been a greater mix of religion and politics in the history of Islam and Islamic institutions than there has been, historically, in Christendom, at least in theory. In practice, Muslim theocracies rarely survived because leaders with more worldly interests (often generals) tended to seize the reins of power, even in the medieval caliphates. But the fantasy of the early-20th-century founding fathers of Islamism was to make their religion into a political ideology as comprehensive as the fascist and communist ideologies they observed, and often greatly admired, from a distance. For the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, Islam was, quite simply, “the answer.”

**T**he rise and spread of Islamism figures large in Paul Berman’s book *The Flight of the Intellectuals*. Expanding a long



**Controversial Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan speaks at Cooper Union in New York City shortly after the Obama administration lifted a six-year-old travel ban on him this spring.**

essay he wrote for *The New Republic*, Berman, a journalism professor and writer in residence at New York University, takes as his primary focus the enigmatic career of the European Muslim thinker Tariq Ramadan, the grandson of al-Banna and the son of Said Ramadan, an active Muslim Brotherhood official who proselytized throughout the Middle East and eventually settled in Geneva, where he founded the Islamic Center. Athlete, scholar, community activist, Tariq Ramadan soon rose to a prominence that outshone his father’s, producing essays, books, and cassettes, and delivering endless lectures on the challenges and possibilities facing Muslims living in the West.

Active in France, he crossed swords with such critics as the young interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy as well as a number of leading intellectuals. (Ramadan, in a debate with Sarkozy in 2003, said he opposed the practice of stoning and other forms of corporal punishment in some Islamic traditions but—in order not to foreclose discussions with Muslim scholars—would only call for a moratorium on such practices rather than

condemn them outright.) The debates Ramadan sparked often boiled down to variations on one question: Was he the ideological son of his father and grandfather, a smoother-talking version of the true-believing Islamist with an ultimately political agenda? Or was he only their biological descendant, and otherwise just a devout Muslim dedicated to making his coreligionists fully integrated members of Western liberal societies?

**T**he number of words that have been devoted to this question is astonishing. It was given added urgency in 2004, when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security revoked Ramadan's visa just before he was to take up an academic post at the University of Notre Dame. The press vigorously recycled unfounded charges that had been leveled against Ramadan over more than a decade. Eventually, Homeland Security revealed that Ramadan had given money to a blacklisted organization that provided support to Hamas, a terrorist group. That was true, but he had no idea that the organization funneled funds to Hamas, and in any case he had made his contribution well before the organization was blacklisted. *L'affaire Ramadan* became a cause célèbre. But it is still hard to imagine that a man whose writings and ideas are so astonishingly pedestrian would end up being so widely scrutinized. ("Following the example presented by Yusuf al-Qaradawi in his book on the problem of poverty, we should reflect on the sources and on the reality of our societies nowadays," he writes stirring in *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity*.)

For Berman, the controversy over Ramadan is really a study in the failure of Western intellectuals. Berman rejects the view that Ramadan is a militant Islamist who should be kept out of the United States. (Ramadan's U.S. visa has in any case been restored under the Obama administration.) But he insists that Western intellectuals have given a pass to

Ramadan and his murkier ideas on the grounds that, even if he is an Islamist of some stripe, he is an authentic Muslim thinker with a large Muslim audience, particularly in the West.

With an unflagging energy that has earned him a position at Oxford University as well as seats on conciliatory committees and councils throughout Europe, Ramadan issues pronouncements of such ponderously vague yet annealing worthiness as to satisfy large swaths of the globalized Islam crowd while reassuring leading Western liberal intellectuals. Those same intellectuals, Berman points out, have dealt far less generously with truly independent-minded Muslim thinkers such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in some cases dismissing them, in the manner of CAIR executives, as inauthentic Muslims hardly worthy of the world's attention. How far Western intellectuals have fallen, Berman laments, even since that not-so-distant time when they stood behind Salman Rushdie in defiance of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death-mandating fatwa.

Don't ban the Islamists, insist Berman and the writers in *The Other Muslims*, but do expose their ideas for what they are—including their elaborate borrowings from fascist, Nazi, and communist ideologies. It should not be forgotten, Berman reminds us, that leading Islamists of the 1930s and '40s forged relationships with Third Reich officials. The fierce strain of Nazi anti-Semitism infused them with a lethal hatred of Jews, particularly Jewish Palestinians, that was truly something new in the world of Islam. That toxic anti-Semitism now vents itself with near impunity on the nation of Israel. Make no mistake, these books argue: Islamism is inimical to the spirit of compromise and tolerance. And without that spirit, neither true democracy nor peaceful coexistence among nations is possible.

JAY TOLSON is the news director of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He was editor of *The Wilson Quarterly* from 1989 to 1999.

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

## Life Chances

Reviewed by Rich Benjamin

FATHERHOOD IS A TOUCHY subject among black American men. Well over half of black kids grow up in a household without a dad. No wonder black public figures ranging from Louis Farrakhan to Bill Cosby to President Barack Obama have exhorted black men to “step up” and be responsible fathers. Some liberal advocates dismiss these pleas as bootstrap sermons that blame poor blacks for systemic problems. Others, conservative and liberal alike, counter that the three pillars that once bolstered black Americans—community, school, and family—are now miserably failing at-risk black kids, not least because of the plague of deadbeat dads.

*The Other Wes Moore* chronicles the parallel lives of two black men from Baltimore’s hard-scrabble turf. The author overcomes his financially challenged, fatherless childhood to become a husband, Rhodes Scholar, White House fellow, and investment banker. The “other” Wes Moore, who is two years older, emerges from a financially challenged, fatherless childhood to receive a life-without-parole sentence for his role in a cop slaying during a botched robbery in 2000. It’s as if *Puddin’head Wilson* met *The Prince and the Pauper* on the streets of black America. How did these two men wind up in such radically different places?

