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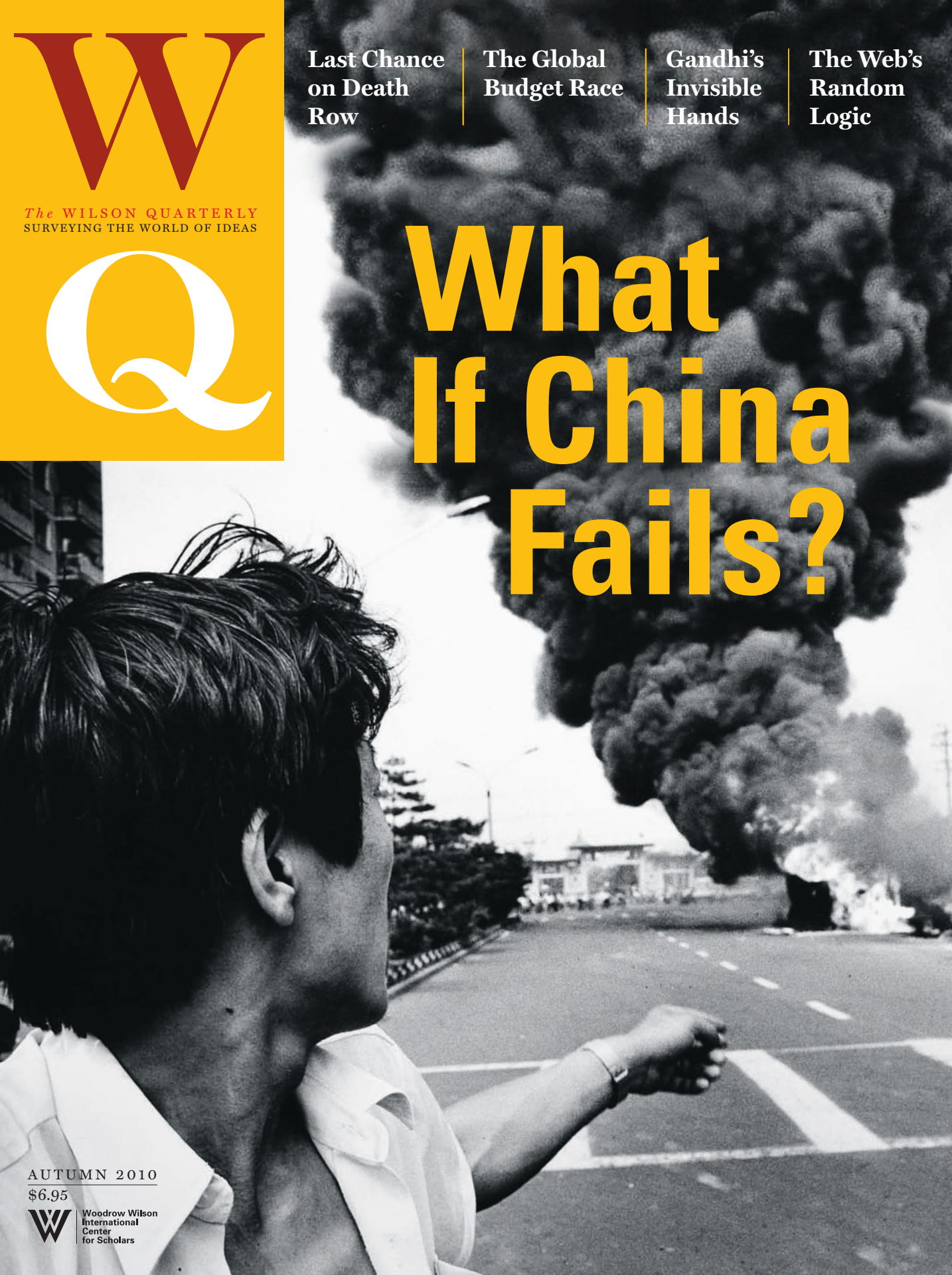

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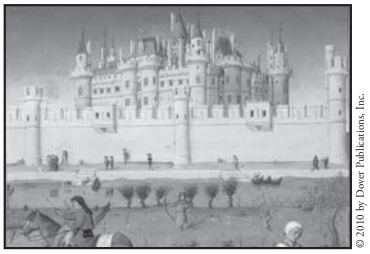

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ON THE COVER: Photograph by Robert Croma, design by Michelle Furman. Vehicles burn in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, June 1989.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Farewell, Sir!

For the *WQ* and its parent institution, the Woodrow Wilson Center, this autumn brings a landmark event. President and director Lee Hamilton is stepping down after 12 years at the Center's helm to return to Indiana, whose Ninth District he represented in Congress for 34 years. Lee departs with the profound respect and affection of all those who had the privilege of serving with him at the Center and sharing in its growing achievements and recognition under his leadership.

At a time when Americans' confidence in public life is at low ebb, there are larger lessons in Lee's exemplary life in public service. His career has taken him from the chairmanship of such important House committees as Foreign Affairs and Intelligence to many other public duties, including vice chairmanship of the 9/11 Commission. But while he is universally considered one of Washington's "wise men," Lee is also to his bones a small "d" democrat, as apt to pull up a chair in the Center's lunchroom with a table full of interns as with the Center's scholars. A living symbol of bipartisanship in a city where that quality is exceedingly rare, he has shown that being in the middle is not a matter of being wishy-washy. A proud Democrat with strong views, Lee nevertheless regularly met privately during George W. Bush's presidency with high administration officials who sought his perspective.

Once, during one of those always educational sessions in the Center's lunchroom, Lee explained that one of the biggest divides among politicians is simply between those who are willing to listen to others and those who are not. For Lee, listening is not just a matter of temperament; it is a philosophical tenet. He doesn't think he has a monopoly on truth. That belief is one of the qualities that made him an ideal leader for the Center, with its commitment to wide-ranging inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge in the public service.

Retirement is not a word Lee Hamilton utters. A man who customarily arrived at the office at an hour when farmers were out milking their cows, he will continue to direct Indiana University's Center on Congress and serve the nation on a variety of public commissions and boards. All of us at the *WQ* and the Center salute him.

—Steven Lagerfeld

The Wilson Quarterly

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LETTERS

ISRAEL ASUNDER

The very elegant and concise cluster devoted to Israel ["Inside Israel," Summer '10] begins with the famous quote of Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, that the making of Israel, and indeed its existence, is a miracle. This is true. But the existence of Israel is also a nightmare for the Palestinians, and I wish that such a distinguished publication as *The Wilson Quarterly* had not ignored this disquieting aspect of the Zionist project.

One sees this in "The Despair of Zion," by Walter Reich, in which discussion of the victims of Zionism and Israel is absent. The Israeli mood and attitudes toward peace with the Palestinians as described by Reich are not familiar to me as someone who was born in Israel and has lived there all his life. I am not suggesting that the Palestinians or their tactics should be idealized. But to describe Jewish Israel in 2010 as a peace-loving nation is a distortion of the truth. For the most part, Jewish Israel is a society intolerant of Arabs at best and openly racist toward Palestinians at worst.

After more than 60 years of existence, Israel is an ethnocentric society whose military and political leaders—regardless of political affiliation—have no interest in peace or desire for reconciliation with the Palestinians whom they dispossessed by force in 1948 and continue to dominate. I respect Reich's opinion but would have loved to see an opposing point of view.

Ilan Pappe

Director, European Center for Palestine Studies
University of Exeter
Exeter, United Kingdom

As an Israeli, I take exception to Walter Reich's diagnosis of despair. The only people in despair in Israel, the only ones who want their children to emigrate rather than live in the greatest national miracle the world has ever seen, are members of the starry-eyed Left, who have believed the Palestinians' rhetoric about peace, who have refused to listen to what the Palestinians have been saying to one another and, most important, teaching their children, who have been blind to the reality that every single Israeli concession—without fail—has led to further terror and bloodshed. Those who insist on seeing reality as it is never expected the so-called peace efforts to bring anything but failure, and ergo, are not disappointed or in despair.

We Israelis know that we are here to stay, and only when the Palestinians realize this will we be able to coexist peacefully. As for despair—how can a developed country with one of the world's highest birthrates and fastest-growing economies, a country that contributes more than any other per capita to global knowledge, that is finding cures for cancer and numerous other diseases, be considered to be in despair? Israelis—with the exception of the lunatic left fringe—are for the most part happy with life in Israel, and numerous studies and surveys bear this out. Instead of pontificating on the basis of the sad comments of his academic friend, Reich should go out into the street and speak to real people.

Ruchie Avital

Ofra, Israel

Posted on wilsonquarterly.com

As a social and developmental psychologist who has lived in Israel since

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1963, I suggest that we look for a process in Reich's article that the American social psychologist Leon Festinger called dissonance reduction, and that psychoanalysts call rationalization: rejecting opinions or facts that conflict with one's self-understanding and understanding of the world. According to Reich's article, for example, on the maps used by Palestinian students, Israel does not appear. At the same time, on the Israeli road maps I use to get around Israel, there is no Green Line separating Israel from the Palestinian territories—in fact, there is no mention of the Palestinian territories at all. The driver is directed seamlessly from Netanya in Israel to Tulkarm in the West Bank without any indication that he is crossing through areas where different cultures and legal systems exist. Within Israel itself, destroyed Arab villages appear as the Israeli villages or kibbutzim that have replaced them. So, who is delegitimizing whom? What psychological ends are being served?

Israelis, says Reich, feel that their concessions will never be seen as enough. But the most meaningful concessions Israelis could make, such as stopping construction in the West Bank and accepting the Saudi pan-Arab proposal for peace, have been rejected. To think that one side has made generous concessions and the other side has made none is another way to reduce dissonance. Perhaps if both sides rid themselves of the processes that blind them, they could find a way to peace.

Charles Greenbaum
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jerusalem, Israel

Both Yoram Peri ["Israel at 62," Summer '10] and Dan Senor and Saul Singer ["What Next for the Start-Up Nation?," Summer '10] refer to the brisk growth of Israel's economy and the country's emergence as an innovation leader. There is no denying this, but the picture is incomplete. As documented in a recent report by Jerusalem's Taub Center for Social Policy Research, Israel also has poverty and inequality rates that are among the highest in the Western world. While better-educated citizens are launching start-ups, 65 percent of men in the ultra-Orthodox community don't participate in the labor force. Rates of non-participation are also extremely high among Arab Israelis, thanks largely to discrimination and inequality in the education system. The problems are "severe and existential," in the view of David Ben-David, author of the report, not least since the ultra-Orthodox and Arab communities are among the fastest-growing in the country.

The growing ranks of religious Jews, noted by Peri, have also transformed the institution that would be responsible for implementing a large-scale withdrawal from the West Bank should a settlement with the Palestinians ever be reached—namely, the Israeli military. An estimated 50 percent of soldiers in officer training courses today are religious. Members of the national-religious camp increasingly dominate the Israel Defense Forces' combat units and upper ranks, raising the question of whether, even if political backing for an evacuation of the West Bank could somehow emerge in the near future, the army would be able to carry out the job.

Eyal Press
Schwartz Fellow
New America Foundation
New York, N.Y.

In your excellent "Inside Israel" cluster, Walter Reich relates how fed up we Israelis are with the inability of the Middle East to come to terms with us. Then Yoram Peri explains the ways in which Israelis, and especially our political system, are to blame for the diplomatic standstill. Both authors allude to, but fail to focus on, what is perhaps the most dramatic reality that Israel confronts in the 21st century, namely the shifting security paradigm.

Broadly speaking, Israel's active enemies are no longer its Arab-state neighbors. Rather, they are nonstate actors, mostly militant Islamists—Hamas, Hezbollah, even (in areas of international legal and public relations confrontations) the Palestine Liberation Organization—as well as a non-Arab state, Islamist Iran. The Arab states have basically come to terms with Israel's existence, but they are weak and in disarray. Islamist actors, on the other hand, are determined as ever to call Israel's existence into question.

Neither Israel nor the West has figured out how to defeat or contain Islamist actors militarily or politically. Yet two developments in the Arab world that could conceivably offer some relief are ignored by both Reich and Peri. One is Syrian president Bashar Assad's consistent offers to renew peace talks with Israel. This possibility has been embraced by Israel's security establishment [*Continued on page 10*]

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AT THE CENTER

SUMMER SCHOOL—FOR TEACHERS

The Woodrow Wilson Center is known as a friendly haven for the leading lights of academia, but two programs recently hosted people that mold students before they ever set foot in a college classroom: school teachers.

One morning in late July saw Warren Cohen, a history professor emeritus at the University of Maryland and a senior scholar with the Center's Asia Program, shuffling papers at the podium in one of the Center's meeting rooms. At the long oval table in front of him, 31 high school history teachers were settling into their seats, nursing hot coffees and chatting about their trip to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office scheduled for later that day. The teachers were in Washington at the joint invitation of the Woodrow Wilson Center and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, a nonprofit that seeks to enhance the knowledge of history teachers in part by organizing 39 free one-week summer seminars at educational institutions across the country.

Cohen cleared his throat and launched into the day's first lecture, on the political significance of Taiwan. His talk was supplemented with remarks from Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, a Georgetown University professor and Wilson Center senior scholar. Academics from Princeton, Johns Hopkins, and George Washington University visited the Center during the course of the week to share their expertise with the group. "Most graduate students in the country wouldn't get this opportunity," marveled Christian Ostermann, the director of the Center's Cold War International History Project and its longtime liaison to the Gilder Lehrman Institute.

Judging by the teachers' attentiveness as they scribbled notes during Cohen's talk, they were not taking the occasion for granted. "The lectures have been amazing," gushed Laura Wagner, 25, who teaches advanced placement U.S. history in Minneapolis. Wagner said she applied to the Center's summer seminar, which covered U.S.-China relations, because "I wanted to choose an area where I thought I was weakest with my teaching." For Wagner, the seminar turned out to be not just an opportunity to acquire more book knowledge but also a unique chance to learn from her peers.

Sharing experience was the motive of another teacher-oriented gathering this summer. For two days, the upper floors of the Center buzzed with the energy of more than 80 current and former Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellows—exemplary teachers of math and science selected in a nationwide competition to spend a year working on education policy in Washington. The high achievers had convened to celebrate the fellowship's 20th anniversary with the first-ever Einstein summit, dubbed E20. "The Einstein fellows really fit the Wilsonian mold," said the director of the Center's Program on America and the Global Economy, Kent Hughes, in his opening remarks, referring to President Woodrow Wilson's trademark marrying of policy and academia. Begun in 1990 with a cohort of four, the program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, supported 24 fellows in the 2009–10 academic year. Fellows are placed in congressional offices or at federal agencies such as the Department of Energy, NASA, and the National Science Foundation, but also serve as at-large education experts for institutions such as the Wilson Center.

At E20, the fellows put their policy experience to good use by developing a set of guidelines for science, technology, engineering, and math education. Some of the fellows hand-delivered their recommendations to House and Senate offices the next day. The fellowship's namesake, Albert Einstein, once said of education, "The aim must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals who, however, can see in the service to the community their highest life achievement." In the Einstein fellows, his vision is alive.

NEW FACES AROUND THE CENTER

As the average temperature in Washington began its merciful descent around Labor Day, the Woodrow Wilson Center showed signs of its annual autumnal transformation, with a new crop of fellows and scholars arriving to brighten its corridors.

Twenty-four stars from the worlds of academia, journalism, policy, and business will sink their teeth into book-length research projects during the 2010–11 academic year thanks to the support of the Wilson Center. Many of the new fellows are scholars of history, political science, or international relations, and the group will probe a variety of subjects. Matthew Nelson, a lecturer in politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, plans to study religious education in Pakistan, while Marjorie Spruill, a history professor at the University of South Carolina, will look at how the women's rights movement of the 1970s spurred political polarization in America. Longtime *New York Times* medical correspondent Lawrence Altman is researching how journalists report on the health of presidents and other significant political figures.

The diversity of the fellows doesn't end with their research interests; it's reflected in the geographical range of the class, too. The Center is just a stone's throw from where incoming fellow Henry Farrell, a George Washington University political science professor, normally teaches, and a comfortable drive for Gilbert Rozman, the Musgrave Professor of Sociology at Princeton, who will be examining Sino-Russian national identity. But Boris Lanin, a philology professor from Moscow, and Patricio Abinales, a Southeast Asian studies specialist on the faculty of Kyoto University, have made longer treks to tackle their projects, on education policy and U.S. assistance to the southern Philippines, respectively. Fellows from Egypt, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay round out the cohort.

The fellows are joined by a revolving group of colleagues, the Wilson Center public policy scholars, who are at work on shorter research projects, and senior scholars, who have long-standing affiliations with the Center as well as appointments elsewhere. The public policy scholars are explicitly focused on—you guessed it—public policy, and traditionally spend three months at the Center. The uniformity, however, ends there. During the 2010–11 year, public policy scholars will study everything from U.S.-French relations in the lead-up to the Iraq war (Sorbonne professor Frederic Bozo) to cybersecurity (Cisco Systems managing attorney Matt Fussa) to Botswana's response to HIV/AIDS (former Botswana president Festus Mogae). Wilson Center programs such as the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies also welcomed short-term scholars.

Look for the work of this talented group in periodicals around the world—and in future issues of the *WQ*.

[*Continued from page 6*] because it presents a possible diplomatic strategy for blunting Iran's penetration into the Levant. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has unfortunately rejected Assad's overtures.

A second development is Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad's relatively successful unilateral state-building project in the West Bank. His efforts are designed to culminate in a diplomatic endgame a year from now, when international recognition of a Palestinian state could provide a first step toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—precisely because that conflict would no longer pit Israel against a nonstate liberation movement. The Obama administration could make a big contribution by successfully mediating these developments.

Yossi Alpher

Coeditor, http://www.Bitterlemons.org

Ramat HaSharon, Israel

The decision to publish Galina Vromen's and Walter Reich's articles on Israel side by side was a smart one, since it exposes readers to two distinctive versions of contemporary Zionism. In the Reich piece, the reader sees the Zionist discourse that focuses on blaming the other, ignoring Israel's faults, and feeling victimized, while the Vromen piece ["Israel Through Other Eyes," Summer '10] shows a Zionism that is aware of the price paid by the Palestinians, and tries to build bridges to the Arab world without giving up its Zionist beliefs.

A person who had read only Reich's article might believe that Palestinians live safely while Israel is under constant attack (though the number of Palestinians killed since 2000 is six times the number of Israelis killed); that Israel has done its best to achieve peace with the Palestinians (though it has built hundreds of settlements in the West Bank); and that Israel recognizes Palestinian history (though mentioning the *Nakba*—the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948—is not permitted in Israeli schools). If the reader knew nothing about contemporary history, he or she might be led by Reich's article to believe that the United States is a veteran supporter of the Palestinians and grants them billions of dollars every year while ignoring Israeli needs.

Reich believes that the Obama administration should be sensitive to Israeli needs and fears. I agree, but suggest that the U.S. government approach the situation as Vromen does: by looking at the world from more than one perspective.

Hillel Cohen

Author, Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs 1948–1967 *(2010)*

Department of Islam and Middle Eastern Studies

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TWO VIEWS ON TURKEY'S FUTURE

Michael Thumann presents a lucid account of the extraordinary changes that are transforming Turkey ["Turkey's Role Reversals," Summer '10]. At a moment when some in Washington are pressing the panic button and demanding to know who lost Turkey, this article points out that Turkey is in no way "lost" to the cause of freedom.

The presence of religion in the lives of Turks is now more visible than it used to be, and secularists no longer monopolize public discourse. But, as Thumann writes, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is not an Islamist group, but a pragmatic coalition whose most often proclaimed goal is to make Turkey one of the world's 10 biggest economies. (It now ranks 16th.) Nor is Turkish society becoming more religious. What has happened is that fuller democracy has allowed Turks to express the religious beliefs that past generations held but were discouraged from expressing.

Finally, Turkey's new activism in regional and global affairs does not undermine Western interests. The Turkish model is the one the United States should promote in the Middle East. Anything that increases Turkey's influence and helps it promote its successful capitalist democracy—whether by electing a government of pious believers or differing with the United States on policy toward Iran and Israel—is good for the West.

The United States is in desperate need of a new approach to the Middle East. We need strong partners there, countries whose advice we would heed. Turkey is the best choice.

Stephen Kinzer

Author, Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future *(2010)*

Truro, Mass.

Michael Thumann highlights some very important trends in Turkish society and politics. I would like to expand on some of the issues he addresses from the perspective of the secular middle class.

At a personal level, secular Turks are disturbed by the monopoly that conservatives have established over Islam. Many secular Turks grew up in religious families and practice Islam without enacting their faith in the public sphere. Conservatives who present

themselves as true Muslims and use their faith for political purposes are disconcerting to secular Turks.

The secular middle class is also uncomfortable with the fact that "the devout bourgeoisie" has expanded substantially during the AKP's tenure. The municipalities controlled by the AKP have favored the conservative middle class with construction bids and other patronage, as a series of corruption accusations in recent years has revealed.

Finally, the secular middle class is suspicious of the democratic credentials of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has exhibited authoritarian tendencies. Skeptics also view the ongoing Ergenekon trials as a violation of legal norms and individual rights as well as an attempt by Erdogan to suppress the opposition. For many secular-minded Turks, Erdogan is an aspiring sultan rather than a democratic leader.

The tension between the secular and devout middle classes will persist in Turkey as long as power remains concentrated in the center and Erdogan resists improving the system of checks and balances. In such an environment, the political initiatives taken by the AKP government, including the September referendum on constitutional reforms, will only generate polarization, not pluralization, in Turkish society. And in a polarized society, the first casualty is always democracy.

Sebnem Gumuscu Orhan
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IMMIGRATION TODAY

Katherine Benton-Cohen's article ["The Rude Birth of Immigration Reform," Summer '10] shows that the current wave of anti-Latino immigrant bashing is but the latest variation on a very old American theme.

The current wave is different from the one she describes in two ways: the undocumented status of so many immigrants and the degree of repressive force directed against them. At present, some 11 million immigrants are unauthorized, constituting one-third of all foreigners in the country. But among Mexicans the proportion is more than half, and among Central Americans it is even larger. Never before has the United States housed such a large population of people outside the law.

The presence of so many "illegals" contributes to the stereotyping of Latinos as criminals and serves to justify ever more repressive policies, though immigrants have lower crime rates than U.S. natives. Since 1990, the number of deportations has increased 13-fold to reach a record of nearly 390,000 per year. Meanwhile, the immigrant detention system has ballooned by a multiple of five in order to process 360,000 people per year. At the same time, the size of the Border Patrol has quintupled and its budget has increased more than 20 times, even though net undocumented migration fell to zero in 2008 and since then has been negative. Hardly any undocumented immigrants are coming in and some are trickling out, yet ever more resources continue to be directed to internal and border enforcement.

I agree with Benton-Cohen that what we need is to see today's immigrants not as an invasion of barbar-

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ians, but as Americans in the making. The place to start is with a legalization program for people who have peaceably lived and worked in the United States, and their children who have grown up here. The longer we put off this regularization, the worse it will be for all of us.

Douglas S. Massey
Henry G. Bryant Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

LONELINESS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Having written a book on long-term loneliness, I took great interest in Daniel Akst's "America: Land of Loners?" [Summer '10]. I agree with Akst that friendship is in a perilous state in America today, but I don't agree, as he suggests, that we "overlook" friendship or take it "far too lightly."

I hear quite often from people for whom friendship is extremely important. There's a thesis out there—which Akst repeats—that friendship peaked in the 18th and 19th centuries, and that we've been dismissive of it ever since. But to talk to lonely people is to understand the opposite. Rather than get by on what Akst calls "mere familiarity," isolated people long for friendship more than ever.

People do not need to be reminded of how crucial friendship is, as Akst suggests. They know it's crucial. They know that friends may extend life spans and make the time between birth and death infinitely richer. People who lack friends talk about being denied something critical in life. Cultural factors are what make worthwhile friendships harder to form and maintain today. This is quite different from thinking that we're all making do with "friendship-lite."

Emily White
Author, Lonely: A Memoir *(2010)*
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

Daniel Akst paints a grim portrait of Americans' interpersonal relationships. I do not doubt that we are plagued by loneliness, but I wonder how different or unique things today really are. Historians tell us that friendship in the modern sense is a recent development, a legacy of the capitalism that undermined the strict relational orderings of earlier times. But even in a relatively recent period, the 1950s, people (especially women) were encouraged to remain close to their families at the expense of outside friendships. Although families were not as threatened as they are by the geographical mobility that is the norm today, friendships were less valued than would become standard during the upheavals of the 1960s.

It seems more likely that our contemporary expectations are colored by the golden age of friendship, in the ancient Greece of Aristotle. Then, it was not families—at least traditional families—that were valued as the source of meaningful relationships. Peers and the families formed from communities of peers were what offered the promise of intimacy and solidarity.

If this is right, then the urgent question facing us today is less one of how lonely we are than of how we are lonely. How are today's relationships different from those of the 1960s, the '50s, or even the '80s? What forces are pulling us from one another, what are drawing us together, and how are they doing this? What phenomena, such as Facebook, are doing both at the same time? We should look at our relationships and our loneliness both historically and contextually to see ourselves aright and to address the particular loneliness that afflicts us now.

Todd May
Class of 1941 Memorial Professor of the Humanities
Clemson University
Clemson, S.C.

ART, SCHMART!

Your item on the Santa Monica annual art sale by artists identified only after purchase ["But Is It Art?," Findings, Summer '10] reports the glee with which Will Kopelman purchased Ed Ruscha's sketch *Cup of Coffee*. The article concludes, "It was, after all, the scrawled signature [on the back of the drawing] that made *Cup of Coffee* . . . certifiable art." I would hope so. From the reproduction of the sketch that ran in the *WQ,* the Ruscha is something that could have been drawn by any talented high school art student. In fact, if 20 such students were asked to do such a drawing, how sure would Kopelman be that he'd select the Ruscha? If the bidders were buying a signature, why not have Ruscha sign the back of every one of the museum's selections and make all the winners richer?

Just putting your name on something doesn't make it "art," any more than having won a Pulitzer makes everything you write a masterpiece. No matter what the critics say!

Fred E. Hahn
Golden Valley, Minn.

FINDINGS

BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

Fluid Faith

High sacraments

The Volstead Act of 1919 served to bring Americans closer to God, Daniel Okrent reports in *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (Scribner). The ban on intoxicating liquor included an exemption for religious uses. In Napa Valley, California, the Beaulieu Vineyards netted over $100,000 a year by selling sacramental wine to the Catholic Church. Some priests bought 120 gallons at a time, which Okrent figures is enough for 46,000 Communion sips. He suspects that quite a few bottles got diverted to parishioners.

Rabbi Meyer Hirsch, leader of San Francisco's Golden Gate Avenue Shul, stands in front of barrels of sacramental kosher wine that he was allowed to keep during Prohibition.

Rabbis diverted, too. Some opened stores selling kosher wine "for sacramental purposes." A customer could sign up as a member of the synagogue and buy a bottle of wine, all in one visit to the store. The rabbi might be a new convert himself, according to Okrent. In Detroit, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin claimed to know of at least 150 men who, "without the slightest pretense at rabbinical training or position," were claiming to be rabbis in order to market liquor. Franklin charged, "They simply gathered around them little companies of men; they called them congregations; and then, under the law as it now exists, they were privileged to purchase and distribute wine."

The abuses prompted some embarrassed rabbis to advocate repealing the religious exception altogether. Congress didn't act, but in 1926 the Prohibition Bureau began enforcing the rules more rigorously. After that, shipments of wine for Jewish ceremonies dropped by 90 percent in some cities. And, presumably, the ranks of the new godly evaporated a bit.

The Name of the Pose

Advice to the online lovelorn

Clients of dating Web sites typically choose screen names, and their choices can be significant, according to British researchers Monica T. Whitty and Tom Buchanan.

Whitty and Buchanan first gathered a sample of gender-neutral screen names from a dating site and assigned the names to categories. For example, "Greatbody" fell under

appearance, "Wellread" under intellect, and "SunnyPorsche" under wealth. The researchers then contacted 404 clients of the same site and asked how likely they would be to get in touch with the users behind particular screen names.

Based partly on evolutionary psychology, Whitty and Buchanan expected men to favor appearance-related names and women to favor wealth-related ones. Their expectations were only partly borne out, they report in the annual *International Journal of Internet Science* (2010). Men did gravitate toward names that connoted physical attractiveness, but women gravitated toward ones that connoted intellect. Wealth-related names proved off-putting to both sexes. At least for men, a "Sexyrose" by any other name might not smell as sweet.

Uptime

Busy bodies

With people compulsively checking text messages and tweeting updates on their whereabouts, idleness seems a thing of the past. Christopher K. Hsee of the University of Chicago and two coauthors report that in order to avoid dead time, people will go out of their way—literally.

The researchers recruited 98 college students who they determined were equally fond of milk chocolate and dark chocolate, then administered a survey to them. Afterward, participants were told that the survey had a second part, which wouldn't be ready for around 15 minutes. The students could turn in what they had completed, receive a piece of chocolate, and wait, doing nothing else in the interim. (They had been told to leave backpacks, cell phones, and books elsewhere.) Or they could take a short walk to another site, turn in the initial part of the survey there, receive their chocolate, and stroll back.

Are TVs necessary? Depends on whom you ask.

Participants wouldn't take the hike if the same kind of chocolate was available at both sites, Hsee and his colleagues report in *Psychological Science* (July), but they would if the choices differed. The distant chocolate might be no more appealing, but it provided a reason to keep busy. In addition, the researchers found that those who took the walk were happier afterward than those who stayed put.

It seems that people will opt for idleness when they're given no reason to be busy, though the choice also means they'll be less happy. But give them a reason for activity, even a specious one, and they'll move. The authors conclude, "Our research suggests that Sisyphus was better off with his punishment than he would have been with a punishment of an eternity of doing nothing, and that he might have chosen rolling a rock over idleness if he had been given a slight reason for doing it."

Flat and Flatter

TV's ups and downs

Bad economic times have a way of reordering our "wants" and "needs." In May, the Pew Research Center asked Americans whether various household electronics and appliances were necessities or luxuries. Across the board, the "necessity" numbers declined from 2006. Television sets showed the sharpest drop. Nearly two-thirds of Americans called them a necessity in 2006. Now that number is down to 42 percent—and just 29 percent among 18-to-29-year-olds.

At the same time, perplexingly, Americans are buying more TVs than ever, despite predictions that entertainment delivered on computers, smart phones, iPads, and the like may render them obsolete. The number of TVs in the average American home has risen steadily, from 1.57 in 1975 to 2.86 in 2009. Ten percent of Americans now deem a flat-screen TV a necessity, up from five percent in 2006. Most new technologies are favored by the young and the wealthy, but it's the opposite for flat-screen TVs: They're especially popular with Americans over 65 and those earning less than $30,000 a year. As Pew says, the TV picture is fuzzy.

Hands On, Hands Off

Keyed up

The player piano helped democratize music in the early 20th century, yet the technology also provoked some unease. Was the piano just an

oversized music box? Or could an operator take credit for "playing" it?

In a master's thesis earlier this year, MIT graduate Nick Seaver describes how some piano manufacturers included "expression lines" on early piano rolls that told operators when to press the foot pedals to adjust the sound and when to use hand levers to vary the tempo. The Aeolian Company, for example, said of its player piano, "Let no one suppose that the Pianola is an automatic instrument, or that it produces 'mechanical music.' It *does not* play the piano. *You* are the one who plays, putting into music all the soul and expression you possess." One writer observed in 1920 that regular pianos were mechanical, too: "If a man wants a really 'natural' musical instrument . . . he will just have to whistle with his fingers."

Baldwin emphasized the nonmechanical aspects of its "Player-Piano."

In other instances, though, companies took pride in fully mechanizing the experience. A piano roll was produced from Sergei Rachmaninoff's performance of one of his preludes. "When the Ampico plays, it is just as if the hands of the artist were actually touching the keys," a sign in a piano showroom boasted in 1927. "The same strings are vibrating identically as they vibrated when Rachmaninoff himself controlled them. This is not a copy or an imitation or a reproduction, but the actual playing of Rachmaninoff himself."

Now, Seaver says, self-playing pianos are making something of a comeback. Based in Raleigh, North Carolina, Zenph Studios creates a high-tech equivalent of piano rolls through the computer analysis of old, sometimes scratchy recordings. Zenph then stages what it calls a "re-performance," with an electronically controlled piano mimicking the original. At the Newport Music Festival in July, Zenph featured Glenn Gould "playing" his 1955 recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. Re-performances of Gould, Rachmaninoff, and Art Tatum are available on CD.

Abolitionist Aberration

An inconvenient truth?

Before the Civil War, many abolitionists championed the cause of Native Americans as well as slaves. The Cherokee and other tribes should be permitted to keep their ancestral lands, the abolitionists said, and not be forced to move west. Linking the two causes, William Lloyd Garrison's antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, published a cartoon showing Indian treaties being trampled by bidders at a slave auction.

But common cause between abolitionists and Indians proved elusive. Starting with the Washington administration, the federal government had tried to "civilize" Native Americans by getting them to adopt the principle of private property—including the ownership of African slaves. The Cherokee owned 1,277 slaves in the mid-1820s, and the tribe's newspaper published advertisements seeking runaway slaves, Natalie Joy reports in *Common-Place* (July).

The abolitionists knew that slavery was entrenched among the Cherokee, but they tried to look the other way. *The Liberator* claimed that "although some of the Cherokees are owners of slaves, slavery is unknown to the constitution and laws of the Cherokee nation, and is sanctioned only by custom." In fact, several provisions of the Cherokee constitution, written in 1827, expressly derogated the rights of slaves.

"As part of their support for the Cherokee Nation's fight against removal," Joy writes, "abolitionists found themselves in the unusual position of acting as apologists for Indian slaveholding."

Media War and Peace

Bedside manners

In his final days, Leo Tolstoy wanted solitude, but Russian journalists had other plans. Jay Parini told the story in his 1990 novel *The Last Station*, the basis of a 2009 film. Now William Nickell has produced a nonfiction account, *The Death of Tolstoy* (Cornell University Press).

A photographer captured Sofia Tolstoy as she gazed in the window of the station agent's house at Astapovo Station. She had traveled there to see her husband, Leo, who lay on his deathbed.

The 82-year-old Tolstoy left his estate in Yasnaya Polyana, south of Moscow, and his wife, Sofia, in late October 1910. He soon contracted pneumonia and ended up at Astapovo Station, some 100 miles from home. As he lay dying in the station agent's house, the Russian press swarmed to the scene. Tolstoy's daughter Aleksandra wrote of reporters "catching every word" and cameramen "minute by minute getting everything they could on film." Newspapers published all of the telegrams they received from correspondents on the scene, even reports rendered obsolete by subsequent events. Tolstoy's son Sergei sent a letter to his wife saying that he wouldn't bother providing medical updates; she could learn everything from the press.

Some journalists took issue with the saturation coverage. "There was a desert for Buddha," one editorialist chided, "but there is no desert for Tolstoy. No matter where he goes, the telegraph, cinema, and automobile will overtake him." Another wrote, "Don't fill the newspapers with sensational and vulgar headlines. Tolstoy left in search of peace. Quiet, gentlemen, quiet!"

Actually, Tolstoy may have been the one Russian untouched by the frenzy. When he felt well enough, according to Nickell, he asked to be read the day's newspapers—but not any items about himself.

Rebate Debate

Waiting game

Ever wondered what's in it for companies that offer big rebates rather than straightforward discounts? As it turns out, a lot. Customers may never get around to submitting the rebate forms, William Poundstone writes in *Priceless* (Hill & Wang). Or they may fill them out wrong. "Minor omissions mandate 'further research,' requests for more paperwork, and transferring the case to a 'special team,' " he explains. "This is defended as necessary to prevent fraud, but it also has the effect of causing many a consumer to give up."

Even when a company does issue a rebate check, the consumer may fail to cash it. One reason: Checks often arrive in envelopes with no return address or other markings, and get thrown out as junk mail. Poundstone quotes business consultant Paula Rosenblum: For companies, "anything less than 100 percent redemption is free money."

Dr. Death

Cadaver cures

In one of the more macabre chapters in medical history, healers starting in ancient times would instruct the sick and infirm to touch a corpse. Not just any corpse, either: It had to be that of an executed criminal, sociologist Ruth Penfold-Mounce writes in *Mortality* (August).

After some public executions, crowds would surge forward to touch the corpse and even rub its hand over the site of their maladies. As late as the 1940s, some Britons sought the touch of an executed criminal as a remedy for swelling.

Some entrepreneurial executioners charged admission, and, of course, they had the best access to the corpses. From the early 17th century to the 19th century, many afflicted Germans went so far as to consult executioners for medical advice. That may not have been such a bad idea, Penfold-Mounce notes: "The fact that executioners were experts in torture and death meant their knowledge of human anatomy and the physical condition was often more advanced than [that of] university-trained doctors of the time."

—Stephen Bates

Last Chance on Death Row

A little-known legal doctrine confounds the most basic understanding of justice—whether it matters if a convicted person is actually innocent.

BY WILLIAM BAUDE

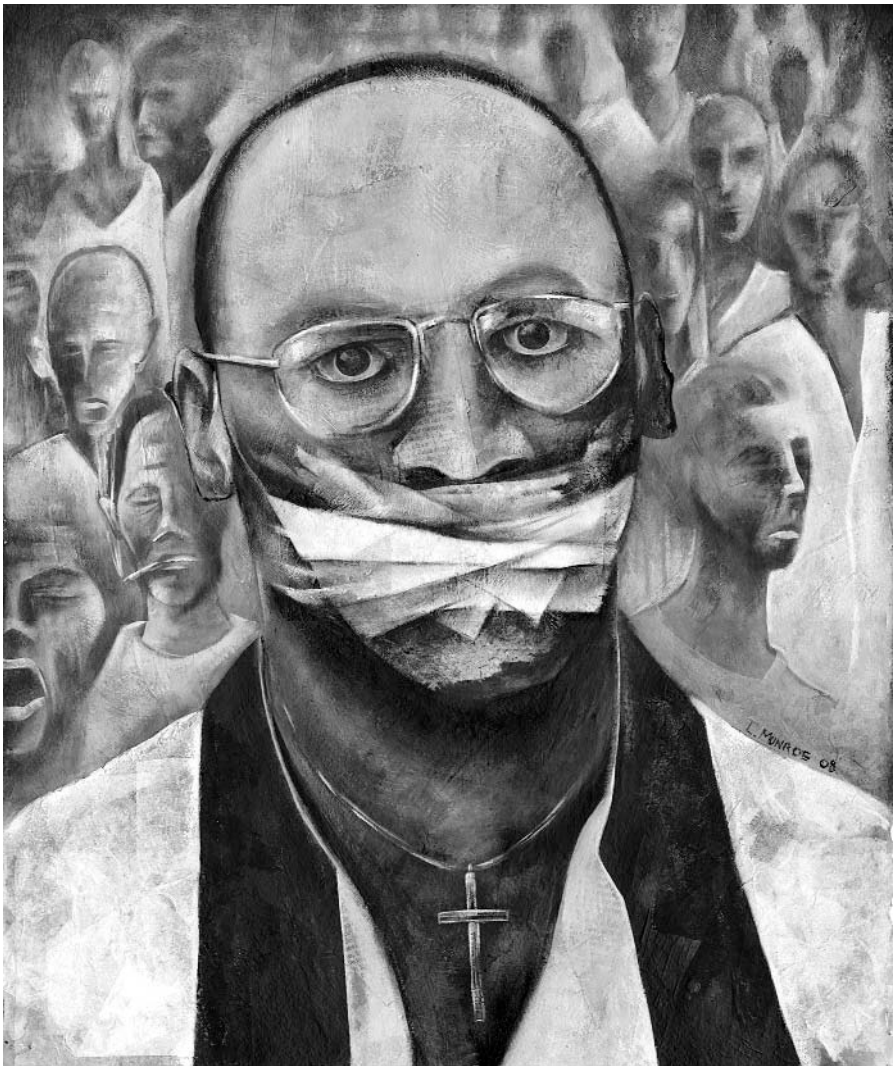
When a federal judge in Georgia announced the fate of death row inmate Troy Davis on August 23, the long-awaited decision was not what Davis or his supporters had prayed for. He'd become a cause célèbre for organizations such as Amnesty International and the NAACP, which decried his conviction as baseless and racist and had deployed the usual campaign of online petitions, protests, T-shirts, and pins. Former president Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Pope Benedict XVI had lent their support to the cause.

