the weekly Standard

JULY 26, 2010 • $4.95

THE PRO-RIOT ELITE
HEATHER MAC DONALD

SHOULD ISRAEL BOMB IRAN?

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Thinking about Capitalism

As the economic system under which you live, capitalism determines where you work, how much you make, and what you can buy. But capitalism is as much a social force as an economic one, and its impact on noneconomic life has drawn the attention of the Western world's greatest minds.

A learning experience that is a rarity among both economics and history courses, **Thinking about Capitalism** takes you beyond the narrow focus of economic analysis. In 36 engaging lectures, you explore how over 300 years of thinkers—including Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, and Joseph Schumpeter—have commented on capitalism's moral, political, and cultural ramifications. Award-winning intellectual historian and Professor Jerry Z. Muller's accessible approach makes this course the perfect way to master the history, concepts, and personal applications of this vital economy system.

This course is one of The Great Courses®, a noncredit, recorded college lecture series from The Teaching Company®. Award-winning professors of a wide array of subjects in the sciences and the liberal arts have made more than 300 college-level courses that are available now on our website.

Thinking about Capitalism

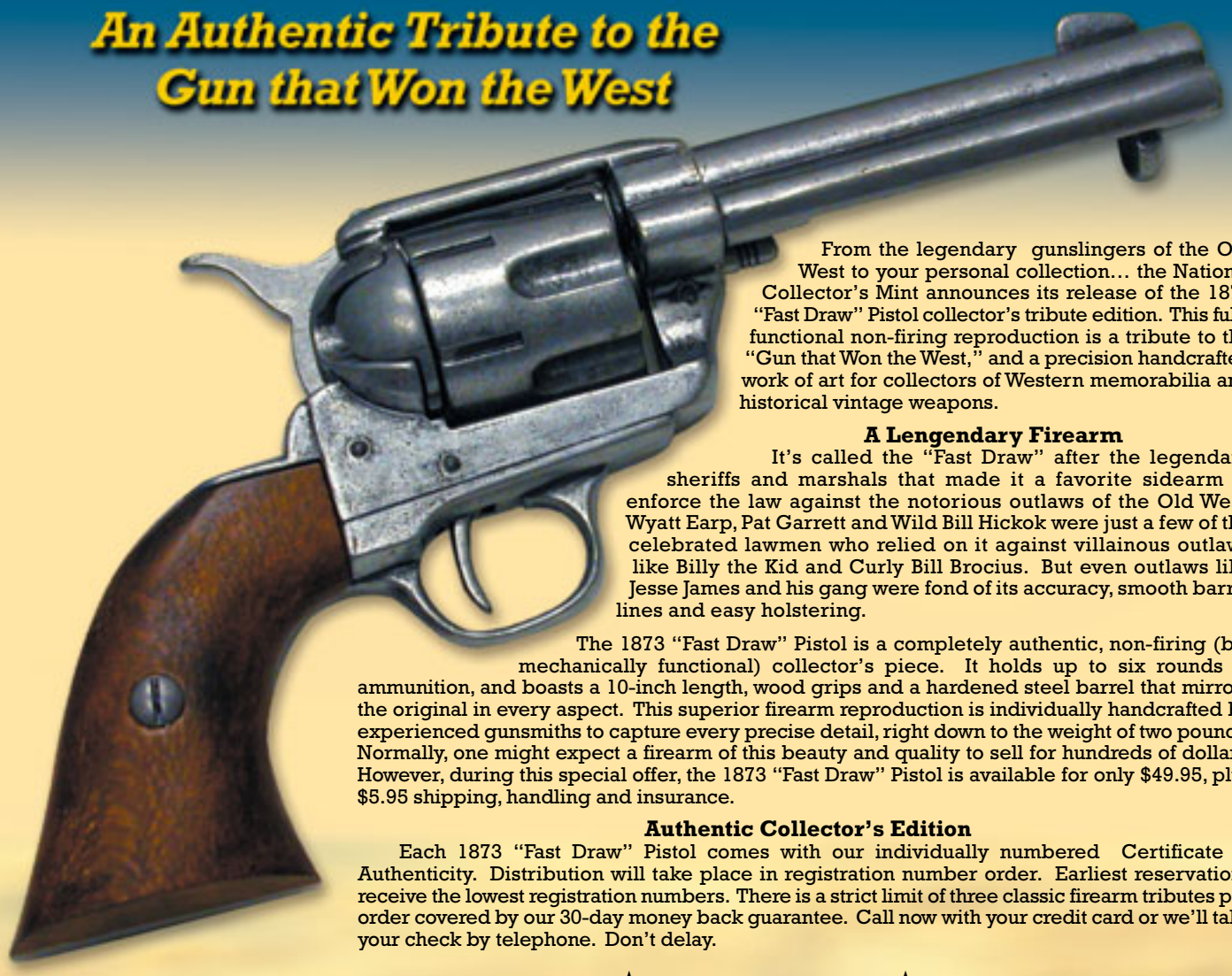
Taught by Professor Jerry Z. Muller, The Catholic University of America

Lecture Titles

1. Why Think about Capitalism?
2. The Greek and Christian Traditions
3. Hobbes's Challenge to the Traditions
4. Dutch Commerce and National Power
5. Capitalism and Toleration—Voltaire
6. Abundance or Equality—Voltaire vs. Rousseau
7. Seeing the Invisible Hand—Adam Smith
8. Smith on Merchants, Politicians, Workers
9. Smith on the Problems of Commercial Society
10. Smith on Moral and Immoral Capitalism
11. Conservatism and Advanced Capitalism—Burke
12. Conservatism and Periphery Capitalism—Möser
13. Hegel on Capitalism and Individuality
14. Hamilton, List, and the Case for Protection
15. De Tocqueville on Capitalism in America
16. Marx and Engels—*The Communist Manifesto*
17. Marx's *Capital* and the Degradation of Work
18. Matthew Arnold on Capitalism and Culture
19. Individual and Community—Tönnies vs. Simmel
20. The German Debate over Rationalization
21. Cultural Sources of Capitalism—Max Weber
22. Schumpeter on Innovation and Resentment
23. Lenin's Critique—Imperialism and War
24. Fascists on Capitalism—Freyer and Schmitt
25. Mises and Hayek on Irrational Socialism
26. Schumpeter on Capitalism's Self-Destruction
27. The Rise of Welfare-State Capitalism
28. Pluralism as Limit to Social Justice—Hayek
29. Herbert Marcuse and the New Left Critique
30. Contradictions of Postindustrial Society
31. The Family under Capitalism
32. Tensions with Democracy—Buchanan and Olson
33. End of Communism, New Era of Globalization
34. Capitalism and Nationalism—Ernest Gellner
35. The Varieties of Capitalism
36. Intrinsic Tensions in Capitalism

"Fast Draw" Pistol

An Authentic Tribute to the Gun that Won the West



From the legendary gunslingers of the Old West to your personal collection… the National Collector's Mint announces its release of the 1873 "Fast Draw" Pistol collector's tribute edition. This fully functional non-firing reproduction is a tribute to the "Gun that Won the West," and a precision handcrafted work of art for collectors of Western memorabilia and historical vintage weapons.

A Lengendary Firearm

It's called the "Fast Draw" after the legendary sheriffs and marshals that made it a favorite sidearm to enforce the law against the notorious outlaws of the Old West. Wyatt Earp, Pat Garrett and Wild Bill Hickok were just a few of the celebrated lawmen who relied on it against villainous outlaws like Billy the Kid and Curly Bill Brocius. But even outlaws like Jesse James and his gang were fond of its accuracy, smooth barrel lines and easy holstering.

The 1873 "Fast Draw" Pistol is a completely authentic, non-firing (but mechanically functional) collector's piece. It holds up to six rounds of ammunition, and boasts a 10-inch length, wood grips and a hardened steel barrel that mirrors the original in every aspect. This superior firearm reproduction is individually handcrafted by experienced gunsmiths to capture every precise detail, right down to the weight of two pounds. Normally, one might expect a firearm of this beauty and quality to sell for hundreds of dollars. However, during this special offer, the 1873 "Fast Draw" Pistol is available for only $49.95, plus $5.95 shipping, handling and insurance.

Authentic Collector's Edition

Each 1873 "Fast Draw" Pistol comes with our individually numbered Certificate of Authenticity. Distribution will take place in registration number order. Earliest reservations receive the lowest registration numbers. There is a strict limit of three classic firearm tributes per order covered by our 30-day money back guarantee. Call now with your credit card or we'll take your check by telephone. Don't delay.

★ 10-inch length ★ hardened steel barrel
★ holds up to six rounds of ammunition
★ wood grips ★ authentic details

Deluxe Display Plaque available for only $19.95
(Display Plaque required for orders shipping to CA or KS)

Call Toll-Free to reserve yours today!

CALL TOLL-FREE
24 hrs/day–7 days/wk 1-800-799-MINT ASK FOR EXT. 3281

National Collector's Mint 8 Slater Street, Port Chester, NY 10573 www.ncmint.com/3281

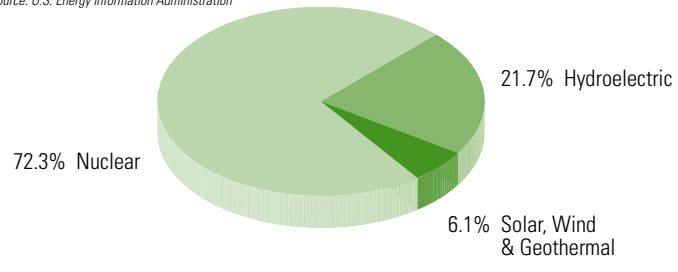
OX-O25

Westinghouse nuclear power plants release zero greenhouse gases while producing electricity.

WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC COMPANY LLC

Greenhouse Gas-Free Electricity Production

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration



Nuclear energy provides electricity for one out of every five homes and businesses in the United States without producing greenhouse gases. In fact, nuclear energy is a proven solution to climate change — accounting for 72% of greenhouse gas-free electricity production.

We need to develop all sources of clean electricity. And the Westinghouse **AP1000** nuclear power plant is the most advanced of its kind currently available in the global marketplace. Four **AP1000** units are now under construction in China, and the **AP1000** design is the announced technology of choice for no less than 14 new plants planned for the United States.

Westinghouse and its more than 15,000 global employees are always looking to the future, taking the next steps to develop even more advanced nuclear power options to meet the world's diverse energy needs. Westinghouse technology will help provide future generations with safe, clean and reliable electricity.

Check us out at **www.westinghousenuclear.com**

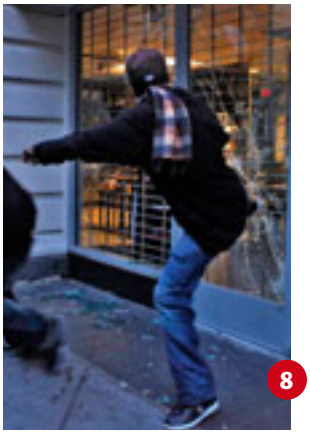
Westinghouse

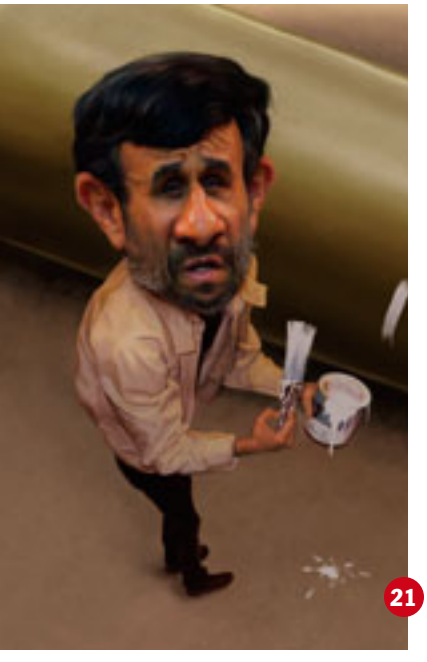
A Toshiba Group Company

You can be sure...
if it's Westinghouse

Contents

July 26, 2010 • Volume 15, Number 42





Articles

Features

Books & Arts

COVER BY JASON SEILER

Dancing with the Davos Stars

Behind many conspiracy theories, The Scrapbook has always suspected, lies a deep longing to believe that the ships of state are being captained by highly competent, ingenious people. Evil geniuses, to be sure, but geniuses nonetheless.

So, people who fear the machinations of the CIA tend to attribute to the agency great feats of cunning and derring-do. The idea that Langley might be a bureaucracy stuffed with third-rate academic mediocrities and time-serving, risk-averse careerists planning for early retirement does not compute.

Likewise, those obsessed with international banking conspiracies envision a manipulative cabal that always knows which buttons to push to make lesser mortals dance to their tune. But what if the cabal is instead just that hapless fraternity of the good-looking but academically challenged young men from your college days, now all grown up: stuffed-shirt CEOs taken for a high-speed ride to insolvency by the social-misfit math PhDs in their own employ?

The future global elite get in touch with their buttocks.

The conspiracists are convinced they live in a sinister world because they find the alternative even more horrifying: What if the ship of state is just a ship of fools? What if the world is being tossed wildly from one swell to another, always about to founder or run aground, and the crew is just a rabble of lackwit incompetents down in the hold guzzling all the rum before they shoulder the passengers aside and commandeer the lifeboats? Unthinkable.

These happy meditations were prompted by The Scrapbook's reading in last Saturday's *New York Times* about the latest activities of the World Economic Forum's 50 fellows. The forum gathers the elite of the world to a shindig every year in Davos, Switzerland—a gathering of titans of industry and politics that has launched a thousand conspiracy theories. The fellowships it sponsors are a three-year work/study program for elites-in-training. And as the *Times* reports, they were in New York last week to—wait for it—attend theater camp:

> "Tap the skin," Kristin Linklater tells the two dozen or so students who face her on the stage of the Miller Theater at Columbia University. "Now tap your leg. Walk. Tap. Walk. Tap."
>
> "Now tap your own buttocks," she instructs, and ripples of laughter spread across the stage. "Remember what I said earlier: tension in your buttocks makes you stupid."
>
> "Oh come on, do it!" she urges the most reluctant tappers. "Don't be self-conscious." . . .
>
> "It gets you out of your comfort zone," Arthur Wasunna, one of the global leaders in training, said of the class. . . .
>
> Compared with her regular roster of students, the forum fellows had "enormous inhibitions," Ms. Linklater said. . . .
>
> In a classroom across the street from the Miller Theater, a second group of fellows similarly let go of their inhibitions with Andrea Haring, a vocal coach. Grunting and stretching, students were arranged in circles, throwing imaginary colored objects at one another: an orange baseball, a jagged fire-engine

What They Were Thinking

REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Octopus Paul, the soccer-predicting star of the Oberhausen zoo

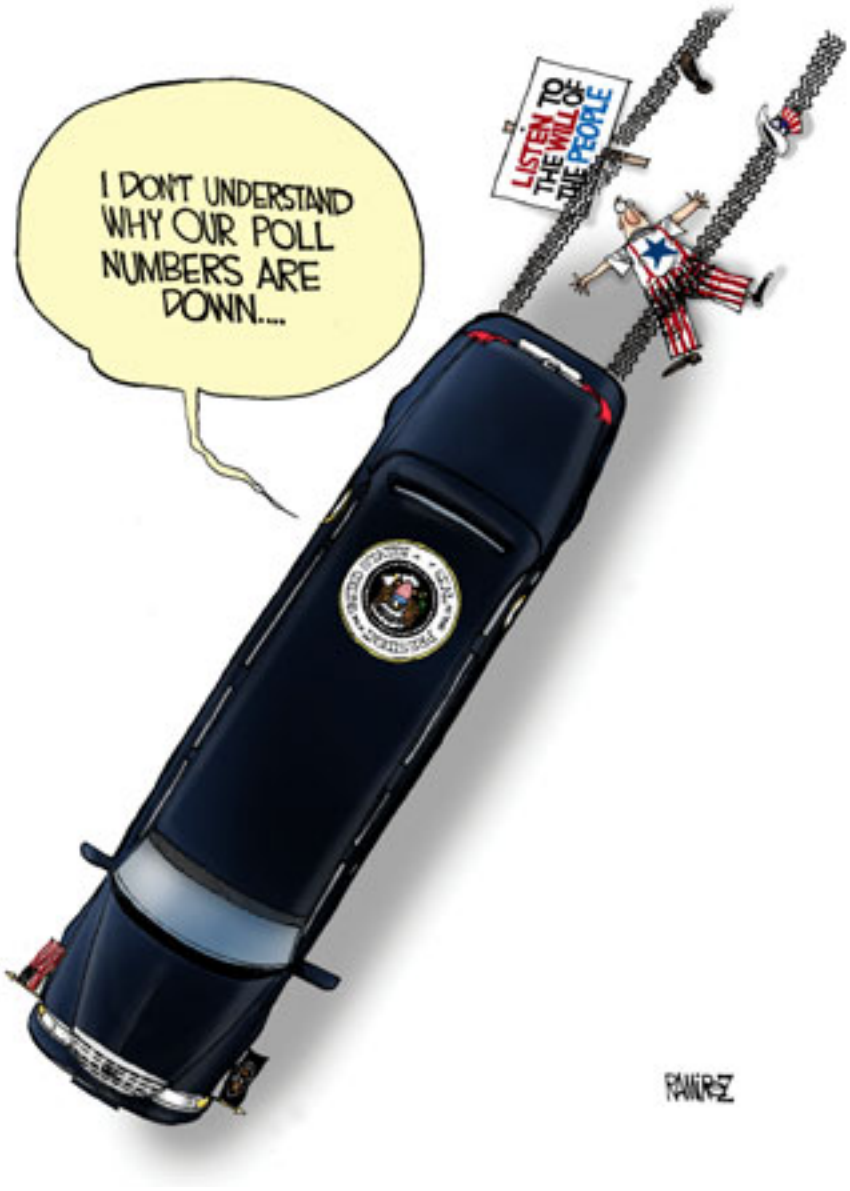
red boulder, a hot pink feather.