Moore interweaves their stories in an elegant narrative, bobbing between living rooms, basketball courts, alleys, lawns, stoops, and, most important, the prison visiting room where he interviews the other Wes Moore, whose existence the author discovered in a newspaper story about the robbery. It was not random events that launched these boys on dramatically different paths. Rather, it was the influence of adults. At the most vulnerable moments in his life, members of the author’s family doubled down to

**THE OTHER  
WES MOORE:**  
One Name and  
Two Fates.

By Wes Moore.  
Spiegel & Grau.  
233 pp. \$25

make sure he was properly supervised, and made prescient, commonsense decisions, such as sending him to military school after a minor brush with the law. Meanwhile, the other Wes Moore’s family made spectacularly poor decisions in the face of already meager options. His older brother dealt drugs, survived three gunshot wounds, then earnestly begged Wes not to do as he had done. Wes’s mother kept weed in the house, then acted shocked to discover her son’s drug stash.

The incarcerated Wes Moore’s story doesn’t deliver anywhere near the high-stakes drama seen in gritty entertainments such as the HBO crime series *The Wire* or last year’s film *Precious*. The realities of his four out-of-wedlock children, drug dealing, and gang-banging exploits make for a tale that is flat and rather familiar, his biography one more episode in the media’s narrative of black pathology. As Obama noted in *The Audacity of Hope*, “The images of the so-called underclass are ubiquitous, a permanent fixture in American popular culture.”

The author’s story, on the other hand, reads like an original road map of the contemporary striver’s path to the mandarin class. Moore is a modern-day Horatio Alger whooshing through the revolving doors of military enlistment, public service, and global finance. The coming-of-age memoir that inspired him was not *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* but Colin Powell’s *My American Journey*. That’s no accident. Like Powell and Obama, the author is the child of an immigrant. The contrast between his story and the other Wes Moore’s is explained in part by the different experiences of black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean and native-born black Americans, who on average have lower educational attainment, lower incomes, and higher incarceration rates.

Wes Moore is an artful storyteller, but he’s not a particularly fine writer. His sentences are pocked

Well over half of black kids grow up without a dad, which has led many black public figures to exhort black men to “step up” and be responsible fathers.

with clichés along the lines of “that fateful day.” Particularly grating is his habit of giving women eyes that “twinkled,” are “scintillating,” or are “almond-shaped.” This is not just sloppy writing; Moore’s idolatry of women lets them off the hook in this tale of social woe. While he often castigates men for their personal deficiencies, he glosses over the serial pregnancies of many black women who are not equipped to raise the kids they conceive.

However, insights and graceful sentences punctuate the often mediocre writing. After his father’s death, Moore’s mother moved the family to the Bronx, where, he writes, “the idea of life’s impermanence underlined everything for kids my age—it drove some of us to a paralyzing apathy, stopped us from even thinking too far into the future. Others were driven to what, in retrospect, was a sort of permanent state of mourning: for our loved ones, who always seemed at risk, and for our own lives, which felt so fragile and vulnerable.” The book’s chief triumph is to capture so matter-of-factly the permanent state of mourning experienced by an entire generation of black men who grew up without fathers.

RICH BENJAMIN is the author of *Searching for Whitopia: An Improbable Journey to the Heart of White America*, which earned a 2009 Editor’s Choice award from Booklist/The American Library Association. He is a senior fellow at Demos, a nonpartisan think tank.

## Listening Tour

*Reviewed by Megan Buskey*

THE FIRST WIDELY OBSERVED national moment of silence occurred in Britain in 1919, in commemoration of the nation’s inaugural Armistice Day. For two minutes, switchboard operators declined to connect telephone calls, subway cars and factory wheels ground to a halt, and ordinary citizens held their tongues. Within 10 years, the somber annual tradition had grown so popular that the BBC began to air the sound

of the silence. One broadcaster mused that the communal silence served as a “solvent which destroys personalities and gives us leave to be great and universal.”

While state-sanctioned silence was novel, the sentiment of the broadcaster was not. Silence has long acted as a leveler of ego. From the communal meditation that opens Quaker meetings to the lulling quiet that defines the lives of Buddhist monks, silence is central to various religious traditions. “For many people, silence is the way God speaks to us, and when we ourselves are in silence, we are speaking the language of the soul,” observes George Prochnik, author of a previous book about Sigmund Freud and the American psychologist James Jackson Putnam. In his fascinating new book, *In Pursuit of Silence*, Prochnik sets out to understand the complicated reasons for silence’s power.

Silence enriches the mental life of humans, but, as Prochnik shows, it ensures the very survival of some in the animal kingdom. By being silent, animals avoid detection by predators, and sharpen their wits. Prochnik highlights the intriguing case of the red-eyed tree frog, whose embryos are capable of distinguishing the vibrations of a raindrop from the movement of a hungry snake. When the vibrations are caused by a snake, the embryos prematurely launch themselves from their jellied clutch and attempt to survive in their underdeveloped state.

The inability to hear (or sense vibrations, a related skill) spells doom for some animals. But the biologically imposed silence of deafness, at least in humans, often results in an acute appreciation of the remaining senses. Prochnik points out that at Gallaudet University, the premier American institution of higher education for the deaf, faculty and staff cultivate Deaf Space, an appealing philosophy of architecture that emphasizes natural light, soft shapes, and colonnades and porches—“space that helps people remain in each other’s visual embrace.”

If silence has so many benefits, why are head-splitting rock concerts popular and iPods ubiq-

### IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE:

Listening for Meaning in a World of Noise.

*By George Prochnik.  
Doubleday. 342 pp. \$26*

THE UNWANTED SOUND OF EVERYTHING WE WANT:  
A Book About Noise.

*By Garret Keizer.  
PublicAffairs.  
375 pp. \$27.95*



uitous? In part because loud sounds have their pleasures. As explained by one partisan of boom cars—which sport subwoofers capable of producing more noise than is audible 30 feet away from a jet at takeoff—the sound he experiences is “sensual.” Yet people also crowd their lives with noise, Prochnik incisively argues, because they are resistant to the virtues that silence exemplifies: contemplation, attention, prudence, and restraint.