But in the end, Davis lost. Sometime in the coming months, he will be executed by lethal injection, though he still claims to be innocent of the charge that he killed a police officer two decades ago. How many chances should we give to someone to prove his innocence? Just one? Five? An infinite number? This bedeviling issue—"actual innocence," in legal parlance—remains one of the giant open questions of modern constitutional law. Davis's fate may no longer be in the balance, but sooner or later the courts will be confronted with a person who is scheduled for execution and yet can prove his innocence.

William Baude is a lawyer in Washington, D.C.

Davis's saga began in the early hours of August 19, 1989, when a group of African-American men, including Davis, were seen attacking a homeless man near a parking lot in Savannah, Georgia. Off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail responded to the altercation and was shot in the chest and head. He died before help arrived. One of the attackers named Davis as the killer, and other witnesses confirmed that story at trial. In 1991, a Georgia jury convicted Davis of the murder, and he was sentenced to die. Since then, he has tried every avenue legally available to him, never wavering from the claim that he is innocent.

Davis was convicted on the basis of the testimony of nine witnesses. No physical evidence conclusively linked him to the crime, and no murder weapon was ever found. Later, Davis claimed that seven of the nine witnesses had recanted or contradicted their prior testimony. One, Darrell Collins, who was 16 at the time of the crime, said that he had been threatened with being



***I Am Troy Davis*, by Lavar Munroe**

charged as an accessory to murder if he did not name Davis. Another, Kevin McQueen, had originally claimed that Davis confessed to him while the two were doing time together in prison. Later, McQueen admitted that he had been motivated to say this by a prison yard argument with Davis. (He had received a reduced sentence for his testimony against Davis.) The federal judge decided that several of the recantations Davis presented were not credible, and the remainder did not fundamentally undermine the evidence against him.

At the core of Davis's case is the question of what should happen when a fair, lawful trial is still alleged to have led to the wrong result. Under the Constitution, can we legally execute an innocent person?

The Supreme Court declined to answer that question when it ordered a new hearing in Davis's case last summer, but some of the justices wrote separately to address it. Justice John Paul Stevens argued that a person "who possesses new evidence conclusively and definitively proving, beyond any scintilla of doubt, that he is an innocent man" surely could not "be put to death nonetheless."

But Justice Antonin Scalia, in a dissent joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, argued that a new hearing for Davis was pointless because it no longer mattered whether he had new evidence of his innocence. Even assuming that Davis could prove he was innocent, Scalia wrote, "this Court has *never* held that the Constitution forbids the execution of a convicted defendant who has had a full and fair trial but is later able to convince a habeas court that he is 'actually' innocent." Indeed, he wrote, the Court's prior decisions had "expressed considerable doubt that any claim based on alleged 'actual innocence' is constitutionally cognizable."

WHAT IF SOMEONE GOES through every possible legal procedure and after all is said and done still claims to be innocent?

At this point, anyone whose common sense has not been deadened by three years of law school might scream: How can it be an open question whether it is constitutional to execute the innocent? But the issue of "actual innocence" is more complex than our intuition suggests.

At a trial, the government is required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty. If he is acquitted, that is the end of the matter. If not, he can appeal to higher courts, and ultimately ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review his case. If those appeals fail, he can challenge his conviction again by seeking a writ of habeas corpus (a form of court-ordered release) in both state and federal courts. The defendant can argue that the evidence presented at trial was insufficient to prove guilt, and in some limited circumstances (which vary from state to state and case to case) he can also present new evidence. If his case is rejected, he can appeal yet again: In the state court systems, he can generally appeal to one or more higher state courts, then seek review again from the U.S. Supreme Court. In the federal courts, he can request an appeal to a federal appeals court, then seek Supreme Court review yet again.

These challenges can drag on, but eventually they come to an end.

Yet what if someone goes through every possible procedure and after all is said and done still claims to be innocent? What if another court were to actually find him innocent? No belated claim of innocence has yet been found so compelling as to force the issue. In two previous death-penalty cases (in 1993 and 2006), the Supreme Court heard arguments from prisoners who had exhausted their appeals, yet claimed to be innocent and asked the Court to stop their executions. In both cases, the Court concluded that there was not enough evidence that the prisoners were innocent. (One of those prisoners, Leonel Herrera, was executed; the other, Paul House, was later freed after the Court remanded his case to a lower court on other grounds, and the prosecutor eventually dropped the charges.) The Court also touched on the question of actual innocence in a 2009 case in which it decided that an Alaska prisoner did not have the right to circumvent state law that might bar him from testing old evidence for DNA. In that case, the Court assumed that an actual innocence right existed for the sake of argument, but said the question wasn't relevant to his situation. (DNA evidence has exonerated scores of people in recent years, but these cases did not involve actual innocence proceedings because governors or prosecutors voluntarily agreed to release prisoners or because there was a statute allowing them to be freed.)

Congress, for its part, has said that a convict has only a limited number of appeals and opportunities to attack his conviction in federal court, even if he has new evidence. (While the rules differ from state to state, many also impose such limits.)

The question is whether Congress's prescription is constitutionally permissible. Why shouldn't we try as hard as we can to make sure we get it right? Yet per-

fect accuracy is not the goal of the criminal justice system. For one thing, there are practical concerns with never-ending review. Jury trials followed by some form of judicial review have long been our traditional method of determining guilt or innocence. So what procedures would we use to retry the trial, and who would decide whether those new procedures were accurate? And once a judge was convinced that a convicted prisoner was actually innocent, could that determination be reviewed again by the prosecution?

Normally these questions are answered by the legislature that creates the appeal or habeas procedure. But because actual innocence claims are pursued outside established procedures, there are no ready answers to these questions. And judges cannot simply answer them by saying that there is a duty to get it right, regardless of how many proceedings and how much time it takes, because the judicial system's resources are finite. Indeed, some advocates of an actual innocence right would not limit it to death penalty cases. If such a right meant that courts must allow every prisoner to perpetually pursue claims of innocence, it might push an already overburdened judicial system to the brink.

But these practical problems do not really go to the heart of the matter. One could imagine a court inventing a rough solution to some of these problems, as happened in Davis's case. There is a deeper, more theoretical problem with recognizing an "actual innocence" right.

The principle that courts should seek justice sits alongside a principle of judicial finality—at some point, legal disputes must be settled. In nearly every case, whether civil or criminal, the losing side must eventually accept the authority of the court. In criminal cases, there is a safeguard: the executive's power to pardon, one last chance for a case that has slipped through the cracks. An unending right to keep challenging that decision would make the legal system pointless.

Moreover, judges cannot decide the limits of their own power. They hear cases that the legislature has decided are within their purview. This legislative role is part of the balance of powers: Judges exercise great authority within their jurisdiction. Their rulings can bind very important people who disagree with them, including the president. Because judicial power is so great, it must also be circumscribed. By expanding their role in "actual innocence" cases beyond what the legislature had given them, judges would be straining against judicial finality and against the principle that courts must not define the scope of their own power. It is intolerably dangerous to give judges the unreviewable power to decide how powerful they are.

Such an assertion of authority would be costly in other ways. Indeed, the tradition of judicial finality is one of the chief justifications for the courts' ability to invalidate unconstitutional laws through judicial review. That finality is what forces other branches to obey the courts' judgments, right or wrong.

This concern with concepts such as finality, jurisdiction, and the balance of powers may sound technical, lawyerly, and highly abstract. But so is the criminal justice system. Crimes are messy and the facts are often disputed, but the law must provide simple answers: innocence or guilt, freedom or imprisonment, life or death. It does that through a system of rules animated by abstract principles. Indeed, the reason so much power is given to judges is because they are presumed to be expert at technical, lawyerly questions.

This is not to deny the potential for injustice. But we should not look to the courts for a solution. Legislatures create the procedures used to challenge criminal convictions. If our current ones are inadequate, lawmakers can create more generous rules for presenting new evidence of innocence. Indeed, in many states they have done exactly that in creating new procedures to accommodate DNA testing. Similar procedures could be created for other forms of new evidence

The mistake is in thinking that judges are the only ones who can or should fix this injustice. If we care so much that actual innocence claims get into court, we should be lobbying the democratically elected branches, which have the power to create new procedures. If we are unwilling to demand better systems for assessing innocence from them, we should not be surprised that the courts are reluctant to invent one. ■

The Web's Random Logic

The Internet's oceans of information seem to defy comprehension, but that doesn't prevent us from trying—often successfully—to make sense of it all.

BY JEFF PORTER

When I heard that Leon Redbone had recently played at the Tralfamadore Café in Buffalo, my old hometown, I went online for details. I hadn't seen the Panama hat–wearing, string-tie-strung, bantering blues performer in years. I wondered if he still looked like Frank Zappa on diazepam. Googling the name and place produced an inventory that ran for several pages. Redbone's show in Buffalo was buried deep down the list. At the top was a YouTube video of a herd of Cape buffalo facing off against a pride of lions. This was the "Battle at Kruger" video that a tourist filmed at South Africa's Kruger National Park in 2004, which went viral when it was posted online and became so well known that the National Geographic Channel picked it up for broadcast a couple of years ago.

Every Google search benefits from the billions of queries users have made in the past, generating a mathematical model of the way words are put together. Each query triggers a Web crawler (called a "spider") that scours the Internet, gathering URLs and tagging hyperlinks. The popularity of "Battle at Kruger" convinced the Web spider that I had made a mistake when typing my entry. Did you mean *Lion* and Buffalo? I was politely asked. The many hits tallied by the sensational nature video weighed heavily against my interest in the blues. And of course, in Spanish *lion* is *león*. Not one to be pushed around by an algorithm, I was about

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to scream indignantly at Google's candy-stripe logo—but not before I played the lion clip.

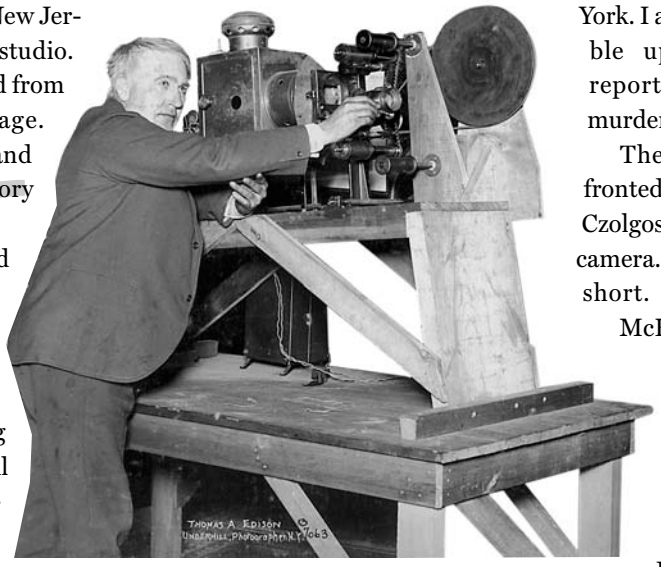
Already I have forgotten Leon Redbone. His name is a vanishing signifier in the hullabaloo that is my hippocampus. I scroll down the search list, losing all focus, and stumble onto another Leon in Buffalo. The infamous one. I click on "Leon Czolgosz and the Trial," part of a centennial site created by the University of Buffalo Libraries to commemorate the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. The site is rich with information I never encountered when visiting the Buffalo Historical Society as a kid. A bottle of beer and a sardine sandwich cost 30 cents at the Pabst Restaurant on the Exposition Midway. The first exhibit on the Midway, if you're wondering, was Eskimaux Village, constructed of papier-mâché and plaster to represent the faraway frozen North, peopled by Inupiaq men and women who mounted spear-throwing contests, dogsled races, and kayak competitions. I try to imagine these scenes unfolding in Buffalo, in Delaware Park to be precise, native Alaskans overdressed in animal skins come all the way from the North Slope running in and out of imaginary igloos. Luckily, there's a link to a movie of Eskimaux Village made by Thomas Edison. The 52-second clip shows several Inupiaq men overdressed in animal skins running in and out of imaginary igloos chasing three baffled Siberian huskies. The link has taken me to the Library of Congress's American Memory project.

Six years ago, the Library of Congress signed on with Google and institutions from Egypt, China, and Canada to digitize a million books. The idea was to create a massive virtual storehouse of information—the Library of Alexandria, only without the gardens. Writers and publishers have been raising a stink over this, worried that the giant Internet company will gain enormous leverage over the distribution of books, but progress toward a global electronic library is unstoppable. The Library of Congress has already scanned, digitized, and uploaded some 19 million historical documents and other items—everything from slave records and photos of the American frontier to the biography of Harry Houdini.

American Memory, which includes the bulk of these digital artifacts, is not a work of art. The homepage provides a simple outline and one or two small images, and the internal links take you to a bare-bones database. The whole thing is as sexy as a lawnmower. I click on the Presidents tab and navigate down the list to "The Last Days of a President: Films of McKinley and the Pan-American Exposition, 1901." I'm looking for a facsimile of the police report filed on Czolgosz, McKinley's crazed assassin. I click next on Early Motion Pictures, scrolling down to a film labeled "Execution of Czolgosz, with panorama of Auburn Prison." After being beaten severely, Czolgosz was tried, convicted, and transferred to Auburn Prison, in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, where he was electrocuted a month later. The film opens with railroad cars passing by, then follows uniformed guards who escort Czolgosz down murderers' row. There's a cut to an isolated chairlike contraption with wires attached. Czolgosz is strapped in, the current is turned on at a signal from the warden, and the assassin's body rises up three times, as though heaving from a bad

dream, then falls slack. The doctors report to the warden that he is dead.

"Execution of Czolgosz" is a wicked little movie. If it weren't a reenactment, it might qualify as the first snuff film. The short was produced by Thomas Edison, and the electrocution sequence was shot with actors in West Orange, New Jersey, at Edison's Black Maria studio. But this back story is withheld from the Library of Congress page. Impatient, I've already cut and run from the American Memory project.



In a frenzy of clicking and rapid eye movement, I'm collecting facts from various sources. Wikipedia tells me that Auburn Prison had the dubious distinction of being the first penal institution to roll out the newly invented electric chair. The Canadian Coalition Against the Death Penalty tells me that William Kemmler, who murdered his girlfriend with an ax in Buffalo, was the first convict ever to be electrocuted at Auburn. (That was in 1890.) The site also summarizes the intense rivalry between George Westinghouse and Edison over electric-chair technology, another episode in the war between alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC). A few years later, Westinghouse lit up the Pan-American Exposition with AC. Elsewhere I learn that Edwin S. Porter (no relation) directed the short movie for Edison, Porter being the same man who would soon become famous for *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). This bit of information gets me to Paghat the Ratgirl's Film Reviews, where it is suggested that Edison was interested in making the Czolgosz film largely because he wanted to brand anything associated with electricity with his own name. At www. buffalohistoryworks.com I find out that Czolgosz was the 50th casualty of the electric chair in New York. I also, at last, stumble upon the police report of McKinley's murder.

The document is fronted by a mug shot of Czolgosz staring into the camera. The narrative is short. "While Wm. McKinley the President of the United States was holding a public reception in the Temple of Music at the Pan-Amer. Exposition, he was shot in the abdomen twice with a .32 cal. revolver." I have seen this face before, in middle school, and the pistol pointed at McKinley's chest. It was a cold November day when our class visited the "Infamous Crimes" exhibit at the Buffalo Historical Society. Czolgosz's gun, a .32-caliber Iver-Johnson revolver, was tucked on a dark mahogany shelf behind glass. McKinley had been glad-handing the public in a receiving line outside the domed Temple of Music. At 4:07 p.m., the disgruntled Czolgosz reached the front of the line and, at point-blank range, shot McKinley twice. In the Czolgosz photograph, there is no trace of the "diabolical" anarchist described by the press. No mustache, no extremist fervor. It's not a portrait of a bloodthirsty gunman.

In one of those strange congruencies that no one later believes is true, I happened to be gazing at the revolver (it seemed so small) when news of the shooting of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas spread through the hallway and then exploded into startled cries and hysterical screams. For a moment I felt implicated, as if gawking at the pistol were regicidal, some sort of thought crime. That's what I recall now,

the shadowy museum, the revolver, the photograph—and the footage of Lee Harvey Oswald's own assassination two days later. These sites can't be moused over, for memory is an ancient mystery.

My Google search has taken little more than 20 minutes. I've bounced around a universe of digital information, zigzagging through time and across a patchwork of nodes. Some research suggests that Internet surfing stimulates the brain. In one recent study, neuroscientists at the University of California, Los Angeles, placed 24 subjects in an MRI machine while recreating the experience of Googling and found increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for complex reasoning and decisionmaking. Book lovers also underwent scans, but simple reading triggered far fewer neural circuits. "There's evidence that the more the brain is active," said one researcher, "the more the brain makes connections." Searching the Internet may even be addictive. In a survey a few years ago, more than 90 percent of American office workers said they surfed the Web, and among those, roughly half said they would rather give up their morning coffee than go offline.

Today, the debate is either/or-ish. Some say we are getting dumber on Google, some say smarter. It's anybody's guess where this technology will take us, but I have a hunch the outcome will be more complicated than we currently think. In my own case, the buzz I felt wasn't triggered by the digital distractions of Web surfing so much as by a growing desire to connect the dots between random data points. It was the buzz a gamer might feel. I was looking for the next level, as if the Internet were a colossal game space with uncharted secrets. As a player, I had to respect its digressive structure.

Another search, another click, and I'm back to Edison's Black Maria. The tarpapered West Orange motion picture studio was closed in 1901 shortly after Edwin Porter's completion of "Execution of Czolgosz," and demolished two years later.

On Google Maps, much of this part of northern New Jersey looks bleak. Two blocks away from the Edison site I see a conspicuously vacant lot at the corner of Alden and High streets. I toggle to Wikipedia. Here, comprehensive demographic data on West Orange is at my fingertips. As of the 2000 census, there was a population density of 3,700 people per square mile (where I live it's 53), and the median household income was $69,254. Industrial from the start, the township was home to the Orange Beer Brewery, Thomas E. Edison, and the U.S. Radium Corporation. The latter was famous for manufacturing "glow-in-the-dark" timepieces, many of which were shipped overseas to American soldiers fighting in the blacked-out trenches of World War I. That in itself isn't much of a story, but I linger long enough to learn that the firm's employees (women who tipped their brushes in their mouths while painting the dials of watches and instruments with a radioactive substance) met a horrible end in one of the greatest epidemiological catastrophes of the period.

When I find out that the vacant lot at the corner of Alden and High is the former site of the U.S. Radium Corporation, I grope for the right adjective. An unexpected narrative is coming to life, as if there were a kind of haphazard intelligence lying in wait at these data points. Information that is random only in appearance is using me to arrange itself. I am the conduit through which it streams into existence.

U.S. Radium employed an estimated 4,000 women as dial painters from 1917 to 1926. The inges-

tion of radium paint resulted in a condition called "radium jaw," a painful swelling of the upper and lower jaws, and ultimately led to the demise of many dial painters, most in their late teens and early twenties. When Grace Fryer, who had worked at U.S. Radium for three years, blew her nose, her handkerchief glowed in the dark. Soon, Fryer's teeth fell out and her jaw swelled to enormous size. The mysterious deaths of the dial painters were often blamed on syphilis. Eventually Fryer and three other dial painters took U.S. Radium to court, but by the time legal procedures began, the four—dubbed the "Radium Girls"—were in bad shape. The two not confined to bed were unable to raise their arms under oath. Fryer needed a back brace just to be there.

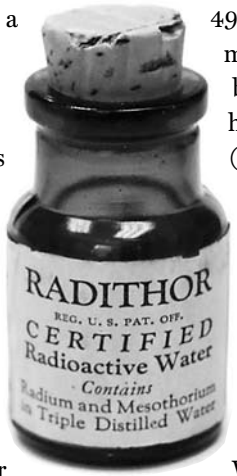
Haunted by the Radium Girls, I toggle back to American Memory and type "radium" in the search field. Up comes a list of 42 items, three of which point to the U.S. Radium Corporation, 422 Alden Street, West Orange, New Jersey. I'm wondering how this story in particular, one industrial tale out of a thousand, wound up in the digital archive of the Library of Congress. The collection features several black-and-white photos and a lengthy report on the history of the U.S. Radium Corporation's two-acre complex, which was designated a Superfund site in 1982. To complete the cleanup, the whole neighborhood would have to be decontaminated and the moribund factory buildings would have to be demolished. Not, however, before a cadre of writers and photographers converged on the area in a documentary blitz. The ill-famed U.S. Radium Corporation was not exactly an American treasure, like Edison's nearby labs, but its toxic role in early-20th-century labor history was recorded on 18 reels of microfilm.

Many of the photographs are simply a record of deserted buildings soon to be leveled, cinder-block

structures with broken windows and peeling paint, embellished with giant strokes of graffiti. Inside, the complex is littered with industrial debris and discarded junk, strewn haphazardly, as though the owners had left in a hurry. There are a dozen large canisters in one building looking vaguely perilous; in another is a large mixing drum where perhaps radium and zinc sulfide were combined with resin. A wasted place. Where are the young women?

HOW DID THE STORY of the Radium Girls wind up in the digital archive of the Library of Congress?

They are in a different database, where I download a black-and-white photo of the dial painters. Hunched over their deadly jars of radium, 15 young women meticulously outline the hands and faces of clocks, licking their brushes. The photo was taken in the Paint Application Building of the U.S. Radium Corporation in 1922. Most of the girls were happy to have such a well-paying job, though no one is smiling in the photo. The windows are half open to ventilate fumes. The women wear earmuffs. At the end of the workday, the girls brushed the buttons on their sweaters, even their eyelids and fingernails, with luminous paint to make them glow in the dark before going out on dates. What you can't see in the photo are the swollen faces and crippling lesions of those with acute radium poisoning, severe anemia and leukopenia, symptoms that could manifest anywhere from one to seven years after exposure. Death came within months of the first symptom. By some estimates, at least 100 dial painters died from their brief stints at U.S. Radium. The productive workers, those girls who painted hundreds of clocks a day, died soonest.



The medical community routinely assured dial painters that handling radium was safe. In fact, company physicians suggested that exposure to low doses of radioactivity was good for their health. Since the turn of the century, radium had been portrayed as a miracle drug that could cure anything from acne to lockjaw. Marie Curie herself kept a glass vial of radium salts on a stand next to her bed for comfort.

As late as 1927, the novelty of radium hadn't worn off. In that year, a wealthy Pittsburgh industrialist, Eben Byers, was advised by his doctor to try Radithor for the chronic pain in his arm. Radithor was a popular nostrum bottled and marketed by the notorious quack and confidence man William Bailey, whose Radium Laboratories sold half-ounce bottles of "certified radioactive water." Unlike many bogus remedies, Radithor was in fact radioactive. Byers, 49, became Bailey's best customer, drinking as many as three bottles of Radithor a day, believing it had not only healed what ailed him but rekindled his sexual vitality. (Radium was frequently marketed as a kind of Viagra, as in Vita Radium Suppositories.) In two years' time, Byers went through 1,400 bottles. Two and a half years later, he began complaining of chronic headaches and weight loss; soon his teeth fell out, holes formed in his skull, and his mouth collapsed. As a headline in *The Wall Street Journal* read, "The Radium Water Worked Fine Until His Jaw Came Off."

Radithor was manufactured in East Orange, New Jersey, from 1918 to 1928. It was removed from the market in 1931, but by then half a million bottles had been shipped worldwide. William Bailey became very rich. His facility was only a mile from Edison's lab and the U.S. Radium Corporation. The string of municipalities known to New Jerseyans as "the Oranges" were the radioactive hub of the world.

Most of this history is available on the Web, but there is another site, an old-fashioned terrestrial archive, where America's fascination with radium

is preserved in the raw—the William J. Hammer Collection at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Among the 100 boxes of documents in the collection—including more than 30 cubic feet of letters, diagrams, photographs, sketches, books, and magazines—are several folders containing newspaper clippings from around the country speculating on the mysteries of radium.

Hammer, a former high-level assistant to Edison, became obsessed with radium while in Europe in 1902. He assisted the Curies for several months in Paris and was rewarded for his efforts with nine tubes of radium, which he brought home to Newark. It was Hammer who invented luminous paint and radium-water cures. He hired several newspaper clipping services to track and gather reports on radium in the popular press. The closest thing to Google at the beginning of the 20th century, the clipping services gleaned a trove of articles and advertisements from daily newspapers, trade journals, and popular pamphlets, all of which became part of the vast collection Hammer accumulated.

To see the radium clippings you have to go to the third floor of the archives center at the museum. There, in Box 19, Series 3, are crammed scraps of yellowed newsprint, bizarre articles from around the country on the wonders of radium. Brittle and flaky, the newsprint cracks along the edges, and brown debris falls in your lap. The news has not quite disintegrated, but its fragility, the fragility of information, is disquieting. We expect archives and the documents they contain to last forever. But they don't.

Several clippings in the Hammer files describe a 1904 event when MIT alumni gathered to attend the ninth annual dinner of the Technology Club in New York City. The theme of the night was radium. A wineglass was placed before each guest filled with "liquid sunshine," a solution produced by stirring together the bark of the horse chestnut, quinine, and water, then inserting a radium tube that produced enough "radio-activity" to give off "ultra-violet rays." Following dinner and a round of speeches, the lights were dimmed as members of the Technology Club rose to toast their alma mater. There was an awkward pause; then a member shouted, "There, I can see it now," his cocktail glowing with a brilliant blue fluorescence.

The sheer number of articles on radium is overwhelming, each one reflective of a collective fantasy that knew few limits. Particularly absurd are accounts describing the efforts of dermatologists to bleach the skin of blacks. A Philadelphia physician, for example, stumbled onto the possibility of "turning a Negro white with the Magic Rays of Radium" when removing moles and facial blemishes from his patients. In one instance, he produced white blotches on a black man's face while bombarding his birthmark with X-rays and radium. "Then came the happy idea that caused both doctor and patient to thrill with pleasure," a reporter explained in a local magazine in January 1904. "Why not continue the process and change the entire color of the patient's skin from mahogany to white?" For more than two months, the patient received daily doses of radium and X-rays, and reportedly "changed completely to a white man." Two weeks later, a New York newspaper ran the story "All Coons to Look White." Women too were targeted. Gynecologists were particularly eager to give radium a try, believing that a woman with excessive menstrual flow could correct her problem simply by inserting radioactive tubes into her uterus.

One spectacle led to another. Lines formed at public demonstrations across the nation wherever radium went on exhibit, as many hoped for a chance to see the uncanny element glow in the dark. "All day long crowds swarmed, pushed, and elbowed their way to this little bit of powder," reported *The New York Sun* when New York's American Museum of Natural History put radium on display. At the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, record-breaking crowds stood patiently outside the mines and metallurgy building waiting to glimpse a gram of radium. "There is something weird and even awe-inspiring in watching the action of this invisible force," wrote a journalist for a Connecticut newspaper.

In 1929, the average person could buy 80 patent

Illustrations: p. 30, Leon Redbone; p. 31, water buffalo; p. 32, (top) Thomas Edison with his moving picture machine, (bottom) Leon Czolgosz after his arrest; p. 33, still from "Execution of Czolgosz"; p. 34, the Radium Girls; p. 35, a bottle of Radithor; p. 36, Roberto Bolaño.

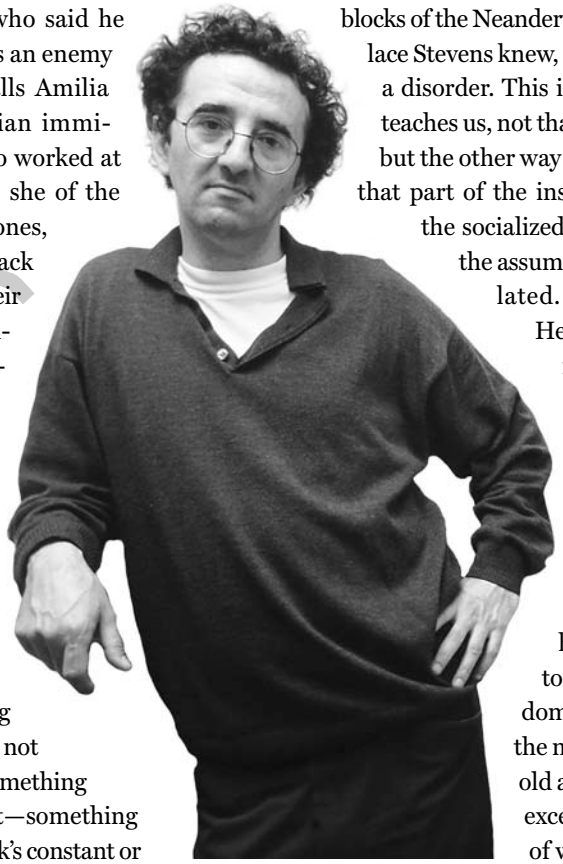
medicines containing radium. It was available in pills, bubble bath, anodynes, and suppositories. It was advertised as an ingredient in candies, cocktails, aphrodisiacs, and toothpastes. But the publicity evoked by the deaths of Eben Byers and the dial painters dampened radium's popularity. By the late 1930s, radium was more likely to appear in a horror feature such as Boris Karloff's *The Invisible Ray* than in mouthwash ads.

What began as a search for Leon Redbone ended, by way of the 20th century's first assassin, at the unmarked gravesite of some young New Jersey women. Fishing for information, I stumbled on the story of little-known people who in their day had become headline news. How many remember Leon Czolgosz, the once notorious son of Polish immigrants, who worked at the American Steel and Wire Company in Cleveland, suffered a nervous breakdown, read socialist newspapers, and became reclusive—who said he killed McKinley because he was an enemy of working people? Who recalls Amilia Maggia, the daughter of Italian immigrants, one of seven sisters who worked at the U.S. Radium Corporation, she of the ravaged mouth and crushed bones, from whose nose escaped a black discharge smelling of garlic? Their fragmentary stories have materialized out of the tailings of a history that survives by chance in random archives and databases. I have a feeling that were I to turn off my laptop, they would disappear forever.

All of this may seem entirely improbable, if not arbitrary, but that's the point. In the age of information, meaning happens by happy accident. It's not an attainment of the will, but something else that we haven't named yet—something strangely inexplicable, like Planck's constant or black body radiation. A degree of indiscriminate randomness has entered our lives and is altering the way we come to know things. New technologies prompt us to synthesize data that is more and more disparate. Did you mean *Lion* and Buffalo? asks Google. "Mark Anthony added you as a friend on Facebook," an automated e-mail says. (Who's that?) Over on Amazon, I want to buy a copy of *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens,* but first I have to go through customer service: Readers who bought this item also bought *The Romantic Dogs* by Roberto Bolaño.

Which is how I discovered the Chilean author.

It's hard not to imagine that randomness is a side effect of the massive, unprecedented effort to concentrate and arrange all information online in searchable databases. The Library of Congress went into a digitizing craze in the 1990s, uploading books, movies, photographs, and audio recordings onto servers at a furious rate. More than a decade later, everything is being fed into computers, from credit reports and phone conversations to the three billion building blocks of the Neanderthal genome map. As Wallace Stevens knew, a violent order can also be a disorder. This is what modern literature teaches us, not that order comes from chaos but the other way around. Yet we also know that part of the inspiration for Web 2.0, as the socialized Internet is called, lies in the assumed relatability of the unrelated. Like the followers of Hermes Trismegistus, Web mongers and marketers believe that everything is linked, and they generate algorithms based on theories of fuzzy connectedness to make it so. What's surprising is how well the human imagination takes to the extravagance of random order. Necessity may be the mother of invention, as the old adage goes, but the road of excess still leads to the palace of wisdom. ■



Gandhi's Invisible Hands

A dust-caked library left behind by his inner circle shows how Mahatma Gandhi's saintly, putatively solitary crusade for peace was made possible by a well-honed enterprise of resourceful supporters.

BY IAN DESAI

On September 4, 1915, in the sticky heat of late summer, Mahadev Desai and Narahari Parikh walked without speaking along the Sabarmati River, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, a city in northwestern India. Desai and Parikh were best friends who shared everything, so the silence between them was uncharacteristic. Their day, however, had been highly unusual, and they were both lost in reflection on what had transpired. When they reached the Ellis Bridge, which spanned the surging waters of the Sabarmati and supported a steady flow of carriage, mule, foot, and, occasionally, car traffic from the bustling city, they stopped and faced each other. They were both thinking about a meeting they had had a few hours earlier with a 46-year-old lawyer who had recently returned to India after living for two decades in South Africa.

Desai finally broke their prolonged silence: "Narahari, I have half a mind to go and sit at the feet of this man."

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This statement, in which Desai contemplated abandoning his nascent legal career in order to devote himself to the service of someone he had met for the first time that day, changed the course of his life. It also helped change the course of history for a colonized nation seeking freedom and its entrenched imperial rulers. With these words, the 23-year-old Desai began a journey that would produce one of the most important partnerships the modern world has known. The lawyer they had met had extraordinary ambitions that were growing by the day, and he had started to assemble a team of gifted individuals to help him achieve his visions. That lawyer's name was Mohandas Gandhi, and in Mahadev Desai the future Mahatma had found a crucial partner for his historic cause.

In March 2005 I was in Ahmedabad, now a major industrial metropolis. It had not rained for nine months, and the temperature hovered above 100 degrees. Although the room I was in felt like an oven, it happened to be a library housed in a museum on

The iconic Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi leads the way during his historic Salt March, gathering new followers as he moves toward the Arabian Sea.

the site of Gandhi's former residence, the Satyagraha Ashram. Wiping my hands clean, I reached for a book from the rusting metal case in front of me. Gently brushing off dust, cobwebs, and an insect from the surface of the volume, I opened it and examined the elegant signature on the inside cover identifying its owner as "Mahadev Desai." What the signature didn't tell me was that this book, along with several thousand others, was read, used, and shared jointly by Desai (no relation to me) and his boss, Mahatma Gandhi.

As I explored the old, dust-caked books in this startling collection over the following weeks, months, and years, a story of Gandhi's life and work unfolded before me that diverged from the accounts I knew. The very presence of such a substantial collection of books in proximity to Gandhi—who famously espoused a philosophy of non-possession—suggested that the image of simplicity and detachment long associated with the Mahatma, or "Great Soul," was misleading: There was clearly a hidden degree of complexity to Gandhi's life.

From the heart of this library, I began to learn that the common conception of Gandhi as a solitary, saintly hero who stood up to the British Empire and led India toward independence was incomplete. Gandhi was actually an energetic and effective director of one of the 20th century's most innovative social enterprises. He was, in essence, an exceptional entrepreneur who relied on a tight-knit community of coworkers—and an extensive store of intellectual resources—to support him and his work.

The origins of Gandhi's enterprise stretch back into the 19th century, well before he became known as the Mahatma. Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar, a city on the Kathiawar Peninsula in Gujarat Province, facing the Arabian Sea, 250 miles west of Ahmedabad. The youngest child of a successful political administrator, Gandhi grew up in a part of India shaped by a rich tradition of cross-cultural exchange. Despite being a shy and diffident student, the young Gandhi made a dramatic decision to leave his homeland and seek his future abroad by enrolling in a law program in London in 1888. Almost immediately following his return to India three years later, he accepted a job as a lawyer for a Gujarati trading firm in South Africa.

At the turn of the 20th century, South Africa was home to a sizable population of Indian immigrants, primarily indentured laborers, who were often treated as second-class citizens. Accustomed to respectful race relations from his time in London, Gandhi was startled and outraged by the racial discrimination he experienced and witnessed while living in South Africa. He resolved to fight the racial injustices around him, and by the time he finally moved back to India in 1915, two decades later, he had transformed himself from a relatively unknown provincial barrister into a political powerhouse and social reformer with an international reputation.

It was during a campaign for the rights of the Indian community in South Africa that Gandhi first came to rely on the support of a cohort of eccentric and talented men and women. Most of these collaborators—who were of both Indian and European backgrounds—were volunteers, and were housed at Gandhi's two experimental communities in South Africa, the Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm. These institutions, loosely based on ancient Indian religious communities called ashrams, became the headquarters for Gandhi's activism, which was based on his philosophy of Satyagraha, or "truth force," and its attendant practice of civil disobedience.

THOUGH PHILOSOPHICALLY Gandhi disavowed material possessions, he became a savvy and serial collector of books and people.

Gandhi's collaborators not only assisted him with the practical elements of his political campaigns and residential communities; they also served as his intellectual companions and introduced him to the writings of a variety of authors. Although he was busy juggling his legal career and increasingly high-profile political work, Gandhi took advantage of his frequent travels around South Africa to immerse himself in books on religious history, literature, politics, and other subjects of interest to him.

Though philosophically he disavowed material possessions, Gandhi became a savvy and serial collector of books and people. When he returned to India, he brought a number of his coworkers from South Africa with him as well as almost 10,000 books and pamphlets. Once in India, he chose a secluded spot outside Ahmedabad on the banks of the Sabarmati River as the site of a new ashram. The Satyagraha Ashram quickly became the focal point of Gandhi's social and political endeavors around India

and a hub for his burgeoning community of coworkers.

Gandhi's nephew Maganlal had been a linchpin of his communities in South Africa, and he continued to serve as a foreman of sorts for Gandhi in India, leading his experiments in agriculture and other fields involving physical work that were key components of his ideal of self-sufficient living. Yet Gandhi still needed someone who could match his tremendous intellectual, social, and spiritual capacities, who would work for him and sustain his causes. He found such a person later that year, when he met Desai. Despite the rapport immediately felt on both sides, Gandhi instructed the young man to wait a year before joining his movement: The work he was about to start would be all-consuming.

Desai officially joined Gandhi in 1917, fulfilling the vision of his future he had first shared with Narahari Parikh on their walk by the Sabarmati River. From the outset, Desai's daily routine was grueling. He woke before Gandhi arose at 4 AM in order to work on the Mahatma's schedule and make other preparations. He was by Gandhi's side throughout the day, taking notes on his meetings and various activities and helping him draft correspondence and articles. (Desai's son Narayan, who grew up working with Gandhi and his father, recalled a number of occasions when Gandhi had only one change to make to Desai's articles: He replaced Desai's authorial initials, M.D., with his own, M.K.G.) Finally, after Gandhi had retired, Desai wrote a diary account of the Mahatma's day so that no important detail went unrecorded.

In addition to Desai, who performed his role under the title of personal secretary, and Gandhi's family members—especially his wife, Kasturbai—the Mahatma's inner circle in India came to include a second secretary named Pyarelal; an English admiral's daughter who abandoned life in Britain to live in the austere environment of Gandhi's community after reading a biography of the Mahatma; and Columbia University–trained economist J. C. Kumarappa, among others. As many as 200 people lived with Gandhi at the Satyagraha Ashram at the institution's zenith.