Colors bring out emotional expressiveness, Ms. Haring explained; each color connects to a different vowel sound. "Zoooooo," she rumbled in a deep voice, originates in the pelvis and legs and is a dark, earthy brown. "He-uh," leafy green, comes through the mouth, and expresses searching curiosity. "Reeee," delivered in a silly, high-pitched trill, is white and pours from the top of the head like confetti.

But wait—there's more:

> [Brent] Blair, the founding director of the Applied Theater Arts program at the University of Southern California, trained with Augusto Boal, the Brazilian director who created Theater of the Oppressed, an international movement, based on the work of the radical Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire, that seeks to empower poor and oppressed people through socially conscious theater. . . . He asked the students to take on the role of an oppressed person or an oppressor, and to improvise a dialogue. Ms. Linklater watched from an orchestra seat. "Yes, it's political, but it's also hugely theatrical and transformative," she said, "It makes you think. I felt we needed provocation."

The Scrapbook has a piece of advice for all of us traveling down in steerage: Keep your lifejackets near at hand. ♦



Twitter Tyranny

When last we visited the Twittersphere, Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez had just tweeted threateningly that he intended to use the social networking site to coordinate the arrests of unpatriotic Venezuelans who were trying to sabotage their country at the behest of Yankee pigs. El Presidente—or "chavezcandanga," as he is known on Twitter—quickly amassed some 660,000 online followers, demonstrating yet again that there is nothing inherently virtuous, or anti-tyranny, about social networking as a technology.

On July 12, Chávez went further when his police arrested two Venezuelan Twitter users for spreading "false information" about the country's banking system. Luis Enrique Acosta and Carmen Cecilia Nares were charged with attempting to destabilize the banking system and damage the Venezuelan economy with their tweeting.

Acosta had, at the time, 225 followers who had read his 201 tweets. Even if each tweet ran to full length, that's a total of 28,140 published characters. If that's enough to destabilize the Venezuelan economy, then Chavez's tenure has been even more disastrous than is widely believed. Nares had set up a Twitter account, but at the time of her arrest had yet to actually post anything on it. The two twitterers face 9-11 years in prison.

Most interesting has been the Western reaction. Reporters Without Borders followed the story with gusto and there were two wire-service reports. And then . . . nothing. Because social-media stories not about the triumph of social media don't exist. ♦

Title Inflation

The *Washington Examiner* reports that "Assistant White House

chef Sam Kass is getting a promotion. . . . Kass's official title went from first lady Michelle Obama's 'Food Initiative Coordinator' to a fancier 'Senior Policy Adviser for Healthy Food Initiatives.'"

THE SCRAPBOOK hears some other title changes are in the works around the Obama residence: "Senior Adviser for Transportation Initiatives" (drives Sasha and Malia to school); "Climate Change Specialist, Carbon Sequestration Divison" (mows the White House lawn); "Telecommunications Network Interoperability Facilitator" (answers the first lady's phones); and, last but not least, "Director of White House Mediation and Conflict Resolution" (president's mother-in-law). ♦

Unions in the News

'Billy Raye, a 51-year-old unemployed bike courier, is looking for work. Fortunately for him, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters is seeking paid demonstrators to march and chant in its current picket line outside the McPherson Building, an office complex here where the council says work is being done with nonunion labor. . . . The union hires unemployed people at the minimum wage—$8.25 an hour—to walk picket lines. Mr. Raye says he's grateful for the work, even though he's not sure why he's doing it. 'I could care less,' he says. 'I am being paid to march around and sound off.'" ("To Protest Hiring of Nonunion Help, Union Hires Nonunion Pickets: Jobless Recruits Get Minimum Wage," *Wall Street Journal*, July 16). ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Good for the NAACP. We need an honest conversation about the role of race and racism in the Tea Party. Thanks to a resolution passed this week at the venerable organization's national convention, we'll get it. The minute you say there are racist elements in the Tea Party . . . " (E.J. Dionne Jr., *Washington Post*, July 15). ♦

the weekly Standard

www.weeklystandard.com

William Kristol, *Editor*
Fred Barnes, *Executive Editor*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*
Claudia Anderson, *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Robert Messenger, *Senior Editors*
Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last, *Senior Writers*
Victorino Matus, *Deputy Managing Editor*
Matthew Continetti, *Associate Editor*
Mary Katharine Ham, *Staff Writer*
John McCormack, *Online Editor*
Daniel Halper, *Deputy Online Editor*
Kari Barbic, Katherine Eastland, *Assistant Editors*
Emily Schultheis, Michael Warren, *Editorial Assistants*
Philip Chalk, *Design Director*
Barbara Kyttle, *Design Assistant*
Carolyn Wimmer, *Executive Assistant*

Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Michael Goldfarb, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P.J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*

Terry Eastland, *Publisher*
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising Director*
Catherine Lowe, *Marketing Director*
Richard Trocchia, *Fulfillment Manager*
T. Barry Davis, *Senior Advertising Manager*
Kathy Schaffhauser, *Finance Director*
Taybor Cook, *Office Manager*
Andrew Kaumeier, *Staff Assistant*

Advertising inquiries: 202-293-4900

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7644 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

War of Words

It's starting to dawn on me that my personal campaign to eliminate the use of the word *issue* to mean *difficulty*, *misapprehension*, *disturbance*, *irritation*, *objection*, and a dozen unrelated words is doomed. My parallel campaign against *reaching out* is probably in trouble too. *Reach out* is a cant phrase borrowed from the weenie world of personal-growth therapy and is now used as a verb meaning *talk to* and *correspond with* and *solicit* and *comfort* and *invite* and damn near everything in between. If you say you're *reaching out to me* instead of *calling me on the phone*, you've managed to make a routine conversation seem like a sticky session with your encounter group. Why would you want to do that?

Yes, sure, language is a gloriously organic phenomenon that constantly changes and grows, develops new meanings as old ones slip away and all that stuff, but the point I've been making to an increasingly resistant—indeed, totally indifferent—nation is that the elastic use of words that once had sharper definitions tends to obscure rather than clarify meaning. In fact, that's often the point—to deflect the reader's attention from the concrete world of sense into a haze of feeling and abstraction.

I was stewing about this the other morning—welcome to my life—when I came across a pair of examples from a single article in the *Washington Post*. The Portland (Oregon) Police Bureau had reopened its inquiry into those bizarre allegations against Al Gore. The bureau was shamed into doing this because in 2009 the cops failed to take even the elementary steps required by an accusation of sexual misconduct, on the grounds that, well, this was Al Gore, and Al Gore is not "happy endings" material.

Did the bureau issue (verb form) a statement saying investigators hadn't done what they were supposed to do? No, the statement said this: "We have determined there were procedural issues with the 2009 investigation." Procedural issues? What they meant was, "We're reopening the investigation because we didn't do one." See? If the word *issues* hadn't been so corrupted, so stretched beyond definition, the cops would have found it harder to slip the hook. Maybe.

MATT COLLINS

And so now they want to talk to Al Gore. "I can confirm that the Portland bureau has reached out to us," oozed a Gore spokesman, as if she'd been asked for a donation to the Policeman's Benevolent Association. The definition of *reach out* has now been expanded beyond *invite* and *solicit* to include *call Al Gore and ask him whether he jumped a middle-aged masseuse*. That's one big phrase you got there, Al.

At least these nonce usages of *issues* and *reach out* have some meaning—too much, you could say—that might be teased out from their context. More and more, however, I stumble upon sentences, entire paragraphs even, from which I can extract no sense whatsoever. I read and reread and nothing happens; neurons fall into deep freeze. Often I'm reading the *New York Times Book Review*.

The psychologists call this aphasia, I think, but I have decided that the fault lies not in the reader's brain but the writer's words. Try this, from a recent review: "Human beings are born to choose. But human beings are also born to create meaning. Choice and meaning are intertwined. We use choice to define our identities, and our choices are determined by the meanings we give them. . . . Some meanings we can articulate, while others remain beyond words."

Beyond words—you can say that again. Sentence by sentence, this paragraph makes no sense to me, and the context, which I combed through for hints, is no help. How do *choice* and *meaning* get intertwined? The vogue word *choice* has, I know, replaced *decision* as absolutely as the gooey *conversation* has replaced the straightforward *discussion*. (*Conversation* is the new *dialogue*.) And *meaningful*, as in "it was a very meaningful experience," has been unavoidable for a generation or more. When some people want to describe an experience that struck them with considerable force for reasons that are obscure to them, they call the experience *meaningful*, which means they don't know what the experience means. *Meaningful*, in its current state of exhaustion, is meaningless.

There was a time when an editor might have been able to take the reviewer aside and, drawing on the work of those prickly logical positivists, point out that the sentence "Human beings are born to create meaning" has no content, if only because its opposite, "Human beings are not born to create meaning," could never be proved not to be true. That would have been an editorial argument (not conversation) worth hearing.

But today? The editor might simply assert he has an issue, the reviewer will respond by reaching out, and the sentence, in all its mesmerizing meaninglessness, will stand.

Andrew Ferguson

Vintage U.S. Silver Half Dollars

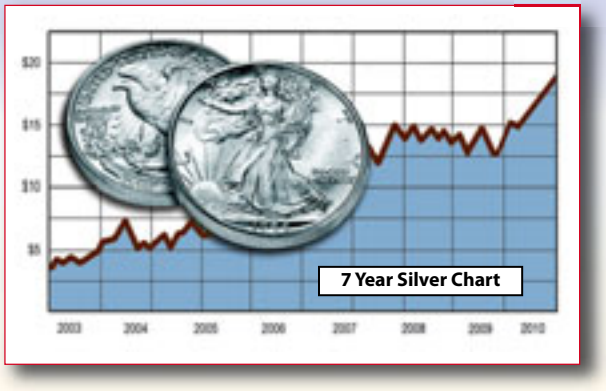
The Smart Silver Investment

Buy Silver Now

Only $8.95 ea.

Saved From The Big 1980 Meltdown

Among all silver coins struck during the 20th Century, none are more highly traded than the Walking Liberty Half Dollar, minted from 1916-1947. Due to their large size and high silver content, (almost a full half oz. of .900 fine silver), experts believe that more than 200 million were melted down when silver soared to $50 per ounce in the early 80's. With silver prices again moving towards $20, millions of more Walking Liberty coins are doomed to the same fate. This great meltdown of our national coin heritage provides astute investors an opportunity to obtain these valuable collector coins for practically their silver value alone!



Real Profit Potential

The relatively few surviving "Walkers" are becoming more sought after and valuable with each passing day. Eastern Numismatics, one of the Nations largest dealers in rare coins, has located a small cache of 5,500 original Walking Liberty Half Dollars dating back to the 1940's. All these coins are in average circulated condition and will be sold to the American public on a first come basis for only **$8.95 each** (min. order 10 coins).

How To Order

With the very strong investor demand for silver continuing, we can only guarantee our price of **$8.95** for this lot; prices may be higher in future offerings. Dates and mint marks will be chosen at random. To avoid the disappointment of a sellout and for best selection do not delay, call NOW. A maximum limit of 100 coins per client will be strictly enforced to allow as many investors as possible the opportunity to own these historic coins. Prices are subject to change without notice.

Please order as follows:

10 coins $89.95 + $9 SH total **$98.50**
20 coins $179.00 + $10 SH total..... **$189.00**
40 coins $358.00 + $15 SH total..... **$373.00**
100 coins $895.00 + $25 SH total **$920.00**

A sellout is almost guaranteed so call today or or visit **www.uscoins.com** and go to "Advertised Specials".

EASTERN NUMISMATICS INC

1-800-835-0008

642 Franklin Ave, Garden City, New York 11530

Coin & Bullion Dealers Since 1974

the weekly Standard

Yes, A Period of Consequences

Last month, we published an editorial under the title "A Period of Consequences." The phrase was taken from a speech in the House of Commons in late 1936 in which Winston Churchill warned: "The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences."

In the editorial, we lamented the procrastination, half-measures, soothing and baffling expedients, and delays that have characterized U.S. policy toward Iran's nuclear program. We argued that U.S. military action to stop the program was preferable to a nuclear Iran, and urged the Obama administration to keep open (and plan for) the possibility of such action. Reuel Marc Gerecht makes the case in our pages this week that an Israeli strike would also be better than no strike at all. This is certainly the case. Still, American action is preferable, and desirable.

But looking at the world in the summer of 2010, we're struck that we have entered a period of consequences on many more fronts than just the Iranian nuclear program. Churchill's words seem to capture all too many aspects of the present moment.

■ We've been living beyond our means and have failed to come to grips with the problem. The financial crisis has been followed by an irresponsible "stimulus" package that has meant the assumption of more debt, and a financial regulation bill that doesn't address our core financial problems. A European sovereign debt crisis is bearing down on us as the global economic recovery falters, and our fiscal and monetary policy instruments seem exhausted. Now we are entering a period of consequences that will require an end to procrastination, and that will necessitate both difficult short-term choices, and a fundamental rethinking of a host of government programs and the very structure of our fiscal and monetary policies.

■ We've allowed—nay, in many cases encouraged—our government to become unlimited in its goals, bloated in its size, and arbitrary in its action. In this respect Obamacare is more the culmination of decades of policy-making than a deviation from them. We've indulged in the fatal conceit that we can ask the state to attend to all our cares and invite the government to correct all our perceived problems, without considering either the counterproductive practical consequences (e.g., Obamacare will make health care less effective and more costly) or the enfeebling of the private sector (crony capitalism turns private businesses into supplicants of the state) or the undermining of our capacity for self-government (federal bureaucrats and federal judges govern us rather than carry out and interpret the laws passed by our elected officials). Now we are entering a period of consequences. To restore the idea and practices of limited, energetic self-government will require more than half-measures.

■ We've hoped that the world might remain reasonably peaceful, friendly, and civilized—while skimping on our defense budgets and our military forces. More recently, we've signalled weakness to friends and enemies alike. We've pretended that happy talk and "soft power" would suffice in dealing with the hard truths of dictatorships, terror, fanaticism, and weapons of mass destruction. Now we are entering a period of consequences, which will require rejecting soothing and baffling expedients, and will instead demand strength and conviction on behalf of freedom and civilization.

■ We've allowed our universities to become politically correct, our media to become juvenile, and our entertainments to become ever-more adolescent—and then we wonder why we're baffled by the difficulties we have as a society in being candid, serious, and grown up. As C.S. Lewis put it, "We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst." Now we are entering a period of consequences in which delaying the decay is no longer enough, and in which the countercultural and reconstructive cultural efforts that are underway will not only have to be intensified, but will have to make a difference quickly.

The British economist and businessman Josiah Charles Stamp is said to have remarked, "It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities." Stamp, along with his wife and son, was killed in London in 1941 during the Blitz. Those deaths, and tens of millions others, were the result of decent people seeking for too long to dodge their responsibilities and to evade the consequences.

—William Kristol

Excusing the Oakland Rioters

Looting is not a form of civil rights protest.

BY HEATHER MAC DONALD

Coverage of the violence, already meager, has all but disappeared from the press.

In a remarkable demonstration of defining deviancy down, Oakland is congratulating itself for the scale of the riots that broke out July 8 in response to the verdict in a police shooting case. "So a hundred businesses were damaged and looted," the conventional wisdom in Oakland holds, "so police were assaulted with rocks and bottles, a California Highway Patrol car's windshield was smashed, and fires were set in the streets. Such violence is cause for relief because it could have been so much worse"—as indeed it was a year and a half ago, when the original incident occurred.

On New Year's Day 2009, a Bay Area Rapid Transit officer fatally shot an unarmed man at an Oakland subway station during a melee between fighting passengers and the police, who had been called to the station to subdue the violence. Several guns had already been found along BART train tracks that night. Officer Johannes Mehserle fatally shot Oscar Grant, a 22-year-old father and parolee with a gun conviction, as Grant was lying on the platform face down. Mehserle claims that Grant was resisting arrest and seemed to be reaching for a gun, a claim disputed by some witnesses. Mehserle testified that he thought that he had grabbed his Taser; instead, he mistakenly reached for his gun. Evidence was presented at trial regarding BART's failure to properly train its officers in Taser use during high-stress situations. The shooting—Mehserle was white and Grant black—set off a month of recurrent rioting in Oakland in January 2009. It was the transit officer's conviction of involuntary manslaughter this July 8 that triggered the current round of riots, because, according to the race agitators, the unusually severe manslaughter verdict, arrived at after an aggressively prosecuted, immaculately fair trial, was not severe enough; the officer should have been convicted of murder.

Coverage of the violence's effect on local businesses, already meager to begin with, has all but disappeared from the press. But before Americans' usual oblivion regarding yesterday's news sets in, it may be worth pondering a few matters regarding this latest episode of civil destruction.

■ Who is compensating the Oakland business owners whose windows were shattered, merchandise cleaned out, and walls defaced with obscenities and slogans such as "Kill all cops!" and "Say no to work, yes to looting!"? (An entire store of sneakers, as well as jewelry—including diamond-studded "grills" worn over teeth—hair and cosmetic products, ice cream, cereal, and potato chips, were among the consolation prizes to which disappointed "justice"-seekers helped themselves. Photos show several grinning festively as they cart off their new shoes. Nearly every bank along one thoroughfare was broken into.) Even if insurance covers all the proprietors' losses, their premiums, undoubtedly already high, will go even higher. The rioters should be forced to repay the costs of looting. The businesses that weren't physically destroyed lost customers on Thursday as word of the impending verdict was broadcast, leading to a near evacuation of downtown as terrified commuters fled the area. Those entrepreneurs and their employees are also victims of the mayhem.

■ Where are the official voices condemning this violence? Oakland mayor Ron Dellums may well have blasted the rioters for their assault on Oakland's fragile civic order, but the available press coverage does not reflect any such pronouncements. His website contains a statement issued in anticipation of the verdict, but nothing since. That pre-verdict message is hardly a ringing endorsement of the American judicial system:

> Voices are crying out for justice. My hope is that justice will be served. I

RAY CHAVEZ / BANG / POLARIS

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor to City Journal *and the author of* Are Cops Racist?