Garret Keizer, a contributing editor at *Harper's*, tackles essentially the same subject, but from the opposite end, in *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want*. Perceptions of noise vary, he notes—Swedish and Dutch scientists have found that people lodge fewer noise complaints about wind turbines when they financially profit from their use. Yet he points out that “noise took a quantum leap with industrialization,” and the racket was compounded with the advent of the automobile and the airplane.

The volume in many places around the world is now objectively dangerous (one child in eight in the United States suffers from hearing loss), and Keizer argues that, saddled with poor infrastructure and fewer resources, people on the social margins are disproportionately affected. He acknowledges that when compared to poverty, violence, and disease, noise is a minor environmental issue. But with noise as his cause, he seizes the opportunity to decry America's “loud” political discourse and climate change stoked by noisy factories.

Both Prochnik and Keizer end their books with policy prescriptions. Prochnik would like to see more pocket parks in cities, while Keizer thinks that we should live closer together to reduce our support of the carbon-spewing automobile industry. These ideas aren't off the mark, but given how subjective noise is, the idea that we possess the power to shape our own auditory space is strangely missing. One can find internal calm in the cacophony of rush hour, after all, or be plagued with racing thoughts in a tranquil park. A quieter life is not just a matter of listening to our physical environments, but also to ourselves.

MEGAN BUSKEY is assistant editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

## HISTORY

## Germany, With a Side of Quirk

Reviewed by Martin Walker

IT IS NOT EASY TO BE FUNNY about the Germans, and unusual to be affectionate about them. *Germania*, Simon Winder's idiosyncratic but delightful book, manages to be both. Winder, a British

publishing executive, has fed and embellished his obsession with Germany during the requisite annual visits to the Frankfurt Book Fair. His book is the result of diligent reading on endless train journeys to small towns with half-forgotten treasures—provincial museums, lesser-known castles, and palaces of the many minor dukedoms that litter Germany.

At the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, that “wonderland of pre-1914 modern design” founded by the melancholic grand duke Ernst Louis, Winder hits upon the key to his fondness for Germany. It is his conviction that the real Germany can be found in the stuff usually absent from the history books: the obscure artists and the mad petty princelings, the herbalists and ornithologists and forgotten inventors whose artifacts stuff local museums. “It is this slightly marginal Germany that has survived, while the political and historical Germany has destroyed itself.”

While Winder takes a roughly chronological approach, starting with Tacitus' famous account of the ancient German tribes as honorable, brave, and loyal to their wives, he has not produced anything like a conventional history of the country. And he ends, because of a fastidious revulsion, with the arrival of Adolf Hitler in 1933: “I can only mark my own distress by stopping this book here. So many of the threads that run through modern German history—a creative irony, edginess, glee, and oddness—are gone in a few weeks, wound up and replaced

**GERMANIA:**

In *Wayward Pursuit of the Germans and Their History*.

By Simon Winder.  
Farrar, Straus & Giroux.  
454 pp. \$25

with a messianic infantilism.”

The book's main themes are familiar, from the German obsession with Italy and Goethe's "land where the lemon trees bloom," to the German sense of victimhood in the Thirty Years' War and during Napoleon's time. Winder marks the usual contrast between those parts of Germany that experienced the Roman Empire (on the whole, still Catholic) and the north and east, which became largely Protestant. And in the eyes of some Germans from the Romanized Rhineland, the taint of barbarism remains; as Chancellor Konrad Adenauer observed, "East of the Elbe the Asian steppes begin."

Winder notes the oddly doomed nature of German militarism, its occasional tactical successes overwhelmed by strategic defeats, along with the power of historical accident. In the early 19th century, few would have predicted that remote Prussia, rather than the more powerful Austria, would become the dominant force in the unification of the Reich. But after Napoleon's defeat, European leaders at the Congress of Vienna awarded Prussia the Ruhr Valley—blithely unaware that the region's coal and iron ore would make it the powerhouse of the continent's industrial revolution later in the century.

Conventional history is not Winder's strong point. His distinction is a self-deprecatory, ironic charm combined with a deep fascination with the country. This fascination may have odd roots. He writes of exchanging notes with a German school pal on how they celebrated their 16th birthdays. Winder's family went out for a Chinese meal; his German chum celebrated by going to bed with one of his mother's friends.

At the outset, Winder suggests that Germany is "Britain's weird twin." Though he doesn't elaborate on this comparison, it's true that just as English history is a blend of rustic, almost Hobbit-like charm and grasping imperialism, so Germany is usually regarded as an extreme example of bipolar disorder, oscillating between sentimental good Germans and ruthlessly bad ones; between jovial folk in lederhosen and ice-cold Teutons with saber

scars; between Brahms and Buchenwald. Winder blames the food: "Like some circling, trapped beast, German cuisine is goaded by its climate into turning out endless sausages, turnips, and potatoes. . . . This is a relatively low self-esteem, ingredient-thin bit of Europe, hemmed in by other cultures with access to serious sunlight." One suspects it is rather more complicated than that, if only because the supposedly sun-deprived Germans have installed more solar panels in their country than can be found anywhere else on earth.

MARTIN WALKER is a Woodrow Wilson Center senior scholar. His third novel, *The Dark Vineyard*, was published this summer.

## What's for Dinner in Africa

Reviewed by Erica Bleeg

THE SOUNDS THAT STAY

with me from the years I lived in Benin are those of the several languages spoken there—and of cooking. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in the rural savanna, where food preparation was the domain of women, who cooked over coal or wood fires. Deftly wielding a wooden baton, my neighbor Nyaki stirred maize meal in a fire-licked pot. As the maize thickened toward the consistency of polenta, her baton went *thwump, thwump, thwump*. Or picture two women standing on either side of a three-foot mortar, each holding a long wooden pestle and taking plunges at boiled yams, pounding one after the other in a driving, two-beat tempo: *barum, barum, barum, barum*. Watching them, I'd wonder, how long have women been working these instruments on this food in this dance?