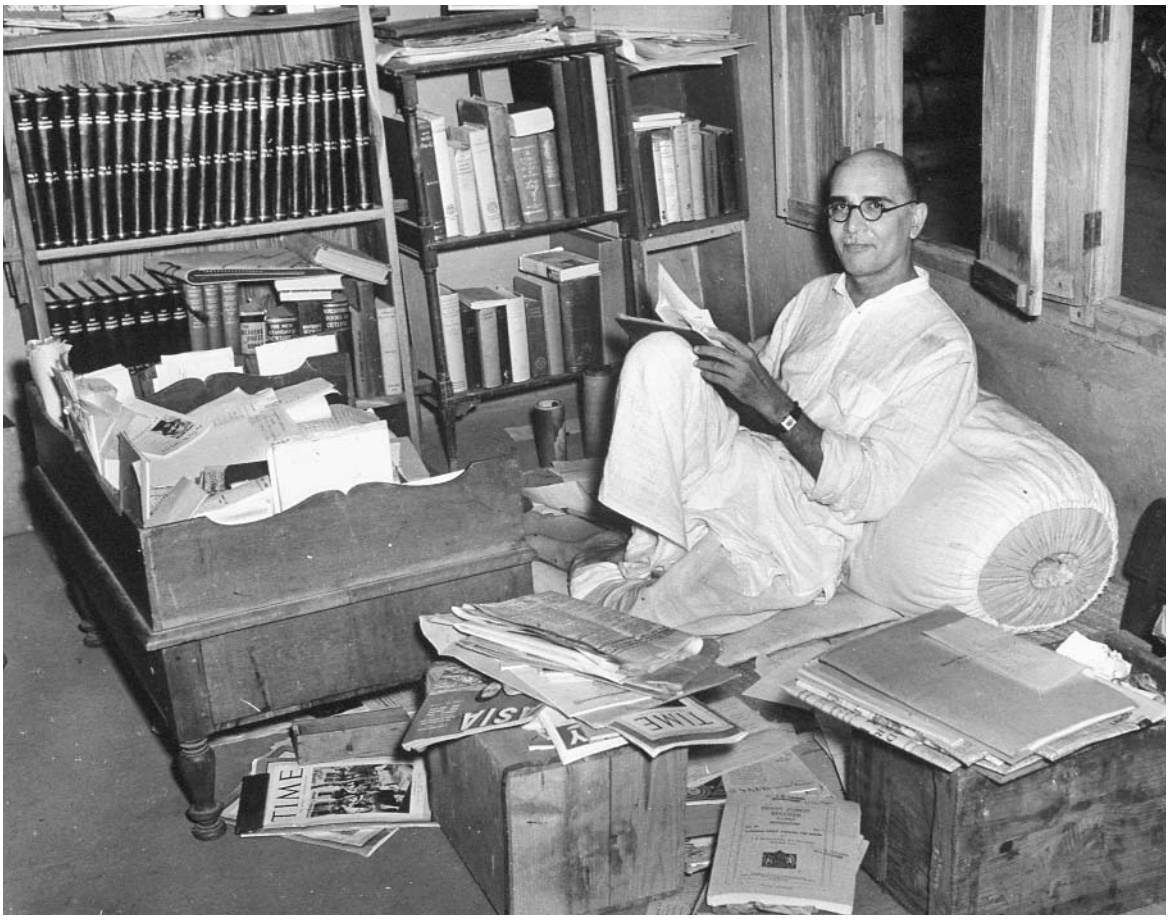
Ever since reading *Unto This Last*, John Ruskin's 1877 paean to the dignity of manual labor, in South Africa, Gandhi had had a credo to match his Victorian attitude of industriousness. Accordingly, he transformed his ashram into a workshop where each member engaged in substantial amounts of communal service, from working in the community's kitchen to teaching in the ashram school to cleaning the shared latrines. The latter task was one of Gandhi's favorite chores, both to do himself and to assign to others. He saw a person's readiness to clean latrines, a major taboo in India, as an indication of a willingness to transgress deeply embedded social values in service of his movement's larger ideals.

This regimen underscored Gandhi's central philosophical tenet: For India to achieve true independence, it needed a widespread ethos of service. More than political freedom from the British, independence to Gandhi implied the ability of a society's system of self-governance to serve the interest of its citizens completely and without corruption. Gandhi was determined to show India (and the British) exactly what he meant by such service. A demonstration of selflessness and self-sufficiency, then, was the first crucial responsibility of Gandhi's enterprise. However, given the nature of his social and political campaigns, it was by no means the only one.

Of all the political events in Gandhi's life, perhaps none is more famous than the Salt March of 1930. That theatrical act of defiance—in protest of the heavy tax on salt imposed by the British in India—catapulted Gandhi to new heights in his political career, as the image of this frail individual challenging a mighty empire captured the hearts and imaginations of millions of people around the world.

Yet like many popular conceptions of Gandhi, this image is incomplete. Absent are the 78 members of the Satyagraha Ashram who accompanied him on his march, as well as numerous aides, lieutenants, and volunteers who worked behind the scenes to stage the historic event. There would have been no Salt March, no iconic Gandhi images, without them.

A month before the march, Gandhi's colleague Vallabhbhai Patel led a team that canvassed arid Gujarat Province to determine the best route. Chief among their considerations were the route's proxim-



The Mahatma called his longtime secretary Mahadev Desai, pictured here at his periodical-laden desk in 1940, his "alter ego."

ity to salt deposits and to towns where local government officials would be likely to resign their posts on Gandhi's arrival in support of the protest, as well as easy access for the news media so that it could report on the march's progress. Gandhi had become a master of employing media coverage to make his efforts successful, and he and his team orchestrated the march so that it would be a sustained media event. They plotted a trail for a three-week trek from Gandhi's ashram in Ahmedabad south toward the Arabian Sea, paralleling the railway line, which would be the primary means for maintaining communication—by both post and messengers—between the marchers and the ashram headquarters, as well as the conduit for the media covering the march.

Meanwhile, at the Satyagraha Ashram, Gandhi's secretariat was busy marshaling evidence demonstrating the link between the salt tax and the degradation of Indian society, and publishing it in Gandhi's weekly journals *Young India* and *Navajivan,* where the arguments could be picked up by mainstream media outlets. Parikh and Desai scoured the vast print resources in the ashram—not only Desai's personal library, but the main library, which housed the thousands of books that Gandhi had brought back from South Africa—for statistics about salt and the Salt Act. Desai used these figures in articles in *Young India* as well as in Gandhi's communications with the imperial government and the speeches he helped Gandhi draft. Gandhi himself contributed to the information-gathering efforts, urging associates to send him publications and other sources of information on salt and related subjects.

Gandhi's personal accounts and other articles from

the Salt March and Desai's pieces in *Young India* and *Navajivan* detailing the narrative drama of the march, along with reports and photographs in the mainstream news media, put the Mahatma and his cause before a growing audience in India and around the world. Yet the organizational sophistication behind Gandhi's dramatic march never got a mention in the headlines the enterprise worked so hard to produce. Its invisibility was partly by design: By effacing their own efforts, Gandhi's associates reinforced his image as a simple and self-reliant crusader.

While most traces of Gandhi's enterprise were indeed erased from the historical record, Mahadev Desai's library is a notable exception. Gandhi's team compiled and utilized an extensive variety of intellectual resources to support the Mahatma's mission. Desai was the heart of this intellectual operation, helping Gandhi refine his philosophy over the course of his career and providing him with concrete information to use in his ideological struggle with British imperialism.

DESAI WAS THE HEART of Gandhi's intellectual operation, helping him refine his philosophy.

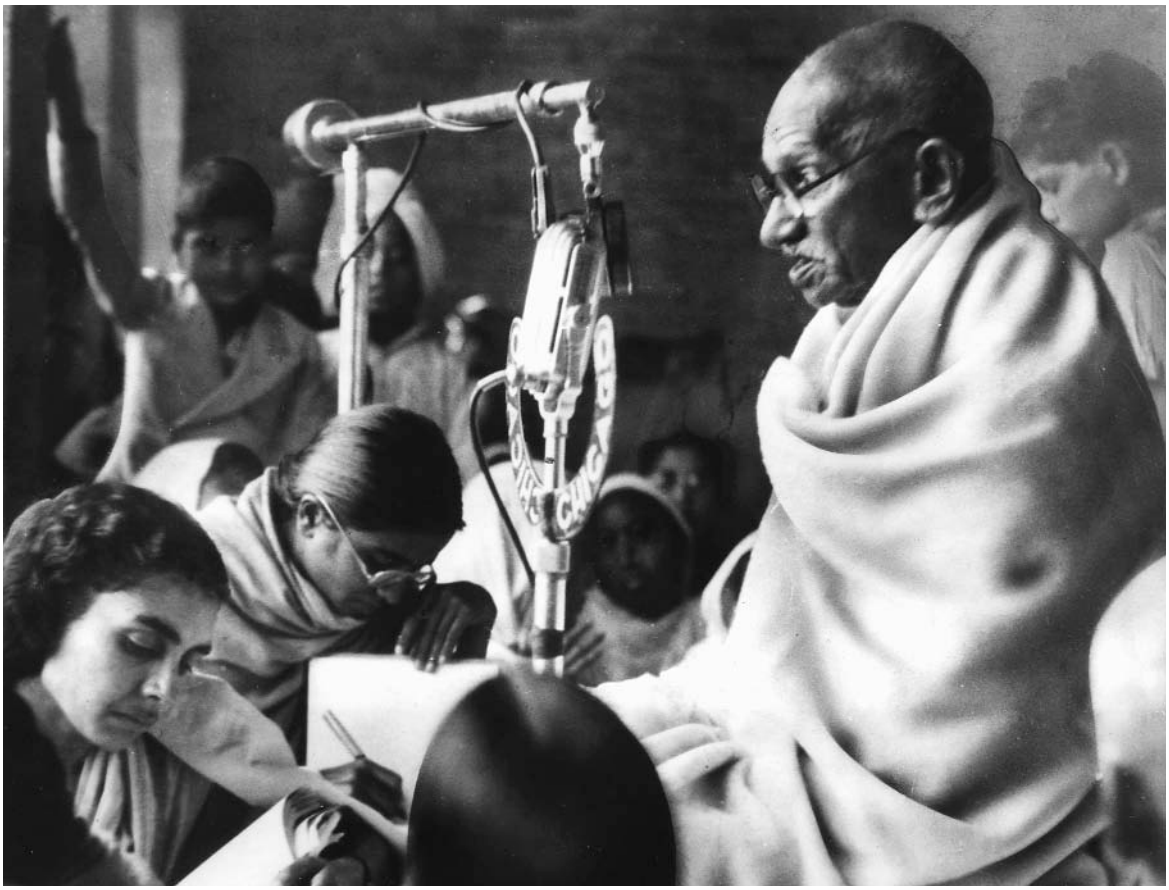
As I studied Desai's library, it became clear to me why these books were important to Gandhi: If you were living in the first part of the 20th century and your goal was to oust the Raj from India and establish *swaraj,* or self-rule, on a national scale, these would be the books you would want on your shelves.

Desai's library covers almost the full spectrum of human topics, and the books in it were used as general references on particular subjects as well as sources for specific facts. First are books that represent the collective knowledge the British had amassed about India since the beginning of their engagement with the subcontinent in the 17th century. The second category of material comprises volumes that convey Britons' knowledge about their own society and history. Understanding how the British understood India as well as how the British understood themselves was a vital component of Gandhi's strategy. A third category within Desai's library embraces thousands of works that might come under the heading of "indigenous knowledge": by Indians, for Indians, and about India. These books were especially relevant to Gandhi's mission of building a self-sustaining and self-governing Indian nation in the wake of imperial rule.

Rounding out the collection is a dizzying assortment of books on subjects close to the heart of Gandhi's work: imperialism and counter-imperialism, health and nutrition, education, religion, literature, philosophy, economics, and world history. Scanning the shelves of Desai's library, I picked out works as diverse as the writings of Winston Churchill, the plays of William Shakespeare (in a beautiful miniature vellum set), the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Vincent Smith's *History of India* (1907), Reynold Nicholson's *Mystics of Islam* (1914), and William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1911) alongside titles such as R. D. Ranade's *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy: Being a Systematic Introduction to Indian Metaphysics* (1926), Tulsidas's version of *The Ramayana* (in an edition published in 1922), and S. R. Narayana Ayyar's *Experiments in Bee-Culture* (1938).

Once I grasped the scope of the collection before me, I was puzzled by two questions: When did Desai and Gandhi have time to read all of these books, and how did they get them in the first place?

The answers to both questions were, in fact, inside the books themselves. A variety of dedications from friends and admirers in India and around the world, stamps of Indian and British booksellers, and other notations revealed a staggering number of sources. These books were the fruits of the transnational intel-



Gandhi speaks at a prayer meeting during his fast protesting communal violence in January 1948. Gandhi persuaded Indian religious leaders to halt their hostilities, but passions were again inflamed when Gandhi was assassinated 12 days after he ended his hunger strike.

lectual network in which Gandhi and company were active participants.

Still, what good is a great library if its contents are never consulted? Given how little free time Desai and Gandhi had, it is hard to imagine when they found the opportunity to read in this vast collection.

Two important types of evidence shed light on not only when but how these books were read. On the inside covers of hundreds of the volumes are small indigo stamps surrounded by a series of dates and signatures. These are Indian prison stamps, recording when each volume entered and exited the penitentiary. Here was the missing time needed to read so many books: when Gandhi, Desai, and their coworkers were locked in jail for acts of civil disobedience. As Gandhi himself noted, "In this world good books make up for the absence of good companions, so that all Indians, if they want to live happily in jail, should accustom themselves to reading good books."

Because Desai, in particular, was an active reader, we can follow his progress through many of the books in his library and see how he mined these intellectual resources for material useful to Gandhi's movement. Furthermore, writing in the margins and other parts of the books indicates that many of them were read by more than one person within Gandhi's circle, including the Mahatma himself. Indeed, Gandhi's political colleagues, including Vallabhbhai Patel (who became independent India's first home minister) and Jawaharlal Nehru (India's first prime minister), sent books to Desai while he was in one prison and they were each in another. Far from stymieing the work of Gandhi's enterprise, by repeatedly arresting Gandhi and his coworkers the British unwittingly supported it.

In his lifetime, Gandhi was arrested 14 times on two continents. By the time of his final incarceration, in August 1942, at the start of the Quit India movement to force the British out of the subcontinent once and for all, his enterprise and stature had grown to such an extent that the British had to take special care to keep him and his assistants confined without further agitating the public. Gandhi was imprisoned along with his wife, Mahadev Desai, and several other aides in the Aga Khan Palace in the city of Pune.

The strain of organizing Quit India agitation had taken a toll on the entire group, as the demand for complete and immediate independence had brought a swift and heavy response from the British around India. Desai particularly worked himself into a frenzy of concern about the 73-year-old Gandhi's fragile health. Nevertheless, after settling into the palace prison, Desai and Gandhi got back to their regular work routine of reading and writing. Eight days after their arrest, following a morning spent taking Gandhi's dictation, Desai began to feel lightheaded. Within minutes he suffered a massive heart attack, and died shortly thereafter in Gandhi's arms. Just 50 years old, he had spent half of his life serving Gandhi and his mission.

By the time Gandhi was released, in 1944, Kasturbai—his life partner and wife of 64 years—had also died. Without Kasturbai and Desai, Gandhi's enterprise lost its twin engines, and sputtered as it tried to support the Mahatma during the dramatic run-up to independence in 1947 and the accompanying chaotic partition of the subcontinent into two countries, India and Pakistan. As tensions increased over the issue of dividing the subcontinent, Gandhi assumed the responsibility of mediating between the vying political factions while also trying to calm an increasingly anxious and aggravated citizenry. While the first part of Gandhi's vision of *swaraj* was fulfilled with the peaceful transfer of power and the departure of the British, India's political freedom did not free it from religious strife. Violent episodes of communal antagonism erupted as millions of people migrated in both directions across the new borders separating the eastern and western halves of the Muslim state of Pakistan from Hindu-majority India.

Gandhi spent most of the last part of his life—both before and after independence—traveling from one fractious part of India to the next, attempting to halt outbreaks of violence, particularly between Hindus and Muslims (and often succeeding, in ways the government could not, leading the last viceroy of British India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, to call him a "one-man boundary force"). As he walked through devastated villages, he was often physically assisted by his two grandnieces, who supported him on either side and whom he called his "two walking sticks." Although they helped him stand until the end, his grandnieces and the other remaining members of his entourage could not replace the likes of Kasturbai and Desai, and the Mahatma's power was accordingly diminished. The girls, Abha and Manu, were at his side when he was shot and killed in New Delhi in 1948 by a Hindu extremist who believed that Gandhi was being too conciliatory toward Muslims.

Despite the contributions of Gandhi's enterprise to his life and work, it continues to be overlooked in both popular and academic studies of the Mahatma. Consequently, we often draw the wrong lessons from Gandhi's story. The real magic of the Mahatma was not a trick of popular charisma, but in fact a deft ability to recruit, manage, and inspire a team of talented individuals who worked tirelessly in his service. Gandhi himself was one of the few people to recognize how this phenomenon worked. "With each day I realize more and more that my mahatmaship, which is a mere adornment, depends on others. I have shone with the glory borrowed from my innumerable co-workers," he wrote in 1928 in *Navajivan*.

Recognizing this fact does not diminish the rare and valuable qualities Gandhi himself possessed. Rather, it acknowledges that great work is the product of collaborative processes, and that many hands working together toward a common purpose can achieve monumental results. In Gandhi's case, it was the relationship between a visionary leader and the team supporting him—and their collective use of the right resources, such as the books in Mahadev Desai's library—that paved the way for extraordinary and lasting accomplishments. ■

The Global Budget Race

The Great Recession drove home a reality Americans have long avoided. An aging nation with mounting health and retirement bills must make hard choices or be outrun by its competitors—some of whom have been quicker to face facts.

BY DOUGLAS J. BESHAROV AND DOUGLAS M. CALL

News stories regularly remind us that most national governments in the developed world are essentially insolvent. The United States has one of the worst balance sheets, with a projected debt in 2050 of $123 trillion. Of course, what can't happen won't happen, as economist Herbert Stein taught us. Long before that point, most countries will get their finances in order—either after a careful analysis of the alternatives or because they will be unable to borrow money and will be forced to take corrective action. How capably they respond will determine their future economic competitiveness and their standard of living.

Those countries that do a better job of bringing revenues and spending into balance—in a way that fosters a healthy and productive citizenry—will have a competitive advantage in the global economy, and they may be able to avoid economic decline.

Whether they know it or not, the developed (and emerging) nations of the world are in a race—not, one hopes, a race to the bottom, but rather a race to develop more economically efficient tax and social welfare policies while maintaining an effective social safety net. As in any race, learning from your competitors can be crucial to doing well. Around the world, countries are trying different approaches to solving the same long-term budgetary problems.

The accruing national debts are truly staggering. In a report earlier this year that reflected the catastrophic impact of the recent recession on national balance sheets, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that in 2050 the U.S. gross debt will reach about 344 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). That's up from an already alarming estimate of 292 percent before the recession. (State and local liabilities, in the form of unfunded pension and health costs, would add trillions of dollars more.) As of late last year, in 2050 France's debt was projected to reach 337 percent of GDP, Germany's 221 percent, and Britain's 560 percent.

The root of the problem is the same in most countries: With populations aging, the intergenerational transfer system that has paid for pensions and health care is breaking down. Low birthrates and longer life spans are changing the

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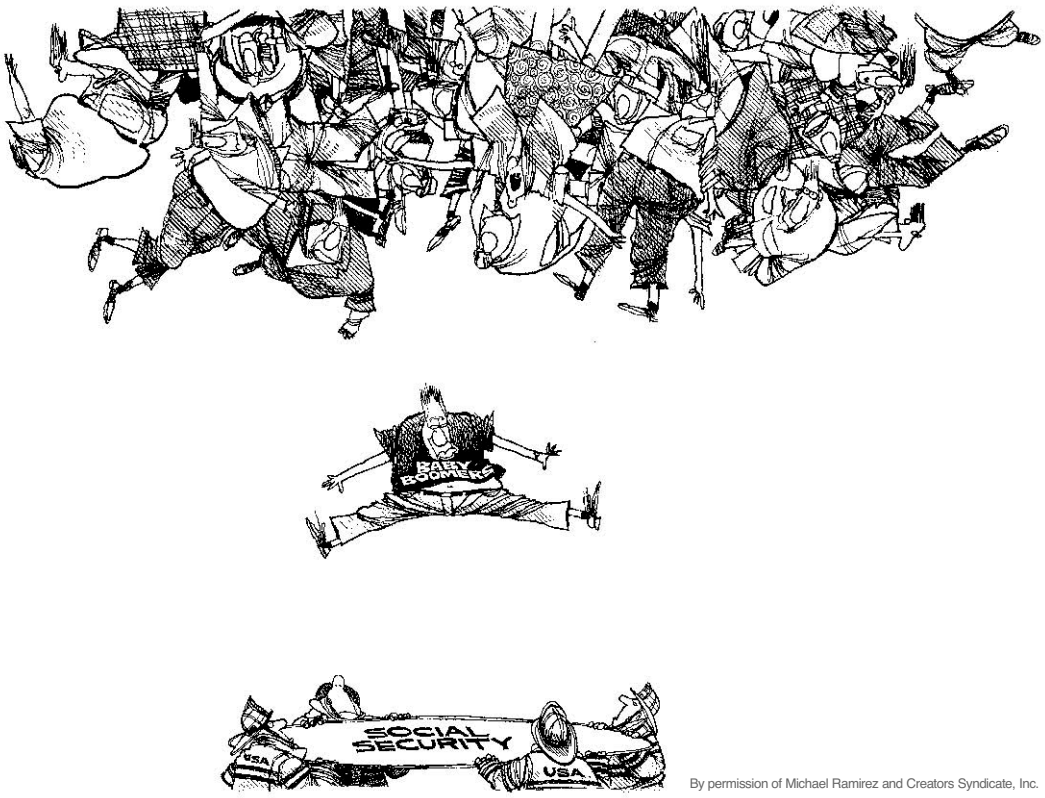

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Only five years from now, as the number of retirees grows, Social Security will start paying out more in benefits than it takes in from taxes.

balance between workers and retirees so that current levels of taxation cannot support the promised benefits. Across the developed and, increasingly, developing worlds, worker-to-recipient ratios are declining. By 2050, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates, there will be only 2.7 American workers for each retiree, down from 4.7 in 2008. The European Union nations will have only 1.8 workers per retiree, and Japan 1.3. China faces the biggest adjustment, dropping from about 7.7 workers per retiree to 2.1.

As a result of these demographic changes, many government pension and health care systems for the elderly worldwide are now little more than Ponzi schemes that are running short of new "investors." Aggravating the budget situation is the rapid rise in health care costs caused by the development of new—and expensive—medical technologies, drugs, and treatment procedures.

The math is simple: Projected tax revenues are not nearly sufficient to cover future obligations—with the imbalance growing over time as larger shares of the populations in these countries begin to receive benefits. The U.S. Social Security and Medicare trust funds are giant and growing IOUs from the federal government to future recipients. Last year, the government "owed" the trust funds about $4.3 trillion. (These IOUs are dutifully printed at the Bureau of the Public Debt in Parkersburg, West Virginia, and placed in a filing cabinet. Not exactly Al Gore's lock box.)

Years ago, budget watchers warned that the so-called wealthy countries of the developed world had erected unsustainable social welfare systems. The predicted crisis, however, was decades in the future, so neither politicians nor voters were prepared to make tough choices. Then came the recent recession. Sharply reduced tax revenues combined with massive stimulus spending raised budget deficits in developed countries to levels unprecedented in peacetime and added vastly more debt on top of the existing long-term social welfare debt. In the United States, the federal deficit jumped from about 1.2 percent of GDP to about 9.9 percent between 2007 and 2009, reaching $1.4 trillion. According to *The Washington Post*, the federal government will "borrow 41 cents of every dollar it spends" this year.

For a while, it seemed that the developed countries might be able to borrow their way out of immediate trouble. But with Greece's brush with insolvency this past year, and fears that Spain, Italy, and Portugal would soon face similar prob-

lems, the day of reckoning suddenly, very suddenly, seemed at hand.

Many European countries responded by adopting multibillion-dollar austerity packages including elements such as higher taxes, cuts or freezes in government spending, salary freezes for government employees, and, most important, rollbacks in social welfare benefits. Some of the packages were modest, but many involved major tightening, notably in Britain, where the new Tory–Liberal Democratic coalition government is cutting most government departments by 25 percent over five years (though health care, notably, is largely exempt) and raising taxes.

As politically controversial as they have been, these austerity measures aren't anywhere close to correcting the immense long-term imbalances these countries face. And, of course, the United States has yet to start the process of retrenchment because the Obama administration, with the support of many economists, has decided that the economy should recover first—a strategy that is easier to pursue because America's bond rating is not yet under pressure.

Nevertheless, the immediacy of today's budget problems—and the looming threat of a failed debt refinancing—makes the conditions for long-term reform in the United States ripe. Most international finance economists agree that the bond market will eventually insist on a solution and that the sooner the needed corrections are made, the less jarring they will be. They also agree the fix will be a combination of big tax hikes and deep spending cuts.

Whatever one's view on the proper size of government, one thing is undeniable: Contemporary American politics have given us a government that seems incapable of living within its means. Even though our relatively high birthrate gives us a demographic advantage over most other developed countries in paying for retirement benefits, our lower tax rates and costlier health care system mean that our projected debt is higher.

Despite vociferous opposition from many quarters (not just the Tea Partiers), any realistic solution will require that *all* Americans pay considerably higher taxes. The budgetary imbalance is so large that fixing it with spending cuts alone would eviscerate important parts of the federal government. Americans are now taxed substantially less than citizens in most European countries. In 2007, taxes (federal, state, and local) amounted to 28.3 percent of GDP in the United States and 39.7 percent in the European Union. At least for now, however, we are at a political impasse about raising tax rates, especially on the voting middle class.

Around three-quarters of our projected debt in 2050, according to the CBO, will be caused by three factors and their effect on interest rates and payments on the national debt: (1) the continuing impact of the George W. Bush administration's tax cuts of 2001 and 2003, about 80 percent of which went to the middle class; (2) the continued indexation of the alternative minimum tax to inflation, which keeps taxes on the middle class lower; and (3) Congress's regular suspension (in every year since 1997) of the rule that is supposed to limit increases in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements to the rate of GDP growth, which would hurt doctors, nurses, and other health care providers.

Fix all three, and the U.S. debt 40 years from now falls to about 90 percent of GDP. That is still too high in the opinion of many economists, but it probably would be manageable and, bearing in mind the imponderables of estimating a federal budget 40 years from now, a reasonable goal. But a different mix of solutions will have to be found.

As the three key sources of our problems suggest, it won't be just the rich who will have to pay higher taxes. President Barack Obama has repeatedly promised not to raise taxes "even one single dime" on families earning less than $250,000 and single people earning less than $200,000. Unfortunately, increasing taxes only on upper-income people will not yield nearly enough money to fill the revenue gap. Reinstating pre-Bush tax rates on people in the top two tax brackets (who now pay rates of 33 and 35 percent) would yield only $55 billion of the $250 billion in revenues cut by Bush. Hence, Obama is widely expected to find some way to reverse his promise not to raise middle-class taxes (and many have noted the president has already done that in the health care bill). The report of his National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which is expected to recommend a broad-based tax increase, could give him an excuse to do just that. The report will be delivered after the November elections.

Here is the menu of unappetizing tax choices Obama and Congress face:

Increase Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes. Payroll taxes now fund all of Social Security and about 42 percent of Medicare. If immediate action were taken to fill the long-term Social Security funding gap, the payroll tax would need to increase from its current 12.4 percent of wages to 14.2

percent. (Half the tax is paid by employers, half by employees.) Filling the gap by cutting spending would require an immediate 12 percent cut in benefits. The longer decisions are delayed, the more the cost will go up.

As for Medicare, if the payroll tax increase were immediate, the rate would need to go from its current 2.9 percent of wages to either 3.6 or 4.8 percent, depending on how effective one assumes the cost-cutting measures in the new health care law would be. (As with Social Security, the cost of Medicare is shared by employers and employees.) Again, delays raise the cost. Combined, these new U.S. payroll tax rates would reach a level approaching the European norm of about 22 percent of workers' paychecks.

The advantage of using a payroll tax increase is that it would maintain the connection (however tenuous) between "taxes" and "benefits" in Social Security and Medicare, which advocates on both sides of the debate see as important. Liberals fear that breaking the connection—by using general revenues to cover the shortfall—would highlight that neither program is really a form of insurance, thereby reducing voter support for the programs. Conservatives fear that drawing on sources other than a payroll tax would open the door to even bigger increases in benefits, as voters not subject to the relevant taxes would be more inclined to push for higher benefits.

There are, however, at least two major disadvantages to raising the payroll tax rate. First, many consider such taxes regressive: Because the rate is the same for all payers, it hits low-income taxpayers hardest. One way to compensate would be to increase the size of the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is available to lower-income people, but that would create problems of its own. Another would be to raise or remove the cap on earnings subject to the tax, currently $106,800. (There is no cap on the Medicare payroll tax.) But the sharp disparity between what the many millions of affected people would pay in taxes and receive in benefits would also dramatize the politically uncomfortable fact that Social Security is not an insurance system.

A second disadvantage to raising these taxes is that payroll levies are a tax on labor. They make it more costly for employers to take on new employees, and they diminish the potential take-home pay of people who may be looking for jobs, which reduces their incentive to work. At least at the margin, payroll taxes can hurt employment, productivity, and international competitiveness. That is one reason why so many other nations have turned to consumption taxes.

Impose consumption taxes. Consumption taxes, such as a value-added tax (VAT) or an energy or carbon tax, are used to apparently good effect around the world to raise large amounts of money, encourage saving, conserve energy, and minimize negative impacts on productivity and international competitiveness. Although both kinds of taxes have been decisively rejected in the United States, this time could be different—if they were part of a grand social welfare budget compromise in which both political parties admitted that, one way or another, middle-class taxes needed to increase and, at the same time, agreed on a major fix to the benefit structure.

BIG TAX HIKES and deep spending cuts are inevitable.

More than 140 countries have a VAT, including every country in Europe, the vast majority of Asian and South American countries, and most of those in Africa. A VAT is essentially a sales tax that is levied on the value added to a product at each stage of its manufacture and distribution. Set at European levels (around 20 percent), a VAT could raise almost $1 trillion a year, or about 70 percent of the value of today's deficit. That's enough to make it extremely attractive to both deficit hawks and defenders of government spending. A VAT has the added benefit of reducing consumption, thereby increasing saving. The VAT does not apply to exports, and because it is a flat-rate tax, some U.S. proposals include measures to offset the regressive effects.

Some sort of additional tax on energy may also be on the table. The cap-and-trade bill that died in the Senate earlier this year would have brought in some $750 billion over 10 years. There are now bills in Congress to create a carbon tax that would generate revenues of between about $70 billion and $125 billion annually. Besides raising money, energy taxes would push consumption down, thus reducing U.S. dependence on oil imports. As with a VAT, the burden of an energy tax would fall most

heavily on those with low incomes, so it too might be accompanied by some form of targeted tax relief.

Using consumption taxes to help fund Social Security and Medicare would, indeed, break the direct link between taxpayer "contributions" and benefits. One way to avoid the perils that both liberals and conservatives see in such a course is to change the way benefits are calculated so it is based upon an explicit and transparent set of objective criteria. That could give the system an aura of fairness the current one does not enjoy, and, if the experience in other countries is a guide, help voters and politicians to internalize budget discipline.

Voter hostility to higher taxes will be the major check on the size and shape of any tax hike. Concerns about taxation's effects on the economy and international competitiveness are another limit. Even those economists most skeptical of the Laffer curve recognize that tax increases eventually produce diminishing returns. Higher taxes can raise the price of a nation's goods in the global marketplace, deter investment, and invite increased tax avoidance, while taxing specific activities or groups can lead to harmful distortions of incentives. That's why, in the past few decades, European countries have been hesitant to raise their taxes much, and why their recent austerity packages rely so heavily on spending cuts.

People who have not been paying close attention to government spending might wonder why the cuts need to be in Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and not elsewhere, such as the military. The quick answer is the same one Willie Sutton gave when asked why he robbed banks: That's where the money is.

Cuts in military spending are surely coming, especially as American troops leave Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of the resulting savings, however, will have to be used to replenish badly depleted stocks of weapons and equipment. Moreover, there just won't be that much to cut from—even if military readiness is reduced. The cuts Secretary of Defense Robert Gates proposed in August, though controversial, came to only $100 billion over five years, or about a week of each year's Social Security and Medicare expenditures.

Military spending has not amounted to more than 25 percent of the federal budget since 1989 and the end of the Cold War. Last year, even as the United States was fighting two costly wars, the Pentagon accounted for only about 19 percent of all federal spending (or about $660 billion). The big three of social programs collectively accounted for a much bigger share of spending: Social Security (about 19 percent), Medicare (about 12 percent), and Medicaid (about seven percent).

What about the proverbial waste, fraud, and abuse in government that so many critics decry? Even President Obama has felt the need to promise a new crackdown. The projected savings? About $300 million a year. Not a small amount of money, at least outside Washington, but only a rounding error in the health care budget.

This year, for the first time, Social Security payments to retirees will exceed tax revenues, thanks to the recession. The imbalance is then expected to right itself, but only temporarily. Beginning in 2015, as the number of baby-boomer retirees increases, a more fundamental, demographically driven shift will occur. From then on, funds will be "drawn" from the Social Security Trust Fund to maintain benefit levels until the trust is exhausted in about 2037. After that, Social Security payroll taxes will be able to pay for only about 78 percent of expected benefits.

In 1983, the last time a major correction to Social Security was made (as a result of the Greenspan Commission's recommendations), the payroll tax was raised from 5.4 percent to 6.2 percent, the retirement age was increased from 65 to 67, and a tax was imposed on the benefits of individuals with incomes over a specified threshold (with the revenues to go to the Social Security Trust Fund). The conventional wisdom is that it will be relatively easy to repair the system with similar "small" adjustments to the age of retirement and benefit levels. Don't count on it. Up close, the adjustments most frequently suggested don't seem as small as advertised—and raise serious questions of fairness and viability.

In 2008, a third of all Social Security recipients relied on their monthly check for about 90 percent of their retirement income, and almost two-thirds of all recipients depended on it for about half or more of their income. Even if benefit cuts are phased in slowly enough so that current workers have time to adjust, perhaps by increasing their savings, they may not want or be able to do so. There will be plenty of politicians eager to take up their cause.

The major reform options include:

Raise the retirement age. A popular proposal, at least among Washington analysts, is to raise the Social Security retirement age, on the ground that life expectancy has

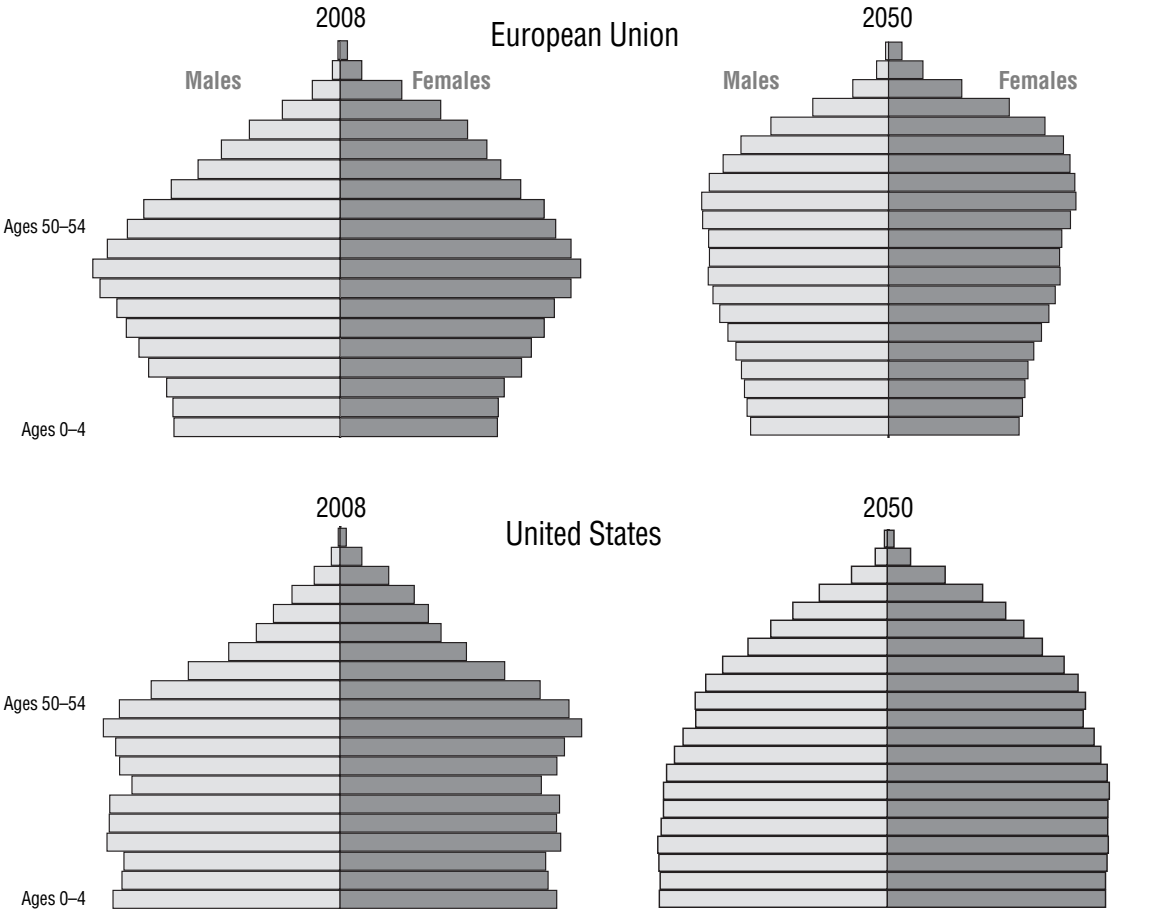
increased dramatically. When Social Security was launched in 1935, a 65-year-old retiree could expect to live another 12 years. Now that number is 19.

Currently, retirees born between 1943 and 1954 cannot receive full benefits until they reach age 66. (Retiring at 62 reduces benefits by 25 percent, with the penalty lessening the later one retires.) Between now and 2022, the age of eligibility will gradually increase until it reaches 67. (The penalty for early retirement will increase to 30 percent.) Some have suggested a further incremental increase, perhaps to age 70 over a 20-year period. Others have proposed "objective" formulas that would have roughly the same effect, for example, by changing the retirement age to keep post-retirement life expectancy constant at 12 years. But as Brookings Institution health care specialist Henry Aaron points out, raising the retirement age is "simply an across-the-board benefit cut." An increase to age 70 would amount to a 20 percent cut.

Later retirement might be fine for lawyers and university professors, but what about people who make a living lifting heavy things, or waiting on tables, or standing behind a counter? Right now, their practical choice is to retire at age 62 and accept a reduced benefit. To raise the retirement age to 70 would mean increasing the penalty for early retirement, exacerbating class differences.