> want to reiterate that the journey to justice does not have to end here. If young Oscar Grant's parents, who out of respect should make this decision, determine that justice has not been served, then I will commit myself to work with the family and their attorneys to continue this journey to justice.

Translation: Unless you get the verdict you want, no matter how scrupulously due process was observed, "justice" will not have been done and the cause of racial grievance will live on. Dellums has welcomed the Justice Department's superfluous investigation into the verdict. Representative Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) backed up that support by reminding U.S. attorney general Eric Holder in a letter that "we are still not in a place where we are judged by the content of our character and not by the color of our skin."

Speaking to the press after this latest round of riots, Dellums portrayed the trashed businesses' losses as the cost of "democracy":

> "If you embrace the reality of people's legitimate rights and step back, then things are going to happen," he said. "Some people will exploit that openness. I would rather err on the side of guaranteeing the constitutional prerogatives of people rather than to have been oppressive and militaristic."
>
> After all, he acknowledged, "democracy can be messy."

Actually, looting is not an inevitable concomitant of the exercise of speech rights.

■ What is the contribution of the American elite's anti-cop ideology to these still sadly-recurrent urban riots? A little over 24 hours after the destruction in Oakland's downtown, a 30-year-old man was shot multiple times in East Oakland and killed. The next morning, another man was found dead in his car, also a suspected homicide victim. Neither of those killings received the slightest bit of attention from Oakland's mayor or the activists who have been whipping up anti-cop, anti-society sentiment. The routine, daily bloodshed in inner cities is regarded as the ordinary course of affairs. The hundred or so homicides in Oakland each year are part of nearly 6,000 murders nationally committed by blacks, mostly of other blacks, compared to just over 5,300 homicides committed by whites and Hispanics combined. (Blacks are 12.8 percent of the U.S. population, whites and Hispanics, 81 percent.) Only in those extremely rare cases where a white police officer mistakenly shoots a black man do the activists, who allegedly care so much about the unjustified taking of black life, spring into action. (Needless to say, fatal police shootings of whites rarely get national press coverage and don't raise fears of riots.)

A looter gets his foot in the door.

LACY ATKINS / SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE / POLARIS

Such a double standard regarding police shootings of blacks and criminal shootings of blacks is perfectly in keeping with elite priorities regarding crime and the police. The academic world and the media churn out a constant barrage of reports purporting to show that the police unfairly target blacks for unnecessary enforcement and that the criminal justice system is racist. Just last week, the *New York Times* delivered a long article on police stops in Brooklyn's 73rd Precinct in Ocean Hill-Brownsville—part of an ongoing series on the New York Police Department's stop rate of blacks, which is higher than the city's black population rate (but lower than the black violent crime rate). The alleged bias against blacks is the only law enforcement topic that consistently gets media, professorial, and professional attention; the costs of crime on victims and society are beneath notice.

The prestigious law firm of Paul, Weiss sued New York City in January on the preposterous claim, inter alia, that police patrols in the city's housing projects are "intentionally discriminatory" because the residents of those projects are overwhelmingly black and Hispanic—a typical big firm pro bono effort. The complaint, which is joined by the NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund and the Legal Aid Society, offers no suggestion as to how the NYPD is otherwise to combat the high rates of violent crime that afflict the city's public housing residents. On Sunday, July 11, an 11-year-old girl was sodomized in an elevator in her Brooklyn housing project. The assailant escaped, but it is just such predation that trespass patrols in public housing stairwells, elevators, and roofs are designed to prevent.

The disproportionate rate of black crime is assiduously kept out of the public eye, whether through deliberate press policies to conceal the race of individual crime suspects or through an informal practice of suppressing aggregate crime data. The *Times* article on stop-and-frisks in the 73rd Precinct did not mention that the per capita rate of shootings there is *81 times* higher than in the mostly white 68th precinct, to choose just one local benchmark; not surprisingly, the stop rate in the 73rd precinct is 15 times higher than in the 68th. Blacks in New York City commit 80 percent of all shootings, whites 1.4 percent, though blacks are 23 percent of the population, and whites 35 percent. Police tactics are color-blind; they target crime, not race. But given the real-

ity of wildly disproportionate racial crime rates, rational, data-driven police activity cannot help but have a disproportionate impact on black neighborhoods, because that is where the overwhelming amount of violent crime occurs and where the victims who most need police protection live.

The drumbeat from the media, politicians, and the professoriate regarding alleged racial injustice in law enforcement is not innocuous. It creates the intellectual context in which rioting over trial verdicts and police shootings is expected and almost accepted. There is a nexus between the endless search for unexplained racial disparities in incarceration and arrests that occupies vast swathes of the legal academy and the sociology profession, and the belief among many blacks that the criminal justice system is stacked against them. If there were any countervailing interest among our opinion-makers in the contribution of proactive policing to urban revival or the enormous benefits of lowered crime to the social and economic health of minority neighborhoods or the fervent support for the police among many law-abiding blacks, the effects of the "law enforcement is racist" conceit would be mitigated. But in fact the "racist police and court system" trope is the only discourse about law enforcement that circulates in the upper reaches of intellectual and public culture. It is no surprise that it is echoed and sometimes acted on by the alleged victims of that racism as well.

Meanwhile, Oakland is already bracing for Officer Mehserle's sentencing in November. For all of July, the entire Bay Area law enforcement community was on nervous riot alert while waiting for the trial verdict. A San Francisco police official predicts even more intense preparations as the sentence date nears. If Officer Mehserle is not given what the activists demand—the maximum 14 years in prison, though such a sentence might be inconsistent the jury's finding of involuntary manslaughter—Oakland businesses could once again be cleaning up their shattered storefronts and salvaging what they can of their merchandise. ♦

A Mosque Grows Near Brooklyn

The dubious financing of 'Cordoba House' deserves scrutiny. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Since a proposal to construct a 15-story mosque and community center two blocks from Ground Zero was announced last year, the project has been a focus of widening protests. To be named Cordoba House, the project would require demolition of two buildings at 45-47 Park Place and Broadway that were damaged on 9/11. They would be replaced by a glass and steel 100,000-square-foot structure with a new address, 45-51 Park Place.

According to its sponsors, the Cordoba Initiative and the American Society of Muslim Advancement (ASMA), the structure would cost $100 million and would include "a 500-seat auditorium, swimming pool, art exhibition spaces, bookstores, restaurants," and an area for Islamic prayer. The Cordoba Initiative and ASMA were created by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, a Kuwait-born cleric of Egyptian background.

Every inch the professional moderate, Rauf has the imprimatur of the State Department, which sent him on an international bridge-building tour earlier this year. And he has cloaked the Cordoba effort in the rhetoric of reconciliation, describing himself and his colleagues as "the anti-terrorists." But he deflects inquiries about its financing. On July 7, New York Republican gubernatorial candidate Rick Lazio called on state attorney general Andrew Cuomo, who is also Lazio's Democratic opponent in the coming election, to "conduct a thorough investigation" of three aspects of the project:

- Rauf's refusal to acknowledge that Hamas is a terrorist organization;
- Rauf's leading role in the Perdana Global Peace Organization, "a principal partner," in its own words, of the Turkish-launched flotilla that tried to break the Israeli naval blockade of Gaza;
- and the project's questionable sources of funding.

Lazio has been supported in this demand by New York Republican congressman Peter King.

Many who object to construction of an Islamic facility so close to the site of the World Trade Center feel that a large, if not dominating Muslim presence there would be at best insensitive and at worst a symbol of the very Islamist supremacy that is the goal of al Qaeda and other jihadist killers. Such sentiments are hardly the last word in a question of public policy. But the background support and financing for this ambitious undertaking are matters that deserve to be addressed.

Non-Muslim defenders of Rauf—including Cuomo and New York mayor Michael Bloomberg—have rejected demands for investigation of the ideological and financial underpinnings of the Ground Zero mosque. They have argued that such an inquiry would violate the First Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion. But faith should not serve as a pretext for extremist or potentially criminal activities.

Rauf's ASMA website lists mainstream philanthropic donors, including the Carnegie Corporation of New York, three Rockefeller charities, the Danny Kaye & Sylvia Fine Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, three feminist-oriented groups, and six other funders. New York Muslims,

Stephen Schwartz, a frequent contributor, is the author of The Two Faces of Islam.

however, are well aware that the Rauf scheme is also associated with financing and support from other doubtful individuals and entities in addition to Perdana, which is led by the notorious Jew-baiter Mahathir bin Mohamad, former prime minister of Malaysia.

The idea of building an Islamic peace memorial in lower Manhattan was circulating as early as 2003. Its early proponents were two Iranian brothers, M. Jafar "Amir" Mahallati, who served as ambassador of the Iranian Islamic Republic to the United Nations from 1987 to 1989, and M. Hossein Mahallati. Amir Mahallati had served with Rauf in the leadership of an obscure nonprofit, the Interfaith Center of New York, for which Rauf was a vice chair and Mahallati a board member. The two had also participated in a 2006 radio program, "From Turmoil to Tourism: Following the Path of Abraham."

Hossein Mahallati had experience of his own in the intersecting New York worlds of charitable giving and property management. He was director from 1983 to 1992 of the Alavi Foundation, set up in 1973 by the government of the shah of Iran as the Pahlavi Foundation, but taken over and renamed after the Khomeini revolution. The Alavi Foundation is currently the subject of a federal civil action seeking forfeiture of assets, including an office building at 650 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan and four Shia mosques and schools in New York, California, Maryland, and Texas.

While U.S. sanctions on the Alavi Foundation, announced in 2009, received little notice, the government's charges are disturbing. They include control of Alavi by the Tehran dictatorship through its diplomats at the United Nations, and transfer of income from the office building at 650 Fifth Avenue to Bank Melli, the Iranian national financial institution. Bank Melli had been designated a "Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferator" by the U.S. Treasury Department. Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Stuart Levey noted, "The international community has recognized the proliferation risks posed by Iran's Bank Melli." In late 2009, the Alavi Foundation's last head, Farshid Jahedi, pled guilty to two felony counts of obstruction of justice for destroying documents about the Alavi-Melli relationship that had been subpoenaed in the investigation, which continues. Jahedi was sentenced on April 29 to three months' imprisonment, six months' supervised release, and a $3,000 fine.

Hossein Mahallati was the subject of an unsuccessful federal inquiry in 1992 regarding an alleged conspiracy to export biological warfare materials to Iran. His predecessor as Alavi director, Manoucher Shafie, who managed the foundation's transition from serving the shah's government to that of Ayatollah Khomeini, was charged with conspiring to export prohibited U.S. technology to Iran. Neither was prosecuted.

The Ground Zero Islamic facility rests on a support network linked to the anti-Jewish Mahathir, the Perdana-supported Gaza raiders, and some notable servants of the Iranian clerical dictatorship.

Hossein Mahallati remains an enthusiastic supporter of Rauf's Ground Zero enterprise, especially since an Egyptian property developer, Sharif El-Gamal, who appears to be the real leader of the effort, using Rauf as his public face, put up $4.85 million in cash to purchase the location. El-Gamal is chief executive officer of Soho Properties, Inc., a commercial real estate investment firm he founded in 2003. His partner is Nour Mousa, another guiding figure in the Ground Zero mosque effort and the nephew of Amr Moussa, head of the Arab League. Amr Moussa was the first major Arab leader to go to Gaza and affirm support for Hamas, in mid-June, after the recent blockade-running assault.

El-Gamal has kept a low profile in the dispute over the appearance of an Islamic institution near Ground Zero, although last week he appeared before a hearing of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to announce that Cordoba House will now be known as Park51. He and Rauf have both taken to downplaying the religious character of the proposal, preferring that the building be called a "community center."

So far, then, the Ground Zero Islamic facility rests on a support network linked to the anti-Jewish Mahathir and the Perdana-supported Gaza raiders, some notable servants of the Iranian clerical dictatorship, and an Egyptian property developer associated with the pro-Hamas chief of the Arab League.

But the questionable aspects of the Ground Zero Islamic project do not end there. Feisal Abdul Rauf's wife, Daisy Khan, executive director of ASMA, has been one of the most assiduous promoters of the lower Manhattan mega-mosque. She spoke on July 6 to the Chautauqua Institution, celebrating the double heritage she claims: "The first, the American faith-based social activism, a legacy that included the abolitionists, women's suffrage movement, and the civil rights movement. Second, I have inherited the tradition of my faith, a faith that has inspired positive social change for over 1,400 years."

Rauf's wife failed to mention another feature of her background: She is the niece of Dr. Farooq Khan, formerly a leader of the Westbury Mosque on Long Island, which is a center for Islamic radicals and links on its website to the paramilitary Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the front on American soil for the Pakistani jihadist Jamaat e-Islami.

Lazio and King are right, and Cuomo and Bloomberg are wrong. Aside from the matter of sensitivity to the families of the 9/11 victims and other Manhattanites who live near Ground Zero, if the friends and fans of Feisal Abdul Rauf believe his mosque plan is entirely above board, they should be the first to encourage full public disclosure of its backing and finances. ♦

Colorado's GOP on a Roll

With one prominent exception.

BY FRED BARNES

Denver

Colorado, the vanguard of a Democratic juggernaut for three straight election cycles, has flipped. To wit:

President Obama won Colorado handily in 2008 (54 percent to 45 percent for John McCain), but his popularity dropped precipitously last year and hasn't recovered. "The state voted for change," says political consultant Floyd Ciruli. "It did not vote for a liberal agenda."

House minority leader John Boehner spoke at a gathering of Republican donors here last week. The result was $800,000 in contributions to help capture House seats in the midterm election in November. It was, Boehner said, the biggest haul at a regional fundraising event by the National Republican Congressional Committee since the new McCain-Feingold campaign finance rules went into effect in 2003.

In the Colorado Senate race, both Republican candidates, former lieutenant governor Jane Norton and county prosecutor Ken Buck, are running ahead of (appointed) Senator Michael Bennett and his Democratic primary challenger, Andrew Romanoff. Mail ballots in the August 10 primary are going out this week.

Meanwhile, Republican Cory Gardner has an excellent chance of unseating Democratic representative Betsy Markey in the House district in eastern Colorado. And Republicans have an outside chance of ousting two other House Democrats, John Salazar and Ed Perlmutter. Their prospects of gaining control of the lower house of the Colorado legislature are reasonably good.

But then there's the race for governor, the centerpiece of Republican hopes in Colorado in 2010. Republican Scott McInnis, 57, elbowed his chief primary foe, 34-year-old state senator Josh Penry, out of the primary contest, and he's led the Democratic candidate, popular Denver mayor John Hickenlooper, for months. But now McInnis is in serious peril, and his advantage in the polls is likely to vanish.

Jon Caldara, who heads the Independence Institute here, has what he calls "Caldara's political axiom number one": There is nothing that Republicans can't screw up. In 2004 and 2006, poisonous primary battles contributed to Republican losses in elections for governor and senator. Republicans have also been tardy in matching the infrastructure of websites and front groups that back Democrats. Nor do they have the rich donors that fund Colorado Democrats.

The trouble this time was caused by McInnis himself. He was paid $300,000 by the Hasan Family Foundation for a 150-page report on water ("Musings on Water"). It turns out portions are identical to a 1984 essay by Gregory J. Hobbs, now a state supreme court justice. Last week, the *Denver Post* broke the story under a blaring front-page headline: "Judge's water essay copied. Expert: McInnis' work, submitted as 'original,' plagiarizes words, ideas."

McInnis dismissed the matter as a "non-issue" and blamed the researcher he'd hired, Rolly Fischer, for lifting paragraphs from the Hobbs essay. In response, Fischer accused McInnis of lying and said he refused to sign a letter accepting responsibility.

A quickie poll by the *Denver Post* found that 20 percent of Republican voters who'd favored McInnis now intend to vote for someone else. McInnis said he would make "full payment arrangements" to reimburse the foundation and insisted he won't drop out. "I'm in it to win it," he said.

Both the *Denver Post* and *Grand Junction Sentinel*, McInnis's hometown paper, urged him to quit the race. And Republican leaders began private discussions about replacing McInnis. This would be difficult unless McInnis won the primary, then agreed to step down—an unlikely scenario. Dan Maes, McInnis's lone primary opponent, is regarded as having little chance of defeating Hickenlooper.

Will the McInnis mess harm other Republican campaigns? Maybe, but given the strong Republican tide in Colorado, especially among the third of the electorate registered as "unaffiliated," the fallout may be minimal.

The controversy did show, however, the influence of the web of liberal groups that target Republicans. "The progressive infrastructure in Colorado is alive and well," says Rob Witwer, coauthor of *The Blueprint: How the Democrats Won Colorado*. Months before the *Denver Post*'s story, liberal blogger Jason Salzman was raising questions about why McInnis was paid $300,000 by a foundation in 2005 and 2006 after he'd retired from the House.

For the moment anyway, the McInnis flap has overshadowed the fierce primary fight for the Republican Senate nomination. Buck, 51, began as the underdog, but two factors have made him a formidable rival to Norton. TV ads by a wealthy Buck supporter—so-called "independent expenditures"—have attacked Norton and touted Buck. And Buck began his campaign months before Norton got in the race, visiting most of Colorado's 64 counties and

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

often appearing at Tea Party events.

When Norton, 55, decided to run last September, she met with Buck and asked him to drop out of the race. He declined. She's been endorsed by two of the state's most popular Republicans, former governor Bill Owens and ex-senator Bill Armstrong. Buck is backed by Republican senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina. "When I went around the Senate to talk to senators, his was the only door that was open," Buck told me.

In precinct caucuses in March, Buck narrowly beat Norton in a straw poll. She chose not to compete in the Republican party assembly, where she would have needed 30 percent of the vote for a spot on the primary ballot. Instead, she collected petition signatures to get on the ballot.

In April, Norton fired her campaign manager, hired Penry, and emerged as a more aggressive candidate. Her new television spot is anything but docile. "Seen those TV ads attacking me?" she says. "They're paid for by a shady interest group doing the bidding of Ken Buck. You'd think Ken'd be man enough to do it himself." The Norton campaign, by the way, has accused Buck and the supporter behind the anti-Norton ads of illegal collusion. Buck and Walt Klein, his media consultant, deny the charge.