In *Stirring the Pot*, culinary historian James C. McCann offers a comprehensive history of the ingredients that have gone into the making of various African cuisines from 1500 to the present, and charts these foods' global

**STIRRING THE POT:**  
A History of  
African Cuisine.

By James C. McCann.  
Ohio Univ. Press.  
213 pp. \$26.95

influence. For this huge undertaking, McCann focuses on the ways trade, politics, colonialism, and diaspora have shaped a dynamic and enduring gastronomic *mélange*. Maize, for example, came to Ethiopia via the Arab Red Sea trade and to West Africa from the West Indies in the 16th century, yet didn't become the continent's dominant cereal crop until the 20th century. Cheap and filling, maize made economic sense.

Anywhere along the maize belt, from Ethiopia down to South Africa and up to the Ivory Coast, a traveler can find a standard dish: maize flour boiled into a stiff porridge known as *sadza* in Zimbabwe, *ugali* in Kenya, and in the Bariba regions of Benin, *dibu*. In general, an African meal consists of a starch—often fixed in a form that holds together when eaten by hand—paired with a flavorful accompaniment. In Ghana, one may eat *fufu* (pounded yam, cassava, or plantains) with a choice of meat or vegetable sauce or with groundnut stew, whereas in the eastern maritime regions of Tanzania and Mozambique, the accompaniment is often what is called a “relish,” composed of fresh fish, meat, or green legumes.

Particular dishes have become symbols of a rich and complicated culinary heritage that has spread into the African diaspora. The popular Jollof rice dishes of Senegal, Gambia, and Nigeria, for example, appear in the United States as jambalaya, a classic New Orleans cuisine that reflects the West African principle of *dafa* (“cook everything”): Meat, fish, vegetables, and rice are cooked together in one pot. The dish owes its lineaments to African slaves. It also shows the influence of Canadians of French descent who were expelled from Nova Scotia by the British in 1755 and eventually found their way to Louisiana, then a colony of France; they contributed andouille sausage to the mix. Thus arose the name “jambalaya,” from the French *jambon* for ham and *à la ya-ya*, a generic West African reference to rice.

McCann includes several recipes, a signal

that times are changing. Traditionally, Africans passed down knowledge orally; girls would learn the art of cooking by observing their elders, a familial apprenticeship from one generation to another. Now, African meals—and written recipes for them—are proliferating around the world. In Rome, London, and urban landscapes and college towns throughout the United States, for example, Ethiopian restaurants have sprouted up, though the dishes patrons eat are often translations. The spongy flat bread *injera* served in the many such restaurants in and around the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., “only approximates” the Ethiopian version, McCann says. Vegetable dishes known as “fasting foods” for the Orthodox Christian fasts practiced in Africa are renamed “vegetarian” on American menus.

Ethiopia provides the book's dominant flavor, taking up two of the seven chapters, while the other five look generally at trends in East, West, and South African foodways. This imbalance is explained when McCann mentions that he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia in the mid-1970s. The book nonetheless offers a fundamental understanding of how various foods arrived in the cooking pots of Africa and the African diaspora, a tremendous feat.

ERICA BLEEG was a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin from 1997 to 1999. She teaches in the English Department at James Madison University.

## When They Were Out to Get Us

Reviewed by Michael Moynihan

THE 1970s—WITH ITS flared jeans and dodgy haircuts, pallid disco music, absurdist trends (pet rocks!), and Khomeinist revolution—what a miserable, squalid decade it was. The idealism and irrational optimism of the 1960s, when

### STRANGE DAYS INDEED:

The 1970s:  
The Golden Age of Paranoia.

By Francis Wheen.  
*PublicAffairs*.  
343 pp. \$26.95

throng of teenagers declared the end of bourgeois society, gave way to Cambodia, Watergate, Jonestown, and the Symbionese Liberation Army. Civil rights marchers and peaceniks made way for black power and Black September.

In *Strange Days Indeed*, British journalist Francis Wheen stylishly chronicles what he calls the “Them decade,” when the grand conspiracy theory was ascendant in the West, having infected the thinking of an astonishing number of clever people—prime ministers, presidents, journalists, and movie directors—as well as the hoi polloi. When something went wrong—a leader deposed, a president shot—it was invariably blamed on the machinations of government, business, and intelligence community conspirators. It was *Them*. Ordinary people saw a government agent behind every rock. British prime minister Harold Wilson was convinced that his intelligence service was fomenting a coup. Richard Nixon distrusted all but his closest aides.

There was something of a hangover in all of this, a predictable backlash from the mainstreaming of political radicalism of the late 1960s. Looking back on 1973, Wheen observes that in Britain “it seems incredible that the National Theater should stage an earnest three-hour Trotskyist seminar, led by no less a figure than Laurence Olivier,” that supposedly portended a working-class revolution.

In the United States, most every conspiracy theory that involved the White House, Langley, the *entire rotten government*, was given a hearing (and sometimes confirmed as fact) in Congress. Public revelation of the CIA’s involvement in assassination plots in the Third World, its role in fomenting coups across the globe, and its production of exploding cigars meant for Fidel Castro were treasonous, said singer Bing Crosby. To others, the exposés merely confirmed

what they had long suspected: Their government could never be trusted.

Wheen concedes that much 1970s paranoia contained a kernel of truth. After all, it was *government* paranoia that created the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), an FBI-led operation to spy on domestic political dissidents in the 1960s. The program’s exposure in 1975 predictably produced a wave of counterparanoia, and, 50 years after its inauguration, COINTELPRO is still grist for conspiracists and paranoiacs.

Wheen sees spasms of paranoia as cyclical: “Historians of the paranoid style have shown that it is not a constant but an episodic phenomenon which coincides with social conflict and apprehensions of doom.” Today, he catches “flickering glimpses of déjà vu” in, for example, Michael

Moore’s conspiracy-laden 2004 documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Perhaps. But the advent of Reaganism, Thatcherism, and the “greed decade” hardly provided an interregnum to mainstream conspiracy theorizing. From Father Coughlin’s 1930s sermons about Jewish plots against America to the amateur Poirots investigating the “suspicious” circumstances of Clinton White House counsel Vince Foster’s suicide, the

20th century was always running a fever.