Replace a smaller share of workers' pre-retirement income. Most Americans probably don't realize that the formula for determining their Social Security payment is set at an arbitrary percentage of their past wages. This is called the

The Demographic Future



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

America's population will age considerably in the next 40 years, but not as much as Europe's. Yet if its current policies on health care, Social Security, and taxation remain unchanged, the United States is expected to amass an even larger national debt than some European countries.

"replacement rate," and some proposals would, over the long term, reduce it drastically.

Currently, replacement rates are set to be "progressive," so that lower-wage workers get monthly Social Security checks that represent a bigger share of their pre-retirement earnings than others do. The rates are calculated using a formula based on an arbitrarily selected percentage of a retiree's previous earnings, which also are arbitrarily measured: The recipient's highest 35 years of earnings are indexed to the increase in wages in order to derive "average indexed monthly earnings" (AIME). That number is then multiplied by politically determined replacement rates to arrive at the recipient's monthly Social Security benefit.

SOME PROMISE SOCIAL Security will be saved with a few small adjustments. Don't count on it.

For AIME up to $761, the replacement rate is 90 percent. For the amount of AIME income between $761 and $4,586, it is 32 percent. And for AIME income above that level, it is 15 percent. (However, remember that during earners' working years, some of the income in this category was above the Social Security tax cap and so was not subject to the payroll tax.) According to Andrew Biggs of the American Enterprise Institute and Glenn Springstead of the Social Security Administration, in 2005 the average middle-income retiree received about 64 percent of his or her last year of pre-retirement earnings in Social Security benefits.

In keeping with Social Security's progressive framework, however, workers with slightly higher incomes do not do nearly as well. In 2005, the Social Security Administration's chief actuary estimated the "internal real rate of return" on the amount people paid in Social Security taxes—their return on investment. For a hypothetical two-earner couple who retired in 2008 with "high" average career earnings (about $50,000), the average annual rate of return was about 1.64 percent. For a single woman with "very low" earnings (about $8,000), it was about 4.42 percent, and for a one-earner couple with similar earnings, it was about 6.59 percent.

Some current proposals would make the return to middle-income workers even worse by indexing past earnings to the increase in prices rather than wages. That would reduce benefits by about 39 percent by 2050, enough to erase the funding problem. In order to soften the blow for the less well-off, some analysts would add yet another arbitrary twist to Social Security's formulas by indexing these workers' earnings differently.

Reduce the inflation adjustment. Social Security payments are adjusted for inflation using a version of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Many economists believe that the index overstates inflation, with surprising results over time. In 2008, the liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities recommended using a different version of the CPI, which would reduce annual increases by about three-tenths of a percentage point. According to one estimate, that change alone would shrink Social Security's long-range funding gap by about 30 percent. Although this is a widely supported option, it is not pain-free. Over those 75 years, it would reduce benefits by roughly 20 percent.

Increase taxes on Social Security benefits. Retirees whose income rises above a certain threshold ($44,000 for married couples) must pay income tax on 85 percent of their Social Security benefits, with the revenues funneled back into Social Security. If all benefits were subject to taxation, regardless of the recipient's income, the proceeds would reduce the 75-year gap between Social Security outlays and revenues by about 28 percent.

The threshold is another indirect way that Social Security is means tested, and thus made more progressive. It is also a disincentive to work for retirees whose paychecks might push them over the threshold. Some analysts recommend eliminating the threshold on grounds of equity, arguing that current beneficiaries should not be exempt from helping alleviate the system's future deficits. And why, they ask, should Social Security income be treated differently from income from traditional pensions, which is already fully taxable? Others, however, argue that taxing benefits discourages work and saving among the elderly, an ever more significant share of the population.

The reform of Social Security presents an unattractive set of options: push the retirement age to what, for many work-

ers, would be an unfairly high level; reduce benefits by adjusting the payment formulas; or increase taxes, either on all or only on higher-income workers, thereby lowering the return on their lifetime payments. No matter which of these options is adopted, it will mean the continuation of a program that shortchanges middle- and higher-income workers while failing to encourage people to save.

Faced with the difficulties of traditional social security systems, many countries have decided that "defined-contribution plans" are a fiscally and politically superior approach to providing for citizens' retirement.

Under these plans, a portion of a worker's pretax earnings is paid into or credited to an account. In some countries, there is a real account in the individual's name; in others the account is "notional," more like a bookkeeping entry. When there is an actual private account, the worker decides how the money is invested and, therefore, bears the investment risk (and upside potential). Workers with notional accounts have no choices about investments or only very limited ones, and the interest rate is set (and guaranteed) by the government. But in both cases, the direct link between payments and subsequent benefits provides a defensible rationale for keeping benefits in check when workers retire rather than bumping them up for political purposes. Another virtue of defined-contribution systems is that they encourage work and saving: The more a person earns, the larger that person's contribution and ultimate payout. At the same time, most countries in the developed world that have such plans complement them with a second retirement benefit, funded by general revenues, to ensure that low-wage workers receive adequate pensions.

Private investment accounts are used in more than two dozen countries, including Australia, Denmark, and Sweden. The individual manages the funds in the account, but regulations often limit choices to some degree in order to reduce risks.

"Privatization" is the mantra of those who want to radically reform Social Security by establishing private investment accounts—and the epithet of their opponents. President Obama has raised the bloody flag of privatization in advance of the 2010 elections, warning that the Republicans are pushing to make such a scheme "a key part of their legislative agenda if they win a majority in Congress this fall." The term conjures up the private investment accounts proposed by President George W. Bush and decisively rejected by the public—in part because they seemed to leave the size of retirement nest eggs to the vagaries of the stock market. And, yes, the returns can be negative. Even in the wake of the brutal downturn in world equity markets in 2008, however, the long-term performance of some funds has been quite good. In Australia, workers had a large share of their money in equities when the global recession began, and their realized losses between 2007 and 2008 were about 26 percent. Yet stretching our perspective to include the 10 years between 1998 and 2008 yields a brighter picture: The median account grew at a seven percent annual rate—a much higher return than most Americans can hope for from Social Security.

Almost overlooked in the political drama surrounding private investment accounts has been the development of defined-contribution plans with predetermined or formulaic—and guaranteed—rates of return. Such "provident funds," found mostly in Asian countries, require workers to deposit a percentage of their wages via payroll deductions into an interest-bearing account in a government-administered institution. Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, and Thailand are some of the places where this strategy is used. In Singapore, for example, workers' contributions are deposited with the nation's sovereign wealth fund, which invests the proceeds in Singapore and abroad. The returns are tied to government bonds, with a guaranteed minimum annual return of 2.5 percent.

Notional accounts are used in Italy, Poland, and Sweden. Workers and employers are taxed at a specified rate and the proceeds credited to a virtual account, with the government setting the rate of return. At retirement, the total is invested in an annuity (which throws off regular payments) that is given to the retiree.

Countries that have existing pay-as-you-go systems, such as the United States, face huge problems in attempting the transition to certain kinds of defined-contribution plans. The Bush proposal, for example, would have required that a portion of each person's Social Security payroll taxes be directed into one of the new accounts, which would have meant that more money would need to be raised to maintain existing Social Security benefits—$754 billion in the first 10 years. A significant advantage of notional plans like those in Australia and Sweden is that the accounts do not need to be funded with tax dollars during the transition.

One key attribute of notional plans is that the promised rate of return can be made affordable by pegging it to a rea-

sonable standard, such as the rate of economic growth. Contrast that with the arrangement in the United States, where political factors can intrude. Last year, for example, President Obama proposed to override Social Security rules in order to give retirees an extra $250 because there had not been enough inflation to trigger an increase. The one-year cost? $13 billion. The Senate narrowly defeated the measure.

As is the case for Social Security, Medicare's looming insolvency is widely recognized among policy experts. But Medicare's day of reckoning will come earlier, and its impact will be much larger. Outlays exceeded income in the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for the first time in 2009, a landmark slightly hastened by the recession. Funds are now being drawn from the trust, which the Medicare trustees estimate will be exhausted by 2029.

Last year, Medicare and Medicaid made up almost 22 percent of the federal budget, about $500 billion and $250 billion, respectively. By 2050, together with the additional costs of the new health care law, they will expand to 48 percent of the budget (excluding interest payments on the national debt). At about $4.8 trillion (in today's dollars), that sum will dwarf that year's projected spending on Social Security by a factor of more than two, even though the retirement program, at $680 billion, is currently much larger.

Not even its strongest proponents claim that the new health care law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, will solve our long-term health care spending problems. Even if all its provisions work as predicted, the CBO estimates that over the next 20 years, it will reduce health care expenditures by "only" $1.1 trillion. That's a truly massive sum, of course, but in 2030, it is expected to amount to only a half-percentage-point reduction in total health care expenditures as a share of GDP, not enough to produce a substantial change in the long-term financial prognosis.

Critics think that even these predicted gains are wishful thinking. As Medicare's chief actuary, Richard Foster, explains, projections based on current law "do not represent the 'best estimate' of actual future Medicare expenditures," in part because some significant cuts called for in the law are unlikely to be implemented. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, former director of the CBO (and now a Republican policy adviser), projects that the new law will *add* about $579 billion to health care spending between 2010 and 2019.

The hard work of cost containment has not even begun. According to President Obama, the new law took into account "every idea out there about how to reduce or at least slow the costs of health care over time." Barring some breathtaking new developments, perhaps in prevention or low-cost technology, future belt tightening will pose even more unattractive choices.

The shortage of ideas is leading many analysts to take another look at European health care systems. The United States leads the world in health care expenditures, both in per capita terms and as a percentage of GDP. Most other developed countries spend about a third less per capita. At the same time, European countries provide medical services that seem to be at least as good as those in the United States, and by some measures better. The studies that find this, however, are the subject of much dispute. The United States has a much more diverse population with higher levels of unhealthy behavior, often provides a wider array of services, and seems to do better at handling various serious medical challenges, including organ transplants and treatment of some cancers.

Many factors help explain why European nations spend less, from lower patient expectations about how much medical care they should get (especially in the last stages of life) to tighter government control over payments to doctors and hospitals. An often-unappreciated reason is the relative wealth of our societies. According to a study by Uwe Reinhardt of Princeton, Peter Hussey of the RAND Corporation, and Gerard Anderson of Johns Hopkins, as much as 60 percent of the difference in spending between the United States and Europe could be a function of Americans' greater societal wealth. Just as wealthier people spend more on their health, so, too, do wealthier countries.

In any event, as Europe has become wealthier, its per capita health care costs have risen faster than incomes. Nevertheless, European medical spending continues to be lower than America's, and the gap between the two is increasing. Health spending in the 33 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development rose from 7.8 percent of GDP in 2000 to 9.0 percent in 2008. In the United States, it rose from 13.6 percent to 16.0 percent.

Lower earnings for physicians. By far the biggest "savings" in the Obama health care law come from a cut in payments to private physicians, hospitals, and health care providers generally. All take a big hit under the new law—and much commentary has focused on whether political pressure

will lead Congress to reverse these reductions. The long-term trend seems clear, though: Taxpayers in the future will not pay providers as much as they do now.

The new law (which in effect continues an earlier rule that Congress has repeatedly suspended in the past) pegs Medicare reimbursement increases for providers to the rate of the nation's GDP growth, even if health care costs rise at a faster rate. This is the oft-delayed 23 percent cut in reimbursement rates scheduled to take effect in December. The new law included a further annual cut in payments to providers, saving some $196 billion over the next 10 years.

Many observers think these reductions are not sustainable and that Congress will continue to override the cuts in the future. The new law seeks to make that more difficult by creating an Independent Payment Advisory Board. Beginning in 2014, IPAB is to propose yet more spending cuts in Medicare if the program's per capita growth rate exceeds a certain threshold. The law also makes it harder for Congress to override the cuts, by mandating a tougher version of the rules that were used to achieve military base closings: Congress must either accept the recommendations *in whole*, or find a comparable set of savings. Otherwise, 60 votes in the Senate will be needed to override the payment rates. The CBO estimates that the actions of the board will result in savings of $15.5 billion between 2015 and 2019, with the savings growing larger each year. But will it work?

Many are dubious. Former CBO director Holtz-Eakin argues that IPAB will confront the government "with the possibility of strongly limited benefits, the inability to serve beneficiaries, or both. As a result, the cuts will be politically infeasible."

The skeptics might be right, but it is easy to envision a world in which physicians earn much less than they do today. (The many doctors now considering early retirement clearly can imagine it.) In 2004, the average American general practitioner earned $146,000 and the average specialist $236,000. Their European counterparts earned much less. The average French general practitioner, for example, was paid $84,000 and the average specialist $144,000. When the choice is between higher taxes on voters or lower payments to providers, politicians tend to become less generous paymasters. That's certainly the way it has worked in Europe.

So, American doctors could be in for a long-term decline in earnings—that is, unless more of them refuse to take patients covered by Medicare and other low-paying insurance plans. According to an American Medical Association survey, nearly a third of all primary care physicians "restrict the number of Medicare patients in their practice." One consequence of these changes could be further increases in the number of foreign-trained doctors and other medical professionals (who are generally paid less than U.S.-trained physicians) working in the United States.

AMERICAN DOCTORS could be in for a decline in earnings.

Tax increases and benefit cuts. More than one-fifth of the projected $1.1 trillion in "savings" from the new law comes from tax increases that take effect in 2013: A nine-tenths of a percentage point increase in the Medicare payroll tax and a 3.8 percent levy on net investment income on top of the existing investment taxes, both limited to couples making more than $250,000 and individuals earning more than $200,000. Beginning in 2018, there will be a new 40 percent tax on so-called Cadillac health insurance policies, defined as those that cost more than $27,500 a year per family.

Many budget hawks have set their sights on the federal government's generous menu of tax subsidies for health care, including the exclusion of employer and employee portions of health insurance premiums from taxable personal income; the tax deductibility of corporate spending on health insurance; money deposited in tax-advantaged health savings plans and similar accounts; the value of benefits people receive from Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Programs; and the income tax deduction for itemized health care expenses. (The congressional Joint Economic Committee estimates that these tax subsidies together accounted for about $185 billion in lost revenue in 2007. To understand the stakes involved, compare that to the $250 billion cost of the Bush tax cuts in that year.)

The new law also trimmed reimbursement payments

to Medicare Advantage programs by some $135 billion over 10 years. These programs offer seniors a bigger menu of benefits (which can include vision and dental coverage, and assistance with Medicare cost-sharing) and analysts predict the cuts will lead to fewer benefits, higher fees, and lower enrollment.

Further cuts in benefits seem inevitable. The crude word for such decisions is rationing. Until the passage of the new law, care in the United States was rationed chiefly through limits on insurance coverage (such as annual and lifetime limits on the payments insurers would make) and on the assistance provided to people who lacked private insurance and Medicaid coverage. But this will change. The only question is how that rationing will be targeted.

Other affluent countries ration health care in various ways. The most obvious technique is to exclude a service or treatment from the basic government-provided health care package. In some cases, a whole sector of care is excluded (for example, vision and dental care in Switzerland), while in others particular services are. A number of countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Britain, have boards or committees that review particular services and determine if they will be included in the basic health care package. In Germany and Switzerland, the primary criterion is effectiveness, but in Britain cost is also taken into consideration. The London-based National Institute for Clinical Effectiveness (NICE), established under Tony Blair's government, uses a cutoff price of about $53,000 per additional year of healthy life in assessing whether particular drugs and treatments are to be covered.

A second form of rationing is through global budgets. In Britain, the National Health Service provides portions of the health budget to 152 regional primary care trusts that manage how, when, and where patients are treated, depending on the available budget. This often results in long waiting lists for non-emergency care, a common feature of universal systems.

A third form of rationing restricts the number of advanced medical devices that are available. Canada, for example, has relatively few CT scanners and MRI machines relative to its population. With only 6.7 MRI machines per 1,000,000 people (as compared with 25.9 in the United States), Canada in recent years has seen waiting times for scans as long as three months.

A final form of rationing involves limiting payment for expensive treatments for patients near the end of life. Uwe Reinhardt and his colleagues write that most countries implicitly set an upper limit on how much they will pay to extend a patient's life through price controls or by limiting capacity to supply certain services.

Without getting into the highly charged rhetoric of "death panels," it seems that the groundwork for the kinds of determinations such panels would make has been established in the new U.S. law in the form of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The institute is to fund "comparative effectiveness research" on drugs and medical procedures. For now, the institute is explicitly prohibited from using such research to implement cost-based rationing, which may explain why this method is estimated to save only $300 million over 10 years. But that prohibition may not last forever. Especially given the fact that the new law removes limits on annual and lifetime benefits, some other means of constraining costs seems inevitable. There won't be "death panels," but many treatments could be deemed insufficiently "effective" to be used, even if no other treatment exists.

The biggest visible change under the new law is the establishment of American Health Benefit Exchanges, which states must create by 2014. The exchanges are to help individuals and small businesses obtain health insurance. Individuals with incomes up to 400 percent of the poverty level will qualify for tax subsidies to help pay premiums when they buy coverage through an exchange.

The exchanges are supposed to create a large and diverse risk pool, while also reducing administrative and marketing costs. The insurance plans will be heavily regulated, with standardized benefits, limits on copayments and deductibles, community-rated premiums, and prohibitions on using risk to adjust premiums or determine eligibility—which will make them much more like standardized commodities than is usual today. Standardization is designed to counter adverse selection, in which higher-cost enrollees flock to plans with attractive features.

In order to lower costs, the law requires participating insurance companies to cap their administrative expenses *and* profits at less than 20 percent of premiums. Many firms, especially small ones, are expected to have difficulty keeping overhead costs that low, one of several factors that will probably push a number of them out of the market. In most states, that will mean consumers will have fewer and larger insurance companies to choose from than today.

These large insurance firms will probably enjoy a modest but steady income, but they will have even less incentive to innovate and compete than they do today.

The primary purpose of the exchanges, however, is not to push down overall costs but to provide a mechanism for implementing universal coverage. In the absence of major legislative changes, they are unlikely to exert strong downward pressure on spending, a conclusion even optimistic projections suggest. Estimates of the savings vary widely. The CBO projects that the savings over 10 years will be only about $27 billion.

In reality, no one knows how the exchanges will actually operate and whether they will succeed. And they remain a work in progress. Both Democrats and Republicans would like to make changes to the law. And much will depend on the regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services—and the responses of the uninsured, employers, and private insurance companies, as well as the states, which will operate them.

Based on the European experience, an equally if not more important question is how, or even whether, private health insurance purchased by people with incomes too high to participate in the exchanges will be regulated. The same question applies to the private market for supplemental insurance that could exist outside the exchanges (much as private Medigap insurance arose to supplement Medicare coverage). The many European countries that have basic universal coverage and are thus freed of the need to worry about protecting the interests of low- and moderate-income beneficiaries have allowed private-sector insurance companies relatively wide discretion in the services they offer and the prices they charge. Many analysts think this has had a positive impact on the varieties, quality, and costs of care. The new U.S. law seems to foreclose such unfettered competition, but that could change.

A common misconception is that Europe is home to socialized medicine, probably because it has long provided universal health care. But with a few notable exceptions, such as Britain's National Health Service, most European systems require consumers to pay more money out of pocket for medical care than Americans do. According to Jacob F. Kirkegaard of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, "In reality, America's health care system is already more 'socialized' than in most European and other developed countries."

Although U.S. employer-provided health insurance plans increasingly require beneficiaries to bear more costs themselves—through paying deductibles, coinsurance, and direct payments to medical professionals—such cost sharing is still much more common in Europe. In 2006, out-of-pocket payments made up about 12 percent of total U.S. health care expenditures. The average in Europe was about 17 percent, with a low of six percent in the Netherlands and a high of about 31 percent in Switzerland.

AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE system is already more "socialized" than most of those in Europe.

In many European countries, patients often make direct payments to physicians—to purchase treatment that is excluded from coverage, to move up in the queue, or to get better service. In France, individuals directly pay between 10 and 40 percent of their own costs, with different rates for drugs, lab work, and other services. Such cost-sharing requirements are means tested. In France, low-income consumers are eligible for free government-provided supplemental insurance that pays for any cost sharing, and in Switzerland, households receive an income-based subsidy.

Cost sharing serves two separate purposes: It keeps public costs down, and it discourages unnecessary care. If recipients are required to pay for a particular service or procedure, they will have a direct incentive to limit its use. In the United States, however, fear that some will not get needed medical care because of its cost (along with pressure from labor unions and interest groups such as AARP) has restricted cost sharing.

In light of the success of cost sharing in Europe and the pressures in the U.S. market, it seems fair to expect that American consumers will also be required to pay more out-

of-pocket expenses. Already, Medicare has significant cost-sharing provisions. In 2006, Medicare beneficiaries paid for about 25 percent of the care they received, through Medigap insurance or direct payments such as deductibles. (As in Europe, low-income patients are protected; Medicaid covers the costs for eligible seniors.)

The new health care law is actually expected to reduce overall cost sharing in American health care by about $237 billion between 2010 and 2019, according to the chief actuary of Medicare, Richard Foster. The reasons: the expansion of coverage for the uninsured, subsidies for insurance premiums and cost sharing, and limitations on cost sharing in the exchanges. Relieving consumers of the sense that they are helping to pay for their own health services runs counter to developing practice for private insurance in the United States, as well as long-standing European practices. Over time, we should expect higher levels of cost sharing, especially for more affluent consumers.

These developments—cuts in payments to providers, the creation of commodity-like plans for the new insurance exchanges, and the rationing of services in taxpayer-supported insurance plans—could accelerate the development of a two-tiered U.S. health care system. One tier would offer a pared-down version of today's benefits for low- and middle-income citizens (much as in Europe), the other a better-cushioned system for the more affluent who are able to spend their own money to buy additional services.

The unfunded promises of the modern social welfare state mean that we (and our children) are not nearly as rich as we thought we were just a few years ago. Unaddressed, this burden threatens to create a prolonged period of economic stagnation, if not worse, with a palpable reduction in living standards. Sooner or later, government borrowing on the scale that is now required will raise the cost of public and private borrowing, thus reducing the productivity of American industry by starving it of capital investment and making U.S. companies less competitive in the global marketplace.

In the past, the United States did reasonably well by muddling through crises. But this time, temporizing may not serve us as satisfactorily. The needed medicine is bitter. Tax increases in the trillions of dollars appear necessary, and they probably won't be politically possible unless accompanied by similarly large—and permanent—cuts in government-provided retirement and health benefits. So, despite the political rhetoric on both sides and the emergence of a Tea Party movement that instills the fear of higher taxes in Washington, we are still betting on the politicians to cut a deal. Call it a "grand social welfare compromise."

The immediate concern must be to find a way to close the long-term budget gap; but how it is closed is just as important. The understandable temptation will be to tinker—to raise a tax here and there, and to trim benefits in one way or another, in the hope that a series of small changes will solve our long-term budget problems. That may be the most appealing course politically, but it is not likely to work, and it certainly will not maximize domestic productivity and international competitiveness. The key will be to raise taxes and trim benefits in a way that minimizes disruption and hardship while creating incentives for saving and investment. This will take analytic smarts and political savvy.

Countries around the world are grappling with many of the same issues that bedevil the United States, and while no one has found a silver-bullet solution to the insolvency of the social welfare state, a pattern does emerge—and it is not a testament to the wonders of socialism.

First, even in nations that pride themselves on providing "universal" social welfare benefits, the middle class has been excluded from entire categories of benefits for reasons of economy. And, whether it knows it or not, the middle class in these countries pays for the benefits it does receive through an array of direct and indirect taxes. Our political system does not seem ready to accept the mathematical reality that benefits must be paid for or dropped.

Second, even some of the most fervently committed advocates on the left seem to appreciate the importance of competitive forces and market pricing in the provision of social welfare benefits. While they continue to provide a safety net for the poor and other low-income groups, most countries are moving, however hesitantly, to shift the middle class to market-based government pension and health care systems. For now, the United States seems to be going in the opposite direction.

It took decades for shortsighted and self-serving policies to get us into this mess, and in the end politics will decide whether there is a grand compromise, and what it will contain. Let's hope our politicians—and the electorate—appreciate what is at stake in getting it right. ■

What if China Fails?

Americans are feeling anxious and a bit ornery about the rise of China. Does that mean they should hope the Asian giant stumbles and falls?

Ross Terrill: Certain setbacks should be welcomed ..... p. 52

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WHAT IF CHINA FAILS?

The Case for Selective Failure

BY ROSS TERRILL

Seven decades ago President Chiang Kai-shek wrote in a preface to his wife's book *China Shall Rise Again*, "For the rebirth of a people certain factors are necessary. Of these one is that the people should go through a period of trials and tribulations." China had already endured a century of turmoil when Chiang wrote those words in 1941, but more was to come. In contemplating China's future, we should remember that its modern past includes numerous failures. The Chinese themselves certainly don't forget. For decades before the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, China was beset by foreign encroachment and farmers' uprisings, and, after the establishment of the Chinese republic, it experienced the depredations of regional warlords, an invasion by Japan, civil war, the collapse of Chiang's regime in the late 1940s, and Mao Zedong's quarter-century of uneven rule (1949–76).

Initially, Mao cast his lot with the Soviet bloc, but the "everlasting" Sino-Soviet friendship evaporated within two decades. This was a failure. Emerging from Moscow's embrace in the mid-1960s, Mao announced a "rebirth." A Cultural Revolution denounced both imperialists (the United States) and back-sliding socialists (the Soviet Union) and promised the coming of Chinese-style revolution worldwide. But the global "countryside" (the Third World) did not "surround" the global "cities" (the developed countries) as Mao had expected, and the Cultural Revolution flopped. Another failure. And another great relief for the West, as China sobered up after Maoism.

Beginning in 1978, Deng Xiaoping used the failure of Maoism as a springboard for replacing class struggle with economic development as China's top priority. Some in the West exaggerated the degree to which China was becoming capitalist, "just like us," and amenable to international arrangements made in its absence. We received a warning at Tiananmen Square in 1989 that Deng's politics were still Leninist, like Mao's. But soon the American hope in China kicked back into gear. It always does.

It may be that China will again face disappointment. Its economic resurgence could be just one link in a "growth chain that began with Japan," as Jonathan Anderson, the head of Asia Pacific Economics at the Swiss bank UBS, wrote a few years ago. That chain then lifted the Asian tigers, and now embraces China—but tomorrow may pass to the Indian subcontinent. Yet China's latest rebirth looks to be the most solidly grounded in its modern history. The question is where the new course steered by Deng, Jiang Zemin, and now Hu Jintao leads: Is China moving only to rescue itself from Maoism, or is it aiming also to wrench world leadership from the United States? Since Deng's death in 1997, its direction has been ambiguous.

Some observers, believing that Beijing's new course has already triumphed, urge American accommoda-

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What will tomorrow bring? Passersby appear to like what they see in a Shanghai architect's rendering of the city's future.

tion to China's coming dominance. Journalist Martin Jacques titled his recent book *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. Columnist Fareed Zakaria detects a "post-American world." President Barack Obama himself favors a change from the United States as sole superpower to one among equals.

"If China can succeed in the next few years," former Clinton administration national security adviser Sandy Berger wrote in 2007, attacking President George W. Bush's "tough posturing" toward Beijing, "it will transform that country, Asia, and the world in ways that serve our long-term interests." Along the same lines, respected China specialists such as Kenneth Lieberthal and David M. Lampton, who are sanguine about President Hu's authoritarian China as the new centerpiece of Asia, make two assertions: that China's present course will continue, and that it is better for the West if China flourishes. But China could stumble. And why not be relieved if, in certain endeavors, it does?

China's success or failure over the next 20 to 30 years will be revealed in four areas:

(1) The drive to achieve an ever higher standard of living for a populace still mostly poor, ranked 124th among nations in gross domestic product per capita by the World Bank.

(2) The preservation of the unity of the enormous, multinational territory of the People's Republic (almost double the size of the territory ruled by the Ming dynasty of 1368–1644 and far bigger than the China of the earlier Han and Tang dynasties).

(3) The ability of the Communist Party of China (CCP) to maintain its monopoly on political power.

(4) The effort to eclipse the United States in Asia and beyond.

In the first two of these areas, success is quite likely; in the last two, less likely.

What are the possible triggers of a setback that would affect China's performance in one or more of these areas? Most likely is a lengthy economic slowdown resulting from exhaustion of the Deng-Jiang-Hu model of development (cheap labor, high exports, piggy-backing on Western technology). Not only would China's confidence in its role on the world stage deflate, but the position of the CCP could be threatened. An economic slowdown of some sort is close to certain for China. It would not necessarily harm U.S. interests. Why welcome a China that leaves our ally Japan in the dust, a China rich enough to buy and sell its small neighbors, a China quarreling endlessly with the United States and the European Union over trade issues? Important political constituencies within the United States—labor on the left, business on the right—might be relieved to see China's annual growth rate cut in half, to four or five percent.

WHY WELCOME A CHINA that leaves our ally Japan in the dust and quarrels endlessly over trade issues?

A second trigger could be social protest from below. Labor turmoil in Guangdong and other coastal provinces will probably grow as migrant workers seek wages more in line with their actual productivity. In the countryside, where 600 million Chinese still toil on farms, many people are angered by rigged village elections, arbitrary taxes and fees, and land grabs by local authorities seeking to make a quick yuan through development projects. Protests already erupt in both the cities and rural areas, but they are spontaneous and uncoordinated. If widespread city-village networking occurred, facilitated by the Internet and cell phones, China would be in trouble, the more so should the economy stall and the party be split over what course of action to follow. National social protest interacting with one of these other threats is quite possible, but it could be forestalled by clever Beijing policies.

The third trigger for a setback could be the eruption of major trouble in the large western half of the People's Republic, which was historically not Chinese but inhabited by Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Mongols, Tibetans, and others. Especially problematic would be anti-government turmoil in the far western "autonomous" region of Xinjiang simultaneously with a pro-democracy surge in Hong Kong or, worse, a renewed independence push in Taiwan. Historically, China has feared facing Inner Asian and maritime challenges at the same time. The words of exiled Xinjiang leader Abdulhekim of the East Turkestan Center in Istanbul a few years ago must have sent a chill down Beijing spines: "If China attacks Taiwan at four o'clock in the morning," he said, "we will have an uprising at three."

But while Xinjiang is a tense place, resentful of Han (Chinese) rule, fracture of the semiempire is unlikely. Beijing has the capacity and the experience—if the CCP doesn't split over how to respond—to limit its damage to a few years and a bloody nose. In the process, however, Beijing would lose momentum in its current activist foreign policy—to the benefit of the United States.

A few countries might privately welcome China's social disruption or partial fragmentation. Historically, major neighbors Japan and Russia have taken advantage of turmoil or disunity in China; the United States is less well-placed to do so even if it wished. Chinese weakness has at different times enhanced the influence of Japan (from the 1890s to 1940s) and the Soviet Union (1920s to 1960s), on both occasions at high cost to the United States. Chaos would bring both loss and gain to America's friends in Asia. A trade slump and an influx of refugees from China would be a loss to much of Southeast Asia. But Chinese arro-

President Hu Jintao reviews an army unit in 2009. Assertive rumblings sometimes issue from Beijing, but its military lacks crucial capabilities.

gance toward smaller immediate neighbors—Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, among others—would be punctured. In the event of severe disruption, Washington would worry about the Chinese nuclear arsenal, of whose nature and whereabouts U.S. intelligence has incomplete knowledge.

A final trigger could be military conflict on one of the five flanks that China has to reckon with, more than any other great power: Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, and, to the north and west, Russia and Kazakhstan. But a major conflict seems very unlikely in the 30-year span that I take as manageable for looking ahead. Russia and Japan have every reason to avoid war with China. And Beijing has good reason to avoid war with the United States over Taiwan. With President Ma Ying-jeou in office in Taipei and President Obama in Washington, the Chinese seem well placed to prepare the goose of Taiwan for the oven of unification simply by continuing their recent successful steps toward economic integration and freer travel across the Taiwan Strait.

But conflict abroad arising from tensions at home—economic slowdown, coordinated social protest, or party struggle—is another question. In Taipei, leaders have long been aware of the danger of some faction on the mainland stirring up the Taiwan issue to exploit, or divert attention from, domestic woes. Not out of the question is armed conflict arising from any one of a number of sources of tension, such as territorial disputes among several nations over the tiny, oil-rich Spratly and Paracel island groups in the South China Sea (on which President Obama is taking a belated stand by rejecting China's attempts to avoid multilateral negotiations). Grievances expressed in the Chinese

province of Inner Mongolia that prompt the adjoining independent Republic of Mongolia to make criticisms of China—rejected by Beijing as "interference"—are another danger. It is also possible that an uprising in Xinjiang would entangle one or more of the nearby Central Asian states toward which Moscow feels a paternal interest, or that turmoil in restive Tibet would push India to the boiling point over border issues.

War always has unintended consequences, but, to be hard-nosed about the matter, U.S. interests are unlikely to suffer if China gets into a conflict with Russia or even Japan. War in the Taiwan Strait, however, though increasingly unlikely, would be appalling for the United States and Japan, hardly less than for China. Similarly, military conflict in the South China Sea would be unwelcome.

IT MAY BE GOOD for the West that China continue its economic progress, but not if it remains authoritarian.

The United States should be neutral toward China's economic and territorial evolution. It is probably good for the West that Beijing continue its economic progress, though not if it remains authoritarian decade after decade. To a degree, it is also in the West's interest for China to avoid a return to its past disunity. That said, China is as likely to lose territory as it is to become larger by adding Taiwan and other "lost territories," and the West should prefer the former to the latter. "One Mongolia," for example, uniting China's Inner Mongolia region with independent Mongolia, while unlikely, would not be against U.S. interests, nor would Xinjiang becoming a separate country or part of an existing Turkic country to its west.

If the prospects for continuing Chinese economic growth and unity are reasonably bright, China's prospects with respect to the two other gauges of success or failure are not. The CCP will be hard pressed to retain its monopoly on political power for another 30 years, and Beijing is certain to fail in edging aside the United States. Moreover, in these two areas U.S. interests favor Chinese failure.

A few years ago, the Party School of the Central Committee in Beijing asked me to compare the country's recent reforms with those of the late Qing dynasty in the 1880s. The issue on my hosts' minds was intriguing: When does reform steady a system, and when does it undermine it? The Qing failed to change, belatedly tried to reform, and quickly crumbled. Meiji Japan reformed itself at roughly the same time, and to this day Japan retains its monarchy. My young Party School interlocutors were quite aware that contradictions between the nature of China's political system and the post-Mao reforms could resemble the late Qing contradictions. They candidly compared the loss of faith in the Confucian worldview in the late 19th century with the loss of faith in Marxism in China after Mao died.

At Harvard and the Council on Foreign Relations, and in prominent U.S. and European newspaper columns, awe at China sweeps aside doubts that are vivid to the young CCP elite. Historian Niall Ferguson walked "along the Bund in Shanghai" and suddenly realized "that we are living through the end of 500 years of Western ascendancy." Journalist Orville Schell felt "an unmistakable sense of energy and optimism in the air" while in China, "bittersweet for an American pondering why the regenerative powers of his own country have gone missing."

Such premature declarations of China's success seem to have influenced public opinion. A recent *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll found that more Americans expect China to be the world's leading nation 20 years from now than expect the United States to be. Columnist Nicholas Kristof, a fan of the Chinese education system, told his *New York Times* readers, "One reason China is likely to overtake the United States as the world's most important country in this century is that China puts more effort into

building human capital than we do." He may be right about the larger contest—a century's a long time—but, while waiting, one marvels at why millions of Chinese and other young people around the world are foolish enough to seek student visas to study on American campuses.

"Chinese people are educated to be the same," complained a savvy Shanghai fashion designer to *The Washington Post*, adding "that's a problem." It is, and as long as that trait persists, and the oxygen of intellectual freedom lacks, Chinese higher education will not match ours. Maybe it's no accident that no Chinese has won a Nobel Prize without first leaving China.

The theoretical problem for China's authoritarian state is that the rationale for paternalistic communist rule is disappearing. One rationale for Leninist rule was to allocate resources; the market increasingly does this in China. A second was to be the guardian of truth; yet official doctrine can be disregarded by most Chinese much of the time. Young Chinese yawn when a party congress rolls around. The practical problem is that the muscle power of China's economy and civil society grows by the month, seemingly at the expense of the party. A showdown could give China a more just and sustainable political system. Or it could lead to chaos.

The CCP's monopoly on power might end in various ways. The CCP could drop "Communist" from its name and become the China Party or the China National Party. Such a result would fulfill the hope of Hu Jintao for a "harmonious society," just as Nikita Khrushchev hoped for "a state of the whole people," signaling an end to class struggle in the Soviet Union.

Last year, anti-Chinese riots by Muslims in Xinjiang left a woman in anguish and scores dead. It was China's worst ethnic violence in decades.

In this clever transition—which eluded Khrushchev—some kind of one-party state might continue for some time, with freedom and democracy perhaps advancing a little. But Hu's "harmonious society," like any consensus crafted from above, offers less long-term stability than a society in which interests clash openly in an atmosphere of free competition of ideas.

Alternatively, the CCP could split over a crisis, with non-Leninists winning out and forming a social-democratic party that takes power in Beijing. This would be a major victory for freedom and democracy. Other possibilities, such as a military takeover, are less likely.

A freer China is not guaranteed after the end of the CCP's monopoly on power, but such a China would undoubtedly be in the interest of the United States. There would come better access to China for U.S. products, genuine cultural exchanges, as well as reduced tensions over human rights, the Internet, and many other issues. Washington folk complain at times about the political ways of Japan, Germany, and South Korea, but in these democracies elections function as a safety valve that makes for ultimate stability. China does not have such a safety valve, and as long as the CCP remains in power, it will not. The failure of the CCP, if it led to a freer China, should please Americans.

Finally, there is the question of China's geopolitical ambitions. Are the Chinese "catching up" or positioning themselves to be the "indispensable power" in Asia? Some Western observers see Beijing well on the way to joining the "international community." Others see China seeking a return to its past imperial primacy in Asia, when Korea, Vietnam, and even Japan paid tribute to the Chinese court. We can see hints of Beijing's long-range strategy before our eyes.

China urges an "East Asian community" that would exclude the United States. It quickly befriends any country in Asia, Africa, or Latin America whose poor relations with Washington give Beijing an opportunity to aid and trade, especially countries whose oil fuels the U.S. economy. China has devel-

oped ballistic and cruise missile forces and diesel and nuclear submarines aimed at canceling the U.S. military presence in the East and South China seas, the Taiwan Strait area in particular. It denies Washington even observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which links Beijing and Moscow to the Central Asian countries in a mutual security pact. The Chinese navy has announced a "far sea defense" strategy to justify activity in the Middle East and across the Pacific, a departure from China's longstanding strategy of devoting itself to coastal defense. These are formidable steps.

Yet so far Beijing has often acted with prudence. It knows that China's prospects of success or failure depend heavily on whether the United States is determined to stay number one; a provoked America would be as tough to challenge as a supreme America. Beijing will go beyond "catching up" if and when it is able to do so. Call it Hegemony by Available Opportunity.

For decades Beijing has been keenly focused on U.S. power, checking how far China is behind the United States, assessing what it would take to catch up, and recruiting other powers to help it resist the United States. The 1991 Persian Gulf War, for example, led the Chinese military to reappraise American power upward and postpone hegemonic hopes. The Chinese Communists are very conscious of this putative contest with the United States, though Americans (beyond the Pentagon) are not. Chinese look out their windows and see one great mountain, the United States, plus several big hills (Japan, the EU, Russia). Most Americans look out their windows and see multiple hills, one of which is China.