In a *Denver Post* poll in mid-June, Buck led Norton, 53 percent to 37. But Norton is counting on the mail-in vote to enlarge the turnout. She's ahead by nearly 2-1 in the "next ring" of voters who don't normally vote in a Republican primary, Penry says. "We think we can get to them."

In truth, both Norton and Buck are good candidates. Both are conservatives. Either is likely to defeat Bennett, a lockstep liberal who has a bitter primary battle of his own against Romanoff. "It's as bad for Democrats in 2010 as it was good for them in 2008," says Penry.

Bad enough for McInnis to stick it out, win the primary, and become a viable candidate again? Probably not, but stranger things have happened in politics and often do. ♦

Easy Credit, Hard Landing

The financial insights of Raghuram Rajan.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

In 2005, University of Chicago finance professor Raghuram Rajan published a paper in the proceedings of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City called "Has Financial Development Made the World Riskier?" Rajan, then the chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, warned bluntly that incentive structures in the banking profession were leading to reckless credit expansion, herding, and other "perverse behaviors." He was frostily received when he presented his findings at the Federal Reserve's annual summer retreat in Jackson Hole that year. The Fed-linked experts who snorted at Rajan's warnings were sure that financial innovations helped "spread risk" in a way that made the world safer. There was a fixed amount of risk in the world, they seemed to believe, and the more widely distributed it was, the better off we were. Rajan, too, thought the new products and practices "spread risk," but in a different and more dangerous way: They multiplied it.

Rajan is worth reading not just because he was correct when few were but also because his writing is clear as a bell, even to nonspecialists. His new book, *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, is not a coherent argument so much as a bunch of independent-minded essays on various topics in contemporary global finance. Some are excellent (his essay on the misaccounting of "tail risk" on corporate balance sheets, for instance). Others are not so hot (his suggestions on improving access to education or his plea for giving IMF analysts more power to impose their views on recalcitrant nations).

Most notably, in the course of this book Rajan offers a bold and convincing diagnosis of how a screw-up in the regulation of poor people's mortgages in one country has brought the world to the brink of economic disaster, where it teeters still. He goes beyond the proximate causes of the problem—the subprimes and derivatives and trade imbalances and the like. The ultimate cause, Rajan convincingly argues, is a widening of economic inequality that American politicians of both parties found politically intolerable, and chose to fix by turning the credit market into an under-the-table welfare state.

The growth in inequality has been large, Rajan shows. The top 1 percent of the population have laid hold of 58 cents out of every dollar in income growth since the Ford administration. Rajan shows no interest in being patted on the back for pointing this out. Moralizing is not his intent, and there are no Gilded Age clichés here about the undeserving rich. In fact, as a professor of finance rather than economics, he is able to show us some unfamiliar statistics about the way rich people are rich, and one of the most interesting is that we do not have a particularly big class of idle remittance men. "Even for the richest 0.01 percent of Americans toward the end of the twentieth century," he points out, "80 percent of income consisted of wages and income from self-owned businesses, and only 20 percent consisted of income from arm's-length financial investments."

Rajan is describing not the moral

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

problems of capitalism but the political problems. The median American is losing ground. And while people at the 90th percentile have never had it so good, Americans in the 10th percentile have endured a punishing economy for about a third of a century now. Their problems become particularly acute during recessions. For reasons that are not fully clear, recessions have changed in nature in the last 20 years. Historically, Western economies returned to full employment within a few months of hitting a recession's trough. Losing a job was a calamity, but a calamity of short duration. Since 1992, however, all recoveries have been "jobless recoveries"—in the 2001 recession, it took more than 38 months for the economy to return to full employment.

And, as Rajan puts it with some understatement, "the United States is singularly unprepared for jobless recoveries." This is only partly because the United States has a weaker welfare state than other industrialized countries. It is also because the American safety net—in which government provides fewer health and retirement benefits but incentivizes employers to fill the gap—winds up placing all of a person's eggs in the basket of his job. Lose your job and you lose not only your income but also your (and your children's) health insurance and possibly (as in several scandalous recent cases) your pension.

Under such circumstances, any recession with the slightest perceptible effect on the public will end political careers by the score. And recessions are, alas, inevitable. The result, under both Democratic and Republican leadership, has been reckless government extension of credit. As a remedy for downturns, this has two political advantages. First, it does not bother conservatives as much as handouts do. Second, "easy credit has large, positive, immediate, and widely distributed benefits, whereas the costs all lie in the future. It has a payoff structure that is precisely the one desired by politicians, which is why so many countries have succumbed to its lure." You might say that the financial crisis reflects the emergence of the off-balance-sheet liabilities—the human costs—of deindustrialization.

This is an account of what ails us that is radically at odds with the familiar tale of greedy bankers in $5,000 suits. "Almost every financial crisis has political roots," Rajan writes. The credit market—at least as regards housing—was distorted by government policy, not by a sudden and mysterious escalation in "greed." The trends that shook the world economy came out of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, out of the Federal Housing Administration, and out of their "regulator," the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

By 2000, HUD required that low-income loans make up 50 percent of Fannie and Freddie's portfolios. Out of "compassionate conservatism," perhaps, the Bush administration raised that mandate to 56 percent. Rajan cites Fannie Mae's former chief credit officer, Edward Pinto, who notes that, by 2008, "the FHA and various other government programs were exposed to about $2.7 trillion in subprime and Alt-A loans, approximately 59 percent of total loans to these categories." Peter Wallison of the American Enterprise Institute found that government-mandated loans accounted for two-thirds of "junk mortgages."

Another way of looking at this problem is provided in a study done by Rajan's Chicago colleagues Atif Mian and Amir Sufi. They found that, if you look at the period between 2002 and 2005, the number of mortgages obtained in a given ZIP code "is negatively correlated with household income growth." In other words, lenders preferred un-creditworthy borrowers to creditworthy borrowers. In a market governed by "greed" and undistorted by government pressure, such a result would make no sense.

It is important to note that the "bubble" part of our real-estate crisis was not especially severe. U.S. housing prices, although they rose unduly, were never nearly as out-of-whack as they became in the past decade in Ireland, Spain, or the United Kingdom or as they became in the late 1980s in Japan. The problem was not so much the amount of collateral people got access to through home-equity loans; it was that they were not well-enough vetted for credit-worthiness—at any level of borrowing—to begin with. Almost everyone has rued that sometime in the past generation, the old-fashioned method of checking out mortgage applicants—through face-to-face interviewing and rigorous investigation of applicants' character and community standing—gave way to an anonymous, bureaucratic, arm's-length process that could easily be abused. This was damaging in Rajan's view. "The judgment calls historically made by loan officers were, in fact, extremely important to the overall credit assessment," he writes. "It really does matter if the borrower is rude, shifty, and slovenly in the loan interview."

The change in procedures was not just a matter of bankers' forgetting or growing sloppy. To inquire too closely into borrowers' creditworthiness would leave bankers in danger of falling afoul of antidiscrimination laws, particularly after Bill Clinton vowed to crack down on alleged "red-lining" (racial prejudice in mortgage lending) in the 1990s. George W. Bush's decision to raise the quotas for low-income lending from 50 to 56 percent of loans certainly strikes us today as foolhardy. But can there be any doubt he would have been pilloried as a racist had he sought to lower them? The Indian-born Rajan never enunciates the unavoidable conclusion, but he is constantly walking much closer to it than any American-born academic would dare to: The finance crisis also reflects, in part, the emergence of the off-balance-sheet liabilities of a kind of affirmative action.

The overarching point is that, whereas European countries until about a decade ago addressed sluggish job creation by expanding their welfare states (which made job creation more sluggish still), the United States chose a different path that

proved just as counterproductive. It spread a safety net under its less fortunate citizens through wanton credit creation. And the terrible problem of credit is that it resembles alcohol—as the dosage rises, the problems get bigger, but so does the capacity to ignore them.

For his part, Rajan thinks overt welfare protections are preferable to the extension of credit as a surrogate safety net, if only because welfare programs are more transparent.

In the United States for the past decade, any time the economy began to sputter in the slightest, the government ran around like a chicken with its head cut off trying to fix it. America thus took on its present role as the world's "stimulator of first resort"—the life of the global party. It borrows money from abroad to stoke world demand. If we think of the international economy as a barroom, then the United States is the guy who can be relied upon to buy a round, even if he has a hard time feeding his own family.

And ad hoc remedies are no different from overt welfare in their tendency to breed unintended consequences. "Policy made in the midst of a downturn is often hurried, opportunistic, and poorly thought out." Extensions to unemployment benefits, because they are so hard to vote against, are routinely loaded with pork-barrel spending. Rajan is scathing about the Obama stimulus, dismissing much of it as not stimulus but "a form of redistribution to fulfill election promises."

But long before Barack Obama came to power, the United States was pursuing, through tax cuts as well as easy credit, a program of nonstop Keynesian stimulus. In fiscal terms, in credit terms, the "change" that the president is delivering consists of pursuing the same fiscal policy his predecessors did, only more so. The debate over whether the country now needs a "second stimulus package" is in this sense deceptive. We ought to be arguing about whether it is wise to prolong an era of permanent stimulus that is now decades old. ♦

In Defense of Moderation

C. Holland Taylor's campaign against Islamic extremism.

BY JENNIFER RUBIN

C. Holland Taylor doesn't look like a man radical Muslims should fear. He is trim, unassuming, and speaks with a faint southern accent. His stylish blond haircut and trim suit give him the appearance of a fortysomething European businessman. He possesses no arsenal of weapons, holds no government post, and operates no intelligence service. Yet he runs the world's most potent and innovative anti-extremist network and may hold a key to defusing the ticking bomb of Islamic terrorism.

Taylor, a multilingual former telecom magnate who has spent substantial time in Muslim countries since his youth, has a deep interest and expertise in Islamic theology, history, and culture. Over the last quarter century, he has observed the encroachment of radical Islam on previously diverse and relatively tolerant Muslim countries. He cofounded with the late Abdurrahman Wahid (the moderate president of Indonesia) a private foundation, LibForAll, which aims to increase and magnify moderate Muslim voices in combating Islamic extremism. "Ideology is more dangerous than bombs," Taylor explains. LibForAll works to "identify, mobilize and encourage moderate Muslim leaders who generate a counter-narrative" to jihadism in theology, mass media, pop culture, and government.

As a child, Taylor recalls, he would rarely see an Egyptian woman wearing a head-covering; now many do. In his youth, Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan exhibited few signs of radical Islam; they are now on the front lines of jihadists' war against the West. He observes matter of factly, "In Gaza they would kill [those working with LibForAll]. We can't do what we do in Gaza." But not every Muslim country or region is Gaza, at least not yet. Where the jihadists don't have a totalitarian grip on the population, they may still use intimidation and violence to perpetuate a "complicity of silence." That complicity is what Taylor and his organization seek to disrupt.

LibForAll's greatest success has come in Indonesia. In the spring of 2009, in anticipation of nationwide elections (and in concert with two high-profile Islamic organizations), LibForAll launched a book in Indonesia entitled *Ilusi Negara Islam* ("The Illusion of an Islamic State"). Based on two years of painstaking research, the book documented the Saudi Arabian Wahabbists' efforts to export radical Islam to Indonesia and the Indonesian PKS party's connection to international Muslim radical groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood. It became the most widely discussed book in Indonesia, helping to undermine the candidacy of the PKS nominee for vice president. Moreover, it exposed radical Islam as a foreign influence, a reversal of the jihadists' usual narrative that pluralism and tolerance are a type of Western infiltration of their societies.

To alter the country's political discourse, LibForAll made use of Southeast Asia's best known Islamic pop icon, Ahmad Dhani, who released a smash hit "Laskar Cinta" ("Warriors of Love") drawing attention to the Islamic radicals' message of hate and violence. ("No to the warriors of jihad! Yes to the warriors of love," the lyrics implored.) Six to seven million copies were sold,

Jennifer Rubin is contributing editor to Commentary *magazine.*

Dhani's press conference announcing the release drew international media, and his concerts sold out.

Western media greeted Taylor's efforts with skepticism. In October 2009, the *Washington Post* reported that the Indonesian elections raised "a tricky question: Should Americans stand apart from Islam's internal struggles around the world or jump in and try to bolster Muslims who are in sync with American views?" The article concluded that there was good reason for the Obama administration to "stay out" and back away "from overt intrusions into religious matters." A USAID official sniffed to the *Post* that we should "avoid theology and help Indonesia 'address some of the problems here, such as poverty and corruption,'" while derisively noting that LibForAll "jumped into the theological fray with gusto." LibForAll meanwhile changed the course of the Indonesian election.

The impact of LibForAll's Indonesia success still resonates. Says Taylor,

> At its recently concluded national convention, the PKS declared that it is "moving to the center" and becoming a "nationalist," rather than "Islamist," party, open to people of all faiths. They've even adopted a new slogan, "PKS for All." As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

While it is not clear this is anything more than strategic rebranding, it does suggest that LibForAll transformed Indonesia's political landscape.

The Swedish National Defense College's Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies studied LibForAll's success and describes it as a "cross-sector network" program that gathers religious leaders to "garner the requisite intellectual and theological support for a pluralistic and tolerant interpretation of Islam; pop idols who have massive support from young people; government leaders who are able to address social factors as an underlying factor of extremism; as well as business leadership that can offer requisite financial support." The study concluded: "The development of extremism in Indonesia has been successfully stemmed by cultural factors . . . and a strategically coordinated initiative, primarily promoted by LibForAll."

LibForAll's other efforts include a 26-part TV documentary that seeks to discredit Islamic extremism and undermine the message of radical Islamists. Taylor enlisted and interviewed for the program the Grand Mufti from Egypt's Al-Azhar Mosque and University, who made the theological case for opposing Muslim extremism.

But Taylor's greatest challenge (aside from the financial disparity between his small foundation and the great wealth which Islamic extremists can access) may be the Obama administration. John Brennan, the administration's top counterterrorism official, commented earlier this year that "our enemy is not terrorism," while President Obama has excised from official communications the terms "jihadist" and "Muslim extremist."

"They are playing to the radicals," Taylor says bluntly. "This is exactly their game plan." He explains that the administration, like many Western governments, is badly advised and is "so woefully ignorant that we are not even capable of vetting those who are advising them." The administration's language is "extremely discouraging to people we are trying to encourage." He contends that this is partly attributable to the bureaucratic mindset that seeks to avoid conflict. A high ranking U.S. Naval officer in the Pacific Fleet, he recalls, expressed admiration for Taylor's work, but asked, "Now how do we do this without pissing people off?" He laughs, explaining that of course his counteroffensive against jihadists is going to annoy the radicals.

The West, he fears, is hobbled by a "civilizational crisis of confidence." A LibForAll program was approved and funded by the EU, but the project soon collapsed as European leaders became angst-ridden over the notion that they should defend their societies from radical Muslim influences. Taylor asked an official from one of Germany's four political foundations what he planned to do about the Muslim Brotherhood, which desires that European Muslims see themselves not as British, or French, or Dutch but "as radical Muslims seeking to impose *sharia*." The official replied, "Well, we are a democracy. If the majority vote for Muslim law that is what we will have." A representative from Al-Azhar attending the meeting commented upon leaving, "They have no manhood."

Taylor's contacts with the Obama administration have been similarly dispiriting. He met with officials in the State Department counterterrorism office. Terrorism, he told them, is like a bomb with blue, yellow, red and green (the color of Islam) wires. "I'm an expert green wire cutter," he said. "If you don't go after the green wire, then you are willing to let the bomb go off." But they bristled and tried to shush him whenever he used the terms "Muslim extremist" or "jihadist."

What would he advise U.S. officials? "In medicine there is an expression: 'First do no harm.'" They need to develop an expertise in Islam. "They need to understand the landscape. They can't even evaluate the landscape so they are like a rogue elephant. They think they are helping but they are only creating chaos." Then, he says, they need to develop policies that reduce the influence of radicals and bolster moderates. And finally, they need to "institutionalize" these policies so new administrations don't start from scratch.

In this administration it may be impossible to overcome the institutional lethargy and aversion to promoting Muslims who can counteract the ideological underpinnings of jihadism. But it would be a positive step were Obama's team merely to adopt Taylor's first step ("do no harm") and cease undercutting moderate Muslims by denying that radical Islam is terrorism's foundation.

It may well be private citizens and groups like LibForAll that will have to be at the forefront of the ideological counteroffensive against jihadism. As Taylor says, "If you see a train wreck coming but do nothing about it and say 'I am not an engineer or a conductor. It is not my affair,' then you have walked away from your duty as a human being. It is incumbent on all of us to act." ♦

GOV'T ISSUED GOLD COINS

Nationwide Coin and Bullion Reserve announces the final release of 2,500 congressionally authorized, fully backed by the U.S. Government, completely free of dealer mark up, $5 Gold American Eagles at the incredible price of

ONLY

$138.00

EACH

FOR THE INVESTOR

If you had $25,000 in gold in 2001 at $290 per oz you would have almost $100,000 at today's gold prices. These profit margins are unheard of in today's volatile financial market. Experts say this is just the beginning. Gold last touched $850 an ounce on Jan. 21, 1980, just after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran. Inflation was running in the triple digits. In today's terms, this would be equivalent to $2,000 an ounce suggesting the current nine year bull market has much further to run. With the Fed's decision to print, print, print trillions of dollars Americans will soon see inflation like never before. With these current conditions we are pleased to provide special arrangements for orders of $25,000 and more. Numerous experts are now predicting gold at $5,000 an ounce your $25,000 could be worth $125,000 in the near future. Please understand that when you convert money to U.S. Government Gold you have not spent your money, but rather transferred its value from a declining paper currency, to a powerful asset providing a long term hedge against inflation. Smart investors are currently moving 25-30% of their paper assets into gold. Call today for the opportunity to turn your $25,000 into $125,000. **Toll free 877-817-1220.**

FINAL RELEASE

Nationwide Coin and Bullion Reserve announces the final release of 2,500 congressionally authorized, fully backed by the U.S. Government, completely free of dealer mark up, $5 gold coins at the incredible low price of only $138.00 each. This at cost offer for American citizens may be your final opportunity to own government gold free of dealer mark up. Gold is currently trading around $1,200.00 per ounce and experts predict gold to skyrocket to as much as $5,000.00 an ounce. Inflation, the printing of trillions of dollars, two wars and the threat of terrorism all have caused the demand for gold to soar. Leading financial experts, Rob McEwen, Christopher Wyke, Peter Schiff and James DiGeorgia all predict $5,000/oz. gold. Due to extremely limited supplies we must adhere to a strict limit of ten coins per household. Nationwide Coin and Bullion Reserve has set these beautiful U.S. Government gold coins for immediate public release and cannot guarantee sufficient inventory to supply current demand. Order now to avoid disappointment. This at cost public offer will sell out immediately. Overage orders may be cancelled and your checks returned uncashed. Ordering now may be your last chance to own these magnificent government issued gold coins at this level. **Call toll free 877-817-1220.**

Authorized by Congress
In God We Trust

CALL TOLL FREE (24 hrs a day seven days a week)

1-877-817-1220

VISA • MASTERCARD • DISCOVER • AMEX • CHECK

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ORDERS OVER $25,000

Vault # WSN-10703

Minimum order 5 gold coins.