There are plenty of quibbles too. Nixon’s presidency was an unmitigated disaster, but it is a stretch to suggest that he was a “kindred spirit” of paranoid Chinese *genocidere* Mao Zedong and Soviet dictator Leonid Brezhnev. (Wheen also misquotes Helen Gahagan Douglas, with whom Nixon squared off during a 1950 run for the U.S. Senate, as saying that the Soviet Union was “the cruelest, most barbaric autocracy in world history.” She was referring to the governments that preceded the Bolshevik Revolution.)

While his larger narrative doesn’t quite cohere,



*Fear Itself* (c. 1960), by Patrick Hughes

Wheen's anecdotes are crisply told, often terrifying, and usually amusing—as when he describes the 1974 meeting that Britain's most powerful civil servant, Sir William Armstrong, held with his underlings, where, naked, he ranted that the end of the world was nigh. Wheen's dramatis personae (Israeli paranormalist Uri Geller, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin) often feel like comic characters invented for their entertainment value. But everything he says is true. And he's right to suggest that the strange, paranoid days of the 1970s are back. Because they never really went away.

MICHAEL C. MOYNIHAN is a senior editor of *Reason*.

## ARTS & LETTERS

### Literary Lobs

Reviewed by John Brown

BOOKS AND PROPAGANDA, for many Americans, don't mesh. Books educate. Propaganda lies. But there was a time when the United States had no qualms about using books as "weapons in the war of ideas"—in the phrase made famous by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In *Books as Weapons*, John B. Hench, a staff member of the American Anti-Quarian Society for more than three decades, recounts this chapter in America's efforts to defeat the enemies of democracy during World War II.

In early 1942, the Council on Books in Wartime, a nonprofit corporation established by U.S. publishers, collaborated with the newly created Office of War Information (OWI) to disseminate works by American authors throughout Europe. This large-scale program, Hench writes, was meant to "win the hearts and minds of the people liberated from the Axis powers." Selected titles ranged from policy treatises such as Carl Becker's essay on the prospects for postwar

**BOOKS AS WEAPONS:**  
Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II.

By John B. Hench.  
Cornell Univ. Press.  
333 pp. \$35

reconstruction, *How New Will the Better World Be?* (1944), to sentimental novels including *The Human Comedy* (1943), William Saroyan's tale about a California family during wartime.

Books were vetted by a convoluted bureaucracy, then printed—in English and also in translation—and distributed overseas. Crates of books bound for French bookstores arrived on the beaches of Normandy along with vital troop supplies. The process was a logistical nightmare, trying enough to "make even Job weep," in the words of one program overseer.

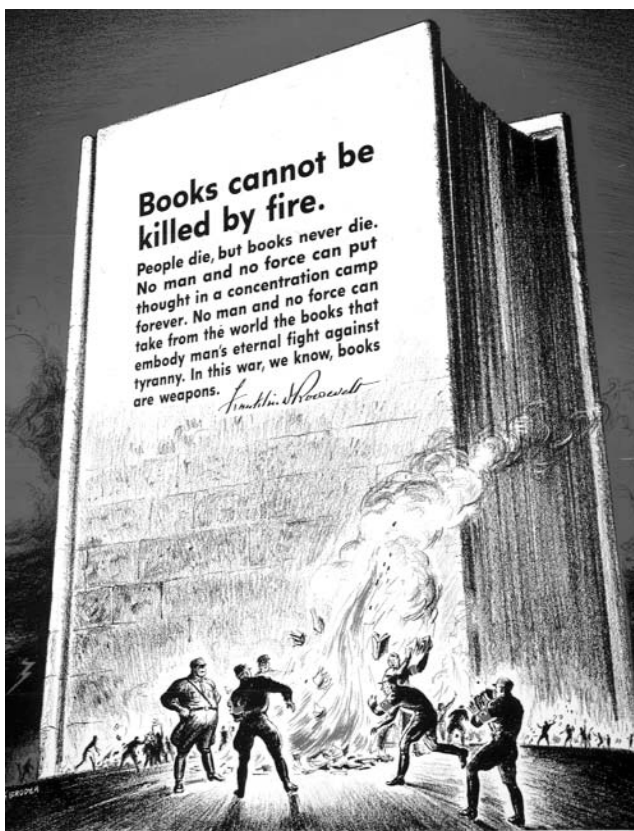
The military was eager to get books into the hands of another target audience—the

379,000 German prisoners of war interned in U.S. camps—"to calm the people who read them, to win their hearts and minds, and to cleanse them of Nazi, fascist, and militaristic thinking." Favored titles included books by anti-totalitarian German authors Thomas Mann and Erich Maria Remarque, as well as German translations of American works such as Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940).

In occupied Germany and Japan, America quite literally had a captive audience, and the military governments installed in these countries sought to make books available to win over the population. Though these efforts were stymied by postwar shortages and a reading public too poor to purchase books, Hench writes, they did introduce "a freer, more democratic system of publishing" in both Japan and West Germany, and helped make both countries "reliable" Cold War allies.

The campaign to sway minds didn't end when OWI shut down after the war. A short-lived organization composed of publishing executives and supported by the State Department failed to gain traction, in part because of internal disagreements about whether its aim should be cultural diplomacy or simply increased foreign book sales. Still, American publishers' wartime experience with

Crates of books bound for French bookstores arrived on the beaches of Normandy along with vital troop supplies.



## BOOKS ARE WEAPONS IN THE WAR OF IDEAS

An Office of War Information poster taunts Nazi book burnings as it touts U.S. efforts to spread ideas with the printed word.

overseas markets—in which they hadn't been interested before—changed the face of publishing, much to the consternation of British booksellers who feared worldwide American competition.

For specialists in World War II propaganda, Hench's meticulously researched monograph is a gem, but his attention to arcane detail may limit the book's appeal. (He goes so far as to provide the dimensions and the grade—"basis 25 x 38-31#/500 white ground wood English finish"—of the paper on which overseas editions were printed.)