"Decline is a choice," the columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote, and some hand-wringing American intellectuals have chosen it with regrettable haste. They are agitated at American assertiveness abroad, yet they nonchalantly report that China is taking over the world. They ignore the likelihood that by being a shrinking violet, the United States would simply hand the future to China. Others on the left, happily not dominant in the Obama administration, embrace decline because they don't believe the United States is morally fit to be the world's sole superpower.

Some declinists nudge world leadership on a bemused China. Asked by *The New York Times* about China's rise, a Chinese assistant foreign minister replied, "If you say we are a big power, then we are." Declinists of all stripes are united in failing to grap-

BY BEING A SHRINKING violet, the United States would simply hand the future to China.

ple with the simple fact that a Pax Sinica designed to replace Pax Americana would not work. America's world leadership derives not only from its economic weight—which remains vastly greater than China's—but from additional strengths that China lacks.

Most obviously, despite Beijing's ambitious military buildup, the People's Liberation Army doesn't have the ability to project power far from home. China also lacks a magnetic message for the world that could replace the American brew of democracy, free markets, pop culture, a near universal language, and innovation. Beijing's model of authoritarian-led prosperity may prove useful for minor Third World countries, but Chinese nationalism is empty of answers for most of the non-Chinese world. Similarly, Chinese culture remains impermeable, clumsy in give-and-take with other cultures. Extraordinary numbers of Chinese workers and engineers now work at sites in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, but they live largely in isolation from their host societies. Last year, on the 60th birthday of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao said, "Today a socialist China is standing toweringly in the Eastern world." Yet, especially in East Asia, Chinese dominion would be a very hard sell.

A tacit East Asia security system exists, and only

its unusual character has prevented full recognition of its achievements. It consists of the United States as a hub with spokes out to Japan, South Korea, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, and other countries. Its unstated function is to hold Japan and China in balance.

Since the 1970s, Washington has had businesslike or better dealings with both Tokyo and Beijing, and these two have had fruitful intercourse with each other. This is no mean achievement. It would be canceled by a China that "succeeded" in the sense of eclipsing the United States and keeping it out of security arrangements for East Asia. All benefits of the tacit balance in the region would be at risk. Japan-China tensions would sharpen overnight. Japan might spread its wings, to the dismay of some Asians. Voices in Australia would say that China must replace the United States as the regional gatekeeper. Small countries close to China would simply throw in the towel.

The desirable policy to keep the current balance in East Asia and peacefully stave off a Pax Sinica is twofold. First, burnish America's East Asia alliances so that Beijing has no illusions about the strength and loyalties of Japan, South Korea, and Australia, nor about the sentiments of other U.S. friends, including India, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. Since money and trade talk, too, the pending free-trade agreement with South Korea is urgent, and Obama should not shackle American multinationals in Asia with the new taxes he is seeking. Second, speak up for freedom and democracy and do not hesitate to assert them as American values. These two policies would keep pressure on Beijing not to reach for hegemony.

Unfortunately, President Obama has lapsed from this twofold policy. He declines to distinguish democracies from authoritarian governments; all have an equal chair at Obama's table. Last November he welcomed "the rise of a strong, prosperous China" as a "source of strength for the community of nations." Unlike his predecessor, George W. Bush, he did not say a "free" or "democratic" China. But there is a world of difference between China as an unfree superpower and China as a democratic superpower. Obama ducked the issue. Ironically, so far he has won less cooperation from Beijing than did the "cowboy" Bush.

Historically, Americans have been slow to meet a foreign challenge but relentless once uncoiled. Ask those Japanese who remember the 1940s. Ask the British (who thought us slow in 1940) or the Germans (who subsequently experienced American might). For many years—since Tiananmen Square, actually—Gallup polls have found most Americans to have a "very unfavorable" or "mostly unfavorable" view of China. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs has found Americans increasingly negative toward China with each survey since 2004.

There are wise heads in Beijing who understand the latent power of American nationalism and other dangers facing a Chinese rush to the top. They urge their leaders to stick with Deng's maxim of "hide our strength and bide our time." These cautious folk in well-connected think tanks and even government ministries do not believe the public mantra that the United States is "holding China back." Rather, they see clearly that the United States is a force fueling China's rebirth—by buying Chinese exports and supplying technology for Chinese industry, among many other ways.

The undulation of national success and failure in the 20th century was spectacular—Russia, Germany, and Japan all rose and fell—and is unlikely to be replicated soon. With globalization, failure for a major nation can hardly be total because many countries would see it in their interest to forestall that outcome. But, also because of globalization, a new world hegemon is hardly possible in the dramatic, "fill the vacuum" sense of the United States' post-1945 ascendancy.

I hope for a measured rise of China that balances economic growth with political freedom; that takes pains to achieve give-and-take between China's singular culture and other Asian and world cultures; that appreciates the 21st-century world as an interlocked whole with little virgin space for a new hegemon to plant the flag; that restrains its militant generals in the People's Liberation Army and rejects hyper-nationalism; and that is cautious about its apparent looming triumph because the United States is more resilient than believed by eager Chinese nationalists and the United States' own pessimists. ■

WHAT IF CHINA FAILS?

We'd Better Hope It Doesn't!

BY DAVID M. LAMPTON

Americans are anxious about the rapid rise of China, and they may be forgiven for idly wishing that the Asian giant would trip and suffer a nasty fall. Many blame China for America's economic distress and see it as a growing challenge to U.S. power, not only in Asia but in other corners of the world, including our Latin American "backyard." That "giant sucking sound" that Ross Perot once predicted we would hear as U.S. manufacturing jobs disappeared to Mexico can now be heard loud and clear, but far to the east.

Among specialists who watch China closely, there is a very different sort of anxiety. Their nervousness grows from the realization that the kind of Chinese failure that occurs in some Americans' daydreams would create enormous problems for the rest of the world. So mighty has China become that such a fall seems almost unthinkable, but Wall Street seers nevertheless nervously watch the Chinese markets, alert for any sign of a bubble or imminent collapse, while economists attuned to larger movements search for fatal economic imbalances and policy shifts. Intelligence specialists scan for rumblings of instability among the country's tens of millions of hard-pressed (often migratory) industrial workers; they also keep an eye out for outbursts among the Muslims of Xinjiang, the nearly three million Tibetans whose "autonomous region" encompasses about an eighth of China's enormous territory, and other groups that chafe under Beijing's rule. In fact, while setbacks and mistakes are the lot of every nation, the likelihood of large-scale failure in China is extremely low, and a closer look at various failure scenarios shows that we should be grateful for that. Almost any such reversal would be profoundly contrary to American and global interests.

The speed of China's emergence as a great power has been unsettling, but the country has become a positive and virtually indispensable element in the global economy, woven into a web of interdependent relationships that connect it to many nations, including the United States. In a single issue of *The Wall Street Journal* I chose at random (August 11, 2010), there were 11 articles that dealt in some way with China's significance to the global economy. Several were related to the just-announced decline in the growth rate of Chinese imports in July, which produced a dramatic jump in China's trade surplus and a host of ripple effects: new fuel for protectionist sentiment in the U.S. Congress; increasing demands for Beijing to let the yuan appreciate against the dollar; the worrisome depreciation of the U.S. dollar against other currencies; and a sizable drop on stock exchanges in China and around the world. The stories underscored the fact that China was the world's growth engine during the recession and that now even that engine seemed to be sputtering, unsettling global markets. (The United States has found Chinese markets important: In 2009, U.S. exports to China decreased by less than a single percentage point, while exports to the rest of the world shrank by about 20 percent.) Strikingly, alarms were sounding not because China was importing less than before but because its imports had grown "only" 22.7 per-

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cent from a year earlier. Imagine the shock if China's imports were to decline in absolute terms.

Other *Journal* articles that day dealt with the China trade's implications for individual U.S. companies. The stock of aluminum producer Alcoa fell on fears of reduced Chinese purchases, while General Motors expected to report its biggest profit in six years, fueled in part by fast growth in China. The newspaper reported that this success was energizing efforts by GM's executives to reduce the U.S. government's ownership share of the company.

SOME MAY HOPE that a setback at home will rein in Beijing's ambitions abroad, but the opposite result is more likely.

The Wall Street Journal's reports hardly exhausted the ways in which China has become essential to the U.S. and global economies. For better or worse, China by a wide margin is the number one foreign bankroller of the U.S. government, with a growing pile of U.S. Treasury securities ($868 billion as of mid-2010) that dwarfs the holdings of all the oil-exporting countries combined. Chinese foreign direct investment in the United States is still small but growing, and includes employment-generating investments in South Carolina, Minnesota, and other states—a Chinese automaker even considered building the revived MG line of automobiles in Oklahoma a few years back. Chinese investment is now a significant force in the economies of Canada, Australia, Southeast Asia, and some parts of Europe, Latin America, and Africa. Estimates of future global expansion by the World Bank and other institutions rely heavily on expectations of continued Chinese growth.

The damage wrought by a sharp Chinese downturn likely would not be limited to the economic realm. Some may hope that a major setback at home will rein in Beijing's ambitions abroad. But the opposite result is more likely. Under Chairman Mao Zedong's rule, from 1949 to 1976, China's share of global economic output was very low and hardly changed at all—Mao's China was abysmally poor. During those years, China was in conflict with almost everyone in its neighborhood—India, the Soviet Union, Taiwan, and several Southeast Asian countries—as well as the United States, and Beijing supported insurgencies in Africa and Latin America. Mao used external conflict to foster unity at home in the face of hardship and whip up support for his policies and power. As Beijing's domestic agenda became focused on economic growth and ever higher levels of well-being in the wake of Mao's long reign, Beijing's foreign policies moderated considerably, with China becoming a good citizen of major international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Wealth and stability do not assure a benign foreign policy, but economic success at home and integration into the world economy have created the conditions that make responsible behavior more likely. A poor or floundering China is unlikely to be a cooperative China.

There are at least three paths that could lead to failure for China, and if one scenario began to unfold, it probably would cascade into the others. While all three are unlikely, none are beyond imagining.

The first path would be economic disaster, triggered by a protracted period of inflation, deflation, or agricultural crisis; dramatic constriction of the international economic system or China's access to it; or the growth and collapse of bubbles in the stock and property markets.

A second path, one that would almost immediately produce spillover into the economy, would be a breakdown of the political system precipitated by a dissatisfied citizenry, a fractured Communist Party elite, or both. While ethnic tensions receive the headlines, they are not a major threat to regime survival because China's ethnic minorities are relatively small and widely dispersed—Beijing can handle them, albeit at substantial cost. Rather, the principal dangers to the regime stem from the possibility that a rising middle class will demand more rights, participation, and control over its destiny and interests. Particularly dangerous would be a fracture of the party elite during a domestic crisis, with different top leaders allying with con-

Millions of cargo containers pass through Shenzhen each year, making this Hong Kong neighbor one of the world's busiest ports. While China's exports get all the attention, its imports last year topped $900 billion, including some $14 billion in U.S.-made semiconductors, aircraft, and plastics.

tending social forces—there are already some signs of elite division, not least over the pace of political reform.

A third path to failure could unfold if China ran up against ecological limits faster than technology could be found to ameliorate them—a risk that the behavior of the current leadership suggests could easily receive insufficient attention until problems reached near-intolerable levels. A significant percentage of what the Chinese government categorizes as "mass incidents" (i.e., public disturbances) have their origin in the ecological impacts of poorly regulated industries: polluted drinking water, chemical contamination, and "cancer villages" in the countryside caused by unregulated industrial and mining effluents. Children in Shenyang, Shanghai, and other cities, the World Bank reported as early as 1997, "have blood-lead levels averaging 80 percent higher than levels considered dangerous to mental development."

A related risk arises from the possibility of a significant infrastructure breakdown. Imagine if today's relatively urbanized and open China experienced a major dam collapse like the one that occurred in August 1975, when the Banqiao Dam in Henan Province (and many other dams) gave way in a typhoon, in part because of poor construction. Between 85,000 and 230,000 Chinese perished, and, according to the Chinese journalist and dissident Dai Qing, "two million people were trapped for weeks in trees and floating wreckage. Some 11 million were stricken by disease, food poisoning, and famine in the aftermath." In 1975 this story could be swept under a large rug; in today's wired China, the political fallout would be very difficult to contain, particularly if the death toll were increased by the erection of substandard buildings allowed by corrupt officials, a

common occurrence in China. Indeed, in the wake of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, which took the lives of nearly 69,000 people, including many children who died in poorly constructed schools, the regime had a very difficult time containing popular anger and demonstrations. Disasters can be of enormous scale in China, and the potential for public backlash has become serious enough that one of China's senior leaders can now be counted on to hasten to any disaster site in a public show of concern.

None of these possible failures could be counted as a boon for the United States. While China's rise unquestionably carries with it costs and risks for the rest of the world—from job losses as Chinese competitors move into new areas of business to security risks as Beijing's ambitions and power increase—contemplating failure only serves to underscore the reality that China's rise is a net gain not only for the United States but for the world as a whole.

If China were a small African nation lifting its people out of poverty at the same impressive rate, we would applaud without hesitation, recognizing the simple value of human progress. At the same time, we would have no difficulty recognizing that a wealthier society is one that is more likely to adopt policies with benefits that reach far beyond its borders—energy efficiency, environmental improvement, and innovation contributing to the fund of human capabilities. A healthy society, moreover, is one that efficiently solves problems that can quickly affect other nations, such as the spread of infectious disease and poor quality control of exported food and other products. China contributes to the world simply by responsibly governing itself. Consider what the inability of Afghanistan, with its mere 30 million people, to maintain order and create a better life for its citizens has meant for the rest of the world—it is less populous than 20 of China's 33 provincial-level jurisdictions. A stronger China willing to use its resources to strengthen international treaty regimes, institutions, and norms should be welcome, particularly at a time when U.S. capabilities are increasingly stretched. The issue is not

Frolicking in Beiliu, one of China's "cancer villages," can be hazardous to your health. Coal-based industry fouls the air and water of this village on the outskirts of Linfen, an industrial city several hundred miles southwest of Beijing, and the death rate is reportedly much higher than average.

Chinese power, but how that power will be used. The United States and other nations can influence China's choices through their policies, but the course of China's own internal development will be the decisive factor.

There are two ways to look at development that I find particularly useful. The first derives from the psychologist Abraham Maslow's thinking on the hierarchy of human needs. Maslow's idea was that individuals, and by extension societies, have a hierarchy of needs, with physiological requirements most fundamental, followed by the needs for personal security, then community, with the apex of the hierarchy being self-actualization. As more basic needs are satisfied, society's agenda moves on to higher-order needs. But that upward momentum cannot be taken for granted. Even in the 21st century, some large and significant countries, such as Pakistan, with its inability to cope with floods and other challenges, find it difficult to devote effort to national integration, political participation, and self-actualization.

The story of China in its reform phase, starting with the ascent of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, has revolved around the movement of massive numbers of people up this hierarchy, with perhaps 400 million people being lifted out of absolute poverty (albeit with growing inequality by some measures). The country has achieved astonishing progress in improving its citizens' quality of life. The death rate for children under age five was 65 per 1,000 as recently as 1980. It dropped to 46 in 1990 and 21 in 2008. The wide gap in public health between urban and rural areas has also shrunk, at least as measured by some indicators, according to a recent study by sociologists Martin Whyte and Zhongxin Sun, and life expectancy has increased. Literacy is now virtually universal among the young, with women making especially great gains since 1990. At the higher end of the hierarchy, the annual number of newly enrolled university undergraduates rose by a factor of more than nine between 1990 and 2006.

In the space of three decades, the bulk of China's people have gone from grappling with issues of survival to aspiring to self-improvement. They are enjoying undreamed of geographic and career mobility and ever-broadening material and cultural horizons. This has positive implications for the world. For one thing, wealthy people buy more goods and services from abroad than poor people do. Last year, China was America's fastest-growing large export market, as it has been for a number of years. And China's growing appetite for education has produced an enormous flow of human talent (and tuition payments) to institutions in the West. The Institute of International Education reports that China had the second-biggest number of foreign students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities (about 99,000) in the 2008–09 academic year—only India had more. Many Americans may not realize it, but education, like corn and automobiles, is an export item. Unlike commodities and manufactured goods, however, talented Chinese graduate students contribute mightily to U.S. hard science and other areas of research.

The second way to think about development derives from the American political scientist Samuel Huntington's 1968 classic, *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Huntington argued that development is a dynamic process in which societies strive for a balance between the capacity to regulate behavior and maintain order (by building institutions) and the demands of individuals to participate in political life. If institutions are too strong, the result is authoritarianism. But unrestrained popular participation with no institutional capacity to regulate it leads to various degrees of anarchy. "Failure" means a radical and sustained move away from balance in the system—too much disorder or too much order (though what constitutes "too much" depends on the beholder).

China's reform-era leaders have acted decisively to impose order at key junctures, such as the 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square and the move to regulate their citizens' access to the Internet by erecting the Great Firewall in 2003. Nonetheless, even as institutional strength has grown, so too has the space for individual and group action, except in the most directly political domains. Groups of citizens, for example, sometimes organize to stop or delay major infrastructure projects such as petrochemical facilities and, occasionally, nuclear power generating plants, and urban condominium owners now join together to protect their property. Last summer, there was what may prove to have been temporary tolerance for collective worker action—strikes—against some foreign (particularly Japanese) manufacturers' pay and working conditions.

China is not a land of black and white; it presents a complex picture of growing individual freedom, episodically increased repression, and institution building, all proceeding simultaneously. The overriding point is that the world

has an interest in China keeping order as it enlarges freedom. This is not an easy balance to maintain; Beijing's leaders have a heavy hand, but chaos would bring a significant human and global toll as well.

Were China to fail in either Maslow's or Huntington's terms, it would mean some combination of declining consumption and investment, increased immigration, declining (or stagnating) indicators of human welfare, less capacity to deal effectively with acts of nature, more social and political disorder, and a diminished ability to regulate domestic predatory behavior, whether stemming from corruption or unrestrained market activity. Any mix of these developments would have mind-numbing human rights and security implications.

What is bad for China would be, in almost every case, bad for the world. Apart from the implications of economic interdependence, consider some of the environmental issues raised by China's rise. Generally speaking, countries with economic wherewithal and social stability use resources more efficiently, even though the overall volume of consumed resources climbs with development. It is also true that total energy consumption rises dramatically with development and urbanization despite increases in efficiency, and that has been the case in China. Demand for electric power, for example, will more than double in the cities by 2030, even though energy intensity, a measure of how much energy must be consumed to create a given amount of output, is declining. So why not hope China stops growing, or grows more slowly? Because wishing for a slowdown is not a policy. Because economic decline or stagnation would reduce the prospects for more liberal political governance in the People's Republic. And because slower Chinese growth would stunt American growth prospects as well.

No matter what some others may wish, relatively high growth rates are likely to continue in China. The regime's emphasis on market forces has the support of most ordinary Chinese, despite widespread dissatisfaction with corruption and the ill-gotten gains of the politically well connected. Beijing generally has been fiscally prudent (though many local governments have not), and individual debt burdens are comparatively low. China saves about 50 percent of its gross domestic product. Access to secondary and tertiary education and universities is rapidly improving. The Chinese middle class is still only at the early stages of growth, so there is enormous potential for further expansion. Beijing is aware of the need to rebalance its economy so that domestic consumption rises and the relative dependence on exports declines. Military spending is growing significantly in absolute terms along with the economy, but thus far the government has limited it to a modest share of GDP (in the three to four percent range). These developments are good news for China and the world, but they also pose a challenge to the United States. As China moves up the value-added ladder, with an ever more skilled workforce and ever more capital at its disposal, Americans will have to increase their capacity to innovate and boost productivity. If they don't, America's national competitiveness will decline.

But if relatively vigorous growth in China is very probable for the next couple of decades, the Chinese still face uncertainties. How successfully will Beijing deal with a rapidly aging population, which, thanks to a significant degree to its one-child policy, will be considerably older than the U.S. population by 2040? Will it be able to maintain political stability as a burgeoning middle class and increasing interest-group activity multiply demands on a system with still-limited institutional and economic capacity? Political reform has been painfully slow, but some of the country's leaders seem to recognize that it is necessary. In August, Premier Wen Jiabao acknowledged, "Without political system reform, economic system reform and modernization construction cannot succeed."

Beyond demographics and politics, will China manage mounting environmental stresses? The record so far, with water and air quality and the supply of arable land all still in decline, is not encouraging. Will Beijing keep military claims on the economy at a moderate level and persist with a foreign policy that has not caused significant friction with other nations? Not all signs are positive on this score. China's leaders have become more assertive about waters and resources off the country's coast. China has protested U.S. and South Korean joint military exercises in the vicinity of the Yellow Sea and is involved in tussles with regional neighbors over a number of disputed tiny islands, the surrounding waters, and the resources beneath them.

Given their record of adaptation and success over the past several decades, it would be unwise to bet against the Chinese. The United States and other nations should plan on facing an increasingly capable China. That is in many ways a daunting prospect, but it is a far better one, and richer in promise, than the alternative. ■

IN ESSENCE

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ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Maximizing the Multiplier

THE SOURCE: "Crisis Economics" by N. Gregory Mankiw, in ***National Affairs***, Summer 2010.

When Team Obama arrived at the White House in January 2009, the first order of business was tending to a very sick patient: the U.S. economy. The administration's doctors (a.k.a. economic advisers) made a diagnosis (flagging aggregate demand) and prescribed a course of action (government spending).

Their plan was based on the Keynesian paradigm that for every dollar the government spends, the recipient of that dollar will turn around and spend some portion of it too (saving the rest), as will the next person, and the next person, and so on. This is called the multiplier effect. The Obama team estimated that government spending would have a bigger multiplier (1.57) than tax cuts (0.99), the other possible strategy for ramping up aggregate demand. When federal stimulus spending failed to bring the economy back to life, the administration economists concluded not that their basic prescription was flawed but that the patient had been much, much sicker than they had realized. The stimulus hadn't been big enough.

Perhaps, says Harvard economist N. Gregory Mankiw, but "to react to a model's failure to predict events accurately by insisting that the model was nonetheless right—as Obama's economic advisers have done—is hardly the most obvious course."

Economists should "constantly test [their] assumptions and policies against real-world results," says Mankiw, who chaired President George W. Bush's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) from 2003 to 2005. And though predicting the effects of economic policy is quite difficult—there are an outlandish number of variables, all influencing one another—a recent spate of research has shown that the multiplier effect of tax cuts may be more sizable than previously thought. (Ironically, Mankiw notes, Christina Romer, former chair of the CEA under President Barack Obama, once coauthored a study that found that the tax cut multiplier was three times larger than what the Obama administration estimated it to

be.) Of course, as with any economic policy, the details matter greatly, and a poorly designed tax cut could be just as ineffective as poorly spent government funds.

Even if economists could perfectly predict the future, their prescriptions would still be subject to the vagaries of the political process. Politicians, after all, must answer to voters, not data. Still, Mankiw advises, "The foremost job of economists is not to make the lives of politicians easier, but to think through problems . . . and to propose the solutions most likely to work."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Theory-Free Foreign Aid

THE SOURCES: "The Pragmatic Rebels" by Maureen Tkacik, in ***Bloomberg Businessweek***, July 2, 2010, and "The Credibility Revolution in Empirical Economics: How Better Research Design Is Taking the Con Out of Econometrics" by Joshua D. Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke, in ***The Journal of Economic Perspectives***, Spring 2010.

TWO WARRING CAMPS HAVE divided the field of development economics in recent years. One side, led by Columbia University professor Jeffrey Sachs, argues that massive infusions of foreign aid can bring the developing world out of poverty. On the other side, led by William Easterly of New York University and economist Dambisa Moyo, are those who criticize foreign aid, saying it has not helped poor countries create jobs or industry but fostered dependence on Western handouts.

Now a group of young economists based at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), are staking out a third position: Enough with your grandiose theories, they say. Let's look at very small, specific actions (subsidies for mosquito nets, for example, or incentives for vaccines), and test which strategies work best for the least cost. Established in 2003 by Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee, and Sendhil Mullainathan, J-PAL has quickly grown to include 46 professors at about a dozen universities conducting at least 200 randomized control trials in 33 countries.

> Could it be time to look at foreign aid and just test which strategy works best?

Duflo won a 2009 MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant for her work, which "is so minutely focused that its importance is not easily grasped at first glance," observes journalist Maureen Tkacik. In one representative study, Duflo found that Kenyan farmers were just as likely to buy fertilizer if free shipping were offered as they were if offered the fertilizer at a heavily subsidized price. Since the shipping discount was cheaper, the discovery should allow aid givers to get more bang for their buck.

Empirical economists have been criticized for focusing on situations that are too "narrow" or trivial to have any useful implications for policy, note economists Joshua D. Angrist of MIT and Jörn-Steffen Pischke of the London School of Economics in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. But over time, the cumulative results of many small empirical studies may supply the building-blocks for bigger theories, as has happened in the field of medicine, in which "clinical evidence of therapeutic effectiveness has for centuries run ahead of the theoretical understanding of disease," Angrist and Pischke explain. In their study of the increased use of empirical tools, not just in development economics but in labor economics and public finance as well, they assert their hopes that the fields of macroeconomics and industrial organization will find uses for these methodologies too.

For their part, the "randomistas" (as Duflo and her associates are sometimes derisively called) are not discouraged by critics, Tkacik reports. Many of them grew up watching big-name economists issue sweeping but "ultimately ineffectual" policy prescriptions. As Duflo puts it, "Ideology doesn't really matter so much when the objective is getting kids to show up for school or immunizing children."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

How Nations Get Ahead

THE SOURCE: "Was the Wealth of Nations Determined in 1000 BC?" by Diego Comin, William Easterly, and Erick Gong, in ***American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics***, July 2010.

WHY ARE SOME AREAS OF THE world so poor and others so wealthy? Economists generally look for answers in contemporary conditions, such as the soundness of economic policies or the presence of political instability. When they do look to history, they tend to point to the Industrial Revolution or the colonial period

as parting points, when some countries hopped on the train to modernity and others stayed at the station. But economists Diego Comin of Harvard University, William Easterly of New York University, and Erick Gong of the University of California, Berkeley, contend that inklings of future development patterns can be discerned as far back as the time of King David.

Comin and colleagues assembled "snapshots" of development for the predecessors of 100 modern nations at three points in history. For 1000 BC and "AD 0," they looked at whether a society had technologies such as writing, pottery, and bronze or iron weapons, and whether it had begun to use pack or draft animals for transportation. For 1500, the relevant advances included firearms, ships capable of crossing oceans, magnetic compasses, movable-block printing, steel, and plows. The authors found that the level of technology adoption in 1000 BC explained differences in technological prowess 2,500 years later—in 1500, just before colonization—and that the technological differences in 1500 strongly predicted wealth variations today.

To put a number on it, with the data adjusted to account for migrations (thus counting America today as primarily European, not Native American), the countries that were the most technologically advanced in 1500 have populations earning 26 times more per capita than those that live in countries that were behind 500 years ago.

The major trends reinforce the authors' belief that "technology adoption dynamics"—the inverse relationship between the cost of adopting new technology and a country's level of development—play a major role in determining the wealth of nations today. Well-known historical puzzles, such as China's failure to capitalize on its ancient technological achievements and the stagnation in the countries of the Islamic empire after their early progress, are not numerous enough to overturn the worldwide correlations.

The authors say that although their results help explain historical patterns, they do not predict the future. Today, technology is developed and spreads much more rapidly than in the past. It's not a sure thing that the dynamics that shaped the last 3,000 years of development will persist in the centuries to come.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Throw Away the Political Resumés

THE SOURCE: "Ready to Lead on Day One: Predicting Presidential Greatness From Political Experience" by John Balz, in ***PS: Political Science and Politics***, July 2010.

DURING THE BATTLE FOR THE 2008 Democratic presidential nomination, Hillary Clinton made sure to let everyone know how much more experience she had than Barack Obama. "Ready to lead on day one," she intoned. No one seemed to question her basic premise: More years of political experience would make for better leadership. But history says otherwise, according to University of Chicago political science doctoral candidate John Balz.

For the most part, political experience seems to have no bearing on a person's ability to be a good, or even great, president. Balz looked for links between White House occupants' resumés and how their tenures ranked in scholars' assessments. Certain kinds of experience—serving in Congress, in particular—actually produced worse presidents. For every two years spent in Congress, a president's ranking fell more than one spot. More often than not, former mayors made bad presidents, but since only three have served in the White House (Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland, and Calvin Coolidge), it's impossible to know how strong the correlation is.

Experience as a governor, state-level legislator, state administrator, or general seems to be slightly beneficial, but the effect was too small to say for certain. (And the president with the most experience as a general, Zachary Taylor, was one of the nation's worst chief executives.) Years spent in the private sector also raised presidents' rankings a bit, a correlation perhaps boosted by one of the greatest there ever was: Abraham Lincoln, who had a long career as a private lawyer before he headed to Washington.

It's impossible to flip the methodology around and try to predict whether a given set of experiences will produce a successful president. Divining how a president will fare based on his resumé is essentially a crapshoot. This is not to say some things aren't predictable: Andrew Johnson's resumé included 17 years of congressional service and three years as mayor of Greenville, Tennessee, a "perfect storm for lousy presidential performance." Johnson was impeached by the House of Representatives in 1868.

The ability to steer the country on a path of greatness can't be gained by time in the statehouse or on the floor of Congress. But candidates will campaign on their resumés nevertheless—in the end, it's really all they have.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Liberalism's Two Camps

THE SOURCE: "Burke, Paine, and the Great Law of Change" by Yuval Levin, in ***The Point***, Fall 2010.

In a rip-roaring debate in the early 1790s, Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke fleshed out two distinct strains of liberalism whose differences continue to animate our political life today. Paine was the archetypal progressive liberal. Burke, though often considered simply a conservative, is better understood as representing a conservative interpretation of liberalism. At the heart of their disagreement, which on its surface was about the revolutions taking place in America and France, lay a

Thomas Paine (left) accused Edmund Burke of protecting the rich and powerful. Burke believed Paine's predilection for revolution could lead to barbarism. Their ideas continue to shape our own.

"not-so-obvious fact: That where we stand on many of the great questions at the heart of liberal democratic politics often depends decisively upon our view of the relationship between the present and the past," writes *National Affairs* editor Yuval Levin.

Paine, a political writer and activist who lived in England, America, and France over the course of his life, believed that the Enlightenment should usher in an era of revolutions. With the newfound tools of reason and political science, leaders should seek to transform society to make it more just and more sensitive to human equality and rights. Paine wrote that for every child born, "the world is as new to him as it was to the first man that existed, and his natural right in it is of the same kind." He should not be bound by the past, but should choose anew society's design. Choice was central to Paine's philosophy. He agreed with his friend Thomas Jefferson that it would be a good idea for every law to come with an expiration date so that it would not be imposed upon future generations without their active consent.

Burke, a member of the British parliament for 30 years, thought Paine put too much stock in reason. Do not wise men disagree? Reinventing society, as Paine would have it, would run the risk of collapse. Instead, Burke favored incremental improvements to our governing systems, which he believed were themselves a good starting point because they embody, in Levin's words, "the collective wisdom of the ages as expressed in the form of long-standing precedents, institutions, and patterns of practice." Though society's institutions may not be just at present, over time they will evolve to at least imitate justice. Burke dismissed Paine's adulation of choice, believing that people enter into society not by choice but by birth, and that the society they enter is a partnership "not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

Paine rejected Burke's philosophy, finding it to be "thoroughly misguided, if not just a cynical defense of privilege and power," Levin explains. Paine wrote, "Mr. Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedom of the living."

Despite their differences, these two men had much in common, Levin observes, including a belief in "open debate, freedom of expression and religion, the rule of law." It's not liberalism and anti-liberalism that shape our political life, but liberalism, divided by the little detail of what we should keep from the past.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Fixing the Presidential Primaries

THE SOURCE: "A Modified National Primary: State Losers and Support for Changing the Presidential Nominating Process" by Caroline J. Tolbert, Amanda Keller, and Todd Donovan, in ***Political Science Quarterly***, Fall 2010.

Why is the process for selecting the candidates for the nation's highest office such a mess? In the absence of constitutional directives, it has evolved haphazardly over 200 years, and the result is a system that is deeply unpopular: The tiny and very white states of Iowa and New Hampshire have disproportionate power, very few people participate, and chaos erupts every four years, as states vie to schedule their contests earlier and earlier to gain greater sway over the final outcome and to boost their economies. Political scientists Caroline J. Tolbert, Amanda Keller, and Todd Donovan have a solution that combines the best features of earlier reform ideas.

Seven in 10 Americans favor switching to a national primary—one day when voters everywhere would head to the polls. Such an event would likely boost participation, since many people don't vote under the current system because the winner is often decided long before it's their turn to cast a ballot. In 2008, less than a quarter of the voting-age population voted in a presidential primary, and that was a good year. The problem with a national primary is that it would do away with one of the greatest strengths of the current system: Since the primaries begin in small states, candidates without huge war chests and who are not necessarily the darlings of the political establishment can win with old-fashioned door-to-door campaigning. A national primary would require candidates to be able to campaign on a national scale from the get-go.

But Tolbert and her colleagues aren't too keen on one of the leading alternatives, known as a "graduated random presidential primary system." Under such an arrangement, smaller states would vote early in the primary season, but the exact order would change every four years. Larger states would be allowed to begin holding their primaries several weeks into the process. Some critics worry that such a system would be confusing for voters and unfair to large states.

The authors propose a hybrid approach: Begin with a dozen primaries or caucuses in small-population states to allow unknown candidates a chance to prove themselves, but let these contests decide only a "tiny" number of these states' delegates to the nominating conventions. In essence, let these early contests be straw polls. Then, when that phase is completed, hold a national primary. This approach would preserve the relatively open playing field of the current system and at the same time allow more people's votes to matter.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Decentering Kabul

THE SOURCE: "Defining Success in Afghanistan" by Stephen Biddle, Fotini Christia, and J. Alexander Thier, in ***Foreign Affairs***, July–Aug. 2010.

Since 2001, the government of Afghanistan, led by Hamid Karzai and backed by the United States, has struggled to build a centralized democracy. The 2004 constitution placed nearly all executive, legislative, and judicial authority in Kabul. But centralization does not sit well with local authorities in Afghanistan's rugged countryside. Past attempts at centralization have always failed, from Amanullah Khan's doomed effort to become Afghanistan's Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s to the Soviet-backed communist power grab in the late 1970s, which resulted in years of civil war.

"Put simply, the current model of Afghan governance is too radical a departure" from what has worked in Afghanistan historically and the "underlying social and political framework" that exists today, declare

***Shuras*, community councils like the one above, could be the key to building a more stable Afghanistan.**

Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations, Fotini Christia of MIT, and J. Alexander Thier, of the U.S. Institute of Peace. It's time to start looking at what is actually possible in Afghanistan and work toward the most acceptable options.

Biddle and his colleagues say there are only four outcomes with any real likelihood of emerging: decentralized democracy; a regulated mix of democratic and nondemocratic territories; a partitioned group of "ministates"; and anarchy. The latter two are not acceptable, but either of the first two could fulfill the United States' two main security interests: barring terrorists who hope to attack the United States and its allies and denying shelter to insurgent groups that could destabilize neighboring Pakistan.

Local councils, called *shuras,* are found in "virtually every community," and could become the foundation of a decentralized system. Their traditional authority would provide much-needed stability. In a decentralized democratic model, local governments would need to hold elections and have some degree of transparency. Kabul would hand over its authority to dictate local budgets, design justice systems, and select local officials. Such a system would be difficult to achieve, requiring ongoing U.S. administrative assistance and a sustained counterinsurgency campaign against Taliban members who oppose democracy on principle.

Easier to achieve but less palatable would be a system of mixed sovereignty, in which local authorities would rule without elections or transparency. Kabul would have to enforce three strict "redlines" in order for this system to remain consistent with U.S. security interests: Don't host terrorists or insurgents. Don't mess with other local districts, by, for example, diverting their water. And don't participate in narcotics trafficking, large-scale theft, or the exploitation of state-

EXCERPT

The Age of the City

Look at a satellite image of the Earth at night: It will reveal the shimmering lights of cities flickering below, but also an ominous pattern. Cities are spreading like a cancer on the planet's body. Zoom in and you can see good cells and bad cells at war for control. In Caracas, gang murders and kidnappings are a fact of life, and Al Qaeda terrorists hide in plain sight in Karachi. . . . Anyone who traveled to South Africa for the 2010 World Cup might have noticed how private security forces outnumbered official police two to one, and gated communities protected elites from the vast townships where crime is rampant. Cities—not so-called failed states like Afghanistan and Somalia—are the true daily test of whether we can build a better future or are heading toward a dystopian nightmare.

—**PARAG KHANNA**, a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation, in ***Foreign Policy*** (Sept.–Oct. 2010)

owned natural resources. If those lines can be toed, a system of mixed sovereignty could balance the realities of Afghanistan with U.S. policy aims.

The downside: "This would represent a retreat from nearly nine years of U.S. promises of democracy, the rule of law, and basic rights for women and minorities, with costs to innocent Afghans and the prestige of the United States." But, sadly, those promises may be impossible to keep.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Limits of Intelligence

THE SOURCE: "Why Intelligence and Policymakers Clash" by Robert Jervis, in ***Political Science Quarterly***, Summer 2010.

It is conventional wisdom that whether because of President George W. Bush's aversion to complexity, Vice President Dick Cheney's obsession with Saddam Hussein, or something else entirely, somehow Washington simply ignored the U.S. intelligence community's doubts that Saddam was collaborating with Al Qaeda and that a stable Iraq could emerge after an invasion. But the Bush administration's mistakes in Iraq are only the most recent illustration of the challenges policymakers and intelligence analysts face when attempting to communicate—challenges that presidents of every political stripe encounter as they struggle to lead with confidence in an ambiguous world, writes Robert Jervis, a professor of international politics at Columbia University.

Presidents don't usually want to hear an intelligence analyst's doubts, preferring confidence (even when unwarranted) in one policy option.

For both political and psychological reasons, presidents often expect the intelligence community to be able to provide them with clear answers. Politically, presidents need intelligence backing to sell their policies to the public. Psychologically, they need to sleep at night, and that requires seeing a world in which one policy is clearly preferable to another and its costs, often measured in lives, are less than those of any alternative. Even when the news is good, it may not be greeted favorably. This was the case when the Central Intelligence Agency told Lyndon B. Johnson that other countries would not fall to communism even if South Vietnam did. Since Johnson's Vietnam policy was based on the domino theory, he did not welcome the information.

Presidents don't usually want to hear an intelligence analyst's doubts. Policymakers will try to convince both themselves and the public that one policy measure is better than an alternative on every dimension, even when, as Jervis writes, "there [is] no reason to expect the world to be arranged so neatly." The confidence (even when unwarranted) that comes from believing one policy option is clearly superior is not simply for a president's personal benefit but also necessary to a successful policy. If a leader is plagued with doubts, the uncertainty can filter down to the rank and file and doom a policy before it is even launched.

When uncertainty exists, intelligence analysts can be susceptible to pressures from policymakers to change their conclusions. But the charge of "politicization" is too easily lobbed about, Jervis argues. How can you tell the difference between a politician making sure that due diligence has been done and one simply demanding a different answer? "In many of these cases, I suspect that one's judgment will depend on which side of the substantive debate one is on," he remarks.