Bill Thomas's Revenge

Democrats now face his magically disappearing tax cuts. BY GARY ANDRES

Bill Thomas loved schemes. The former California congressman, who chaired the House Ways and Means Committee from 2001 to 2006, practiced the arcane art of parliamentary procedure like a wizard, concocting potions that turned his political opponents into hapless frogs.

Thomas sometimes even kept the details of his grandiose plans a secret from allies. He once pulled Majority Leader Dick Armey aside on the House floor and whispered that he had a new idea about how to pass a controversial piece of legislation.

"Great," Armey said. "What is it?"

"I can't tell you," Thomas said with a twinkle in his eye. "But you'll love it."

Thomas understood Congress's dark side. His lengthy House tenure—28 years—convinced him that there is a gene in congressional DNA that leads lawmakers to kick the can down the road rather than make tough choices.

The behavior of the current Democratic majority is a testament to Thomas's understanding. Fail to pass a federal budget? No problem: We'll muddle through. Let unemployment benefits lapse? Blame the Republicans. Funding the war in Afghanistan? Hey, there's always money somewhere. A growing list of federal agencies and programs crying out for reform and reauthorization? Aw, just extend current law for another few months. This list could go on.

Thomas's crowning achievements were the 2001 and 2003 tax cut bills, and both included a procedural tripwire that set in motion a ticking political time bomb.

Republican leaders wanted the tax cuts to be permanent, but in order to get the votes for enactment of both bills, they used the budget process known as reconciliation. While this meant the legislation could pass the Senate with only 51 votes, it also limited the policy changes in the bill to a finite period. Hence the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts are scheduled to expire at the end of 2010—a long way off, many thought back then.

But Thomas also knew a future Congress would face an unavoidable deadline and a tough political choice. Doing nothing assures an automatic tax increase—and not a small one. Failure to act will actually produce the largest tax hike in history. And in about six months, the long fuse Thomas lit nearly ten years ago will ignite an explosion.

On January 1, 2011, the top individual tax rate jumps from 35 percent to 39.6 percent. The child tax credit gets slashed in half—from $1,000 to $500. Taxes on dividends snap back to 39.6 percent from their current 15 percent rate. Capital gains rates jump from 15 percent to 20 percent. The current lowest tax bracket increases by 50 percent—from 10 percent to 15 percent. The estate tax, which phased down to zero this year, surges to a whopping 55 percent. Taxes on married couples increase, and the dependent care and adoption tax credits get reduced. This is just a sampling.

Normally modifying tax law requires major congressional action. But because of the way the 2001 and 2003 legislation was structured, if Congress does *nothing*, all these taxes increase automatically. Boom.

Several participants in the negotiations surrounding the passage of the two tax bills say Thomas's flair for creative legislation helped seal the deals. One former senior administration official recalls a meeting on the Truman Balcony at the White House with Republican congressional leaders when the 2003 bill had hit a snag in the Senate. "Even though Republicans controlled the majority in the Senate, several senators wanted to cut the [amount of money] dedicated to tax cuts in half," he told me.

This created a problem. To help spur economic growth after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush wanted to accelerate the individual rate reductions first passed in 2001. He also sought to cut the tax rate on dividends. House Republicans had a strong interest in reducing the capital gains tax as well. Doing all this, along with addressing other issues such as the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), the marriage penalty, and child tax credits would cost hundreds of billions, more than the Senate was willing to swallow.

Thomas was uncharacteristically quiet during the contentious meeting, but the wheels were turning. After hearing the Senate problem, Thomas broke his silence. "I think I have a way of doing this," he said. He then proceeded to describe a plan that shifted some implementation dates and phased in other provisions, making the numbers fit into the Senate budget window.

While everyone's preference was to make all these tax cuts permanent, Thomas and others were trying to do the best they could under the political constraints. He proposed to use as much money as possible to enact the most simulative yet politically vulnerable tax reductions—accelerating the individual marginal rates and cutting taxes on dividends and capital gains. He felt he could phase out other more politically popular provisions, knowing a future Congress would have a tough time not extending these tax cuts.

After listening to the Thomas scenario, Bush was convinced. "I'm with Bill," he told the other congressional leaders.

"[Thomas's] main goal was to pro-

Gary Andres is vice chairman of public policy and research at Dutko Worldwide in Washington, D.C., and a regular contributor to The Weekly Standard *online.*

tect what many thought was the most needed but vulnerable pieces of the package—the individual marginal rate reductions," David Hobbs, former assistant to the president for legislative affairs told me. "Protecting the middle class from the AMT, the child credit, and marriage penalty relief had broad bipartisan support," he notes. "By structuring the bill the way he did, Thomas got the biggest bang for the buck and did the most with what he had to work with."

He also created a huge political headache for today's Democrats, already nervous about November's elections.

President Obama says he wants to shield families making less than $250,000 from higher rates. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced the administration wants the capital gains increase to go no higher than 20 percent.

Yet granting the administration's wish requires tough decisions by Congress on a broad range of thorny tax policy questions. First, how to pay for these changes? The Congressional Budget Office projects revenue flows into the government based on current laws. And right now, with these tax rates set to rise, so are revenues. Exempting certain groups requires billions in offsets (i.e., higher taxes on someone else) or government debt balloons further.

Neither option is good.

"We're talking about $411 billion just for offsetting for the next two years," lamented Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), a member of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee.

And deciding to exempt all but "the rich" (incomes over $250,000 per year) is not as easy as it sounds. Many small business owners file as individuals and will get hit by these higher rates—not a popular political move or sound economic policy with the prospect of a double dip recession.

Bill Thomas is no longer in Congress, but the remnants of his strategic political thinking endure. Leave it to one of the House's best legislative schemers to create a nasty political problem for the Democrats long after he retired. ♦

Bright Lights, Bad Schoolhouses

Teachers' unions as big-screen villains.

BY SONNY BUNCH

Facing thousands of worried members at the annual convention of the National Education Association on July 3, the head of the nation's largest teachers' union sounded a little whiny.

"Today, our members face the most anti-educator, anti-union, anti-student environment that I have ever experienced," said Dennis Van Roekel, the NEA's president. Leaving aside the bizarre suggestion that there is burgeoning anti-student sentiment in America, Roekel's concerns are well-founded: For the first time in living memory, poor-performing teachers and the unions that protect them are under real scrutiny. So much so that even documentarians—the most liberal enclave of the most liberal institution (the entertainment-industrial complex) in American society—are now taking aim at union excesses.

Theaters across the country have seen an explosion of films that cast a critical eye on public schools and the reasons for their failures. First up was *The Cartel*, a look at the impact teachers' unions have had on schools in New Jersey. Bob Bowdon's documentary betrays its limited budget—it's the roughest-looking of the new releases—but successfully drives home the fact that throwing money at the problem of our public schools will solve nothing: New Jersey has one of the highest per capita rates of spending on education in the country. Governor Chris Christie has taken this lesson to heart; he is waging a fierce battle to improve New Jersey's failing public schools while also tamping down runaway costs.

Currently in theaters is *The Lottery*, an alternately heartbreaking and infuriating work. Madeleine Sackler follows a quartet of students as they enter a lottery to attend a charter school in New York City. Heartbreaking are the scenes of parents who want little more than the chance for their kids to get a decent education; infuriating are the scenes of union-organized protests against charter schools (including a guest appearance from ACORN rabble-rousers), local politicians firmly in the pocket of the city's unions railing against charter schools, and statistics underscoring how hard it is to fire terrible teachers.

Union leaders have said they are just as frustrated by lousy teachers as parents are and just as committed to getting underperforming educators out of the classroom. This would inspire laughter if it weren't so maddening: Citing Department of Education statistics, *The Lottery* reports that in the 2006-07 school year only 10 of 55,000 tenured teachers were fired from New York City's public schools at a cost of $250,000 per removal. It's a problem we see across the nation: Whereas one in 57 doctors loses their license and one in 97 lawyers, only one in 2,500 tenured teachers is ever removed from the classroom.

That last statistic comes from *Waiting for "Superman,"* arguably the most important of the new releases. Directed by Davis Guggenheim—the Academy Award-winning director of *An Inconvenient Truth*—it was the

Sonny Bunch is the senior communications associate at the Center for Union Facts and a member of the Washington Area Film Critics Association.

Centerpiece Screening at Silverdocs, an important film festival for documentarians. Guggenheim unloads on teachers' unions with both barrels in his film, lambasting them for protecting terrible teachers at the expense of students and for stymying efforts to improve the schoolhouses they have captured.

Like *The Lottery*, *Waiting for "Superman"* follows a group of schoolchildren vying for spots in charter schools. But Guggenheim's work is broader and more ambitious; he tackles school districts across the country, in both urban and suburban areas. Time and again, Guggenheim and the reformers he interviews come back to the troubling aspects of teacher tenure. Like its cousin in higher education, tenure is a guarantee of employment for life. Unlike in higher education, however, tenure is handed out to virtually every public school teacher after a short wait, typically two to three years. When layoffs occur, school districts are forced to operate on a "last hired, first fired" basis instead of deciding who to keep based on merit. The one-two combo of tenure and seniority has made it almost impossible to fire poor teachers.

Consider Chicago. Only 28.5 percent of Chicago Public School students met or exceeded expectations on the composite Prairie State Achievement Examination in the 11th grade. In science and math, those numbers were even more dismal; a mere 23.7 and 26.9 percent, respectively, met or exceeded the standards expected of them. But the teachers responsible for these outcomes are virtually untouchable. According to *Newsweek*, the percentage of Chicago teachers dismissed for poor performance between 2005 and 2008 was 0.1 percent. In a district where only one in four students is proficient in math and science, how is it possible that less than one in one thousand teachers is worthy of dismissal?

If Guggenheim's film is to be believed, the changes required to fix this system aren't terribly radical. He cites a study from the Hoover Institution's Eric Hanushek which found that permanently removing the worst 5 to 10 percent of teachers from schools would vault U.S. students into the upper tier of global achievement as measured by standardized testing—on par with Canada. Without changes to the cushy contracts teachers' unions have negotiated, however, raising American children as well-educated as their Canadian counterparts is just a pipedream.

"It's crazy the system that we have," Guggenheim said after the screening of his film at Silverdocs. "The systems that adults have organized have often been in the way of change." None of those systems is more opposed to change than the teachers' unions. With a little luck, this spate of documentaries will help highlight that fact and lead parents across the country to demand change we can believe in. ♦

Creating Jobs for America: Part 1

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The congressional leadership and the administration have taken their eyes off the ball when it comes to Americans' top priority—creating jobs. That's one of the lessons drawn from the U.S. Chamber's Jobs for America summit last week. And although the economy may be growing again, it is not growing nearly fast enough to create the more than 20 million jobs we'll need in the next 10 years to replace those lost in the recession and to keep up with a growing population.

Instead of partnering with the business community and embracing proven ideas for economic growth and job creation, Congress and the administration have embarked on a course of rapid government expansion, major tax increases, and suffocating regulations.

These actions have injected tremendous uncertainty into our economy. Banks, investors, companies, entrepreneurs, and consumers are worried. They don't know what is going to hit them next. Instead of making investments and expanding operations, businesses are sitting on the sidelines until it's clear how new laws and regulations will impact their bottom lines.

Indeed, the regulatory burden imposed on the job creators of our country has reached a tipping point. Congress has approved a massive health care bill that includes a new employer mandate and hundreds of billions of dollars in business taxes. The new financial regulatory reform bill is fraught with unintended consequences, huge new bureaucracies, and higher taxes and fees. The Environmental Protection Agency and Labor Department are embarking on an unprecedented amount of regulatory action.

But this much is certain: If we continue on our current course, we may lose even more jobs, and we could end up in a double-dip recession. We will also erode our competitive position globally as other nations take steps to cut taxes, reduce regulations, and restrain the appetite of government. The world is changing, and it's important that we take steps to keep up.

During these difficult times, it is imperative that business and government leaders work with each other, not against each other. Our current economic direction is not working, and it's undermining our position in a very tough and competitive global economy.

As the president has said repeatedly, prosperity and job growth come from the private sector, not from the government. Government's role is to establish the right conditions so that the private sector can invest, grow, compete, create new products and services, and put Americans back to work.

Next week, I will share some of the Chamber's recommendations for jolting our economy back to life.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Comment at www.chamberpost.com.

Should Israel Bomb Iran?

Better safe than sorry

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

There is only one thing that terrifies Washington's foreign policy establishment more than the prospect of an American airstrike against Iran's nuclear-weapons facilities: an Israeli airstrike. Left, right, and center, "sensible" people view the idea with alarm. Such an attack would, they say, do great damage to the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, where Tehran would counterattack, punishing "the Great Satan" (America) for the sins of "the Little Satan" (Israel). An Israeli strike could lead to the closing of the world's oil passageway, the Strait of Hormuz; prompt Muslims throughout the world to rise up in outrage; and spark a Middle Eastern war that might drag in the United States. Barack Obama's "New Beginning" with Muslims, such as it is, would be over the moment Israeli bunker-busting bombs hit.

An Israeli "preventive" attack, we are further told, couldn't possibly stop the Islamic Republic from developing a nuke, and would actually make it more likely that the virulently anti-Zionist supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, would strike Israel with a nuclear weapon. It would also provoke Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps to deploy its terrorist assets against Israel and the United States. Hezbollah, the Islamic Revolution's one true Arab child, would unleash all the missiles it has imported from Tehran and Damascus since 2006, the last time the Party of God and the Jewish state collided.

An Israeli preemptive strike unauthorized by Washington (and President Barack Obama is unlikely to authorize one) could also severely damage Israel's standing with the American public, as well as America's relations with Europe, since the "diplomacy first, diplomacy only" Europeans would go ballistic, demanding a more severe punishment of Israel than Washington could countenance. The Jewish state's relations with the European Union—Israel's major trading partner—could collapse. And, last but not least, an Israeli strike could fatally compromise the pro-democracy Green Movement in Iran, which is the only hope the West has for an end to the nuclear menace by means of regime change. This concern was expressed halfheartedly before the tumultuous Iranian elections of June 12, 2009, but it is now voiced with urgency by those who truly care about the Green Movement spawned by those elections and don't want any American or Israeli action to harm it.

These fears are mostly overblown. Some of the alarmist scenarios are the opposite of what would more likely unfold after an Israeli attack. Although dangerous for Israel, a preventive strike remains the most effective answer to the possibility of Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards having nuclear weapons. Provided the Israeli air force is capable of executing it, and assuming no U.S. military action, an Israeli bombardment remains the only conceivable means of derailing or seriously delaying Iran's nuclear program and—equally important—traumatizing Tehran. Since 1999, when the supreme leader quashed student demonstrations and put paid to any chance that the Islamic Republic would peacefully evolve under the reformist president Mohammad Khatami, Iran has calcified into an ever-nastier autocracy. An Israeli strike now—after the rise of the Green Movement and the crackdown on it—is more likely to shake the regime than would have a massive American attack in 2002, when Tehran's clandestine nuclear program was first revealed. And if anything can jolt the pro-democracy movement forward, con-

JASON SEILER

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard *and a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.*

trary to the now passionately accepted conventional wisdom, an Israeli strike against the nuclear sites is it.

There are many voices out there—"realists" in America, Kantians in Europe—who believe this discussion is unnecessary since Iran doesn't really pose an existential threat to Israel, America, or anyone else, and whatever threat it does pose can be countered with "strategic patience" and the threat of Israeli nuclear retaliation. Tehran may support anti-Israeli terrorist groups, but there is no need to overreact: The regime is as scared of Israel's military power as Israel is scared of mullahs with nukes. America's preeminent job should therefore be to calm the Israelis down—or, failing that, arm-twist them into inaction.

ANTI-SEMITISM RUN AMOK

One can certainly doubt whether Khamenei would be so rash as to hurl an atomic weapon at Israel, given Jerusalem's undeclared *force de frappe*. But this is a huge unknown for the Jewish state. Iran has already embraced terrorism against Israel and the United States. Via Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas in Gaza, and Fatah on the West Bank, the clerics have repeatedly backed suicide bombers and helped launch thousands of missiles against Israeli civilians. Iranian-guided terrorist teams bombed the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 and slaughtered Argentine Jews at a community center there in 1994. And that was when Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani was Iran's "pragmatic" president; Rafsanjani's once awe-inspiring power network at home has been nearly gutted by his former protégé, Khamenei, who has always been more Trotskyite when it comes to exporting the Islamic Revolution.

Iranian violent adventurism abroad diminished after Khatami was elected president in 1997, as the Islamic Republic's domestic agitation heated up and its clandestine nuclear program accelerated. If Khamenei can suppress the Green Movement and develop a bomb, he might choose to move beyond suicide bombers and Hezbollah and Hamas rocketry in his assaults on Israel and "global Jewry." Who would stop him? It's not hard to find Iranian dissidents grieved by their government's love affair with terrorism, but it's impossible to find any among the ruling elite who ruminate about the wrongness of terrorism against Israelis or Jews.