Hench ends by asking whether books should "become, once again, weapons in the war of ideas." In fact, the U.S. government still uses books in public diplomacy programs (for example, at overseas State Department Information

Resource Centers), but on a far smaller scale than during World War II or the Cold War. The printed word will doubtless survive as an instrument of America's outreach to the world, but in our Internet age it is bound to play a far lesser role than it did in the 20th century.

JOHN BROWN, a former U.S. Foreign Service officer, teaches a course at Georgetown University on the history of propaganda and U.S. foreign policy and blogs at <http://publicdiplomacypressandblogreview.blogspot.com/>.

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Doctoring History

Reviewed by Charles Barber

ALL SURGEONS MUST DEVISE a "way in" to their operation—choosing the entry point and the methodology for each complex procedure. In *Seeking the Cure*, Ira Rutkow, a surgeon himself, hits upon an elegant approach to the contentious

story of American medicine. Throughout his remarkably entertaining account, Rutkow selects telling medical episodes—the tormenting of colonial surgeon Zabdiel Boylston by a violent mob, who believed that his smallpox inoculations spread disease; President James Garfield's death in 1881 at the hands of his own surgeons, who neglected basic antiseptic techniques in treating his gunshot wound; or doctors' extraordinary measures in 1926 to save Harry Houdini from appendicitis, which were unsuccessful but underscored clinical advances—to capture the essence of medical knowledge of the day, and place it in a social context.

Several powerful themes emerge in Rutkow's account. One is the persecution and general calamities endured by many of the great innovators of American medicine. Boylston was so terrified of the mob that he visited his smallpox patients under cover of darkness and disguised in a wig. The three men who, in the 1840s, made the findings that led each to claim he had discovered anesthesia, all went under-recognized and largely uncompen-

**SEEKING THE CURE:**  
A History of  
Medicine in  
America.

By Ira Rutkow.  
Scribner. 356 pp. \$28

sated. All three also had unhappy deaths: One took his own life, aided by chloroform; another, beset by despondency and paranoia, suffered a fatal stroke; the third spent his last days in a Massachusetts insane asylum. William Halsted, whom Rutkow describes as perhaps America's greatest surgeon, tested cocaine on himself in the 1880s before using it as an anesthetic for his patients. He became addicted and spent months in psychiatric hospitals, before resurrecting his career—by using morphine to wean himself off cocaine. Reading *Seeking the Cure* is not unlike watching the television series *House*: The great medical visionaries are simultaneously portrayed as brilliant, eccentric, and suspect, and the narrative is told through specific, pithy anecdotes that illuminate larger controversies.

Another theme is the inexorable growth of the medical-industrial complex. Between 1940 and 1965, as expensive technologies came to dominate American medicine and the power of the American Medical Association (AMA) grew, national health care expenditures multiplied tenfold. Today, health care spending accounts for nearly a fifth of America's gross domestic product. Rutkow describes the current system of "for-profit corporate-guided medicine," which rewards physicians and hospitals for how much care they provide rather than how clinically valuable that care is, as "an economic tyranny of medical services and scientific technology." Yet this "tyranny" was perhaps not inevitable. Harry Truman raised the notion of national health insurance in the 1948 presidential campaign and eventually brought a bill before Congress. The AMA spent nearly \$3 million—more money than any interest group had ever mustered for a single lobbying effort before that time—to defeat the bill. In 1962, it opened its war chest again to defeat President John F. Kennedy's more limited proposal to provide national health insurance for senior citizens. It is one of the many contributions of *Seeking the Cure* to place recent events in the health care debate in a historical context.

Rutkow's otherwise graceful narrative suffers from the occasional infelicitous phrasing, as when he writes that no disease encapsulated medical

progress as well as appendicitis, "which burst onto the medical scene in the years surrounding World War I." And the narrative concentrates overly much on the history of surgery—which is perhaps natural given that Rutkow himself is a surgeon. He acknowledges this bias in the book's introduction, where he quotes Henry Bigelow, a 19th-century Harvard surgeon: "Why is the amphitheater crowded to the roof on the occasion of some great operation, while the silent working of some drug excites little comment? Mark the hushed breath, the fearful intensity of silence, when the blade pierces the tissues, and the blood wells up to the surface. Animal sense is always fascinated by the presence of animal suffering."

CHARLES BARBER, a lecturer in psychiatry at Yale Medical School, is the author of *Comfortably Numb: How Psychiatry Is Medicating a Nation* (2008).

## Up to Here

Reviewed by Darcy Courteau

ON THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM of vice, compulsive hoarding registers toward the innocuous end. Who doesn't have a drawer full of faded T-shirts or old rubber bands? Still, in its most extreme forms the phenomenon is repulsive enough that it's a natural for reality TV. Last year A&E premiered *Hoarders*, which features homes pregnant with debris and agitated occupants who have been given the ultimatum—by landlords or health inspectors—to clean up or move out. A woman stalls a cleanup crew for hours, demanding that they recover a treasured piece of broken floor tile they've misplaced. Amusing. But then come the long-suffering spouses who pick their way, Daniel Boone-like, through "goat paths" on the way to bed. When the camera films a woman asking Mom if a broken vacuum cleaner and its dander-filled companions are more important than family, the problem ticks, on our vice spectrum, a shade closer to perdition. Buried as we are in a glut of cheap goods, clutter is the rule, but we draw the line at

**STUFF:**  
Compulsive  
Hoarding and the  
Meaning of Things.  
By Randy O. Frost and  
Gail Steketee. Houghton  
Mifflin Harcourt.  
290 pp. \$27

ankle deep. More than that, and you've got problems.