The president's need to have the backing of the intelligence community in order to sell his policies stems from the public's faith in the quality of the intelligence community's judgments. But when the president presses intelligence analysts to support his policies, the quality of the information is likely to suffer. And even in the absence of political pressure, reliable intelligence is difficult to come by. When the United States failed to anticipate the 1974 coup in Portugal, then secretary of state Henry Kissinger resented congressional complaints about intelligence failure: "Anytime there's a coup you start with the assumption that the home government missed it. . . . Why the hell should we know better than the government that's being overthrown?"

SOCIETY

Imported Doctors

THE SOURCE: "Evaluating the Quality of Care Provided by Graduates of International Medical Schools" by John J. Norcini, John R. Boulet, W. Dale Dauphinee, Amy Opalek, Ian D. Krantz, and Suzanne T. Anderson, in ***Health Affairs***, Aug. 2010.

If you're rushed to the emergency room with a heart attack and your doctor is a graduate of a foreign medical school, are you in good hands? That depends, say John J. Norcini, president and chief executive officer of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research, and his colleagues. If your doctor is not a U.S. citizen, you should thank your lucky stars. If he or she is American, well, the outlook for you is not quite as rosy.

The authors examined the outcomes of more than 244,000 hospitalizations for heart attacks and congestive heart failure in Pennsylvania from 2003 to 2006. Of the roughly 6,000 physicians in their study, 25 percent were graduates of foreign medical schools. A quarter of those international graduates were U.S. citizens.

How did the doctors perform? Five percent of the patients who found themselves in the care of a foreign-born physician died, while 5.8 percent of those in the hands of an American educated abroad did. The foreign-born doctors even outperformed their U.S.-educated peers, who lost 5.5 percent of their patients.

The authors speculate that the Americans who studied abroad may have performed worse because they attended particularly bad international schools. Or, since many may have enrolled abroad because they didn't get into any school in America, they may have simply been less competent.

SOCIETY

Welfare's New Tune

THE SOURCE: "Effects of Prenatal Poverty on Infant Health: State Earned Income Tax Credits and Birth Weight" by Kate W. Strully, David H. Rehkopf, and Ziming Xuan, in ***American Sociological Review***, Aug. 2010.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, federal welfare policy increasingly tied benefits to an individual either having a job or at least making efforts to get one. President Bill Clinton's 1996 welfare reform sealed the deal, but the trend began in earnest with the 1975 enactment of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Unlike old-school entitlement programs such as Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), EITC makes benefits more generous as a recipient's wages increase. (The benefits eventually taper off, stopping at incomes of

EXCERPT

The Calamity of Main Street

Whereas the Bedouin who surveys a hundred miles of empty sand will crave company and can psychologically afford to offer each stranger a warm welcome, his urban contemporaries, at heart no less well meaning or generous, must in order to preserve a modicum of balance live without any acknowledgment of the millions of human beings eating, sleeping, arguing, copulating, and dying only inches away. Modern society does not help us to put forward our more dignified sides. The public spaces in which we typically encounter others—commuter trains, jostling pavements, shopping malls, escalators, restaurants—conspire to throw up a demeaning picture of our collective identity. It can be hard to keep faith with humanity after a walk down Oxford Street or a transfer at O'Hare.

—**ALAIN DE BOTTON**, author of the book *A Week at the Airport: A Heathrow Diary*, in ***Harper's*** (Aug. 2010)

about $40,000 for a single parent with two children.) The idea is to make work more worthwhile by helping recipients pay for transportation, childcare, and other job-related costs.

Some specialists worried that the policy would backfire—that working single mothers would be under too much stress and that increased cash would mean more smoking and drinking. By one measure, however, that doesn't seem to be happening. Judging by the weight of EITC beneficiaries' newborns, report three sociologists, Kate W. Strully of the State University of New York at Albany; David H. Rehkopf of the University of California, San Francisco; and Ziming Xuan of the Harvard School of Public Health, low-income single mothers are benefiting from the policy.

Birth weight is a valuable indicator, not just because it acts as a proxy for the health of the mother during pregnancy but also because it can be a reliable predictor of future earnings and educational attainment of children.

Beginning in the 1980s, 16 states enacted their own versions of the tax credit to supplement the federal program. The authors found that low-income single mothers in those states bore slightly bigger babies (about half an ounce heavier) than their peers in states without the additional assistance. One explanation is that pregnant mothers living in places with state EITCs smoked less than low-income single mothers elsewhere.

The authors say that the data for policies whose benefits decrease with earnings, such as AFDC and the newer Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, were less clear. One thing was certain: Both programs increased the likelihood of maternal smoking by nearly 10 percent.

HISTORY

Triumph of the Toughs

THE SOURCE: "Five Boys: The Story of a Picture" by Ian Jack, in ***Intelligent Life***, Spring 2010.

On July 10, 1937, the British daily newspaper the *News Chronicle* published a photograph of five boys, two of them dressed in the English gentleman's uniform of top hat, tail coat, and silk waistcoat, and carrying canes. The three other boys stand to the side, smirking at the dandies, wearing oversized jackets, perhaps bought to last longer as the boys grew. Above the photo, taken by Jimmy Sime, the headline read, "Every Picture Tells a Story," and below it was a no-nonsense caption: "Outside Lord's, where the Eton-Harrow match opened yesterday." There was no accompanying article. The message of Britain's sharp class division was self-evident.

In the decades since, the picture has illustrated countless articles about rich and poor, and even graced the covers of two books. The photo speaks for itself; nothing more need be said. But *Guardian* columnist and former *Granta* editor Ian Jack tracked down each of the boys, and the story is quite different from what the picture so plainly suggests.

The photo's two "toffs," as later

From left to right: Peter Wagner, Thomas Dyson, George Salmon, Jack Catlin, and George Young.

iterations of its captioning labeled them, were Peter Wagner and Thomas Dyson, both Harrow students. In the picture, Wagner stares down the street, awaiting his parents' arrival to take him and his friend Dyson home for the weekend. The Wagners were quite wealthy. They had arrived in England from Germany via South Africa in the late 19th century. Peter's father, Richard Harry Wagner, went to Harrow on a scholarship and made out quite well. He and his wife may have arrived in the family's Rolls-Royce just minutes after the picture was snapped. But a rough road lay ahead for young Peter: After attending the University of Cambridge, marrying, and starting a family, he began to be haunted by mental illness. He died in a locked ward of a mental asylum at age 60.

Peter's friend Thomas Dyson fared worse. His English father and Australian mother were stationed in India with the Royal Field Artillery. (It's ironic that a boy of German heritage and another who was half-Australian came to symbolize the upper echelons of English society.) Just a year after the photo was taken, he sailed to Bombay and boarded a train to visit his parents. During the journey he fell ill with diphtheria, and died on August 26, 1938, at age 16.

By contrast, the picture's three "toughs" did quite well. Not toughs at all, but from the "typically straitened circumstances of the old London working class," George Young, George Salmon, and Jack Catlin all lived well into old age, enjoying successful careers and good health. Young ran a window-cleaning business, and his four sons joined the trade. Salmon worked as a foreman for Imperial Metal Industries and helped the company expand across Europe. Catlin joined the civil service and rose to a senior position in the Department of Health and Social Security. "We've always been jolly happy," Young once told a reporter, "just as we were when I was a kid. You don't need to be rich. We've had a very rich life."

Today, Jack observes, class trappings aren't visible in the same way—a photographer looking for such a shot might find five boys dressed all quite alike, in jeans and T-shirts. "Giving a superficial impression of equality," Jack writes, "the picture would be even more of a lie than before."

HISTORY

The Real Justice Taney

THE SOURCE: "Roger B. Taney and the Slavery Issue: Looking Beyond—and Before—*Dred Scott*" by Timothy S. Huebner, in ***The Journal of American History***, June 2010.

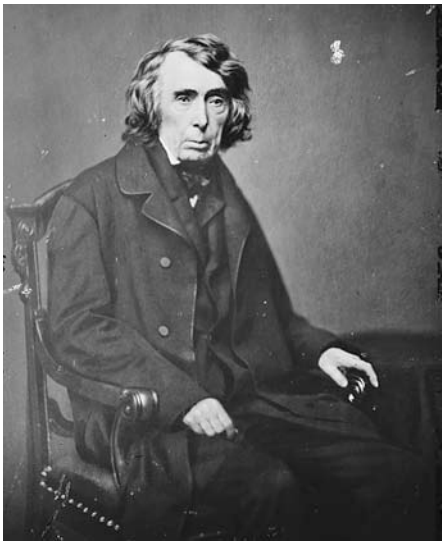
Who was the real Roger B. Taney? Was he the Supreme Court justice who infamously wrote, in the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision denying citizenship to blacks, that they had "for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order . . . altogether unfit to associate with the white race"? Or was he the impassioned lawyer from Frederick County, Maryland, who argued in 1819 that slavery was "a blot on our national character" and insisted that "every real lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will be effectually, though it must be gradually, wiped away"?

> Supreme Court justice Roger B. Taney infamously described blacks as "beings of an inferior order," but he once called slavery "a blot on our national character."

Historians have long struggled to reconcile the two Taneys, Timothy S. Huebner notes. Although Taney's antislavery statements were made during his defense of the Reverend Jacob Gruber, an abolitionist minister on trial for preaching a sermon that his accusers claimed had disturbed the peace and promoted slave rebellion, Huebner says that the 42-year-old Taney didn't limit himself to a simple defense of his client but "went a step further, reaffirming and validating the substance of Gruber's sermon."

Taney's stance carried significant political risk in a state filled with slaveholders, but it was consistent with other actions he took during that time. As a member of the Maryland Senate between 1816 and 1821, he supported several resolutions seeking to limit slaveholding, and, by 1820, had manumitted 11 of his own slaves.

But Huebner, a historian at Rhodes College in Memphis, detects a subtle shift in Taney's perspective during the decades following the Gruber trial. As U.S. attorney general under Andrew Jackson, for instance, he authored an 1832 opinion on the constitutionality of a South Carolina law, in which he referred to African Americans as



Chief Justice Roger B. Taney near the end of his life

a "degraded class" whose rights existed only on "the sufferance of the white population."

After President Jackson appointed him chief justice in 1835, Taney wrote several opinions that, Huebner says, "reflected an emerging 'southern rights' argument that emphasized the need to protect the property rights of slaveholders by preserving state control over slavery." Previously, slavery had been defended mostly as a necessary evil created by the nation's early colonists. A polarizing political climate fed by the rise of radical abolitionism squeezed middle-of-the-roaders such as Taney, and Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion "prompted a nearly universal response of fear and dread on the part of white southerners." By the time of *Dred Scott*, Huebner writes, "Taney's thinking had evolved into full-blown extremism." He now believed that "only states could control slavery, ruled that Congress could not prohibit slaveholding in the territories, concluded that the Declaration of Independence had no bearing on black rights, believed that slavery elevated African Americans, and abhorred the thought of emancipation."

After Taney died, in 1864, just six months before the end of the Civil War, a pamphlet appeared comparing him to Pontius Pilate, inaugurating a continuing debate about who the "real" Taney was. Huebner doubts that a useful conclusion can be reached: "Taney's changing views show that he was both a product and a proponent of this shifting discourse about slavery."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

How Religious Toleration Came to America

THE SOURCE: "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration" by Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, in ***Church History***, Sept. 2010.

Six years ago, historian Russell Shorto rescued the life of one Adriaen van der Donck from obscurity. Van der Donck, as Shorto told it, was one of the earliest advocates in the New World of a republican system of government and Dutch-style religious toleration. Upon the foundation Van der Donck laid, New Amsterdam flourished and its institutions became a model for America. In the academic world, many delighted in seeing the English philosopher John Locke—traditionally credited with popularizing the idea of religious freedom—knocked off his pedestal.

It's a nice yarn, writes Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, director of the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum in the Netherlands, but no more than that. None of Van der Donck's writings—published or otherwise—touch upon religious toleration. He doesn't make any appearances in the colony's records arguing for toleration.

New Amsterdam was no beacon of religious toleration. The authorities discriminated against Jews, Lutherans, and Baptists, among others. In 1657, English colonists on Long Island sent a request to the New Amsterdam government for religious freedom for Quakers. The petition (now called the Flushing Remonstrance) was denied and not thought of again until the 19th century. It was hardly the forerunner of the Bill of Rights, as some now imagine.

"With sophistry bordering on hypocrisy, tolerant New Netherland offered its inhabitants freedom to believe whatever they wanted, as long as their belief did not extend to religious exercises outside the family circle—no preaching, no prayer meetings, no group discussions of theology,"

Bangs writes. One Quaker preacher was dragged through the streets behind a cart.

The Flushing Remonstrance was the product of a misunderstanding. Many in the English-speaking world of the mid-17th century thought there was religious toleration in Holland because the text of the Union of Utrecht (1579) had circulated widely in translation. The treaty unified the northern, Protestant provinces of what would eventually become the Netherlands against a perceived threat from the united support of the southern, Catholic provinces for the Spanish king. It promised that "every particular person shall remain free in his religion."

But just two years later, under pressure from the Dutch Reformed Church (Calvinist), the Dutch government banned the Catholic Mass and shuttered Catholic monasteries and convents. The Synod of Dort (1618–19) marked the effective end of the Union of Utrecht and led to a further crackdown that encompassed even non-Calvinist Protestants. The English-speaking world was mostly unaware of these developments.

Dutch dissenters, largely from Mennonite and Remonstrant churches, continued to plead for religious toleration in their own country. Of particular importance are the works of Philip van Limborch, a Remonstrant theologian whose writings and friendship deeply influenced John Locke. Locke dedicated his 1689 *Letter on Toleration* to Van Limborch. It's through the connection between these two men that religious liberty spread to the English colonies, according to Bangs, and reached Thomas Jefferson's pen.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Two Presidents and Their God

THE SOURCE: "American Scriptures" by C. Clifton Black, in ***Theology Today***, July 2010.

George Washington's Farewell Address (1796) and Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address (1865) are standard texts for any student of American history. C. Clifton Black, a professor of biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, explores these speeches not to understand political philosophy but in a search for the theology, however unspoken, undergirding their authors' perspectives. He finds Washington's theology "predictably meager," but Lincoln's exploration of the nature of providence put to shame even the leading religious thinkers of his day.

In his farewell, Washington primarily reflected upon his decision to retire and warned the young nation to be wary of partisanship and sectionalism. Washington was politically wise, but he portrayed religion as nothing more than simple civic morality—for example, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." Black writes, "Theology—such as it is—does not so much inform and correct political theory as prop it up." With only passing and superficial references to God in more than 6,000 words, the speech was nevertheless quite Christian in character, extolling Christian virtues such as humility and brotherly affection, and warning against cunning and ambition.

By the time Lincoln took to the stage to deliver his second inaugural address, the nation was riven by sectional conflict, much as Washington had feared. Lincoln, unlike Washington, didn't shy away from theology, and instead framed the Civil War in "relentlessly theological terms." By Black's assessment, no fewer than 85 of the 700 words in the address are either direct biblical quotations or allusions to Scripture. Lincoln propounded what Black describes as "a radical monotheism that properly elicits both awe before the Almighty's inscrutable purposes and compassion for the thousands who died in the sincere yet mistaken belief that God was on their side." At the heart of Lincoln's address is the acknowledgment that men on both sides "read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other," as the president put it. Only God's eventual discretion would reveal which side he was on; why he allowed war to persist among God-fearing men was beyond human understanding.

Today Washington is often criticized for owning slaves, and Lincoln for suspending habeas corpus in wartime. Under the unrelenting scrutiny of our modern world, neither comes off scot free. But this would be no surprise to them, Black remarks. Central to both men's understanding of the world was the fallibility of man—and they were no exception.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Is Science Finished?

THE SOURCE: "Science's Dead End" by James Le Fanu, in ***Prospect***, Aug. 2010.

Has the era of major scientific breakthroughs run its course? Lord Kelvin famously claimed at the end of the 19th century that future scientific achievements would be found "in the sixth place of decimals." Just a few years later, Albert Einstein proposed the theory of relativity and forever changed our understanding of physics. Science writer John Horgan caused a minor stir in the 1990s by arguing that science has reached its limits now that we have a basic understanding of the physical world, from the nanoscale to the universal.

That's true for matter, agrees James Le Fanu, a columnist for Britain's *Telegraph*, but our understanding of *life* still leaves something wanting. If more breakthroughs are made, they will be in clarifying two of the greatest mysteries: how it is that the double helix of DNA gives rise to vast biodiversity, and how the electronic impulses in our brains create an individual—personality, free will, memories. "At a time when cosmologists can reliably infer what happened in the first few minutes of the birth of the universe, and geologists can measure the movements of continents to the nearest centimeter, it seems extraordinary that geneticists can't tell us why humans are so different from flies, and neuroscientists are unable to clarify how we recall a telephone number," Le Fanu muses.

Life is much harder to study than matter. For one thing, it's "immeasurably more complex." Think of a fly and a pebble of the same size. A common fly is "billions upon billions upon billions" of times more complicated. Life's most basic units—cells—are at work in every living thing, converting nutrients into tissue, repairing, and reproducing, and each cell is a tiny fraction of the size of the smallest machines ever built. Another wrinkle: Many of the mysteries of life produce no tangible evidence. What do you "look" at if you want to study thought, memory, or belief? The assumption that science could one day probe such inscrutabilities "remains an assumption," Le Fanu writes, as, "strictly speaking, they fall outside the domain of the methods of science to investigate and explain."

Times are flush for Big Science. Biomedical research alone is a $100 billion industry, dwarfing the gross domestic products of a dozen countries. The quantity of research is astonishing, with many journals publishing around 100,000 pages of articles each year. Yet the results have been "disappointing." The Venter Institute's announcement last spring that it had managed to create "artificial life" may have grabbed headlines, but Le Fanu remains unmoved. "Fabricating a basic toolkit of genes and inserting them into a bacterium—at a cost of $40 million and 10 years' work—was technologically ingenious, but the result does less than what the simplest forms of life have been doing for free and in a matter of seconds for the past three billion years."

For all its money, Big Science is not supporting those who are "discontent with prevailing theory," and could make history-altering discoveries. The end of science won't come when there's nothing left to discover, but "when the geeks have taken over and the free thinkers [have been] vanquished."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Frozen Past

THE SOURCE: "A Humanist on Thin Ice" by Tom Griffiths, in ***GriffithREVIEW***, Spring 2010.

In the three billion years of life on this planet, ours is not the first era of mass extinction and global climate change. But we are the first creatures to live through such upheaval and know what is happening. Much of our understanding comes from studying simple, frozen hydrogen dioxide. The story of ice—how it came to exist in such concentrations at the planet's poles and what makes up the gases

The century-long study of ice, a historian says, reveals "the cumulative, insidious, all-pervading power of people on Earth."

trapped within it—"is the key to understanding climate change," writes Tom Griffiths, a historian at the Australian National University in Canberra (and no relation to the *GriffithREVIEW*'s namesake).

The first inklings of the role ice has played in shaping the world emerged in the late 1830s, when Swiss-born scientist Louis Agassiz postulated that large sheets of ice once covered much of the globe. Decades passed before this idea gained wide acceptance. In 1859, Irish researcher John Tyndall went poking into the causes of the Ice Age, examining the gases in the atmosphere to see if they all behaved the same way. He found that not all atmospheric gases are transparent to radiant heat—in particular, carbon dioxide ($C0_2$) is opaque—which means that fluctuations in the amount of $C0_2$ in the atmosphere could affect how the earth heats and cools. One and a half centuries ago, the role of greenhouse gases in setting the earth's temperature was flagged. What we know about climate and global warming today began with efforts to understand the climate of eras past and the glaciers that once covered large swaths of Europe.

Griffiths is quick to point out that nothing in the first century of climate research supports the sinister, left-wing conspiracy many global warming skeptics imagine. When scientists did raise the possibility of global warming, "they saw it mostly as positive. . . . Indeed, if the world were warmer, it might make winters more comfortable and agriculture more productive, or even help stave off the next Ice Age. For the first two-thirds of the 20th century the global warming trend was called the 'embetterment' of climate, or the 'recent amelioration.'"

It wasn't until very recently that scientists began to recognize the peril posed by global temperature fluctuation. There were two key discoveries. First, in the early 1980s, scientists studying the Greenland ice sheet found that climate change had occurred much more quickly than they had assumed was likely, sometimes as much as five or six degrees Celsius within a few decades. Second, the levels of $C0_2$ in the atmosphere today are higher than at any time in at least 400,000 years, as indicated by archived ice cores from Antarctica.

Until now, major scientific discoveries have invariably established that humans are less than central actors in the physical world. Copernicus upended the notion that the sun revolves around Earth; geologists and biologists have demonstrated the incredibly recent appearance of Homo sapiens on the planet. By contrast, the century-long study of ice reveals "the cumulative, insidious, all-pervading power of people on Earth," Griffiths observes.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Cloning the Neanderthals

THE SOURCE: "Should We Clone Neanderthals?" by Zach Zorich, in ***Archaeology***, March–April 2010.

Nearly 50,000 years ago in northern Spain, 11 Neanderthals were murdered. The circumstances remain mysterious, but the evidence—1,700 broken bones—is today providing scientists with many clues about what color hair Neanderthals had (red), what their skin looked like (pale), and whether they spoke (probably). It's possible that in due time, DNA extracted from those bones or those of another Neanderthal will be implanted in a cell, that cell will be coaxed into multiplying, and, with the right techniques and no shortage of luck, the result will be a living, breathing Neanderthal. Such an achievement will "force the field of paleoanthropology into some unfamiliar ethical territory," writes Zach Zorich, a senior editor at *Archaeology*.

Neanderthals are modern humans' closest extinct relative, having branched off from our line of the family tree some 450,000 years ago. Locked in their DNA could be priceless information for scientists studying diseases that are "largely human-specific, such as HIV, polio, and smallpox." If Neanderthals turn out to be genetically immune to such ailments, it's possible that studying their DNA could lead to gene therapy treatments. But for scientists interested in cloning a Neanderthal, technical hurdles stand in the way. A

A technician touches his drill to a piece of fossilized Neanderthal bone as part of the Neanderthal genome project at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany.

stitched-together genome (since no intact ones exist) would likely be full of errors, and to make it, scientists would have to take several samples, destroying rare bones in the process. One method of cloning—nuclear transfer—tends to produce many sickly organisms that often die. Perfecting the process would "require a horrifying period of trial and error," Zorich explains. Another method—using stem cells—has so far only been tested in mice.

Even if scientists are one day able to clone a Neanderthal, the resulting being would lack "the environmental and cultural factors that would have influenced how the original Neanderthals grew up." One scientist says that the clones would be no more than "neo-Neanderthals."

Bernard Rollin, a bioethicist and professor of philosophy at Colorado State University, doesn't believe that cloning a Neanderthal would be a problem—the issue, he says, is how that clone would be treated once he or she was brought into the world. Would a clone have human rights under the Constitution and international law? How much of a genome needs to be changed before someone is not considered human? Moreover, no one would be creating these clones just on a lark. They'd be created for research—to be studied and experimented on. Wouldn't they need to give their consent?

"The ultimate goal of studying human evolution is to better understand the human race," Zorich writes. "But what if the thing we learned from cloning a Neanderthal is that our curiosity is greater than our compassion?"

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

In With the New

THE SOURCE: "The New Normal" by Emma Marris, in ***Conservation***, April–June 2010.

Conservationists have traditionally focused their efforts on preserving "pristine" ecosystems—those unchanged by modern man—but an upstart brigade of ecologists is calling on the scientific establishment to pay more attention to what they call "novel ecosystems," writes Emma Marris, a writer working on a book about proactive conservation approaches. These are areas not under human management where species that have not previously existed together (and therefore did not evolve together) are now living in the same place. By one estimate, such ecosystems cover 35 percent of the earth, a proportion that is likely to grow.

Ariel Lugo, a scientist in Puerto Rico, has shown that novel ecosystems can be nearly as rich in species as native ones. They may also have more above-ground biomass and use nutrients more efficiently. Sometimes such ecosystems provide much-needed habitats for native species.

Peter Kareiva, chief scientist of The Nature Conservancy, says that studying novel ecosystems helps conservationists to "face the facts and be strategic" rather than try to deny their existence. In some cases, a novel ecosystem may be "better" at what are known as "ecosystem services"—processes that benefit humanity such as filtering water in wetlands, preventing erosion, and sucking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Should such ecosystems merit the same protection as pristine ones, or even more? That's "a question we don't talk about that much," Kareiva admits.

But novel ecosystems have their skeptics. James Gibbs, an ecologist at the State University of New York, Syracuse, warns that increased biodiversity is not inherently a good

thing. For example, in Clear Lake in northern California, the number of fish species has risen from 12 to 25 since 1800. But species that were unique to that lake are long gone. The species there today can be found in many other lakes. Also, genetic diversity may decrease, as plants descended from the small genetic pool of just a few invaders will have more genes in common than those that have evolved and bred over thousands of years.

Ironically, pristine places such as a rainforest or an old-growth forest often require intense human management to keep them that way. But for scientists interested in how environments change and evolve when new species appear, novel ecosystems can be "ideal natural experiments." After all, Marris explains, "it takes a dynamic ecosystem to study ecosystem dynamics."

ARTS & LETTERS

Barnes Storm

THE SOURCE: "No Museum Left Behind" by Lance Esplund, in ***The Weekly Standard***, May 31, 2010.

Many in the art world are celebrating the Barnes Foundation's relocation from Merion, Pennsylvania, to its new home next to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2012 as the long-overdue unlocking of one of the world's premier art collections. But to defenders of the original vision of Albert Coombs Barnes (1872–1951)—and count *CityArts* senior art critic Lance Esplund firmly among that number—the uprooting is a sacrilege, "no different from the destruction of a Gothic cathedral."

The Barnes collection has always excited attention not only because of its scale (conservative appraisals put its worth between $20 billion and $30 billion), but the uniqueness of its arrangement. Barnes eschewed the con-

Henri Matisse called the Barnes Foundation the "only sane place" to view art in America. Above, he gazes upon a painting of his own on display there.

ventional curatorial approach of hanging art chronologically, or by period or "school," preferring to display his masterpieces on the basis of other similarities—in color, subject matter, technique, or artistic sensibility. A Picasso might hang next to an African mask, or a buxom Renoir nude next to similar works by Rubens or Titian. This is not just an idiosyncratic approach. "It is the way artists look at art," Esplund writes. After a 1930 visit to the Barnes Foundation, the French artist Henri Matisse prophesied that the Barnes aesthetic would "destroy the artificial and disreputable presentation of the other collections."

Matisse proved to be overly optimistic, perhaps because only a select few ever saw the collection. While the mercurial Barnes, who made his fortune in pharmaceuticals, was still alive, students had to demonstrate that they were "in earnest" to gain admission; after his death, it took a lawsuit brought by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and its publisher, Walter Annenberg, to force the museum to open to the public in 1961. Since the 1990s, the trend has been to adopt the modus operandi of other museums—raising admission prices, opening a gift shop, and aggressively courting attendance and donations. None of these efforts has offset the dwindling endowment of the foundation, which has struggled to care properly for the masterpieces.

Financial distress left the foundation vulnerable to power brokers such as Pennsylvania governor Edward G. Rendell, the Annenberg Foundation, and officials at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who conditioned aid on the collection's becoming a downtown Philadelphia tourist attraction. But in Esplund's view, though the new museum "will supposedly replicate the scale, proportion, and configuration of the existing galleries, it will be through a Frankenstein's monster–like revivification." Gone will be "Barnes's spectacular and well-thought-out views that lure and entice you from, for example, the forms in a particular Cézanne in one gallery to those in a particular Cézanne or Courbet or Renoir in the next." The loss of the original Barnes, Esplund argues, is another step in the homogenization of museum collections, as larger institutions gobble up the smaller, unique places, often designed, like the Barnes, "to get us closer to the minds of art's makers."

ARTS & LETTERS

Potemkin Translators

THE SOURCE: "The Pevearsion of Russian Literature" by Gary Saul Morson, in ***Commentary***, July–Aug. 2010.

Like Dostoyevsky's saintly Prince Myshkin, literary translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky seemingly can do no wrong. Their recent translations of *Anna Karenina*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *Dead Souls*, among other Russian classics, have garnered praise from such diverse cultural arbiters as *The New Yorker* and Oprah Winfrey. But accolades do not sway Gary Saul Morson, a humanities professor at Northwestern University. In Morson's eyes, P&V, as the two translators, who are married, are known among the literati, churn out "Potemkin translations—apparently definitive but actually flat and fake on close inspection."

Morson holds that P&V's weakness as translators owes a lot to their method. Volokhonsky, a St. Petersburg native, kicks off the process by translating the Russian text into highly literal English, which is then massaged into readability by Pevear, a literature professor from Massachusetts who has only a basic command of his wife's native tongue. That approach gives short shrift to essential literary elements such as context, tone, humor, and timing, Morson says.

> A humanities professor believes the famous Russian translators known as P&V give short shrift to essential literary elements.

Take a passage from Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842). In the 1942 English translation by Bernard Guilbert Guerney, the protagonist, a bureaucrat, settles

into "a very dark cubbyhole, whither he had already brought his overcoat, and together with it, a certain odor all his own, which had been imparted to the bag brought in next, containing sundry flunkeyish effects." "Sundry flunkeyish effects" is true to the spirit of Gogol, Morson asserts, since "Gogol often chooses words less for their meaning than for their humorous sound and resonances." Guerney also stays true to Gogol by ending the passage with a funny image, as in the Russian.

P&V's translation is quite different. In their version, the bureaucrat settles into "a very dark closet, where he had already managed to drag his overcoat and with it a certain smell of its own, which had been imparted to the sack of various lackey toiletries brought in after it." The use of "toiletries" in the P&V version is prompted by the Russian word *tualet* in the original, but Gogol's intention, Morson says, was for *tualet* to be funny and jarring. This effect is achieved by Guerney, but not in the P&V translation.

A handful of instances in which P&V emphasize semantic accuracy over tone and overall meaning round out Morson's indictment of the lauded literary pair. For Morson, a great work of literature is an "experience, not just [a] sequence of signs on a page." If translators are not able to convey that experience, they risk leading readers to think that the book's greatness is the real sham.

ARTS & LETTERS

Forgotten Bauhaus

THE SOURCE: "The Powerhouse of the New" by Martin Filler, in ***The New York Review of Books***, June 24, 2010.

SAY THE WORD *BAUHAUS* AND the thing that pops into just about everyone's mind is Bauhaus architecture, codeword for boring, sleek, soulless, corporate design. This is all a terrible misunderstanding, declares architecture critic Martin Filler. The Bauhaus was not an architectural movement but a school for artists, architects, and designers whose uniqueness was found "not so much [in] its departure from prevailing aesthetic norms—specifically its rejection of historical styles—but rather

EXCERPT

Creation Mists

Just about any person fascinated by books has felt the seductive pull of the writer's archive. Human beings love creation stories, and that's what the researcher hopes to discover: to witness, in retrospect, the birth of a masterpiece. . . . [Sam] Tanenhaus writes excitedly [in The New York Times*] of the trove of materials that went into the making of* Rabbit at Rest*: snapshots of storefronts in a Pennsylvania town, photocopies of pages from medical books on heart disease, a memo from a researcher on sales practices at Toyota dealers, a list of basketball moves. There's even the wrapper from a Planters Peanut Bar, "as lovingly preserved as a pressed autumn leaf," which Tanenhaus imagines [John] Updike using to come up with the novel's vivid description of Rabbit dumping the "sweet crumbs out of the wrapper into his palm and with his tongue lick[ing] them all up like an anteater"—one of those actions we've all done but would be at pains to describe.*

But if these are the keys to a literary universe, where are the locks? None of us, presented with this miscellany of sources, could sit down and write the Rabbit novels. What they actually reveal is how mysterious the essential act of creation is. You might as well gather together Picasso's paint jars, canvas, and easel and try to reconstruct Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, or imagine a ballet by looking at the music, costumes, shoes. What's missing is the alchemy that takes an assortment of random objects and transforms them into a work of art. And that process leaves no trace.*

—**RUTH FRANKLIN**, senior editor of ***The New Republic*** (June 30, 2010)

[in] its systematic recasting of the way in which the fine and applied arts were taught." (Many buildings deemed Bauhaus are actually Modernist works by Modernist stars who had nothing at all to do with the Bauhaus, Filler insists.)

The school was founded in Weimar, Germany, in 1919 and closed at its final location in Berlin (on suspicion of *Kulturbolschewismus*—cultural Bolshevism) when Hitler came to power in 1933. The Bauhaus's key innovation was the *Vorkurs,* "a required introductory class that provided intensive back-to-basics immersion in the fundamentals of color theory and composition." The course was conceived and taught by Johannes Itten, "the extravagantly eccentric, mystically inclined Swiss Expressionist painter . . . an oddball even for a radical art school," who often donned medieval-style robes and sandals and "consumed copious quantities of garlic."

Itten, Filler writes, was "the id to the superego" of architect Walter Gropius, the school's first director. Together, the pair represented "both sides of the Bauhaus's bifurcated nature, at once utopian and pragmatic, intuitive and scientific, highly ordered and subversively anarchic." Itten left the Bauhaus in 1923 in protest over Gropius's intent to focus on commercial prototypes rather than theoretical design.

An exhibit that ran from November 2009 to January 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art, "Bauhaus 1919–1933," offered "an eye-opening experience for those familiar only with the cliché of the Bauhaus as a soulless assembly line of mechanistic design." The show included *Untitled (Pillar With Cosmic Visions)* (1919–1920) by Theobald Emil Müller-Hummel, a wooden sculpture carved from a World War I fighter plane propeller. "Closely resembling an oceanic tribal totem, this *objet trouvé*—taken from an engine of mass destruction and metamorphosed into a talisman of social transformation—movingly summarizes the Expressionist search for spiritual treasure amid the wreckage of industrialized warfare," Filler writes.

Beyond the characters of Itten and Gropius, those interested in understanding the Bauhaus should turn to two artists who exerted a "tremendous" influence on the school, Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946). Kandinsky's "pulsating colors and hyperactive forms" and Moholy-Nagy's innovations with photography and sculpture are a far cry from the Modernist architectural style "Bauhaus" normally evokes.

ARTS & LETTERS

Welty's Southern Discomfort

THE SOURCE: "Intimate Strangers" by Ellen Ann Fentress, in ***The Oxford American***, Issue 69.

Eudora Welty was not only a jewel but an emblem of the South. Richard Wright, self-exiled from home at the age of 17, became a symbol of black anger and empowerment. Both writers hailed from the same small town of Jackson, Mississippi, and were born within nine months of each other—Wright in 1908 and Welty in 1909. Yet they never met.

> Eudora Welty and Richard Wright were born in Jackson, Mississippi, nine months apart, yet they never met.

Ellen Ann Fentress, a writer living in Jackson, ponders why. Though the writers' childhoods—Wright's one of deprivation and discrimination, and Welty's one of privilege and parental pampering—were spent "a Jim Crow galaxy" apart, their careers ran roughly parallel as they worked in the New Deal's Works Progress Administration, published early-career short stories in 1936, came out with well received books (Wright, *Uncle Tom's Children* in 1938 and *Native Son* in 1940; Welty, *A Curtain of Green* in 1941 and *The Robber Bridegroom* the next year), received a Guggenheim each, and won multiple O. Henry awards.

And there were mutual acquaintances to introduce them—the writer Ralph Ellison and the 1940s "literary powerhouse couple" of Edward Aswell (Wright's editor) and Mary Louise Aswell (Welty's close friend). Welty visited both New York City and Paris while Wright was living in those cities, and when Wright's memoir *Black Boy* came out in 1945, she refused *The Journal of Mississippi History*'s request that she review it. The two writers' failure to connect, concludes Fentress, "had to have been deliberate."

While conceding that it is a "slippery business" to speculate about a "relationship that didn't happen," she insists it's worthwhile to consider why

a seemingly inevitable meeting never occurred. In the memoir of *Harper's* editor Willie Morris, *North Toward Home* (1967), Fentress discerns an inkling: Wright was a guilty reminder of the complicity that even a "decent white Southerner" had in a "diseased civilization." As a young man, Morris had sought out Wright in Paris, but the night that the two shared at a bar was awkward, and Morris didn't follow up on Wright's suggestion that they correspond. "He felt that with Wright," Fentress writes, "he was at the wrong end of history's pointing finger." Welty rarely addressed race directly in her work and was afraid of reprisals against her and her mother if she openly defied "local racist customs," but, writes Fentress, she didn't avoid Wright merely out of "petty pragmatism." It wasn't "as much about Wright as about what he set off in a thoughtful, pre–Civil Rights white person."

Why should we care about this "tidbit" of midcentury history? Recently, the FBI reopened 108 cold murder cases from the civil rights era, and in a town south of Jackson, the school board held a "graduation" for 10 members of the class of 1962 who were expelled as seniors for their civil rights activities. The wrongs and shortcomings of the past still resonate. "When we circle back to Southern history in this more evolved time," writes Fentress, "it is because we want to show that we pass our own muster. When we step in to fix past failures, we cast ourselves in the story, too, an outlying speck on the Civil Rights timeline."

OTHER NATIONS

Separate and Unequal in Eastern Europe

THE SOURCE: "Report on Roma Education Today: From Slavery to Segregation and Beyond" by Jack Greenberg, in ***The Columbia Law Review***, May 2010.

African Americans and the Roma of Eastern Europe may live thousands of miles apart, but their histories have taken remarkably similar paths. Both groups suffered centuries of slavery, were emancipated in the middle of the 19th century, and endured decades of poverty and segregation. But around World War II, their stories diverge. In the United States, the civil rights movement began to take shape, while in Europe, the Nazis killed as many as 1.5 million Roma in the Holocaust. Under communism, Roma got jobs and apartments, but they continued to receive inferior educations in segregated schools. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, they were ill prepared to work in a capitalist economy and have since fallen into "staggering" poverty. In some Roma areas, the unemployment rate is 100 percent.

The Roma (also known as Gypsies, though that term is no longer widely used) need to take a page from the civil rights movement's playbook, writes Jack Greenberg, one of the lawyers who argued *Brown v. Board of Education* and the former head of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. In 2003, Roma leaders invited him to Eastern Europe to help them figure out how to desegregate schools. But Greenberg found that the Roma lack the makings of a political movement. Missing were the churches, institutions of higher education, and organized civil-society groups—features of American society that made the civil rights movement not only possible but successful.

Roma arrived in Eastern Europe from northern India perhaps as early as the fourth century. Today, they are one of the fastest-growing groups in Eastern Europe. In the four countries Greenberg studied, Roma make up as little as two to three percent of the population (Czech Republic) to as much as eight to 10 (Bulgaria). Hungary and Romania fall somewhere in between, though the data are rough approximations. Everywhere, Roma are poor and uneducated. Maybe as little as one percent of Roma have a college education, and 70 to 80 percent have not completed primary school.

European law prohibits discrimination against the Roma, and courts at both the European and national levels have ruled in favor of Roma in individual anti-discrimination cases. But the verdicts have been toothless. National authorities, despite passing desegregation laws, have shied away from enforcing them, in part because of a residual, postcommunist resis-

tance to centralized power.

Greenberg says that without a Roma rights movement, there is little hope of achieving integration. Roma scarcely participate in politics at all. There is only one Roma member of the European Parliament, and Roma across the board vote in very low numbers. To complicate matters, some Roma don't support desegregation, fearing that it will lead to assimilation and the loss of their cultural heritage. It's time to put an end to this, says Greenberg. "Europe has dithered long enough with one of the gravest humanitarian and economic crises of our time."