Anti-Zionism has deep roots in Iran's left-wing "red mullah" revolutionary ethos. Iran's hard core seems even more retrograde than the many militant Arab fundamentalists who once gave intellectual support to al Qaeda but have lost some enthusiasm for the organization's insatiable and indiscriminate killing. The Egyptian-born former al Qaeda philosopher Abd al-Qadir bin Abd al-Aziz, aka "Dr. Fadl," for instance, has evolved so far as to express reservations about murdering Israelis and Jews. Even the Saudis, in private, are capable of entertaining such thoughts. But from Iran's power players we hear not a peep about the impropriety of killing Israeli civilians or Jews in general. This holds for Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; for the president's spiritual adviser and the most influential cleric supporting the dictatorship, Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi; for the head of Iran's legislation-surveilling, candidate-disqualifying Guardian Council, Ahmad Jannati; and for the bright and more "pragmatic" Ali Larijani, the speaker of parliament who helped orchestrate the crackdown on the 1999 student rebellion.

Revolutionary Iran hates its main enemies—America, Israel, and the anti-Shiite Wahhabi Saudi court—with a special, divinely sanctioned intensity dwarfing the class-based hostility that the vanguard of the proletariat had for capitalists. And the hard core among the regime's leaders—who have squeezed out of power just about anyone who could have worn a "moderate" label—revile Jews above all. Third World-friendly radical Marxism, which depicts Jews as the most nefarious members of the Western robber-baron class, provides half the fuel for the Iranian revolutionary mind. Classical Islamic thought, now given a nasty, modern anti-Semitic twist, provides the rest.

In the Koran, Jews are depicted as intelligent, well educated, and treasonous. The Prophet Muhammad's slaughter of the Jewish Banu Qurayza tribe, which occasionally caused moral indigestion and apologias among later Muslim commentators, serves as a leitmotif for contemporary radical Muslims, who often see Jews, as the Nazis once did, as innately and irreversibly evil. Modern Islamic fundamentalism has turned a scorching spotlight back on the faith's foundation, when Jews, as the Koran tells us, stood in the way of the prophet and his divine mission. The tolerant, sometimes even philo-Semitic, attitudes of the Ottoman Empire have been almost completely forgotten by Islam's modern militants. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini wrote in the foreword to his masterpiece on Islamic government, "The Islamic movement was afflicted by the Jews from its very beginnings, when they began their hostile activity by distorting the reputation of Islam, and by defaming and maligning it. This has continued to the present day."

The disciples of Khomeini grew to intellectual maturity in an age when Western anti-Semitism—in part thanks to Nazi propaganda in the Middle East during World War II and subsequent Muslim admirers of Hitler, both secular and fundamentalist—had married anti-Zionism in ways that might have made the young Khomeini recoil in disgust. In Iran among the hard core, an Islamist-Marxist-Nazi brew sustains the most vicious anti-Semitic—not just anti-

Zionist—regime ever in the Muslim Middle East. (Saudi Arabia is a close but less threatening second.) In the Islamic Republic, state-sponsored anti-Semitism, for both popular and highbrow audiences, has become ubiquitous. Westerners need not know Persian to get an idea of how toxic the situation has become. The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) translates items of interest from the region's press which regularly illustrate the Jew-hatred coming from Tehran. MEMRI doesn't pretend to be comprehensive, but it provides an inkling of how the disease has metastasized.

It is important to dwell on the matter of anti-Semitism in Iran and the Muslim Middle East since American and European officials and academics usually refrain from doing so. It is a complicated and invidious subject. In the decade that I served in the Central Intelligence Agency, I can recall only a few diplomatic or intelligence cables and reports even mentioning anti-Semitism among Muslims. Yet the disease permeated Sunni and Shiite fundamentalist thought, and it's only gotten worse since I left the agency in 1994. American officials and scholars like to wall the subject off, reluctantly touching it when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio and suggesting that the issue will evanesce when the Israelis and Palestinians make peace. As the historian Bernard Lewis pointed out in 1986 in his seminal *Semites and Anti-Semites*, peace between the Arabs and the Israelis would surely help diminish the antagonism toward Israel and the Jews that exists in the Middle East, at least among Muslims who view the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation more or less as a political and geographical struggle between two peoples. But for those, like the Iranian hard core, who believe this is a match-up between God and the Devil, a peace process can ameliorate nothing.

What Lewis observed 25 years ago among the Arabs is truer among the Persians 31 years after the Islamic Revolution: "Muslim anti-Semitism is still something that comes from above, from the leadership, rather than from below, from the society." The average Iranian, including the average well-educated Iranian, who even under the shah was fairly likely to be obsessed with Jewish conspiracy, is free of the personal contempt for Jews that marks the classical European or American anti-Semite. The Green Movement even mocks the regime for its fixation on Israel and Palestine and Holocaust denial (which really means Holocaust approval). Young Iranians want to talk about Iran, not Palestine.

The average Iranian, however, controls neither his country's nuclear program nor the clandestine network Tehran has built up to support its ideological proxies. As for the average Israeli, it matters little to him if someone who is virulently anti-Zionist is not lethally anti-Semitic. The two are operationally indistinguishable. Either way, the targets are Israelis.

As Bret Stephens pointed out in *Commentary*, Iran's psychological state more closely resembles the militarist Japanese mindset in the 1930s—"a martyrdom-obsessed, non-Western culture with global ambitions"—than it does that of the Soviets of yesteryear, whose worst instincts were deterred at enormous cost. Japan made a series of gross, hubristic miscalculations—especially misjudging the United States—that led it into a world war that killed millions of its own people and destroyed the militarists' cherished way of life. But even the Japanese parallel doesn't quite capture revolutionary Iran's special animus toward Israel.

Rafsanjani, whom Washington foreign-policy types have usually viewed approvingly, gave a few speeches in 1983 and 1984 about the Jewish contribution to Western imperialism. He described the creation of Israel as "a united conspiracy against Islam" which the Jews still lead. Understanding the aggression and nefariousness of the United States, he said, isn't possible without first understanding the role of Jews within America—their success at capitalism and their power within the media. The Iran-Iraq war, the most searing near-death experience for the founding fathers of the Iranian revolution, couldn't have happened without Jewish-controlled America giving the green light to Saddam and his financiers in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Jews were thus responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iranians. For Rafsanjani, Jews have a dark, centripetal eminence. For Khamenei, a man of fewer words, it's much simpler and more explicitly religious. When he describes Israel as an "enemy of God," he means exactly that. His Revolutionary Guards continuously rail against nefarious Jewish power.

KHAMENEI RUN AMOK

A nuclear arsenal would allow Khamenei much greater latitude in finding ways to make Israel bleed. Iran's actions against the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan have been pretty bold considering America could, if it chose, rain hell down on Iran for its complicity in the killing of hundreds of American soldiers. We have not done that because we have feared escalation into direct conflict with another Middle Eastern state. The Israelis, too, have failed so far to take on the Iranians with much gusto even though the Islamic Republic has done far more damage to the Jewish state via Iranian allied groups, weapons, and cash than has any Arab nation since 1973.

Imagine what Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guard Corps will think of the Americans, and especially the Israelis, if, after announcing repeatedly that an Iranian nuclear weapon is "unacceptable," they permit it. Israelis, who must live with the Middle East's merciless power politics, should expect considerable Iranian creativity. Terrorism is never static. Even suicide bombers, Iranian-made improvised explosive devices, and missiles can become passé. And as Khamenei and the Guard Corps become savage in suppressing dissent at home, we should expect them to become more violent abroad. The regime lives in fear of a "velvet revolution." It sees foreign powers—the United States, Israel, and some Europeans—as deeply complicit in the Green Movement (though, regrettably, none is). The odds are high that after the supreme leader and the Guards acquire a nuclear weapon, they will think of ways to get even. If Khamenei can kill and torture his way to more self-confidence, we may see a repeat of the 1990s, when the regime went on an overseas killing spree that culminated in the bombing of the American base at Khobar, Saudi Arabia, in 1996.

Imagine what Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guard Corps will think of the Americans, and especially the Israelis, if, after announcing repeatedly that an Iranian nuclear weapon is 'unacceptable,' they permit it.

The key to stopping all of this is Khamenei. Like the former shah, he is the weak link in the regime. Once a relatively broad-based, consensual theocratic dictatorship run by Khomeini's lieutenants, the Islamic Republic today is an autocracy. The supreme leader's office has become a de facto shadow government, with bureaus that mirror the president's ministries. In matters of security and intelligence, Khamenei's men reign supreme. His arrogation of power has made the regime more fragile. Only someone of the supreme leader's short-sighted, insecure arrogance could turn most of the Islamic Republic's founding fathers into enemies of the state. Mir Hossein Mousavi, for instance, now leader of the Green Movement, was a loyal son of the regime who—if he'd been left unharassed during the 2009 election, if he'd not been personally belittled by Khamenei and told he was not really an acceptable candidate—probably would have proved a relatively uncontroversial president. Mousavi might even have lost a fair election, given the status-loving conservatism of many Iranians.

Khamenei has now turned a man with an iron will into his sworn enemy. Worse, he's turned him into a democrat. The supreme leader's rash decision to throw the election to Ahmadinejad has also compromised all future elections. He has permanently destabilized the country. National and municipal elections—especially in the major cities —will now get postponed, perhaps indefinitely, or be so grossly controlled that they can no longer be viewed by the regime as a legitimating force.

And the supreme leader has regularly played musical chairs with the leadership of the Revolutionary Guards, purging those who rose to fame in the Iran-Iraq war and had respectful and affectionate connections to others in the republic's founding generation. Since June 12, 2009, he's alienated even more members of Iran's senior clergy, who've never been particularly fond of Khamenei, a junior cleric until his elevation to Khomeini's office. The use of rape by the regime to pacify the political opposition in the past year sent shockwaves through Iran's clergy, even though their institutional conservatism and government paychecks have inclined mullahs to avoid discussing the regime's worst abuses.

The Islamic Republic is not without ethics—it's not nearly as morally flexible as the Orwellian states of the former Soviet empire or the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Political-religious legitimacy really does matter in the country, and Khamenei in his paranoid quest to make himself the "shadow of God on earth" has thrown it away. He has countered his loss of legitimacy by massively increasing the size of the security forces. The once proud Revolutionary Guard Corps, whose ethos was built in combat with Baathist Iraq, has become more like a mafia, where senior members make fortunes and those below try to advance through the gravy train. Greed and envy are rotting the state's overmuscled internal defenses and making guardsmen, like the favorites of the late shah, the objects of Iran's still lively class-based anger. The supreme leader's hiring and firing practices within the corps and the outfit's evolving ethos

make one question the spiritual solidity of the organization.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others have described Iran as an emerging "military dictatorship" where "the space of decision making for the clerical and political leadership is shrinking." That might be news to Khamenei, who has allowed the corps to grow and had his way with its leadership, promoting men who profess unrivaled religious zeal. It is certainly possible that if Khamenei were to fall, a military dictatorship would follow. But such an "evolution" would place the Guards in ideological opposition to the entire clergy and everything that is Shiite in the republic's identity. If Khamenei's rule cracks, the corps, riven with rivalries, will probably crack with it.

ROCK THE SYSTEM

What the Israelis need to do is rock the system. Iran's nuclear-weapons program has become the third pillar of Khamenei's theocracy (the other two being anti-Americanism and the veil). If the Israelis, whom the regime constantly asperses as Zionists ripe for extinction, can badly damage Iran's nuclear program, the regime will lose enormous face. Khamenei and Ahmadinejad have said repeatedly that the Israelis wouldn't dare strike the nation's nuclear program; if the Israelis do dare, it will be a stunning blow. And military defeats can be deadly for dictatorships—historically, there's nothing deadlier.

While there is no guarantee that an Israeli raid would cause sufficient shock to produce a fatal backlash against Khamenei and the senior leadership of the Guards, there is a chance it would, and nothing else on the horizon offers Israel better odds. Loyal members of Khamenei's entourage, like Speaker Larijani, publicly counseled Khamenei not to be too aggressive in the development of the nuclear program for fear of provoking an American military response. Rafsanjani warned the supreme leader and Ahmadinejad about their aggressiveness even more explicitly. (Those public admonitions ended, as did President Bush's threatening rhetoric, after the 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate asserted, with more confidence than information, that Tehran had stopped its weaponization program in 2003.) It's one thing to have the "Great Satan" lay waste your program; it's another thing entirely to have the "Little Satan" do what the senior leadership of the Revolutionary Guards said was impossible. At the very least, the Iranian left, right, and center would rise in umbrage against any Zionist aggression, and Khamenei's foes and the population as a whole would question the leadership of the men who provoked the Israelis, then couldn't stop them from blowing up the nuclear program that has taken Iran 20 years to construct.

Too much has been made in the West of the Iranian reflex to rally round the flag after an Israeli (or American) preventive strike. Iranians aren't nationalist automatons. Compared with Arabs and Turks, who lack an ancient cosmopolitan culture reinforcing their modern identity, Iranians don't have a jagged and brittle patriotism. They are an old and sophisticated people quite capable of holding multiple hatreds simultaneously in their minds. The Green Movement is an upwelling of 30 years of anger against theocracy. It won't go away because Israel bombs Iran's nuclear sites.

Iran's defeat in the Iran-Iraq war did not make Iranians rally to the regime. On the contrary, that defeat by Saddam Hussein helped to unleash an enormous wave of reflection and self-criticism. Without it, we likely would not have seen the rapid transformation of the Islamic Republic's religious and political culture—a second intellectual revolution, which created the Green Movement. After that transformation, we have a supreme leader whom millions loathe and even more distrust. If the Israelis can make Khamenei look pathetic (and Khamenei has a nearly flawless talent for doing the wrong thing at the wrong time), they can conceivably crack the regime. Jerusalem needs to put the supreme leader under tremendous pressure and see if he can hold it together.

Neither the Israelis nor anyone else need fear for the Green Movement. (Always skeptical of democratic movements among Muslims, most Israelis probably wrote it off as soon as it was born.) If Khamenei were so foolish as to arrest and kill Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, another Khomeini loyalist who has become a leader of the Greens, he would create martyrs in a martyr-obsessed society. If he left them alone and the Israelis struck, they would rise in eloquent anger against the Israelis. Khamenei could never publicly try them for treason. Khamenei has been ordering his goons to rape and murder men and women who've dared to challenge his authority. Would he target still more Iranians for somehow abetting an Israeli bombing? This would only make the regime look more reprehensible in the eyes of the common faithful, on whom, ultimately, the supreme leader's power rests. Yet such repression becomes conceivable as Khamenei's exercise of power grows increasingly paranoid and prone to mistakes. In any case, Iran's pro-democracy dissident culture is here to stay. Regardless of what the Israelis do, it will continue to hunt for fissures in the police state.

And the other concerns about an Israeli bombing are no more persuasive. Hezbollah would undoubtedly unleash its missiles on Israel after a preventive strike. Its *raison d'être* is inextricably tied to war with Zion. It did not twice send terrorists all the way to South America to slaughter Jews to deter Israelis from nefarious activities

in the Levant. Hezbollah does not train Hamas, which is pledged to seek Israel's destruction, because it is searching for leverage in negotiations. It did not make contact with al Qaeda because it wanted to improve its image with Sunni Lebanese. Right now, Israel has to deal with a Hezbollah backed by a nonnuclear Iran. Once the Islamic Republic goes nuclear, this relationship can't get easier. Israel's nuclear deterrent may hold back the worst that Iran could do—regardless of whether Israel strikes preemptively—but other horrific terrorist possibilities remain.

Hundreds of Israelis could die from Hezbollah's new and improved store of missiles. Israel might have to invade Lebanon again, which would cost more lives and certainly upset the "international community." These concerns have tormented a few Israeli prime ministers. But if nuclear weapons in the hands of Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards are an existential threat to the Jewish state—and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, like his predecessors, has said that they are—Jerusalem has little choice. Bombing is the only option that could likely alter the nuclear equation in Iran before Khamenei produces a weapon. The Obama administration might fume, but it is hard to imagine the president, given what he has said about the unacceptability of Iranian nukes, scolding Jerusalem long. He might personally agree with his one-time counsel, Jimmy Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, that Israel has become a pariah state, but politically this won't fly. The left wing of the Democratic party has been going south on the Jewish state for 30 years, but congressional Democrats, who've been pushing for new sanctions against Iran more aggressively than the White House, are not that far gone. By and large, the Republican party would hold behind the Israelis.

American fear of Iranian capabilities in Iraq has been exaggerated. The Shiite Arabs now lead Iraq. Is the supreme leader of Shiite Iran really going to wage war on the Iraqi Shia? Is he going to upset the Iraqi status quo that has mostly been built by the blood, sweat, and tears of the country's Shiites?

The Israelis are well aware of the United States' global security interests. The American presence in Iraq and Afghanistan figures in any Israeli discussion of striking Iran. What should have been a strategic asset for the United States has become a liability since the Americans made it clear that our primary interest from the moment we arrived in the region was leaving. The Iranians aren't stupid: If we tell them that we fear for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Revolutionary Guard Corps officers will give us reason to fear.

American fear of Iranian capabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan has been exaggerated. The Americans are leaving Iraq; within a year, most of our troops are due to be gone. This might not be the best thing for the long-term health of Iraqi democracy, but President Obama appears more determined to exit than to ensure that Iraqi governance doesn't fall apart. The Shiite Arabs now lead Iraq. Is the supreme leader of Shiite Iran really going to wage war on the Iraqi Shia? Khamenei has considerable difficulty with his own clergy. Is he now going to provoke the Iranian-born Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the preeminent divine of Iraq and the most popular ayatollah among Iranians? Is he going to upset the Iraqi status quo that has mostly been built by the blood, sweat, and tears of the country's Shiites, on whom Iran depends for influence in Iraq?