Well, yes and no. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) specialists Randy Frost and Gail Steketee take a philosophical approach in their engaging and surprisingly cheerful study *Stuff*. Frost, a psychologist, narrates several representative cases. (Steketee, a social worker, contributed to the "conceptual work," but most of the fieldwork is Frost's.) The collections that brought the woman they call Irene to financial ruin and broke up her family are ho-hum in comparison to Ralph's house, in which the bathtub is so full of scavenged detritus that he showers at a pool at the local college. These folks

Hoarders' connection to objects is so real that some have committed suicide after forced cleanups.

require interventions such as the "experiment," in which hoarders throw out an inconsequential item, then track their diminishing emotional pain until—in the best cases—each

subsequent purge becomes easier. The clinician's tone remains imperturbable, though the authors do allow themselves a dusting of deadpan humor: Irene, encouraged to experiment with tossing a newspaper, first shakes from its pages an envelope containing \$100. "This wasn't exactly the outcome I'd expected," Frost writes.

Between six and 15 million Americans obsessively collect, and, contrary to popular notion, they are not always elderly. Frost and Steketee report an "average age of just over 50" among their subjects, many of whom described hoarding symptoms from early in life; other hoarders are in elementary school. Hoarders' pathologies, often exacerbated by past trauma, are many, and can include OCD (which drives the collecting), attention deficits that prevent organization (an item out of sight is out of mind), paralyzing perfectionism (organizational standards, set impossibly high, end up abandoned altogether), and a childlike avoidance of the discomfort associated with discarding things.

Yet, the authors argue, there is more to the picture. Hoarders' style of consumption is different from that of status seekers: "Objects become part of

who the hoarder is, not the façade he or she displays to the world." The connection to objects is so real that several hoarders have committed suicide after forced cleanups. Items are cherished for the utility and possibilities they represent; Ralph will not part with a leaking bucket as long as he can imagine alternate uses for it. An "inordinate number of hoarders describe themselves as artists," the authors observe, adding, "Maybe hoarding is creativity run amok."

The modern world tends toward abstraction. Files are stored not in cabinets but in information "clouds." People who once earned a living making things now look for work. Against this backdrop, there is a heroic element to the "de facto archivists of objects others have left behind, inverted versions of materialists who crave the new." Indeed, it is the collector of leaking buckets who knows what succor the right piece of trash could bring to a person in need—of a needle, a knife blade, or the unrotted portion of a potato.

DARCY COURTEAU is an editorial assistant at *The American Scholar*. Her fiction and essays have appeared, most recently, in *New Orleans Review* and *Oxford American*.

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RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

## Sweat Equity

Reviewed by Winifred Gallagher

VICTORIAN MORES STILL dominated mainstream America at the dawn of the 20th century, but an eclectic proto-counterculture stirred in more adventurous circles. Spiritual teachers including the mystic

G. I. Gurdjieff, the feminist evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, and the prosperity-minded African-American minister Father Divine preached new religious ideas to big followings. Pierre Bernard has faded from the ranks of such well-known names, but the man who popularized yoga in the United States, where 20 million people now practice it, was once the much-chronicled glittering sage of the Jazz Age. In *The Great Oom*, he's resur-

**THE GREAT OOM:**  
The Improbable  
Birth of Yoga in  
America.

By Robert Love.  
Viking, 402 pp. \$27.95



rected as an important cultural figure who blazed the trail for New Age spirituality and alternative health regimens.

Bernard's life offers a particularly colorful iteration of the American success story, in which a lad from the heartland transcends his rustic beginnings to become a charismatic guru who was also hailed by *Fortune* magazine as a "shrewd and level-headed businessman." Born into a struggling Iowa family in 1876, Perry Baker—he later took his stepfather's surname and switched to the more stylish Pierre—was sent to live with a cousin in Lincoln, Nebraska, at age 13. In that improbably cosmopolitan university town, the intellectually curious teenager befriended a young neighbor interested in the occult and joined him in studying with the Sanskritist and yogi Sylvais Hamati. In 1893, Hamati and his new acolyte headed to California and eventually settled in San Francisco. Soon, the gorgeously turbaned and muscular Pierre Bernard was practicing his new skills on clients suffering from "nervous disorders."

Although the famed Hindu yogi Swami Vivekananda had established his Vedanta Society outreach centers in California and New York by the turn of the century, Asian practices such as yoga and meditation were regarded as heretical and indecent by all but cosmopolitan elites. Moreover, Bernard's salubrious ministrations were not always entirely spiritual. Although not particularly handsome, the Iowan guru was a gifted athlete who exuded energy and, apparently, sex appeal. When he began to preach as well as practice his exotic arts, rumors of sinuous nautch dancers and sex rituals attracted the attention of police and press. In 1906, he fled San Francisco in disgrace.

By 1910, Bernard had set up shop in New York City, where his seamy history seemed about to repeat itself. Headlines screamed "Arrest Hindu Seer," and the newly dubbed "Great God Oom"—the extra "o" was a misspelling—was jailed for corrupting young girls in tights. Despite dark rumors of "white slavery," the charges were dismissed, and, backed by society beauties such as Margaret Ruthenford Mills and her mother, Anne Vanderbilt, within a few years Bernard was a celebrity.

Trading his turban for tweeds, Bernard set about refashioning yoga and Eastern religious ideas for an America increasingly interested in health and fitness as well as spiritual quests. With his lissome wife and best student Blanche DeVries, he established America's first ashram on a Hudson River estate in Nyack, New York, which he cleverly called the Clarkstown Country Club. There and at venues in nearby Manhattan, devotees performed rigorous exercises, observed a careful diet, and practiced inner cleanliness (by giving themselves enemas) to prepare for the enlightened realization that "all is one." Guests could also enjoy jazz, baseball, circuses complete with elephants, and lots of dexterous girls in scanty costumes. The chic ashram became a destination for celebrities the likes of Noel Coward, and Bernard was anointed by snooty *Town & Country* as "the Guru of Nyack."

Now middle-aged, Bernard heeded his own advice to his closest disciples: "Live dangerously, carefully." The former social pariah became a civic leader who brought a music school, an airfield, and other amenities to once sleepy Nyack. By the mid-1930s he was speaking at the Yale Club, Mae West



Pierre Bernard twisted America into knots when he began popularizing yoga in the early 20th century.

and Greta Garbo were practicing yoga, and *Cosmopolitan's* models were twisting themselves into attractive asanas (yoga postures).