EXCERPT

A Pox on Islands?

An island is a bit of earth that has broken faith with the terrestrial world. This quite naturally gives rise to concern about the reliability and goodwill of these landforms, which have so clearly turned their back on geographical solidarity. Creeping anxiety along these lines likely accounts in some measure for the prominence of islands in the robust literatures of betrayal, solitude, madness, and despair. One is abandoned on islands (Ariadne, Philoctetes), trapped on them (Odysseus, repeatedly), and subjected thereupon to the whims of lunatics (e.g., the islands of doctors No and Moreau). Prisons and penal colonies abound, encircled by an oceanic moat: Devil's Island, Alcatraz, Rikers, Robben Island, Saint Helena, Guantánamo.

—**D. GRAHAM BURNETT**, a historian of science and editor of ***Cabinet*** (Summer 2010)

OTHER NATIONS

Asia's Dying Death Penalty

THE SOURCE: "Asia's Declining Death Penalty" by David T. Johnson, in ***The Journal of Asian Studies***, May 2010.

Over the last 50 years, the prevalence of capital punishment around the world has decreased dramatically. By 1970, a total of 21 countries had abolished capital punishment. Today, 103 have done so, and 36 more have the death penalty on the books but have not executed anyone in at least 10 years. In Europe, Central and South America, and Africa, capital punishment is exceedingly rare. There remain four death penalty strongholds: the United States, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Asia. Asia, home to 60 percent of the world's population, accounts for more than 90 percent of the executions of recent years.

Still, the death penalty's prevalence in Asia is diminishing, writes David T. Johnson, a professor of sociology at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. Of 29 Asian jurisdictions, just 13 have capital punishment and only four—China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Singapore—use it with any frequency. These countries do not provide official data on the number of executions (in China it's a crime to disclose that figure), but Johnson says that China "probably" executed an average of 15,000 people a year between 1998 and 2001. Singapore, with a population only a little larger than Houston's, executed upward of 70 people in 1994 and 1995, approximately as many as Houston did for the entire period from 1976 to 2004—and Houston is "the most aggressive executing jurisdiction in the most aggressive executing state in the most aggressive executing democracy in the world." Fifty-two people were executed in the United States in 2009.

In the last few years the number of executions has fallen dramatically, with just 14 in Singapore between 2005 and 2008 and perhaps as few as 5,000 a year in China by 2008. Many countries (including India, Japan, Thailand, and Muslim-majority nations such as Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia) have instituted temporary death penalty moratoriums in recent decades.

There are two causes behind capital punishment's decline in Asia, and they're the same two that have driven executions down around the world: the fall of authoritarian regimes (which explains abolition in Cambodia, East Timor, and the Philippines) and the ascent of left-liberal parties (which explains execution rate declines in South Korea and Taiwan). The absence of these two factors in Japan may account for continuing use of the death penalty there, Johnson says.

One "noncause": public opinion. "There is strong support for capital punishment everywhere in Asia where the issue has been studied—whatever the execution rate," Johnson notes. The push for abolition tends to come from the "very top of the power structure." It's a delicate irony: Democracies tend to do away with the death penalty, despite widespread support for it.

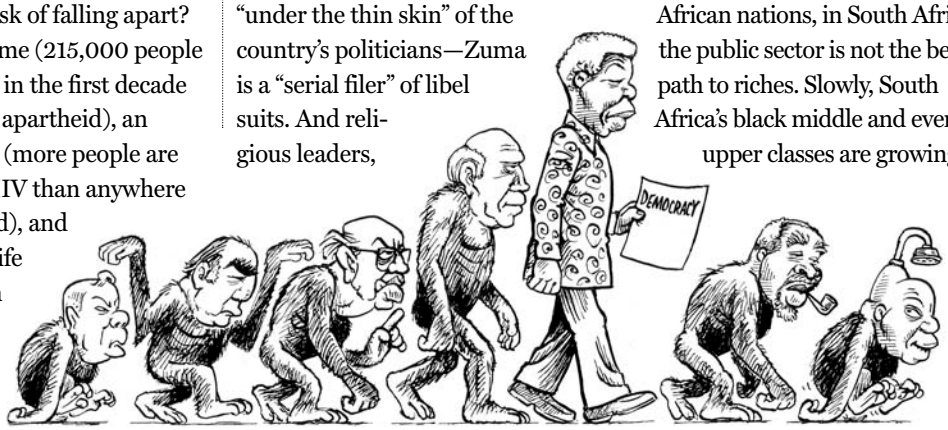
OTHER NATIONS

South Africa's Staying Power

THE SOURCE: "State of Play: How South Africa Became South Africa" by Matthew Kaminski, in ***World Affairs***, July–Aug. 2010.

Is the young South African democracy at risk of falling apart? Widespread crime (215,000 people were murdered in the first decade after the end of apartheid), an AIDS epidemic (more people are infected with HIV than anywhere else in the world), and a government rife with corruption (the current president, Jacob Zuma, disbanded the police's anti-corruption unit upon taking office) certainly stain the miracle of the peaceful transition to full democracy in 1994. But though the political system is "borderline rotten," the fruit around the pit is healthy, argues *Wall Street Journal* editorial board member Matthew Kaminski. An independent press, a large nongovernmental organization (NGO) sector, religion, and private business are all thriving. "These ingredients give hope that South Africa will be able to consolidate its still fragile democracy," Kaminski writes.

In South Africa's democracy, only one party, the African National Congress, wins elections. But the ANC's power does not go unchecked. A robust civil society grew out of the movement that ended apartheid; its various parts—newspapers, activist organizations, churches—have become "surrogate checks and balances to complement those that are ostensibly provided in the constitution." There are more than 26,000 registered NGOs, and many are effective at both providing services the government doesn't and advocating for better policies. Active news media get "under the thin skin" of the country's politicians—Zuma is a "serial filer" of libel suits. And religious leaders, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, are among the ANC's loudest critics.



A critic of President Jacob Zuma depicts the evolution of South Africa's democracy.

A growing private sector is another stakeholder the ANC must now answer to. With Nelson Mandela's leadership, the transition from apartheid fostered warm relationships between the once quasi-communist ANC and the formerly all-white business community. In 1991, after his release from prison but before he became the nation's first president, Mandela said, "The private sector must and will play the central and decisive role in the struggle to achieve many of the [transformation] objectives. . . . We are determined to create the necessary climate that the foreign investor will find attractive." As president, Mandela governed accordingly. The ANC "inherited a debt-ridden state, a closed economy, and a strong but white-dominated private sector. In a few years, budgets were balanced, trade opened, the rand made convertible, and numerous state companies sold." Before the global recession began in 2008, growth had averaged five percent per year. In contrast to the situation in other African nations, in South Africa, the public sector is not the best path to riches. Slowly, South Africa's black middle and even upper classes are growing.

Over time, economic growth will "produce voters who yearn for responsive government that won't endanger their livelihoods," Kaminski believes. In the end, the ANC's economic policies may someday lead to its own downfall, as the political system stabilizes and more parties emerge.

Also in this issue:

Edward Tenner on the Web and our brains

Georgia Levenson Keohane on the World Bank

Thomas Rid on America at war

Michelle Sieff on human rights

Sarah E. Igo on passports

Steven Biel on Grant Wood

James Morris on TV in the 1950s

Andrew Starner on fashion as art

Eric Hand on space exploration

CURRENT BOOKS

REVIEWS OF NEW AND NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

Armed for a Fight

Reviewed by Andrew Exum

THE GUN.

By C. J. Chivers. Simon & Schuster. 481 pp. $28

The real use of gunpowder, essayist Thomas Carlyle wrote, is "that it makes all men tall." As far as inventions go, none have had as democratizing an effect as the rifle. While the battlefield before the advent of firearms was marked by a class system as rigid as the one that ruled the larger society—with armored knights on horseback directing the masses (quite literally beneath them)—rifles and muskets meant that a well-trained peasant could as easily kill a nobleman as vice versa.

The development of small arms is one of the most important evolutionary processes in warfare, though it does not receive nearly as much attention as the periodic introduction of larger weapons systems—tanks, submarines, atomic bombs—from both academics and casual students of military history. Following World War II, entire fields of scholarly inquiry were devoted to how nuclear weaponry might affect the behavior of states and shape the world in which we live. Small arms are more or less assumed to occupy a static place on the battlefield, only driving change, if ever, along the margins.

Implicit in C. J. Chivers's fascinating new history of the development and spread of light automatic weaponry is the argument that while the academy, the military, and the rest of society were busy contemplating nuclear weapons, a quieter revolution in arms was taking place in lesser technologies that deserves at least as much attention. Just before the Soviet Union tested its new atomic bomb in 1949, it began to manufacture and disseminate a light assault rifle of devastating simplicity and durability. That assault rifle, the *Avtomat Kalashnikova,* or AK-47, has killed orders of magnitude more people than atomic weaponry, though its effect on the battlefield is never mentioned in the same breath as that of nuclear weapons. A modified design is still in production today.

Chivers hopes to change that state of neglect. Anyone who has followed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the pages of *The New York Times* and *Esquire* is familiar with his work. He is justly lauded as one of the finest war correspondents of his generation, and he has a former infantryman's eye and ear for the staccato cadences of small-unit

combat. (Upon graduating from Cornell in 1988, Chivers served in the U.S. Marines for six years and led infantrymen in the Gulf War of 1990–91.) As consistently excellent as Chivers's embedded reporting for the *Times* is, his regular posts on the newspaper's "At War" blog about small arms and marksmanship—subjects for which he has an enduring and obvious affinity—are equally enthralling. This book is testament to his erudite understanding of military history and professional interest in gunfighting. The AK-47 has already been the subject of a book by the journalist Larry Kahaner, *AK-47: The Weapon That Changed the Face of War* (2006), but Chivers's effort surpasses that earlier book in both depth and breadth of inquiry.

The first third of Chivers's book is devoted to the history and development of automatic weapons and is nearly the length, at 140 pages, of John Ellis's seminal book, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (1975). Many of Chivers's general themes are similar to Ellis's: The machine gun was introduced to Western armies in the 19th century over the objection of the armies themselves. Senior officers in Western armies—most especially, perhaps, those of Britain and the United States—found machine guns ungentlemanly, and failed to imagine how automatic weaponry might be used to devastating effect both against and in support of their own troops. "The blindness that afflicted the senior officer class was extraordinary," Chivers writes. "In addressing the more difficult questions of developing tactics and doctrine for fighting with and against modern automatic arms, institutional inertia trumped individual intellect."

In some ways, Chivers's decision to tell the story of the AK-47 within the context of automatic weaponry is an odd one. As he has reported, assault rifles, the AK-47 included, are often ineffective when fired in automatic mode. The best and most experienced gunfighters employ assault rifles on semiautomatic, firing rounds either as single shots or controlled pairs. But Chivers is a keen observer of the often subtle shifts in the ways of combat. Vignettes from the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) and the Spanish-American War (1898) illustrate the value of the Gatling gun—a precursor of automatic weapons—and, more generally, the effect of massed fire on infantry formations. Rifle fire—either single-shot, volley, or automatic—can be effective as a means of suppression, forcing enemy fighters to take cover even when it does not immediately kill them. Chivers notes that much of the fire employed by riflemen in World War II was intended to suppress the enemy. A rifle that allowed infantrymen to put more fire downrange would be an advantage to frontline infantry units.

Chivers provides three corrections to the historical record. The first and most obvious is to the narrative advanced by Kahaner, the Soviet authorities, and Mikhail Kalashnikov himself: that the invention and development of the Kalashnikov series of small arms was largely the work of a lone hero of the proletariat. Kalashnikov played a major role in the development of the weapon that bears his name, but Chivers rightly points out that the production and dissemination of the weapon could not have happened outside the massive centralized Soviet system. Portraying the weapon's development as the work of an uneducated enlisted man was part of a Soviet propaganda campaign by Stalin's regime.

Second, where John Ellis in his history saw automatic weaponry as a means to further imperial conquest—especially the colonization of Africa—Chivers points out that in World War I, the machine gun in the hands of the indigenous defenders of German East Africa (now Tanzania) helped to repel a British assault, shaming British officers who were defeated by black African troops. Like the rifle before it, the machine gun was first effectively employed by colonial powers but then leveled the playing field between them and their would-be subjects.

In the same way, Chivers takes aim at the AK-47's iconic status as the weapon of liberation. In the popular imagination, at least, the AK-47 is forever associated with plucky freedom fighters resist-

Armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, a young boy rides with Sudanese rebels near the Chad border.

ing Western hegemony. But as Chivers notes, the first time the Kalashnikov was employed outside the Soviet Union, it was used to brutally repress burgeoning freedom movements in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, in 1953, and Hungary, in 1956. More often than not, the AK-47 has been a tool in the service of repression and autocracy.

Chivers, like Kahaner, seems to want to draw larger conclusions about the evolving character of war from the story of the AK-47, but I am not sure that the spread of irregular war can be so easily linked to the spread of small arms. One should also not overstate the importance of the assault rifle in the successes of nonstate actors on the battlefield. Though the AK-47, held in a raised fist, enjoys privilege of place on the flag of Hezbollah, it was not through coordinated infantry assaults but through roadside bombs, antitank rockets, and a savvy propaganda campaign that Israel and its allies were driven from Lebanon in the 1990s. The same tactics are evident in Iraq and Afghanistan today. As Chivers himself has written elsewhere, Iraqi and Afghan insurgents are, by and large, comically poor marksmen. What successes they have enjoyed against U.S. and allied soldiers are due more to improvised explosive devices and the tried-and-true insurgent tactics of protraction and exhaustion than to effective use of the AK-47, though it remains ubiquitous in both countries.

The most important lessons from this book concern not the effect of the AK-47 on the modern battlefield, but rather the ineptitude displayed by the British and U.S. armies in adapting to automatic weaponry in World War I, and later by the U.S. Army in developing a capable alternative to the AK-47.

Given the stakes involved in combat, readers could be forgiven for imagining that military organizations are among the most flexible and pragmatic of bureaucracies. In reality, though, they are among the most hidebound and resistant to innovation, in large part due to the organizational cultures that take root and instruct the officer corps not only about what war is but what war *should* be. Challenges to military culture are often successful only when accompanied by exceptionally strong leadership or the kind of external shock that follows a disastrous defeat. The weapons acquisition process is

usually slower to change than are units in the field. Time and again, in Chivers's account, the fates of mud-caked infantrymen in far-off lands were determined by procurement and budgeting decisions made in London and Washington.

The British rifleman in World War I was betrayed by his uniformed leadership in two ways. Even after German machine guns (built on a variant of American-born inventor Hiram Maxim's model) decimated British ranks at the Somme, the British continued to lionize close-in bayonet fighting as decisive, though, as Chivers memorably writes, it reduced the Enfield rifle to "a 20th-century spear." It was not until late in the war that infiltration tactics were developed to mitigate the horrific defensive advantages the machine gun offered in trench warfare. Second, consistent with Barry Posen's argument in *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (1984) that strong civilian intervention is required to spur military innovation, only at the urging of statesman David Lloyd George did the British army finally acquire enough machine guns for each of its battalions.

Even the hard lessons of combat don't quickly penetrate organizational culture. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps were victimized by an insular Army Ordnance Corps that had failed to commission or develop an assault rifle to match the AK-47 carried by the Viet Cong and their North Vietnamese allies. With the rest of the nation focused on the development of nuclear weapons, the leaders of the Ordnance Corps had, as Chivers puts it, "lost the arms race of their lives." Although the M-16 and its variants eventually developed into fine rifles and carbines, superior to the AK-47 in most ways, U.S. infantrymen in Vietnam were badly outmatched for the duration of the war.

Though I have never met Chivers, we have much in common: Like him, I am a recovering infantryman who takes delight in the esoterica of small arms and rifle ballistics. I am unsure how much enjoyment the non-specialist will take from this excellent contribution to the field of security studies. If it is half as much as mine, though, Chivers's book will be well worth reading.

Andrew Exum is a fellow at the Center for a New American Security. A veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, he grew up in East Tennessee and learned how to shoot with a Winchester Model 68 when he was about 10 years old.

No-Brainer?

Reviewed by Edward Tenner

THE SHALLOWS: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains.

By Nicholas Carr. W.W. Norton. 276 pp. $26.95

COGNITIVE SURPLUS: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age.

By Clay Shirky. Penguin Press. 242 pp. $24.95

Two recent books on the future of media go against the grain of their authors' professions. Nicholas Carr is a journalist who has written mostly for business and technology publications but has courageously challenged some of his readers' most cherished assumptions. In *Does IT Matter?* (2004), he argued that the transformative power of corporate computing is overrated. In *The Shallows* he goes further, questioning the faith of many computer industry leaders that the Web can enhance thinking and accelerate learning.

Clay Shirky, on the other hand, is a tenured professor at a major private research university, whose heart is clearly with the amateur upstarts who doubt the need for scholarly hierarchy. While Carr does not address Shirky's earlier book *Here Comes Everybody* (2008) directly, he does cite a blog post Shirky wrote that dismisses the reverence for literary classics such as *War and Peace* and *In Search of Lost Time* as the "side-effect of living in an environment of impoverished access," before today's digital

abundance. Carr fears that Shirky's remark reflects not just a provocative pose but an emerging "post-literary mind."

The conflict exemplified by these two authors is, in Internet time, already old. It can be traced back at least as far as Bill Gates's *The Road Ahead* (1995), in which the Microsoft chairman predicted that the Web would revolutionize reading and dedicated his millions in royalties to educational technology. The classic opposition salvo, Sven Birkerts's *The Gutenberg Elegies,* appeared even earlier, in 1994. Gates is still financing electronic learning, and Birkerts is still lamenting it.

Of the books at hand, *The Shallows* is the longer and more earnest. The center of Carr's argument is that the current media environment is destroying the ideal and practice of rich, contemplative reading—not always realized, but a norm of Western education—with a steady diet of electronic distraction. Carr turns the early enthusiasm for the Internet on its head. Hypertext, with its ability to jump to new pages when a reader clicks a mouse on highlighted words, appeared ready to fulfill the dream of engineer visionaries such as Vannevar Bush of linking all knowledge. But in Carr's analysis, the ability to navigate away from conventional text to richer but more distracting resources turns out to be a bug, not a feature.

Carr has assembled a formidable body of scientific studies on the negative consequences of new media. At the core of this research is neuroplasticity, the brain's seemingly endless ability to reconfigure itself in response to new stimuli, as established in more than 30 years of experiments by the neuroscientist Michael Merzenich, whose work Carr deeply and rightly admires. Heavy use of the Internet, according to Merzenich and the neuropsychiatrist Gary Small, strengthens some of the brain's processes and weakens others, as neurons and synapses are shifted to the functions in greatest demand.

Magnetic resonance imaging of people while they are using the Internet shows that intensive users of Google, for example, activate a zone of the brain called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, little used by Web novices. The speed of the brain's adaptation is also remarkable. Beginners, after only five days of one-hour Web-surfing sessions, begin to use the same area as Internet veterans. MRIs performed on people while they read books show that they use regions linked to language, memory, and vision; surfers call on prefrontal sites of decision making and problem solving.

The cognitive neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf has argued that the rapid-fire decision making required to pause, evaluate, and click on links impedes our ability to make the deep connections associated with reading traditional texts. And there is evidence that the distractions of surfing raise the barrier between short-term and long-term memory that must be bridged before we can achieve a rich understanding. Carr is right to contrast the technological impact of the pocket calculator, which freed the brain from its cognitive load and promoted the transfer of concepts to long-term memory, with that of hypertext, which taxes our working memory more.

Nicholas Carr argues that the Internet is destroying contemplative reading with a steady diet of electronic distraction.

Not all of Carr's examples are as persuasive. Studies of road safety support his point that multitasking tends to degrade humans' mental performance across the board, and it's true that television viewers remember less when a news crawl and information graphics appear onscreen than when they see and hear only the announcer. But what does it mean if volunteers who watch a presentation enhanced with sound and video remember less and report less enjoyment of the experience than those who view the text alone? Results might be different with better media materials; think of the powerful impact of photography and video on the efficacy of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. And perhaps somebody who experiences an inspiring multimedia presentation will in the long run be more motivated to read deeply into a subject than someone who recalls more of a straight lecture or text—as in the old adage that education is what's left after you've forgotten everything on the exam.

Carr sometimes implies that Web users have no choice but to click on every link they come across. That's not my experience; in fact, I've found so many links to be trivial that I usually don't bother following them. And for serious study, isn't following a hyperlink less distracting than the old process of tracking down a footnote's source in a book or bound journal? Carr cites a researcher who fears that London taxi drivers who use new satellite navigation technologies may weaken the area of their brains enlarged by memorizing geography before the introduction of GPS; doesn't this suggest that the brain's changes, at least in adults, are reversible, that neuroplasticity works both ways? (It's true, though, as Wolf and others have urged, that we should be cautious about technology's impact on young people's developing brains.)

Clay Shirky shares Carr's low opinion of television. But while Carr regards the Web as a failed attempt to rescue serious reading from the remote control, Shirky still takes the early cooperative idealism of the Web seriously. He reminds us that cultural critics such as Harvey Swados wondered whether the paperback revolution that began in the 1930s was going to increase access to classics or flood the market with trash. It did both. Information abundance multiplies the quantity of low-grade material and reduces the average quality of media, but it also enables the experimentation that is essential to keeping a culture alive and dynamic.

The Internet is a revolutionary medium in that it allows millions of people and organizations to share ideas collaboratively at low cost, as book readers, television viewers, and even telephone users cannot. Shirky rejects the notion, advanced by Carr on his own blog, that the work of YouTube and Facebook contributors is "digital sharecropping," uncompensated and exploitive labor for the shareholders and executives of Web media companies. Shirky counters that social networking sites are sought for "sharing rather than production," that contributors' works are "labors of love," and that users desert companies that abuse their trust. In Shirky's view, the Web is enabling a new style of generous common culture as an alternative to the professionally created conventional media that prevailed in times of information scarcity. He sees the social Web expanding from personal expression to group mutual help, and ultimately to public and civic projects that can transform society.

Shirky, like Carr, overstates valid points. For one thing, he exaggerates the conflict between amateurs and professionals. Both have long helped and complemented each other in scientific fields such as astronomy and ornithology. Many "generous" contributors to the Web are really aspiring pros who still dream of attracting conventional agents and publishers. The nonprofessional volunteers who work on Wikipedia articles frequently insert calls for better documentation—in practice, that usually means the work of career academics and journalists. And lay collaboration is better for assembling facts than synthesizing them. That's one reason for the survival of the print edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* despite all predictions voiced in the 1990s that it would become obsolete.

Both authors invoke history, but their examples don't always support their points. Consider Carr's technological determinism. He cites the early medieval substitution of space between words for the unbroken *scriptura continua* of ancient Latin as evidence that media technology reshapes our thinking. Yet the change reflected not the advent of a new pen or writing surface but the need of early medieval Irish monks to teach Latin texts efficiently to speakers of non-Romance languages. Mechanical clocks arose as a result of religious orders' quest for punctual observance, not the other way around. Nor did print-era cultural authorities always welcome reading as a form of mental self-discipline. In *The Nature of the Book* (1998), which Carr doesn't mention, Adrian Johns cites the natural philosopher Robert Boyle, who was prescribed romances to cure his melancholy, but found that fiction "accustom'd his Thoughts to such a Habi-

tude of Raving, that he has scarce ever been their quiet Master since."

Carr also reaches surprising conclusions on more recent media history. He considers Google a product of the efficiency movement instigated in the early 20th century by Frederick Winslow Taylor, when it is really the opposite in spirit, even if both are dedicated to reducing effort. Taylor preached benevolent imposition of a single scientifically determined method and tool for each job, disdaining workers' individual and collective knowledge. As a search engine, Google rejects prescriptive, hierarchical library classification systems; it's an organized anarchy (to quote a classic definition of the market) aiming to give users not necessarily what they ought to have but what most people entering a search term are looking for. Taylor's procedures had to be followed to the letter; Google's options encourage personalization.

Shirky, too, sometimes misdirects his historical examples. Printed vernacular Bibles may have initially interrupted "the interpretive monopoly of the clergy," but Protestant leaders were soon persecuting Unitarians, Anabaptists, and others for their heretical readings of Scripture. London's scientific Royal Society may have exemplified the cooperative spirit, but it was no protodemocracy; the society was originally limited to gentlemen and denied recognition to the craftsmen who actually performed many of the experiments it published. Shirky also argues that the gin craze in early-18th-century London ended with the social and political integration of the city's poor. But his dates are fuzzy; the (male) working class did not get the vote until 1867, more than a century after the fad's end. Rising alcohol prices had more to do with the change. Besides, there was another gin mania in London in the early 19th century.

It is in prognosis that Shirky has the edge over Carr. Carr holds out some hope of stemming the tide of distraction, but toward the end of *The Shallows* he confesses to backsliding into following social networking sites, a captive of his own technological determinism. Shirky, rejecting inevitability arguments, ends with a more nuanced view of the possibilities and some memorably epigrammatic advice (e.g., "Intimacy doesn't scale" and "Clarity is violence"). Those who would save deep reading and a place for print need not more elegists but a Shirky of their own.

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World Leader

Reviewed by Georgia Levenson Keohane

A GLOBAL LIFE: My Journey Among Rich and Poor, From Sydney to Wall Street to the World Bank.

By James D. Wolfensohn. PublicAffairs. 462 pp. $29.95

In August, the World Bank redirected nearly a billion dollars in aid to Pakistan from development projects to emergency flood relief. Weeks of heavy rain had left millions of Pakistanis without food, shelter, clean water, or medical care. Media coverage was sparse, and private donors—on vacation? fatigued from Haitian earthquake relief?—few and far between. The World Bank, however, responded immediately to the disaster. While this might seem a natural role for a well-capitalized international institution, crisis intervention has not been the business of the bank for much of its history. The shift in recent years is due in no small part to James Wolfensohn, World Bank president during the tumultuous decade from 1995 to 2005.

The World Bank got its start in 1944, when the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—which, together with the International Development Association, constitutes the bank today—was founded to help rebuild the decimated economies of Europe after World War II. That mission, vast as it was, is modest compared with the broader one that evolved over time: poverty alleviation in developing countries. Today, the World Bank, which is owned and governed by 187 member countries and has 10,000 employees worldwide, dispenses tens of billions of dollars in loans and grants every year. The challenges of effectively directing this behemoth are amply illustrated in James Wolfensohn's memoir *A Global Life*.

Born in a suburb of Sydney, Australia, in 1933, to parents who had left a comfortable existence in London only to encounter financial straits Down Under, Wolfensohn initially seemed to buckle under the pressures from home. It was not until his second year at the University of Sydney that he began to excel. He learned to fence (and competed in the 1956 Olympic Games), went to law school, then moved to the United States to attend Harvard Business School. Wolfensohn quickly learned the ropes of corporate finance and joined the ranks of the banker-titans at Schroders and Salomon Brothers before opening his own advisory firm. In 1995, when Wolfensohn was tapped to head the World Bank, *The New York Times* described him as "a Renaissance man": He was a spectacularly successful financier by day, and an accomplished cellist and chair of Washington's Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in his off hours.

It was this ambition that landed Wolfensohn at the World Bank. By custom, the World Bank president is an American and the International Monetary Fund's managing director a European. In 1981, when Wolfensohn learned that he was on President Jimmy Carter's list of potential nominees for the bank post, he immediately applied for the requisite U.S. citizenship, though he was ultimately passed over for Alden Clausen. In 1994, he discovered that he was again being considered for the bank's top spot, this time by President Bill Clinton. To hear Wolfensohn tell it, he quietly put out feelers to Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and Clinton confidant Vernon Jordan. But according to journalist Sebastian Mallaby's insightful account of Wolfensohn's battles at the bank, *The World's Banker* (2004), Wolfensohn wanted the job with a "10 million–volt passion" and enlisted every member of his vast network to lobby on his behalf.

When Wolfensohn arrived at the bank, it was under fire from both left and right. By the early 1990s, it had grown decidedly market oriented, reflecting the neoliberal economic orthodoxy (the "Washington Consensus") of its largest donors, including the United States and Britain. Lending was conditioned on "structural adjustment" programs that prescribed market deregulation and privatization, debt repayment, deficit reduction, and cuts in government spending. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), officials in recipient countries, and academics charged, often rightly, that the bank had championed economic growth at the expense of social, cultural, and environmental concerns, and that the costs of implementing its policies frequently resulted in even greater poverty and political instability.

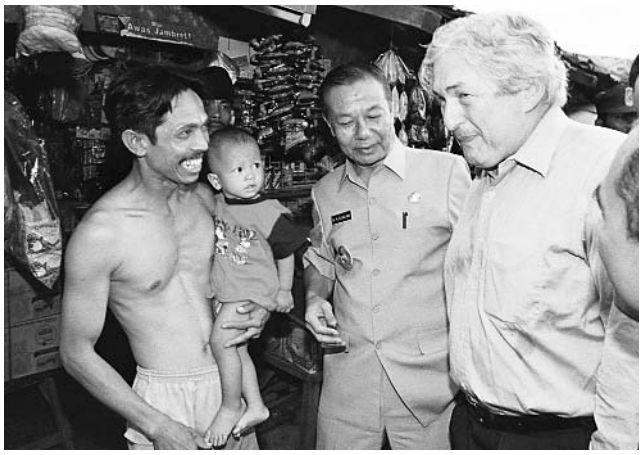
Two weeks into his tenure, Wolfensohn and his wife, Elaine (who joined him on nearly all of his bank travels), embarked on a five-nation sub-Saharan tour, beginning in Mali. On this trip—the first of more than 120 country visits during his two terms—he witnessed firsthand the perverse effects of "debt overhang": impoverished countries forced to take on new bank loans simply to repay old ones, with nothing for infrastructure projects or social programs. Under Wolfensohn, debt forgiveness became a priority for the bank, made manifest in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, a joint debt relief program with the International Monetary Fund. And, breaking with tradition, Wolfensohn tried to engage the NGOs that railed against the bank. Often these conversations took place in the field, with representatives from high-profile nonprofits

such as Oxfam as well as more indigenous environmental and human rights organizations.

Wolfensohn's forays persuaded him of the futility of supporting kleptocratic regimes in places such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Haiti. Traditionally, the World Bank had avoided the word "corruption" on the grounds that it should stay out of politics, but at the bank's annual meeting in 1996, Wolfensohn delivered a now famous speech on the "cancer of corruption," describing it as an enormous obstacle to development and calling for more rigorous measures to combat it. Although there was near consensus on the importance of good governance, the new focus on corruption proved controversial—within the bank as well as outside of it. Some argued that the bank's standard for corruption was hard to define and selectively applied. Moreover, a hard line on corruption was at odds with Wolfensohn's drive to improve the bank's responsiveness to client needs—as defined by the countries themselves. This tension was particularly pronounced in places such as Indonesia, where the World Bank helped to foster extraordinary economic growth and dramatically reduced poverty under the regime of a ruthless and corrupt military dictator.

Wolfensohn also reshaped what he believed was the World Bank's "relevance" in political and humanitarian emergencies. Historically, the bank had focused on long-term economic development. "For a change of policy," Wolfensohn explains, "we needed a trigger." In August 1995, the U.S. special envoy to Bosnia and two other high-level American negotiators died in a car crash outside Sarajevo. President Clinton received the news while vacationing in Jackson Hole the day he was to celebrate his 49th birthday at a party at Wolfensohn's home there. Instead, the two met to discuss how the bank, which already had a team on the ground preparing for postconflict reconstruction, could help. Even though fighting had not yet concluded, the bank's team prepared a seminal needs assessment for rebuilding that helped lay the groundwork for the Dayton peace talks that fall. The bank played a similar role in East Timor in 1999, when it established an internal postconflict unit. In 2004, the bank responded rapidly—in concert with the United Nations—to the Asian tsunami, and it was on the ground quickly in crisis-beset places such as Turkey.

Wolfensohn recalls that his "willingness to break eggs" to get things done ruffled feathers, but he glosses over the pace and tone of the shakeup. Career specialists bristled at what they perceived as hubris and naiveté on the part of a brash newcomer. In 1999, when Wolfensohn presented his "New Development Framework"—a unified theory of development according to Jim



World Bank president James Wolfensohn, right, chats with slum dwellers in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 1998.

Wolfensohn—some greeted it with derision. Calls for a more holistic approach to human development—to put poverty rather than economic growth front and center in the bank's work, to make lending more "participatory" by allowing clients to define their own needs—were hardly new. Ultimately, however, the question of whether Wolfensohn's articulation represents original, or simply good, thinking about poverty relief is less important than whether what he was doing worked.

In his second term, during which George W. Bush was president, Wolfensohn lacked the kindred spirit and worldview he had enjoyed with Clinton. The new administration was skeptical about the bank's efficacy, and as the United

States grew increasingly unilateralist, Wolfensohn contended with an international board of directors that did not share the American appetite for war in Iraq or protracted engagement in Afghanistan. In 2002 the bank established its first ground office in Afghanistan since 1979, but rebuilding activities were stymied by ongoing conflict, corruption, and a brisk drug trade. In 2003, it was shut out of the Pentagon's planning for reconstruction in Iraq but was later pressed to help with nation-building. Still, Wolfensohn was buoyed by global enthusiasm for poverty alleviation. An international coalition of nonprofits mounted the Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt relief for poor countries, and the United Nations' member countries pledged through the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty and to improve health, education, and development assistance by 2015.

Since Wolfensohn's presidency, the global economic crisis has exacerbated entrenched poverty around the world. According to World Bank figures, nearly half of the world's six billion people still live on less than two dollars a day; when factors such as education, health care, and credit access are taken into account, the picture is even direr in some of the world's poorest places. The Obama administration, which has been occupied with two expensive military conflicts and a number of domestic policy battles, is only now beginning to articulate a comprehensive international development strategy.

In the meantime, under the leadership of former U.S. trade representative Robert Zoellick, the bank has ratcheted up its commitments to crisis locales including various African states, earthquake-ravaged Haiti, and now Pakistan. Many of the additional billions have come from developing countries themselves—countries that are now the engines of global economic growth. In exchange, the bank recently changed its voting structure to give nations such as China (now its third-largest shareholder), Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam greater say in running the place, and is considering ways to shift the balance of power further, including, quite possibly, the inauguration of a non-American president. Perhaps more than the legacy of any leader (even one of Wolfensohn's wattage), it is the more prominent role of developing countries in determining bank policy that will redefine the institution: a brave new World Bank for the new economic order.

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CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

American Conspiracy

Reviewed by Thomas Rid

WASHINGTON RULES: America's Path to Permanent War.

By Andrew J. Bacevich. Henry Holt. 286 pp. $25

Over the past five years, Andrew Bacevich has emerged as one of the most prolific and eloquent critics of American foreign policy. In several influential books and essays, Bacevich, a professor of international relations and history at Boston University, has often walked the fine line between scholarship and mass-audience opinionating. As a self-styled realist, he has mostly crafted these positions with detached, historically balanced analysis.

Washington Rules breaks with this trend: It is the passionate, personal, and polemical story of how Bacevich, as an Army officer visiting Berlin in 1990, embarked on an educational journey that led him to discover the ideological roots of America's path to permanent war. At times *Washington Rules* articulates a sophisticated critique of the United States' global ambitions. But with this book, Bacevich is dancing along another line. He now has at

least one foot in the murky territory of conspiracy theory.

The first indicator is Bacevich's obsessive use of dogma and quasi-religious language. The country is run not by presidents and senators, but by something bigger, the "Washington rules." These rules start with the "credo": All presidents from Harry S. Truman to Barack Obama have faithfully adhered to a "catechism" of American statecraft founded on four assertions: (1) The world must be organized and "shaped." (2) America, and only America, has the vision, the will, and the wisdom to lead and enforce this global order. (3) America has articulated the principles that govern the international order, and these principles are, not surprisingly, American ones. (4) The world, despite occasional complaints, wants the United States to lead.

The other half of the Washington rules consists of the "sacred trinity": the convictions that the United States must maintain a global military presence, that it must configure its forces to project power globally, and that it must counter anticipated threats around the world with interventions. The credo and the trinity—terms Bacevich uses throughout the book—promise prosperity and peace but, in effect, usher in the opposite: insolvency and perpetual war.

Washington Rules imposes a grand and simplifying scheme on a vast set of complex facts. Consider Bacevich's explanation of the Washington rules' origins: the cloak-and-dagger world of Cold War spies and the hidden Air Force command centers where cigar-chomping four-star generals devised strategies for nuclear overkill. The most important masterminds were Allen Dulles, the first and most influential director of the CIA, and Curtis LeMay, the first and most influential commander of the Strategic Air Command, the agency that was in charge of nuclear war. These two "semiwarriors," as Bacevich calls them with a curl of his lip, "left an indelible mark on our age." He describes how the Washington rules and America's global footprint survived the defeat in Vietnam as well as the demise of the Soviet Union, aided by legions of semiwarriors on the left and the right, apparently uninfluenced by partisan politics. President Bill Clinton's secretary of defense, William Cohen, conserved the rules, and his secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, midwifed them into the 21st century. President George W. Bush's defense team, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, applied them in Afghanistan and Iraq.

For Bacevich, there is an obvious "chain of events" that paved the way to 9/11: the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran in 1953; America's "deference" to Israel after the 1960s; U.S. dealings with Saddam Hussein in the 1980s; Washington's support for jihadis in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan; and the Gulf War in 1990–91. If George W. Bush had acknowledged the connection between these policies and the fall of the Twin Towers, Washington's sacred dogma would have been called into question, so he deliberately ignored it. Instead, under the Bush administration, the standard of debate fell to a level "hitherto achieved only by slightly mad German warlords."

For Andrew Bacevich, there is an obvious chain of events that paved the way to 9/11.

Bacevich carefully acknowledges that the Washington "elite" is not all-knowing and often just doesn't get it. Yet, especially when he discusses recent examples, he unearths willful deceit. General David Petraeus's counterinsurgency doctrine, for instance, is dismissed as "counterfeit coin," a strategy that only gives the *appearance* of purpose to military activity, and in truth is a recipe for more and more wars in the various broken quarters of the world. Bacevich dismisses the threat of Islamic terrorism in a nonchalant way, shrugs off the geopolitical relevance of the Middle East and Central Asia, and disregards mad dictators eager to get their hands on nuclear weapons. Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Kim Jong Il are ridiculed as not more than "a motley collection of B-list foes"; North Korea, Syria, and Cuba are derided as "pygmies." America and its allies seem to have no A-list enemies. Consequently, there is no need for Bacevich to suggest alternative policies beyond just "getting out."

This book is a pity. U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and Central Asia, driven by ideology and now hope, is indeed producing more and more questionable outcomes. An authoritative and constructive critique by an outsider with an insider's knowledge would be highly welcome. *Washington Rules* offers a few illuminating glimpses, but no balanced view. Bacevich ends up doing a great service to his reviled semiwarriors by handing them a straw man they will manage to shoot down with ease.

Thomas Rid is a visiting scholar at the University of Konstanz in Germany and was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2009. His most recent book, *Understanding Counterinsurgency,* was published earlier this year.

Poor Man's Bank

Reviewed by Jeremy Lott

BROKE, USA: From Pawnshops to Poverty, Inc.—How the Working Poor Became Big Business.