If Khamenei is so foolish as to antagonize the Iraqi Shia, by all means let him. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true in Afghanistan. The Iranians have no reliable proxies there: The Hazara, although Shiite, have never been close to Persians, the Sunni Tajiks are even less affectionate, and the Uzbeks carry no one's water. Iran could ship more improvised explosive devices to the Afghan Pashtun Taliban, but eventually anti-Taliban sentiment in Iran and in Afghanistan would get in their way. If the Iranians tried their mightiest, they could give us only a small headache compared with the migraine we've already got courtesy of the Pakistanis, who are intimately tied to Afghanistan's Taliban. And the Israelis know the U.S. Navy has no fear of Tehran's closing the Strait of Hormuz. If Khamenei has a death-wish, he'll let the Revolutionary Guards mine the strait, the entrance to the Persian Gulf: It might be the only thing that would push President Obama to strike Iran militarily. Such an escalation could quickly leave Khamenei with no navy, air force, and army. The Israelis have to be praying that the supreme leader will be this addle-headed.

It is entirely possible that Khamenei would use terrorism against the United States after an Israeli strike. That is one of the supreme leader's preferred methods of state action, which is why he should not be permitted a nuclear weapon. The correct response for the United States is to credibly threaten vengeance. President Obama might be obliged to make such a threat immediately after an Israeli surprise attack; whether the Iranians would believe it, given America's record, is more difficult to assess.

The great merit of the Bush and Obama administra-

tions' efforts to engage Iran in nuclear negotiations is that they have transformed the discussion about the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. The West bent over backwards to be nice to Tehran, to extend carrots rather than sticks. The slow ramping up of Western sanctions has also forced all concerned to be more explicit about the Iranian menace. Democrats in Congress, who are backing tougher sanctions than the White House wants, are mentally in a different galaxy than they were under President Bush. If the Israelis bomb now, American public opinion will probably be with them. Perhaps decisively so.

The same is true, to a much lesser extent, of opinion in Europe. Starting in 2003, the European Union made a major effort to negotiate with Tehran. For the French, Germans, and British—the "EU-3"—it's been an unsatisfying exercise, increasing distaste for the Iranian regime. Since June 12, 2009, the Europeans—more than the Americans—have watched on TV Khamenei's attack on the Green Movement. Human rights in Iran is an issue in Europe, especially Germany, and especially on the left. Tehran's representatives in Europe have also done their part in disturbing the diplomatic politesse that Europe's political elites live and breathe. After Ahmadinejad's election in 2005, Iran's ambassadors to Portugal and Poland, for example, publicly ruminated on the practical impossibilities of the "Final Solution." In 2006 Warsaw's ministry of foreign affairs had to threaten to declare the Iranian ambassador persona non grata if he followed through on his publicly expressed wish to visit Auschwitz to measure the ovens so he could prove that genocide could not have happened there.

European sentiment remains overwhelmingly opposed to the use of force in foreign affairs, and many Europeans have developed an ugly anti-Israeli reflex. An inclination to excuse or ignore Arab violence toward Israel while excoriating any lethal (usually labeled "disproportionate") Israeli response is still there, as witnessed recently with the Turkish-led, pro-Hamas, Gaza-bound flotilla. But the Europeans also take an increasingly dim view of Iran. Khamenei's decision to tap Ahmadinejad for president in 2009, his post-June 12 crackdown, and the European political elite's long and frustrating experience with the supreme leader's minions have dispelled the sympathy Iran enjoyed under Khatami, when Europeans blamed every setback on George W. Bush.

No doubt many Europeans will rise in high dudgeon if the Israelis attack. Conceivably, the Germans will lead a charge to punish the Israelis through EU economic sanctions, though it's doubtful the necessary consensus could be built. Even the Austrians, who've never seen an Iranian sanction they liked, might balk at imposing sanctions on the Jewish state for militarily striking a Holocaust-denying Islamist autocracy. The Israeli left might have to abandon its dream of being fully accepted in the salons of the Old World, but that is a sacrifice that most members of the Labor party, which seems only a bit less disposed to bombing Iran than the right-wing Likud, are probably willing to make.

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

It is possible the Israelis have waited too long to strike. Military action should make a strategic difference. If the Israelis (or, better, the Americans under President Bush) had struck Iran's principal nuclear facilities in 2003 and killed many of the scientists and technical support staff, Khamenei's nuclear program likely would have taken years, even decades, to recover. Now, by contrast, the Iranians may be sufficiently advanced in uranium enrichment, trigger mechanisms, and warhead design that they could build a device quickly after an Israeli raid, and the attack would have accomplished little. Khamenei could emerge from the confrontation stronger.

A spate of Iranian defections to the West (including Ali Reza Asgari, a former Revolutionary Guard commander, in 2007, the somewhat bizarre case of the nuclear scientist Shahram Amiri in 2009, and the country's former nuclear negotiator with the EU, Hossein Moussavian, in 2010) may have allowed the Israelis and other Westerners a clearer picture of how advanced Tehran's nuclear-weapons program is. If we're not at the end of the road, then the Israelis probably should waste no more time. Khamenei is still weak. He's more paranoid than he's ever been. The odds of his making uncorrectable mistakes are much better than before. Any Israeli raid that could knock out a sizable part of Iran's nuclear program would change the dynamic inside Iran and throughout the Middle East. There is a chance that it would spare the Israelis the awful, likely possibility that other Middle Eastern states—especially the Saudis, Iran's arch-religious rival—would go nuclear in response to a Persian bomb. The Israelis know that many in the Sunni Arab world would be enormously relieved if the Israelis did what the Americans have declined to take on. The United Arab Emirates' ambassador to the United States recently revealed what is likely a Sunni Arab consensus: Bombing Iran might be bad; allowing Khamenei to have a nuke would be worse.

Unless Jerusalem bombs, the Israelis will soon be confronting a situation without historical parallel. The Islamic Republic currently has 8,528 uranium-enrichment centrifuges installed at the Natanz facility. Almost 4,000 of these are operational. A 3,000-centrifuge cascade could produce fuel for one warhead in 271 days. Natanz is designed to hold 50,000 centrifuges, which could produce enough fuel for one warhead every 16 days. Ignoring the possibility that Khamenei's nuclear experts will transfer Natanz's cascading centrifuges to covert facilities once they figure out how to maintain and array them (hence the urgent need to

blow up the facility), uranium production will soon create a command-and-control nightmare. Envision nuclear warheads on missiles and on planes, dispersed throughout Iran to ensure that an American or Israeli first strike couldn't take them out. Now focus on the fact that the Revolutionary Guards Corps will have possession of these weapons. Khamenei isn't likely to give command-and-control to "moderate" guardsmen; he'll likely give it to the folks he trusts most—a nuclear version of the Quds Force, the expeditionary terrorist-and-assassination unit within the Corps that does most of the regime's really dirty work and has direct access to the supreme leader.

We're not talking about the stolid (but at times dangerously foolish) Pakistani Army controlling nuclear weapons; we're talking about folks who've maintained terrorist liaison relationships with most of the Middle East's radical Muslim groups. It's entirely possible that even with Khamenei in control, an Iranian atomic stockpile could lose nukes to dissenting voices within the Guards who have their own ideological agendas. Now imagine the ailing Khamenei is dead, the Guard Corps has several dozen nuclear devices in its "possession," and the country is in some political chaos as power centers, within the clergy and the Corps, start competing against each other. The Green Movement, too, will probably rise in force. The whole political structure could collapse or the most radical could fight their way to the top—all parties trying to get their hands on the nukes. Since there is no longer a politburo in Iran to keep control (Khamenei gutted it when he downed his peers and competitors), this could get messy quickly.

In the best case scenario, if things were just "normal" in Tehran, Israel would likely be confronting Cuban Missile Crisis-style brinkmanship on a routine basis. Any halfway successful Israeli raid could transform the Western approach to the Islamic Republic. An Israeli strike could finally prompt the Western powers to think in concrete terms about what it would mean to allow the Revolutionary Guard Corps nukes.

Without a raid, if the Iranians get the bomb, Europe's appeasement reflex will kick in and the EU sanctions regime will collapse, leaving the Americans alone to contain the Islamic Republic. Most of the Gulf Arabs will probably kowtow to Persia, having more fear of Iran than confidence in the defensive assurances of the United States. And Sunni Arabs who don't view an Iranian bomb as a plus for the Muslim world will, at daunting speed, become much more interested in "nuclear energy"; the Saudis, who likely helped Islamabad go nuclear, will just call in their chits with the Pakistani military.

So then, does the Israeli air force think it can do it? Historically, Israeli politicians have taken the assessments of their air force as canonical. If the air command believes it can, will Bibi Netanyahu and his cabinet proceed with preemption, which has, most Israelis will tell you, repeatedly saved the Jewish state from terrible situations?

The *Atlantic*'s Jeffrey Goldberg, an acute observer of the Israeli prime minister, holds that Netanyahu will favor a strike if he has no other serious option. And Israelis—right and left—are deeply skeptical that a sanctions regime that does not shut down the Iranian oil and gas sector has any utility whatsoever in halting the nuclear program. The sanctions effort led by Treasury undersecretary Stuart Levey and congressional Democrats has certainly damaged Iran's economy and slowed down the nuclear program, as Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, in a rare moment of honesty recently confessed. These sanctions are definitely beginning to sting Iran's energy sector. But the Israelis have history on their side when they express their profound skepticism about the will of the "international community" to use sanctions decisively against Tehran. Contrary to what Senator Lindsey Graham said recently in Israel—"there's many options still available to us" to stop the Iranian nuclear program—there has always, really, been only one peaceful way: paralyzing sanctions against Iran's oil and gas industry. Neither President Obama, nor most Europeans, seem ready to hit so forcefully the Islamic Republic.

For Netanyahu, the Iranian-nuke question touches the core of his own Israeli identity—what he was taught by his historian father, whose specialty, the Jews of Spain, is a tragic saga of helplessness, flight, and conversion, and what he learned from the death of his elder brother, the only commando killed in the Entebbe raid to free Israeli hostages in 1976. Most Washington foreign-policy commentators just don't believe the Jewish state will strike because of the limitations of Israel's airpower. But they are probably underestimating Netanyahu personally and the Israeli-Jewish reflex to never again be passive in the face of an existential danger.

Israeli hawks may be wrong about what their air force can do, but they express sentiments—where there is a will, there is a way—that most Israelis probably still share. Which brings us to the current minister of defense and leader of the Labor party, Ehud Barak. At times he sounds as hawkish as Netanyahu; at other times, he seems almost willing to live with an Iranian nuclear weapon. The current coalition government couldn't attack Iran without Barak's approval. So, the whole discussion may boil down to this: Will Israel's defense minister remain calm and "strategically patient," putting his faith in Israel's atomic arsenal, in the nuclear sobriety of Ali Khamenei and his Guards, and in the awe that Barack Obama's America inspires in the Middle East? Or will he decide that a military strike is the only sound response to an existential danger? ♦

'Lord of the Flies' (1990)

Piggy's Back

The case for William Golding

BY MICHAEL DIRDA

Kill the pig! Slit her throat! Spill her blood!

Just pronounce those words and anyone who's been to high school during the last 50 years will instantly remember their source: William Golding's great and greatly disturbing *Lord of the Flies*. I would guess that it's the most widely taught 20th-century British novel in America. The only serious competition that comes to mind is another fable, George Orwell's more intransigently political *Animal Farm*.

Yet while almost anyone can name other works by Orwell, starting with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the much-studied essay "Politics and the English Language," I suspect that few Americans readers know any of William Golding's other novels. This is a pity, for he is—as John Carey's superb biography shows—one of the essential novelists of the second half of the 20th century, possessed of an unflinching vision of both the human condition and the doleful human comedy. If you want to situate so *sui generis* a writer as Golding, imagine a cross between Thomas Mann and Marilynne Robinson: All three of them highly intellectual, yet full of deeply felt emotion, obsessed with the nature of good and evil, alive to sexual tensions and ambiguities, and nothing if not serious about the art of fiction.

William Golding
The Man Who Wrote 'Lord of the Flies'
by John Carey
Free Press, 592 pp., $32.50

Only a few years after its publication in 1954, *Lord of the Flies* had already become something of an albatross to Golding; he once even dismissed it as relatively minor. His own favorite among his novels was his second, *The Inheritors* (1955), in which early man, Homo Sapiens, commits the first genocide by wiping out the last band of loping, ape-like Neanderthals. It's the only other Golding book that people sometimes know, in part because fantasy and science fiction fans have adopted it as one of their own. Golding himself probably wouldn't object to this, since he was himself an avid reader of sc-fi.

Indeed, there have been interpretations of *The Inheritors* that claim the novel isn't about the past at all; that it actually reveals a future in which mankind has been bombed into the stone age. The book thus describes the first steps in the march back toward technological civilization—and probably to another holocaust. From this perspective, it may be linked not only to *Lord of the Flies* (actu-

Michael Dirda is the author of the memoir An Open Book *and of* Readings, Bound to Please, Book by Book, *and* Classics for Pleasure.

ally set during an imagined World War III) but also to such dystopian visions of tribalized life after nuclear disaster as Stephen Vincent Benét's famous story "By the Waters of Babylon" (1937) and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1980).

But whether located in the past or future, *The Inheritors* does what a great work of art should always do: It makes us see with new eyes. The novel's point of view is largely that of Lok, a proto-hominid with the mental age of a human two-year-old, who almost incomprehendingly suffers the destruction of his "people," of his very species. As a moralist, Golding compels us to recognize that humankind's dominance on this planet has always come at the expense of other creatures—and yet he doesn't portray the smarter Homo Sapiens as evil or sinful. They, or rather We, are the next big thing. But for Lok and his kind? This is the way the world ends.

Golding's third novel, *Pincher Martin* (1956), is yet another tour de force: It opens with a man drowning, fighting for his life:

> He was struggling in every direction, he was the centre of the writhing and kicking knot of his own body. There was no up or down, no light and no air. He felt his mouth open of itself and the shrieked word burst out.
>
> "Help!"
>
> When the air had gone with the shriek, water came in to fill its place—burning water, hard in the throat and mouth as stones that hurt. He hutched his body towards the place where air had been but now it was gone and there was nothing but black, choking welter. His body let loose its panic and his mouth strained open till the hinges of his jaw hurt. Water thrust in, down, without mercy.

Naval Lt. Christopher Martin's ship has apparently blown up, and somehow he manages to make his way to a tiny Atlantic atoll, just a bit of rock, and there he attempts to survive. As time goes by, Martin remembers his cruel and dishonorable past, he hallucinates, he rants at God. Not so much a stripped-down version of *Robinson Crusoe*, Golding's novel should instead be likened to a journey through a dark night of the soul. In fact, things are darker than we initially realize, for *Pincher Martin* is a novel with a secret, and its conclusion recalls one of the most famous of all 19th-century American short stories.

Lord of the Flies, *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin*—these three nightmarish existential visions of man's inhumanity and suffering, one right after the other, would themselves justify the Nobel Prize that William Golding was awarded in 1983. But there are still other books, arguably just as fine, in particular *The Spire* (1964), about the moral costs in building a medieval cathedral's tower, *Darkness Visible* (1979), which interlaces a story of mystical vocation with a terrorist plot, and the Booker Prize-winning *Rites of Passage* (1980), about an emotionally and spiritually storm-wracked sea voyage to Australia in the early 19th century. The latter was followed by two sequels, *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989). Parts of this angst-ridden trilogy—collectively titled *To the Ends of the Earth*—can be strangely comic, especially if you regard the unnamed vessel as a modern ship of fools.

He remained uneasy at lavish soirees and parties, often drinking too much and growing testy. . . . He was happiest mucking around in his garden and messing about in boats. On the day before he died, he was up on a ladder cleaning out his gutters.

William Golding was born in 1911, the son of an imaginative schoolmaster and a sensitive mother. He grew up playing the piano and once thought about a concert hall career. After finishing his degree at Oxford, where he studied natural science and English, he even worked for a while as an actor. During the 1930s Golding hewed politically to the left, partly because he viewed himself as a member of the working class. Throughout his life he was to regard the rich, posh, or aristocratic with suspicion and disdain.

At first, the young Golding imagined himself a poet, and Macmillan brought out a book of his rather Georgian verse as early as 1934. But he still needed to make a living, especially after he married a beautiful woman named Ann, who was slightly his social superior. Their marriage was to be, for the most part, a happy one, though Golding seems to have been an inveterate flirt—and perhaps more. (Carey is suggestive but still circumspect about possible infidelities.) To support Ann and, before long, their children Judy and David, he decided to become a teacher at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury. The behavior of Ralph, Piggy, and Simon in *Lord of the Flies*, and especially the savagery of Jack and Roger, are based on Golding's own classroom experiences and observations.

During World War II, Golding served in the Royal Navy, participating in the D-Day invasion as the commander of a rocket-boat, a rather cumbersome barge-like craft loaded with missile-launchers. In a near suicidal operation at Walcheren, LCT (R) 331 managed to shell German defenses and get safely away, but virtually all the other ships, manned by Golding's comrades, were not so lucky.

In later years, Golding would often revert to a hearty Cap'n Bill persona, a bluff, balding mariner with a beard who couldn't possibly have written his sensitive and philosophical novels. Yet Cap'n Bill also possessed a real appetite for learning: Golding was so drawn to Homer and the Athenian dramatists that he taught himself ancient Greek. Behind the ritualized horrors of *Lord of the Flies* there clearly lurks the novelist's memory of Euripides' *The Bacchae*, in which crazed maenads tear apart and apparently devour the hapless Pentheus.

Meanwhile, during school breaks and sometimes even during class-time, Golding worked away on his fiction. One novel, *Strangers from Within*, made the rounds of most of the London publishers before it finally reached Faber and Faber. There, it was given to a professional reader,

who scribbled the following report:

> Time: the Future. Absurd & uninteresting fantasy about the explosion of an atom bomb on the Colonies. A group of children who land in jungle-country near New Guinea. Rubbish & dull. Pointless.