The Great Depression and World War II brought America back down to earth, and mystical philosophies and alternative country clubs lost their appeal. After Bernard tried to raise money with a dog-racing track that later closed amid charges of corruption, he lost his health and fabled energy. Reunited with his Iowa family and his wife, from whom he had become estranged, he died in 1955 at the age of 78. The whiff of sulfur notwithstanding, the Great Oom had won fame and fortune and helped to prepare the way for the cultural changes that would revolutionize American society beginning in the 1960s.

Despite his outrageously colorful life, the cigar-smoking fitness guru remains an enigma. Like the fabled journalist Joseph Mitchell, who, as a cub reporter, profiled Bernard in 1931, Robert Love settles for his subject's opaque self-description as a "curious combination of the businessman and religious scholar." *The Great Oom* is more successful as an East-meets-West social history than as a biography, and helps explain how yoga became a mainstream fitness activity and why a quarter of the population is comfortable with Eastern religious beliefs such as reincarnation.

WINIFRED GALLAGHER writes about human behavior. Her most recent book, *Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life*, was published last year.

## Meeting of the Minds

Reviewed by Michelle Sieff

SINCE 1982, WHEN ELIZABETH Young-Bruehl published *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, it has been widely known that Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger had an affair. He was Germany's leading philosopher of existentialism; she was a German Jew and one of his most promising students at the University of Marburg during the 1920s. But the winds of history blew

their lives in different directions. When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, Arendt fled to France, then the United States. Heidegger joined the Nazi Party and became the rector of Freiburg University, where he dismissed Jewish faculty. Though he resigned after one year, he remained a member of the Nazi Party and supporter of National Socialism.

In 1951, Arendt published *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and quickly came to be viewed as one of the most brilliant political philosophers of her era. A year earlier, during her first trip to Germany since she had fled, Heidegger had visited her hotel. Afterward, she wrote, in her characteristically visionary style, that it was "the confirmation of an entire life." Whether they resumed their sexual relationship remains unclear, but until her death in 1975, they corresponded and sometimes saw each other when she was in Germany. She assiduously helped translate and promote his work in the United States.

Scholars have struggled to make sense of the intimacy between these two titans of 20th-century thought. In *Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger* (1995), Elzbieta Ettinger took a critical view and accused Arendt of whitewashing Heidegger's Nazi past. Now, in *Stranger From Abroad*, Daniel Maier-Katkin, a professor of criminology at Florida State University with a particular interest in crimes against humanity, presents a more sympathetic interpretation of the relationship, and explores its influence on Arendt's philosophy.

How could Arendt have resumed her friendship with Heidegger? Maier-Katkin proposes an interesting answer, suggested by a radio address she wrote for Heidegger's 80th birthday in 1971: Arendt believed that Heidegger had taught her how to think. She contended that he instructed students in a style of "passionate thinking," in which thought is pursued for its own sake, and not to achieve some result. In the address, she excused Heidegger's Nazism as the momentary error of an intellectual who later recognized his mistake and broke with the regime.

But a wing of Heidegger scholars in France and Germany have long contended that Heidegger's Nazism was not fleeting but rather essential to his

### STRANGER FROM ABROAD:

Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Friendship and Forgiveness.

By Daniel Maier-Katkin.  
W.W. Norton.  
384 pp. \$26.95

philosophical endeavor. As French scholar Emmanuel Faye argues in *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism Into Philosophy*, published in English last year, “Heidegger devoted himself to putting philosophy at the service of legitimizing and diffusing the very bases of Nazism and Hitlerism.” How is it that Arendt, who trenchantly analyzed racist thought in her own work, failed to take seriously the racist categories in Heidegger’s philosophy, and even promoted his work?

An important point of Maier-Katkin’s book is that Arendt’s reconciliation with her mentor shaped her ideas on political evil. As he notes, Arendt’s political consciousness was transformed in 1943, when she learned of Hitler’s gas chambers. For the rest of her life, she struggled to understand the meaning and causes of Nazi evil. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she argued that the perpetrators of Nazi genocide were in the grip of a mad theory of history that required the elimination of the Jews from the earth. But in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) she held that many perpetrators, including the Nazi bureaucrat Adolf Eichmann, had more banal motives, such as keeping their jobs.

Katkin suggests that her reconciliation with Heidegger led Arendt to develop the notion of the “banality of evil,” a concept that downplayed the anti-Semitic motives of Nazi perpetrators.

This explanation is based on a misapprehension of Arendt’s “banality of evil” concept, which she first introduced in an often-overlooked 1945 essay, “Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility,” years before her reconciliation with Heidegger. She used the idea to explain the actions of thoughtless functionaries of the Nazi regime. It was not intended to explain Heidegger, who was a thinker, a philosopher, and ultimately a fanatical supporter of Nazi doctrines.

Maier-Katkin’s effort to link Arendt’s erotic attachments to her work is provocative, but it ultimately leads him to flawed interpretations of her political philosophy. This is a shame. With the emergence of radical Islamist movements, which in many ways resemble the totalitarian movements Arendt analyzed, her ideas are as relevant and necessary today as they were half a century ago.

MICHELLE SIEFF is a research fellow at the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism. She is writing a book on the ideology of the modern human rights movement.

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## PORTRAIT



### *Sweating It Out*

“To understand the crowd, one must go to Coney Island,” opined Edouard Herriot, the prime minister of France, after visiting the teeming Brooklyn shoreline in the summer of 1924. “One is carried along into the torrent with all the languages and all the races of the globe.” Eighty-six years later, the sun-scorched sands of Coney Island continue to attract New York City’s polyglot masses. Residents of local Russian, Georgian, Turkish, Dominican, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani communities crowd Coney Island’s nearly three miles of beach and amusement park. This 1977 photograph by Bruce Gilden, which was recently on display at Amador Gallery in Manhattan, captures the sweltering throng on a typical summer day.

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