By Gary Rivlin. HarperBusiness. 358 pp. $26.99

The poor we may always have with us, but must they always get a raw deal? That's the question award-winning journalist Gary Rivlin poses in *Broke, USA*. "Poverty, Inc.," is the somewhat loaded term he uses to describe financial services firms that cater to the working poor—people in American households making up to about $30,000 a year. Normally these folks scrape by, living paycheck to paycheck. But once a year they are flush with cash. Thanks to the Earned Income Tax Credit, they receive lump-sum payments from the federal government, often equivalent to two or three months' salary.

There are many reasons for persistent working poverty—from single parenthood to injury and disease to just plain awful luck. But this once-a-year payday has arguably made things worse by encouraging poor habits. Instead of trying to conserve some of their scarce resources to build capital or deal with unexpected expenses, poorer Americans are more likely to spend every penny of their current paycheck before the next one comes. They rely on their income tax "refunds" (an inaccurate term because poor Americans receive back far more than was withheld from their paychecks) to pull them out of the financial sinkhole.

To get by between paychecks or to absorb unexpected expenses (e.g., a broken-down vehicle), they often need to borrow money. Because of their meager incomes and cyclical spending, they can't get the sort of credit that is available to America's middle class. That's where Poverty, Inc., comes in. In Rivlin's telling, that's also where the problem starts.

From any one or two poor Americans, there is not a lot of money to be made. But poor people's numbers add up to a market that is extremely lucrative for lenders willing to take some added risks—Rivlin estimates revenues of roughly $100 billion a year, a figure that has seen a meteoric rise over the last two decades as mom-and-pop operations have given ground to large, publicly traded corporations such as Dollar Financial Corporation and Cash America International. Some of these business models are very old, while others are of more recent vintage: pawnshops, check-cashing centers, payday loan shops, instant refunders, lenders that specialize in "subprime" loans.

These institutions extend credit to the poor, but at a steep price. Big payday lenders such as

Temptations abound for low-income customers to cash out—for a price.

Moneytree are particularly reviled for the high rates they charge customers. Payday loans are small advances—usually $200 to $500—to people with jobs who need cash right this minute. The customer writes a postdated check for the amount of the loan plus a hefty fee. Voters in Ohio recently chased many payday lenders out of the state after they learned that these fees were the equivalent, in some cases, of interest rates as high as 391 percent per year.

Payday lenders complain about the unfairness of the comparison. These are not long-term loans, they say. If you were to express the rental rate of a $29-a-day compact car on a yearly basis, it would total more than $10,000. Switching back and forth between outraged consumer advocates and outraged businessmen, Rivlin reports scrupulously on both sides of the fight over the ethics of payday lending and other financial services for the poor. Ultimately, however, he concludes that the poor are being exploited, and that the government needs to step in with more regulations that would shut some lenders down.

But exploited compared to what? Rivlin only glancingly considers the question. He quotes the CEO of a credit union as saying that rather than take out a payday loan, "I'd say go get a loan shark. . . . They're cheaper." The remark is both telling and damning. Loan sharks are cheaper because they must absorb fewer defaults. They have fewer defaults because, unlike payday lenders, they are willing literally to beat the money out of their customers.

Is it worth a few hundred dollars to avoid the threat of broken arms and busted kneecaps? That's not an academic question, and I confess a personal interest here. My family is doing fine now, thank God, but we went through economic rough patches when I was growing up and made use of the services of Poverty, Inc. Rivlin might say we were exploited—but it beat the hell out of the alternative.

Jeremy Lott is an editor for the Web site Real Clear Politics (www.realclearpolitics.com) and the author of *William F. Buckley* (2010).

Immoderate America

Reviewed by Ethan Porter

THE DISAPPEARING CENTER: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy.

By Alan I. Abramowitz. Yale Univ. Press. 194 pp. $35

Nearly 50 years ago, sociologist Philip Converse published his landmark article "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in which he presented polling data showing that most American voters lacked coherent ideologies. Now, Emory University political scientist Alan I. Abramowitz has turned this notion on its head. In his important and persuasive book *The Disappearing Center*, he argues that voters today take their ideologies quite seriously. His analysis of survey data stretching back several decades leads him to believe that Americans "are more interested in politics, better informed about public affairs, and more politically active than at any time during the past half-century." Everyone knows how polarized our politics have become. Abramowitz points out that this is so in large part because we have become more politically engaged.

Abramowitz's findings refute the notion that polarization is only an inside-the-Beltway phenomenon foisted on a reluctant electorate. At the start of the 1960s, he observes, less than 40 percent of Americans identified as strongly partisan; by 2004, more than 60 percent did. The liberal and conservative ideologies have ossified in voters' minds, and become inseparable from the parties they call home. Abramowitz's survey data shows that the strength of the relationship between partisanship and ideology has nearly doubled over the last 30 years. Meanwhile, *pace* his title, the center has all but disappeared.

This is startling. The consensus view of American politics, especially among political operatives, holds that primaries are for base voters and general elections are for persuadable moderates, whose votes get politicians over the finish line. But today, if Abramowitz is right, base voters are where most of the action is.

An engaged public, as Abramowitz notes, is a

sign of a healthy democracy—especially when the parties in power respond to that engagement. Yet as he recognizes in his closing pages, polarization presents serious problems for governance. American politics is structurally embedded with numerous anti-majoritarian features. In particular, in the Senate, states have power disproportionate to their population, and individual senators have immense capacity to stymie legislation. When its opponents are unified, the majority party can find it very difficult to accomplish much of anything, as the Democrats have learned over the past two years.

For whatever reason, Abramowitz ends up glossing over the perverse result of this dynamic: While moderate citizens are a diminishing class, moderate legislators have grown more powerful, sometimes playing roles of near-presidential importance. Because the Obama administration desperately needed Senator Joseph Lieberman's vote to pass its health care bill last spring, for example, his opposition alone doomed a major provision that would have allowed uninsured Americans ages 55 to 64 to purchase Medicare coverage. The center may be disappearing in the electorate, but the same cannot be said of Washington. If the will of the majority is to prevail, then, as Abramowitz well knows, our political institutions must be reordered. Unfortunately, though he offers a trenchant analysis, he stops disappointingly short of even attempting to describe how this could be brought about.

Ethan Porter is a contributing editor of *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas.*

HISTORY

A Law Unto Itself

Reviewed by Michelle Sieff

THE LAST UTOPIA: Human Rights in History.

By Samuel Moyn. Belknap/Harvard. 337 pp. $27.95

Columbia University historian Samuel Moyn has written the first sober history of the doctrine of human rights. His book *The Last Utopia*—together with David Rieff's *A Bed for the Night* (2002) and Paul Berman's *Power and the Idealists* (2005)—is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand the origins of our modern foreign-policy vocabulary.

Though many historians have traced human rights to the Enlightenment notion of the "rights of man," Moyn draws a useful conceptual distinction. The "rights of man" described a "politics of citizenship at home," in which the nation-state was seen as the ultimate locus of rights. But human rights activism implies a "politics of suffering abroad," in which states are generally viewed as the problem. In this sense, the historical struggles of Jews, women, and blacks for the rights of citizenship—protections afforded by the state—were different from modern human rights struggles.

"Human rights" entered wide English parlance in the 1940s. In his 1941 Four Freedoms speech justifying America's possible entry into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed that freedom meant "the supremacy of human rights everywhere." The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights codified and defined the concept of human rights in international law.

Moyn emphasizes that the human rights slogan failed for many years to percolate into the wider political discourse. Postwar anticolonialists invoked the principle of self-determination, not individual human rights. They were more interested in creating states than restraining them. Western sympathizers of anticolonial movements draped their idealism in the more militant doctrines of Marxist "Third Worldism."

Activism based on the human rights idea only triumphed in the 1970s. Moyn synthesizes an impressive array of sources to describe its rise in different regions. In the West, Amnesty International—founded by British lawyer Peter Benenson in the early 1960s—pioneered the public "naming and shaming" strategy of human rights advocacy. Dissidents in the Soviet Union and its satellites, such as Václav Havel, adopted the human rights vocabulary after the violent crackdown that ended the Prague Spring of 1968.

The 1975 Helsinki accords, intended to improve Cold War relations between the communist bloc and the West, included human rights provisions. The treaty spurred the creation of several groups—such as Helsinki Watch, later renamed Human Rights Watch—that demanded enforcement of the human rights clauses. President Jimmy Carter's 1977 inaugural speech invoked human rights as the guiding principle of American foreign policy. In Latin America, activists fighting brutal military dictatorships appealed to human rights. And in France, a group of "New Philosophers" such as André Glucksmann and Bernard Henri-Lévy invented a new political vocabulary, which included a version of human rights activism.

The human rights idea finally triumphed as a basis for activism because, Moyn contends, other utopian political ideologies collapsed. It offered a pragmatic alternative to bankrupt, grandiose visions, such as communism. The claim that human rights transcended politics helped cement coalitions among diverse voices.

But Moyn is muddled about whether early human rights activism was philosophically—or just strategically—apolitical. Some of the Soviet bloc dissidents whom Moyn quotes suggest that their adoption of legalistic human rights rhetoric was tactical. Perhaps they understood that their goal was political—democratic transition—but publicly framed their struggle in the language of human rights to widen its appeal. Havel himself, in his landmark 1978 essay, "The Power of the Powerless," warned against fetishizing the law. "Even in the most ideal of cases," he wrote, "the law is only one of several imperfect and more-or-less external ways of defending what is better in life against what is worse. By itself, the law can never create anything better."

In the book's epilogue, Moyn reveals his own motive for narrating the history of the human rights idea: to bury it. He believes that the doctrine has mutated into the beast it was intended to slay: a utopian form of politics. In his view, the Reagan administration corrupted human rights by embedding it within a democracy promotion agenda. And Moyn lambastes the George W. Bush administration for hijacking human rights rhetoric to justify the Iraq war.

But if the birth of human rights activism was part of the struggle for democracy, then it is wrong to view democracy promotion as a perversion. Moreover, perhaps human rights activism was most successful in the 1980s—as a weapon against Soviet totalitarianism—precisely because dissidents were clear in their own minds about the liberal democratic preconditions of human rights. Moyn is right to assert that the human rights idea has gone wrong, but it's not for the reasons he thinks.

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.

Paper Trails

Reviewed by Sarah E. Igo

THE PASSPORT IN AMERICA: The History of a Document.

By Craig Robertson. Oxford Univ. Press. 340 pp. $27.95

Craig Robertson opens his history of the passport with a seemingly trivial anecdote: In 1923, a Danish man traveling in Germany reportedly had to regrow his mustache before border officials would permit him to return home. When clean-shaven, he did not resemble the photograph in his passport, a document that had only recently become essential for travel across national boundaries.

The Dane's experience seems benign compared to those of Arizona's immigrants and other undocumented individuals in our post-9/11 world. But the beauty of Robertson's *The Passport in America* is that it shows how a modern "documentary regime of verification" created new rules of movement for the well-heeled and marginal alike. The United States was slower than Europe to require identity papers, devising a universal passport system only after World War I hardened borders abroad and internal clamor resulted in immigration restriction in the 1920s. Yet America was perhaps more vigorous in its

effort to track individuals and make them visible to the state.

Robertson, an assistant professor of communication studies at Northeastern University, asks how "a piece of paper" came to be thought of as official identification, and why that document "was considered reliable and accurate enough to secure the border of a nation-state." The emergence of nation-states themselves, the new value placed on experts' claims to objective knowledge, and increasing bureaucratic centralization are all part of his answer. Tracing the career of the American passport from "a letter of introduction to a certificate of citizenship to an identification document" between the 1840s and the 1920s, when it assumed its modern form, Robertson takes fascinating excursions into the history of currency, voting, immigration, tourism, and even filing methods.

When passports were introduced, "respectable" travelers took offense at the idea that their word could not substantiate their identity.

Robertson probes the technologies of identification that gradually became part of the U.S. passport, such as the bearer's name, signature, physical description, and photograph, as well as the ever-more-standardized bureaucracy that produced it. The result, he argues, was official, state-produced identities that became truer, in a sense, than individuals' own testimony about who they were. Yet, Robertson regularly reminds us, public (and even official) acceptance of the passport was contested.

One hurdle was the persistent association of official documentation with suspect populations such as criminals and the insane, so that "respectable" travelers took offense at the idea that their word could not substantiate their identity. The flip side was the fact that official-looking papers were not enough to enable particular sorts of individuals—Mexican workers crossing the border, merchants exempted from the draconian Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882—to prove that they were who they said they were. In these instances, bodies were scrutinized more carefully than papers, inspectors' personal judgment trumping bureaucratic procedure.

One might imagine a history of bureaucracy to be dreary, but apart from a few moments of excessive technical detail, *The Passport in America* is compelling reading. We learn, for instance, about the difficulty that newly enforced borders posed for individuals who straddled them: One unfortunate man lived in his Canadian woodshed for four years, lacking the proper papers to enter the back door of his American residence! And we catch intriguing glimpses of an older world, where the U.S. secretary of state personally signed passports and, most foreign to us, where validating one's citizenship was unnecessary for most travelers.

Increasingly, however, the passport became tangled with questions of state, exposing the gap between Americans who requested protection abroad and those who were entitled to first-class citizenship. Passports sometimes wound up in the hands of noncitizens and non-natives—free blacks, not-yet-naturalized immigrants, residents of the Hawaii Territory—complicating a tacit understanding of U.S. nationality as the property of whites only. Mormons (deemed polygamists and therefore undeserving of state protection), expatriates, and married women who had not changed their names posed further challenges for a novel apparatus for establishing identity and nationality simultaneously.

Bureaucratic rationality could never be as comprehensive or confident as its advocates hoped. As U.S. citizenship became more rigorously policed, and therefore more valuable, passport fraud proliferated. Nevertheless, the curious "archival logic" of the modern passport regime progressed, whereby an official identity was assembled by the government in anticipation of its future use. By the 1930s, Robertson writes, "the state could only accurately 'know' people through documents," and, in an exquisite irony, if appropriate supporting documents could not verify one's identity, the appli-

cation process "had to create them," providing the impetus to formalize other documents such as birth and naturalization certificates. One of the many virtues of Robertson's book is that it makes these mundane bureaucratic practices strange once again.

Sarah E. Igo teaches history at Vanderbilt University and is the author of *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (2007).

ARTS & LETTERS

Tortured Artist

Reviewed by Steven Biel

GRANT WOOD: A Life.

By R. Tripp Evans. Knopf. 402 pp. $37.50

Grant Wood's life story, as he told it to the press and as many of his biographers have repeated it, went like this: Born in rural Iowa in 1891, Wood showed artistic precocity from an early age, flirted with bohemianism, turned his back on his benighted region under the sway of H. L. Mencken, traveled to France, grew a hideous beard, produced derivative Impressionist paintings, returned home, shaved off the beard, discovered a "native" subject matter and style (most famously in his 1930 painting *American Gothic*), and became America's "artist in overalls." Well adjusted, hard working, and clean living, the mature Wood was everything the stereotypical artist wasn't. Most of all, he was masculine—"a sturdy, foursquare son of the Middle West," as an admiring critic put it. The art, like the artist, was solid, straightforward, and robustly American.

In *Grant Wood: A Life,* R. Tripp Evans, an art historian at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, reveals how this narrative of "normalcy" hid in plain sight the reality that Wood was a closeted homosexual. Newspapers and magazines routinely remarked on his apparently permanent bachelorhood. In 1940, some of Wood's colleagues at the University of Iowa tried to have him fired for, among other transgressions, his alleged homosexual relationship with his secretary, the latest in a series of young male protégés and companions. Faced with constant threats of exposure, he sought protection in his regular-guy persona, to the point of ratifying the virulent homophobia of his friend and fellow Midwestern regionalist Thomas Hart Benton, whose 1937 autobiography he praised for its "healthful commentary" on "the parasites and hangers-on of art . . . with their ivory-tower hysterias and frequent homosexuality."

Self Portrait **by Grant Wood, 1945**

Evans gives us a moving and persuasive psychoanalytic study that finds in both the life and the work powerful forces of "desire, memory, and dread." The artist's father, who died suddenly when Wood was 10, looms large throughout. Stern and intimidating, Maryville Wood compared Grant unfavorably to his two brothers, disapproved of his unmanly artistic inclinations, and left him with "a sense of shame" about "his artwork and its attendant sense of fantasy." The doting and adored mother, Hattie, completed "the family romance that would shape so much of Wood's life and work." Wood lived for most of his adult life with his mother and his younger sister, Nan—his model for the woman in *American Gothic*—in a small carriage-house studio in

Cedar Rapids. Taking care of Hattie served as his excuse for bachelorhood until the prospect of her death prodded him into a disastrous marriage, in 1935, to an older woman, Sara Sherman Maxon.

Pushing aside the public inspirations for and meanings of Wood's work that have preoccupied critics since the 1930s, Evans explores "the personal factors that complicate everything we may think we know about his paintings," including *American Gothic,* which displays "not the artist's patriotism" or some conception of the national character "but a fractured return to his own past." From ostensibly unimportant details—the female figure wears the Persephone brooch Wood gave to Hattie; the male figure wears Maryville Wood's glasses rather than those of the model (the artist's dentist)—Evans establishes the presence of the family romance in the painting. We immediately recognize that the woman's gaze is directed away from us, but on closer examination so is the man's. "In establishing this peculiar standoff between sitter and viewer," Evans explains, "Wood deftly illustrates his own feelings of invisibility before his father"—feelings that Wood repeatedly articulated in his unfinished and unpublished autobiography, *Return From Bohemia.* In *American Gothic*'s complex invocation of the Persephone myth, Evans finds an artist who was far from reconciled to this return.

Late in the book, after an equally dazzling reading of *Parson Weems' Fable* (1939), Wood's last major painting before his death in 1942, Evans offers a sweeping defense of his method. Having claimed that the small figures in the background suggest "an incestuous union" between mother and son (to complement the "patricidal hatchet job" in the foreground), he addresses readers who might react with "alarm and disbelief" to this interpretation and those that precede it. Such reactions, Evans argues, would indicate not only a lack of sympathy with his approach but a "conscious resistance to the psyche's raw and anarchic operations." By treating any objection that an interpretation "goes too far" as a symptom of resistance, Evans precludes even sympathetic readers from reasonably identifying instances of overreaching. Why not leave potential critics to their opinions rather than preemptively psychoanalyze them?

No doubt there will be readers, whatever their motives, who see *Grant Wood: A Life* as a slander against the self-described "simple Middle Western farmer-painter" and his wholesome paintings. But Evans has done Wood a great service in saving him and his work from the one-dimensionality to which they have largely been consigned. He has rendered the artist and the art in all their ambivalence, disquiet, mischief, deceptiveness, and anguish. This is a deeply respectful and compassionate biography.

Steven Biel is executive director of the Humanities Center at Harvard and a senior lecturer on history and literature at Harvard University. His most recent book is *American Gothic: A Life of America's Most Famous Painting* (2005).

NewTube

Reviewed by James Morris

INVASION OF THE MIND SNATCHERS: Television's Conquest of America in the Fifties.

By Eric Burns. Temple Univ. Press. 342 pp. $35

Eric Burns's lapel-grabbing title does his book a disservice. The invocation of a 1956 sci-fi movie that made people wary of watermelons is at odds with his more sober judgments about how the new medium changed the country. Television did not turn us into zombies: "What we Americans learned to do as the fifties progressed was incorporate television into our lives rather than allow our lives to be controlled by it. The medium became a choice rather than a czar."

Not much to argue with there, even for those of us who watched test patterns on off-the-air channels during the late '40s and early '50s. The wonder of the motionless patterns identifying the idle channels was that they existed at all, grayish and humming, right there in our living rooms. Though the technology had been around for decades, TV sets did not become household items till the

postwar '40s. With remarkable speed, television then moved from marginal to mainstream.

The first half of Burns's history is a scattershot survey of television's encroachment on American life, a process that altered everything from where and when we ate dinner to how we picked our toothpastes and our presidents. He hopscotches his way across the decade, landing on an interesting trend here (television had a calming effect on persistent viewers) and an alarming one there ("the fifties were a time of frivolity . . . fads ruled"). Hula-Hoops, Pez dispensers, pedal pushers, and ponytails, he argues, distracted us from serious thought—as if a Hula-Hooper would otherwise have been reading Hegel. A Davy Crockett coonskin cap has for Burns the temporal pull of a Proustian cookie, and the audience most likely to appreciate the cascading detail in his narrative are grownups of his own advanced baby-boomer age willing to be pulled back with him to the analog America of their childhoods.

Burns, author of five other books, grants the '50s a *Blob*–like expansiveness; the decade seeps forward, backward, and sideways. Narrative discipline and chronology are not his strong suits, and as sociologist and cultural critic he repeatedly invites interruption. What does it mean, for example, to call the '50s "a uniquely vexing and eclectic decade"? More vexing than the '30s, or '60s, or now? He thinks that the '50s were "a fulcrum that tipped from yesterday to tomorrow," and then makes that fulcrum do somersaults, taking us from Graham Greene's novel *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) to the rock musical *Hair* (1967).

In the second, and more coherent, half of the book, Burns revisits the effects television had on politics, religion, and the movements for civil and women's rights. He gets to recall a cast of marvelous midcentury characters, including Senators Kefauver (crime fighter) and McCarthy (alarmist); avuncular, calculating Ike; Dick Nixon on offense and defense, Pat Nixon in her respectable Republican cloth coat, and Checkers the family dog; Amos, Andy, and, uh-oh, the politically incorrect Kingfish; über-Catholic Fulton Sheen and entrepreneurial evangelist Oral Roberts; quiz show cheater Charles Van Doren; and brave black students kept from their classrooms and threatened with violence. All found their televised way to America's homes, and the nation was riveted. Burns's lively retrospective glides smoothly through their stories, at about the depth of a standard TV documentary. Eric Burns is not Ken Burns, and that's all to the good; the reader stays awake for the duration.

"Television was nothing when the fifties started, everything when they ended," writes the sober Burns, who immediately turns into the suspect sociologist: "But with time and circumstance Americans had lost not only their initial enthusiasm for the medium; we had lost our belief in its veracity and good intentions, and for most of us, neither quality would be fully restored." That's a statement as worthy of a place in the serious annals of mass disenchantment as the curtain pull on the Wizard of Oz.

Within a few years of its primitive beginnings, commercial television had headed down paths of evolution and devolution that it travels to this day. The basic programming genres were set—drama, comedy, politics, news, sports, games, even competitive humiliation (*Strike It Rich*, *Queen for a Day*). Ahead lay proliferation, refinement, coarsening, and endlessly burgeoning fallout. This past summer, the sitting president of the United States sat within the estrogen-laced precincts of ABC's *The View*, the coffee klatch as art form. The president did so willingly and could not, for once, blame his predecessor. He was merely catching a cultural wave that began as a ripple in Burns's distant '50s, has gathered force ever since, and shows no signs of breaking. Not even on the *Jersey Shore*.

James Morris is an editor at large of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

Story Material

Reviewed by Andrew Starner

THE CONCISE DICTIONARY OF DRESS.

By Judith Clark and Adam Phillips. Photographs by Norbert Schoerner. Violette Editions. 136 pp. $39.95

In a 2000 exhibition at London's Victoria and Albert Museum titled "Papiers à la Mode: Paper Fashions," Belgian artist Isabelle de Borchgrave and collaborator Rita Brown painstakingly recreated dozens of dresses from 300 years of fashion in white drafting paper twisted to look like braid, delicately buttoned and drawn into bows, and otherwise manipulated. Borchgrave elaborately painted most of these whimsical ensembles to mimic the silk and damask of the originals; the few pieces that were not given this treatment functioned like a window into fashion's unconscious—they looked more than anything like the pages of a book tortured into expressive shape.

The catalog to another show that was up this spring at the Victoria and Albert Museum, which houses the world's largest collection devoted to decorative arts and design, appears to perform the inverse operation: It shoehorns a succession of three-dimensional garments into a two-dimensional book. The message of "The Concise Dictionary of Dress"—the name of the exhibition as well as the catalog—is that clothing functions simultaneously as textile and text, sensuous object and intellectual exercise. A visit to nearly any museum can offer a window into another time and place, but an exhibition of historical costumes encourages a corporeal engagement: to imagine the feel of a corset or the weight of a brocade.

Sponsored by the London-based arts commissioning agency Artangel, the exhibition allowed visitors a behind-the-scenes view of the Victoria and Albert Museum's monumental storage facility at Blythe House. Visitors took a private tour of 11 tableaux created by Judith Clark, a lecturer at the London College of Fashion who codirects the master's program in fashion curation (the existence of which signals the increasing importance of fashion in museum collections), and Adam Phillips, a psychoanalyst and writer. Garments culled from storage, commissioned for the exhibition, or created by Clark herself were tucked into Blythe House's vast galleries of ceramics, textiles, and drawings, as well as in its underground coal bunker and on the roof overlooking West London.

The thrust of Clark and Phillips's creations isn't the indefinability of fashion, but rather its proliferating meanings. Each entry in *The Concise Dictionary of Dress*—devoted to an installation in the exhibition that represents a word such as *provocative* or *essential*—has a single page of definitions followed by several pages of photographs. Phillips's quirky, almost metaphysical take on *fashionable*—the meanings he lists include "a form of alarm" and "excited impatience with the body"—gives an idea of how the exhibition and this book frustrate conventional expectations. Clark's accompanying illustration consists of eight wig forms arranged in a glass cabinet, displaying, among other articles, a sequined headdress in the style of a 1930s hairdo, a knitted hood, and a barrister's curled headdress.

Readers may get a fuller experience of the installations (which were devoid of wall texts and labels) than did museumgoers, thanks to the illuminating end matter, which includes detailed information about the objects on display as well as a colloquy on fashion in which Clark fields anonymous questions from notable thinkers from a variety of disciplines, including Shakespeare scholar Stephen Greenblatt and art historian T. J. Clark (no relation to the lead curator). By masking her interlocutors' identities, Judith Clark elicited adventurous questions—her inspired response to "Do you believe in ghosts?" will forever alter your experience of second-hand clothing shops.

Although the word *costume* has fallen out of favor among fashion curators, it evokes the duality of dress, which can be a form of make-believe (donning another's clothing) or just as easily a form of authenticity (self-fashioning one's identity). This oscillation of fashion between reality and fiction, static display and animate object, makes *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* intriguing. The wonderful photographs by Norbert Schoerner, accompanied by minimal text, make reading it akin to

watching an engrossing silent film with just enough subtitles to convey the plot. Terse and brittle, it is an art-house primer on the intersection of fashion, sexuality, performance, and art. While it cannot explain the current phenomenal success of outré music performer Lady Gaga or what her outrageous outfits mean, it does illustrate that we live in a world where what is on the surface speaks volumes about what lies beneath.

Andrew Starner is a graduate student in theater and performance studies at Brown University.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Food Police

Reviewed by Rebecca J. Rosen

KOSHER NATION: Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority.

By Sue Fishkoff. Schocken. 364 pp. $27.95

In 2008 at Kosherfest, the annual U.S. trade show of kosher food manufacturers, certifiers, and purveyors, an Iron Chef–like culinary competition featured not brisket, nor bagels and lox, but sushi. While not traditional Jewish cuisine, California rolls and tuna sashimi are now staples of religious weddings and bar mitzvahs. Observant American Jews, once consigned to a limited pantry and sparse restaurant options, are enjoying the output of a massive kosher industry made up of thousands of *mashgichim* (kosher certifiers) who monitor food production to ensure that Jewish dietary laws are strictly followed. It is this industry that journalist Sue Fishkoff deliciously serves up in *Kosher Nation*.

The basics of these laws, known in Hebrew as *kashrut* (the related word, *kasher,* means "fit" or "proper"), are straightforward. Observant Jews do not eat milk and meat together; nor do they consume a wide variety of animals—pig, most notoriously, but also shellfish and bugs. (This makes preparing salad a complicated endeavor; who knows what might have burrowed into the celery?) Permitted animals must be ritually slaughtered and bled. Of course, it's not so simple. How many hours must you wait to eat a dairy dessert after a meat entrée? Most Orthodox Jews say six, but German Jews say three, and Dutch Jews just one.

Today, the defining characteristic of *kashrut* is the extreme precautions taken to ensure that no *treyfe* (nonkosher food) is eaten. For example, observant Jews will not eat meat from a plate that has ever touched dairy, *just in case* a nano-sized speck of cheese is clinging to it for dear life. One formerly observant Jew aptly calls the entire system an "exercise in neurosis." Such safeguards have given rise to a global kosher food industry, whose inspectors go to every corner of the globe, making sure that none of these strictures are violated at any step of the food production process. (China, for example, has nearly 2,000 food factories under kosher supervision, largely to cater to American and Israeli markets.)

Today, between a third and a half of processed food products sold in the United States are certified kosher, though "less than two percent of the population is Jewish, and only a minority of Jews keep kosher." Much kosher-certified food is consumed by non-Jews who are vegetarians , Muslims, or believe that kosher food is somehow "purer." And many other people who buy kosher products are simply oblivious to the tiny symbols on the packages—Nabisco, Entenmann's, and Godiva all have stamps of approval.

When people prepared most of their meals at home from scratch, Jews had no need for *mashgichim*. If you bought your meat from a butcher you knew and trusted and grew your own vegetables, you could ensure the kosher status of your food yourself. But beginning in the 19th century, the advent of prepared and packaged foods removed those labors from the house and placed them behind closed factory and restaurant doors. An industry sprang up to give observant Jews peace of mind about the products they bought and ate. As Fishkoff writes, kosher certification became a business. In 1923, Heinz Vegetarian Beans was the first brand-name product to receive an official certification. (In the 1980s, the Japanese company Fuji added a symbol of kosher certification to its camera film. Upon learning of its error—only food requires certification—the company apologized, saying it had heard that products with that symbol "sell better in

the United States.")

Business is business, and since the early days of the industry, competition has been cutthroat, rife with fraud and corruption. One hundred kosher retailers amassed $4,200 in 1914 to pay for a hit job on poultry dealer Barnett Baff, suspected of underselling rivals who adhered to fixed prices. The ugly underbelly of the *kashrut* industry took center stage in 2008 when federal agents raided Agriprocessors of Postville, Iowa, the largest kosher meatpacking plant in the United States, and arrested 389 undocumented workers, including 18 minors. For many kosher-keeping Jews, the incident was a wake-up call: Your meat may be "kosher," but those who bring it to your plate may not be treated fairly—or in keeping with Jewish law.

In response to the Agriprocessors scandal as well as wider American food trends, fledgling kosher movements such as "ethical *kashrut*" and "eco-kosher" are gaining traction. "Jews," Fishkoff writes, "are hard-wired to link our food choices to moral and political beliefs." Entertaining and sympathetic throughout, Fishkoff is at her finest when discussing new interpretations of *kashrut*.

Of course, some things never change. Last year at Kosherfest, the theme for the culinary competition was the much-beloved deli sandwich.

Rebecca J. Rosen is associate editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Long Goodbye

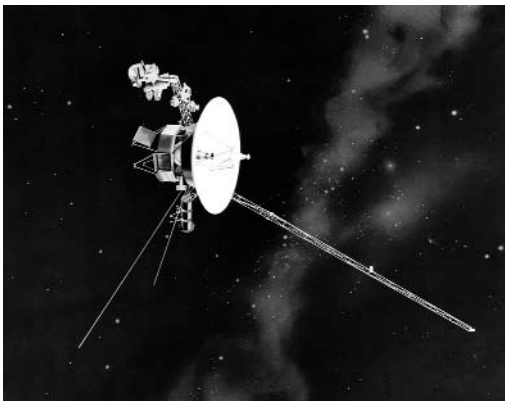
Reviewed by Eric Hand

VOYAGER: Seeking Newer Worlds in the Third Great Age of Discovery.

By Stephen J. Pyne. Viking. 444 pp. $29.95

Several years after their launch in 1977, the twin spacecraft *Voyager 1* and *2* flung themselves past Jupiter, using the giant planet's gravity as a booster rocket. Thanks to this innovation of orbital mechanics—and a once-in-176-years alignment of the planets—Saturn and even Uranus and Neptune lay within reach.

But what really propelled the two Voyagers to the edge of the solar system, writes Arizona State University environmental historian Stephen Pyne, was a rare alignment of political will and technological know-how. The Voyager program was born just before the Cold War spirit—and dollars—of Apollo dissipated and just after key advances occurred in microprocessors and software. This coincidence ushered Voyager from the launch pad to the firmament—where today the twin probes still coast on as the "grand gesture" of an era that began with the space race of the late 1950s and '60s.



A Voyager spacecraft, in an artist's rendering, points toward Earth, to which it has sent data for more than 30 years.

In *Voyager*, a long and occasionally labored meditation on the nature and meaning of exploration, Pyne braids his narrative with anecdotes from the two earlier exploratory eras: the flood of 15th-century ships that Portugal unleashed in search of gold and glory, and the intracontinental journeys of the late 18th century, rooted in the science of the industrial age Enlightenment and exemplified by Alexander von Humboldt's exploration of South America.

Parallels abound. Like Voyager's mission managers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, Christopher Columbus had to hawk his plans for years to the powers that were before purse strings loosened. And, as with previous exploration missions, on which scientists were a rare luxury among soldiers and quartermasters, science was not all that was packed aboard Voyager. Of the two crafts' total 1,817-pound weight, just 13 percent went to scientific instruments, with the rest going

to other equipment and fuel.

But Pyne is also aware that the spacecraft tell a fundamentally different story. They are machines whose cameras have retrieved spectacular visions of dead places. These encounters contrast with the gripping (and often murderous) confrontations between earlier explorers and indigenous peoples. And while journeys of previous eras hewed mostly to the Odyssean ideal of the return, each Voyager spacecraft, having escaped the sun's gravity altogether, will eventually exit the solar system and drift through the vast emptiness of the galaxy—perhaps outliving Earth.

Will the third age of exploration itself live on? After *Voyager 1* took a last picture postcard of the solar system in 1990, the Voyager spacecrafts' electronic eyes lidded shut. Today, their radio beacons pulse ever more wanly as their nuclear fuel runs out. Meanwhile, orbiting telescopes, parked near Earth, may have mooted future grand planetary tours like Voyager's. Voyager discovered 26 new moons in total; the Hubble Space Telescope has discovered 48 around Jupiter alone. The deep of Earth's oceans still beckons. Astronomers, with telescopes on the ground and in space, are hunting for the first Earth-like planet outside the solar system. And the Obama administration has pushed NASA to develop orbiting telescopes that will turn inward on Earth to study carbon cycles that are key to addressing climate change.

As enamored as he is of Voyager, Pyne understands that exploration can take these other forms. He writes of the moment in 1980 when *Voyager 1* flew past Titan, the methane-shrouded moon of Saturn, whose soup of prebiotic amino acids and carbohydrates was supposed to illuminate something about Earth's earliest history. But Titan's murk remained mostly impenetrable to *Voyager 1*'s instruments. Meanwhile, wildfires raged around the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. At the time, ecologists were just beginning to understand how inextricably life is linked to fire, which generates oxygen and hydrocarbon fuels, and, since humans have been around, often provides the spark of ignition. The wildfires offered a more vivid insight than *Voyager* into how life evolved on Earth. Later advances in astrobiology would come not from outer space, but from Earth's frozen deserts and geothermal pools—when, observes Pyne, "new eyes viewed seemingly old worlds afresh."

Eric Hand is a Knight science journalism fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a reporter at *Nature*.

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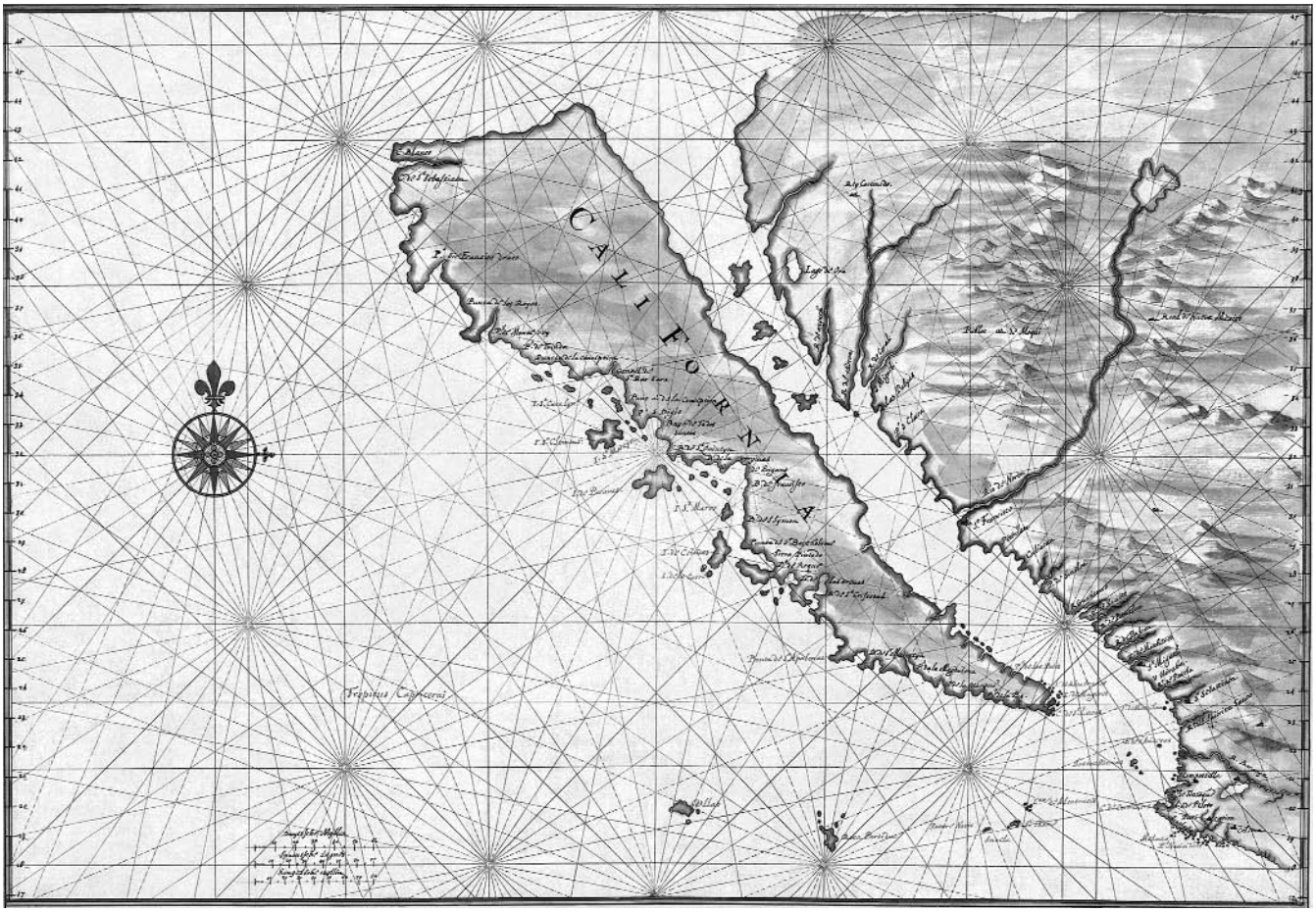

California Unmoored

With its laid-back attitudes, Arcadian landscape, and peerless sunshine, California can seem like a land all its own. For a couple of centuries, it was—on paper, at least. Thanks in part to the wrongheaded Spanish explorer Juan de Fuca, by 1622, the idea had taken root that California was completely surrounded by water. One reason the fallacy persisted well into the 18th century, historians believe, is that it outfitted California with the romantic trappings of an island. Insistent explorers eventually corrected the public record, but hundreds of documents, including this circa 1650 map by Dutch cartographer Johannes Vingboons, preserve the error.

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