Every writer needs a bit of luck, and Golding's now appeared in the shape of a new young Faber editor. Charles Monteith had been with the firm for about a month, but one day happened to pick up a shabby typescript from the reject pile. This was late September 1953. Monteith began to read *Strangers from Within*, eventually taking it home. Let Carey take over in telling the story:

> The first pages described a nuclear war, and contained no characters at all. Later, attention switched earthwards, where there was a hurriedly organized evacuation of schoolchildren. The planes in which they flew had detachable cabins, "passenger tubes," which could float to earth beneath giant parachutes. Then the focus switched to a particular plane, to a fierce air battle over the Pacific, to the release of the passenger tube, to a tropical island and—at last—to some human beings, who were all boys.

Monteith eventually cut all this preliminary matter, and asked Golding to tone down Simon's Christ-like character, this latter change being one that Golding eventually came to regret. Still, it's clear that Monteith was an invaluable partner in the creation of Golding's first published novel, and in all those that followed. Typically, the writer would send Monteith his typescripts, expressing great uncertainty about their quality. Monteith would nearly always praise what he saw, announce that he was willing to publish the book as it stood, then suggest possible changes, while encouraging his author in every way. The working relationship turned into a friendship and paid off handsomely for both men: Over the years Monteith rose in the firm, eventually becoming chairman of Faber, his stable including Samuel Beckett, Philip Larkin, Tom Stoppard, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and of course, William Golding.

When *Lord of the Flies* appeared in 1954, Golding was 42 years old. In England, the book received enthusiastic reviews without becoming a runaway bestseller. In the United States, it was published by Coward-McCann, which sold a couple thousand copies and remaindered the rest. I own a first American edition because my steelworker father would sometimes pick up cheap department store remainders to stock the bookcase he had built for his children. He told me that he paid 59 cents for the novel—its green jacket, showing jungle scenery, bears the words: "The Struggle for Survival in a World without Adults." Today, a fine copy of the American first of *Lord of the Flies* sells for a thousand dollars. The English first can go for ten times that.

William Golding, 1964

CSU ARCHIVES / EVERETT COLLECTION

Golding was still a schoolmaster when *The Inheritors* and *Pincher Martin* appeared. Only in 1962 did he finally give up his day job. Shortly thereafter, *Lord of the Flies* began its second life, as students somehow discovered the book and it became all the rage on American campuses. Since then it has sold millions of copies in dozens of languages.

Golding did take a job as a visiting writer at Hollins College just before his boom years started, and he would lecture with increasing frequency at university campuses around the world. For the last 30 years of his life, and largely because of *Lord of the Flies*, Golding was able to travel, afford an expensive boat—sailing remained his chief pleasure and he regularly took his family on nautical holidays—and even complain about British taxes. But he also worked steadily, not only on his fiction but on essays and travel articles for magazines, many of them collected in *The Hot Gates* (1965) and *A Moving Target* (1982). He and Ann visited Italy, Greece, the United States, Canada, Egypt, India, Australia, Japan.

For a late starter, William Golding managed to do very well for himself, being made a companion of literature in the summer of 1983 (along with Graham Greene and Samuel Beckett), winning the Nobel Prize later that same year, and then being knighted in 1988. Nonetheless, he remained uneasy at lavish soirees and parties, often drinking too much and growing testy with other guests. He was happiest mucking around in his garden and messing about in boats. On the day before he died, Golding was up on a ladder cleaning out his gutters. That evening he threw a party, drank a lot, passed out in an empty bathtub, and was put to bed in his son's room. The next morning he was discovered lying on the floor, crouched in the fetal position. He was 81.

John Carey pointedly hopes that this admiring life will lead to a greater appreciation of a magnificent writer, now sadly neglected. As such, it is really a critical biography, containing as much material about the various novels as about their author's day-to-day existence. (In this regard, note that the book does reveal Golding's plots, which some readers may find distressing.) Throughout, Carey draws heavily on unpublished diaries and manuscripts, and the result feels definitive. Moreover, as befits the chief book reviewer for the *Sunday Times*, Carey writes with exemplary clarity, efficiency, and wit. As an emeritus professor of English at Merton College, Oxford,

he also brings to bear great learning and critical authority.

Yes, William Golding was "the man who wrote *Lord of the Flies*," but only in the sense that Samuel Beckett was the man who wrote *Waiting for Godot* and Vladimir Nabokov the man who wrote *Lolita*. All three of those works made their authors rich and famous, but such undoubted masterpieces are themselves only parts of larger oeuvres. One might even argue that *Endgame* is Beckett's greatest play, and *Pale Fire* Nabokov's most Nabokovian novel. John Carey's excellent biography reminds us that William Golding produced not just one remarkable book but an entire shelf of them. ♦

B&A

Rough Diamonds

How baseball was played in the late 20th century.

BY DAVID GUASPARI

Earl Weaver (left), Boog Powell confer with umpire (1970)

It is no criticism to say that the third installment in Fay Vincent's oral history of baseball cannot compete with the classic that inspired it, Lawrence S. Ritter's *The Glory of Their Times*. Ritter, a professor of finance at NYU, spent the first half of the 1960s tracking down players from the early decades of the 20th century and recording their stories—capturing a wonderful slice of American history that would otherwise have been lost.

It's What's Inside the Lines That Counts
Baseball Stars of the 1970s and 1980s Talk About the Game They Love (The Baseball Oral History Project, Volume 3)
by Fay Vincent
Simon & Schuster, 328 pp., $25

In those early days, the business of baseball was not yet rationalized. Independent teams and leagues flourished. There was no panopticon of sports media to scour elementary schools for talent, no conveyor belt to trundle boys to the majors through youth teams and a system of captive minor leagues. Sixteen-year-old Rube Marquard hopped a freight train and, five days later, presented himself to the Waterloo club in the Iowa State league, where a friend of his was playing. "Keokuk is here tomorrow," the manager said, "and we'll pitch you." (He won the game and then hopped a train back when they wouldn't immediately give him a contract.)

Off-season, players barnstormed; and during one tour the mayor of Oxnard, California, insisted that Hans Lobert, reputedly the fastest man in the majors, put on a postgame show by racing a horse around the bases. (The horse won, but cheated.) The trainers, said Wahoo Sam Crawford, "didn't know any more about health or medicine than the man in the moon." One had a single all-purpose remedy, a rubdown with a mixture of Vaseline and Tabasco sauce, which he called "Go fast."

Roger Angell, the most celebrated of baseball essayists, has said that an interview with an athlete consists basically of one question: What is it like to be you? The baseball lives recounted here—from the 1960s, '70s, and '80s—seem an awful lot like those of today. The romance of the world that Ritter uncovered could charm anyone with a fondness for Americana, but the baseball gossip of *What's Inside the Lines* is for fans: Juan Marichal's "incident" with Johnny Roseboro, Earl Weaver's never-ending grudge match against the (now-dead) umpire Ron Luciano, Ozzie Smith's first back flip, Bobby Richardson's positioning when Willie McCovey lined a screamer at him to end the 1962 World Series. Which is not to say that these stories lack insight into the human condition. The umpire Bruce Froemming, for example, brilliantly and succinctly defines the point at which an argument crosses the line: "Profane is anything with 'you' in front of it."

Seven of Vincent's subjects are in the Hall of Fame: Willie McCovey, Juan Marichal, Tom Seaver, Ozzie Smith, and Cal Ripken as players; Earl Weaver and Dick Williams as managers, their careers validating the conventional view that marginal players make the best skippers. Bruce Froemming will be there soon, joining nine other umps. Marvin Miller, first executive director of the Baseball Players Association, should be—in the category "Executive/Pioneer"—but won't. The selection committee seems to have been gerrymandered

BETTMANN / CORBIS

David Guaspari is a writer in Ithaca, New York.

to keep him out. The tenth entry, completing the lineup card, is Don Baylor, an excellent player and successful manager, though not quite one of the game's gods. (Miller, who may be unknown to non-fans, has had an enormous impact on the game and on the most conspicuous difference between then and now: money. The average salary of a major league ballplayer in 1965, the year before Players Association was formed, was a bit more than $14,000. The average salary in 2010 is a bit over $3 million.)

Like many fans, I've taken a marginally informed, plague-on-both-their-houses stance toward the players and owners during strikes and drug scandals. (Two years before he died, Lawrence Ritter, presumably better informed, told the *New York Times*, "I don't like the players, I don't like the umpires, I don't like the owners. But I love the game.") There is no doubt, however, that before their union was formed, players were little more than chattel. Team owners colluded to sign every player to a contract containing the so-called reserve clause that bound him to a single team until it chose to release or trade him. Years of turmoil produced the current system—too complex to summarize here—that allows players with a certain seniority to become "free agents" and shop their talents around. Hence the multiyear multimillion-dollar contracts.

Of the bitter strike that wiped out the middle third of the 1981 season, Miller says, "Major League ballplayers are the most competitive people I've ever met and the owners made the mistake of trying to face them down." He claims to believe in "basic economics, a balance between demand and supply"—meaning by "balance" (a euphemism presumably uttered with a straight face) a strategy that limits the number of new free agents each year so that scarcity will keep their salaries high.

The stories of the nonplayers seem more interesting than those of the players, perhaps because what they do is less well known. Who would have guessed that someone floated a plan to have the union represented by a balanced ticket consisting of Miller and the law firm of Richard Nixon? Froemming makes it clear that umpires don't just call the plays; they control the game. And he exudes confidence in his ability to project the moral authority needed to do that, and his ability to handle himself and others in tense confrontations. Froemming also confirms one's most painful imaginings about the doggedness needed to umpire in the minor leagues: During the season he could never afford to go home for a visit; he had to drive himself from game to game, including the 800 miles from El Paso to Tulsa; and in 1968, after a decade in the minors, he was making a salary of $3,200. (Umpires now have their own union.)

It's amusing to try disentangling the mix of spin, bonhomie, and moonshine when Earl Weaver says that 'almost every time I got thrown out I deserved it' and 'the umpires were so good it's almost impossible that I could disagree with them that many times.'

Dick Williams and Earl Weaver are notoriously prickly and sharp-tongued, just what the reader wants. Williams took three different teams to the World Series but never lasted longer than five years with any of them; he "rubbed a lot of people the wrong way." Weaver, by contrast, spent his entire career with the Baltimore Orioles. Holder of the American League record for being ejected from ball games, he directed much of his energy to intimidating umpires and opposing players. It's amusing to try disentangling the mix of spin, bonhomie, and moonshine when he says that "almost every time I got thrown out I deserved it" and "the umpires were so good it's almost impossible that I could disagree with them that many times."

Both Weaver and Williams complain that an emphasis on "fundamentals" was a key to their success and is now a thing of the past. That has more in it, I think, than old-guy crankiness. Some nonobjective evidence: In the summer of 1981, recovering from an illness, I would drift in and out of sleep with an Orioles game on the radio and seemed always to awaken as they grabbed a defensive out with a cut-off play. The cut-off, an opportunistic way to settle for half a loaf, is the most bourgeois play in baseball: It must be set up hundreds of times a season, for the one time in 10 or 20 it can be sprung—and redirect a throw to catch a trailing runner. I might add that Ritter's players, reflecting on how baseball had changed, regularly said that their game called not for power but, preeminently, for quick wits.

Clearly, none of these men is unintelligent. And none has false modesty, which someone at the top of a difficult profession can hardly afford. Marichal thinks, plausibly, that there must be something wrong with the Cy Young Award since he never won it. Seaver revels in being the center of the action, when there are 50,000 people in the park and he alone knows what pitch is coming next. Ozzie Smith, a dazzling defensive shortstop who made himself into a capable batter, offers this portrait of Cal Ripken, his mirror image: Smart, positions himself well, a great hitter, and "defensively, he's not going to hurt you."

The modern players emphasize their pride in how hard they work at their difficult craft. A cynic might call that a ploy, conscious or not, to defuse resentment at their astronomical pay. I think the pride is justified, the dedication admirable, and give the last word to Ripken, one of the most widely admired—one of the most blue-collar—of baseball's multimillionaires: "First and foremost, I was someone who loved the game of baseball, was absolutely crazy and passionate about the game of baseball." And of that brief, consuming career lived between the lines, "You know, it's just a phase of your life." ♦

B&A

Disloyal Opposition

Anarchists are finally organized—between two covers.

BY HARVEY KLEHR

Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, 1917

Entering the world of idealists, lunatics, killers, double agents, triple agents, and religious fanatics who populate Alex Butterworth's book is a bewildering experience, not least because an ordinary reader will likely get lost in the maze of plots, counterplots, and speculation, some of it plausible and some of it unprovable. An account of the frenetic and fractious world of anarchism from the suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871 to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, this long and often jumbled book both entertains and infuriates.

The World That Never Was
A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists and Secret Agents
by Alex Butterworth
Pantheon, 528 pp., $30

Harvey Klehr is the Andrew W. Mellon professor of politics and history at Emory and the author, with John Earl Haynes, of Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America.

Butterworth's major theme is that the first war on terror was that directed against anarchists from the days of the Paris Commune to the Bolshevik Revolution because of the threat they were perceived to pose to European civilization. Anarchism has always had two faces. Many of its idealistic, scientific leaders envisioned an earthly paradise and a peaceful, cooperative world, based on human beings' natural inclination to cooperate with each other. Along with this picture of a Garden of Eden, however, there were the hundreds of its practitioners, motivated sometimes by anger at the repression and violence used by government authorities, and other times by a zealous belief that striking down symbols of authority would convince the masses that the world could be organized anew—the so-called propaganda of the deed—who carried out shocking acts of murder and terror.

For decades these two images of anarchism have persisted. On the one hand, there are the peaceful utopian communities (that rarely overcame internal bickering) and on the other the assassinations of heads of state (Russian czars, American presidents, French prime ministers, Austrian royalty, and others). Many of the worst excesses of the anarchists, Butterworth charges, were fomented by agents of government, most notably the Russian Okhrana, charged by the czars with neutralizing opposition to their feudal and brutal rule, which tracked the international wanderings of its foes, inserted agents provocateurs into their ranks, carried out disinformation operations, and even sanctioned murders to discredit anarchism. One of the most striking portraits is that of Peter Rachkovsky, recruited by the Okhrana in 1882, who infiltrated radical groups, was exposed and became the Okhrana's chief agent in France, worked tirelessly to convince French authorities to crack down on Russian exiles, orchestrated the killings of right-wingers in order to blame anarchists, published forgeries, and survived bureaucratic intrigue to rise to chief of police for all of Russia before being fired in 1906.

Butterworth also dutifully chronicles the excesses of the anarchists themselves and explores the resentments and fantasies that inspired many of their dubious schemes. Even the more rational anarchist thinkers were prone to peddling conspiracy theories, often cooked up by the security agencies of both repressive and democratic states. Without any prompting from Rachkovsky, French anarchists in the early 1890s did their best to discredit the doctrine. An anarchist known as Ravachol exhumed the corpse of a noblewoman, murdered a 95-year-old hermit, raided an arsenal, and launched a bombing campaign against judges, aristocrats, and army troops. Eventually captured after a tip from a waiter, Ravachol was quickly turned into a martyr. His friends promptly blew up the café where the waiter

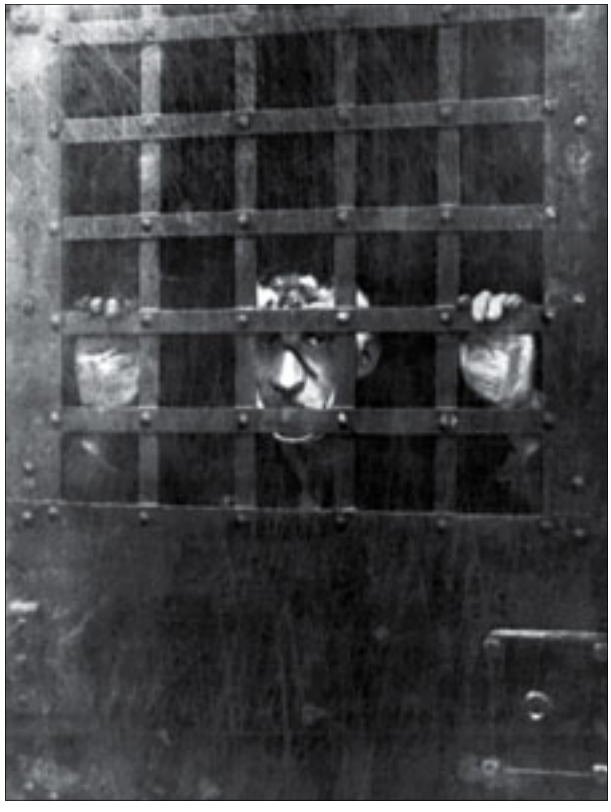
CORBIS

worked, killing and maiming several people. Élisée Reclus, one of the grand old men of anarchism, found in Ravachol "goodness," "greatness of soul" and "generosity." And a heroine of the Commune, Louise Michel, could only gently criticize these acts of terror.

Filled with an enormously large cast of characters, and written in a breathless, novelistic style, this ambitious book ultimately exhausts its readers with its level of detail, much of it imaginatively re-created with Butterworth imagining how his characters must have felt or reacted to events. But in immersing himself in the world of anarchism, and the oft-times deluded mentality of people who imagined that killing a government official would expose the weakness of authority, or bombing a restaurant strike a blow against the bourgeoisie, Butterworth sometimes seems to have forgotten that their delusions did not reflect reality.

Consider, for example, his comments on the United States, hardly central to his story, but the locale for several anarchist adventures, since a number of believers either visited the country on speaking tours, spent time in exile here, or participated in the anarchist movement, most notably Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. (America was also the site of probably the largest number of utopian communities, many influenced by anarchist visions, in the world.) Butterworth mentions that veterans of the Commune were not welcomed in the United States, because a "brutal and ugly system … the monstrous, accelerating engine of unregulated capitalism" so feared the message of social revolution. If one of the earliest Russian anarchists, living in a utopian community in Kansas, had "known in full the miserable terms of their [U.S. workers'] employment, half starved and lacking legal protection of any kind, he might have thought the freed serfs of Russia almost fortunate by comparison."

Few historians would describe working conditions in the United States in the late 1800s as particularly good, but even fewer would credit a description that left them worse off than Russian serfs, either economically or politically. Apart from the wild exaggeration, Butterworth is prone to suggesting that various anarchist acts of violence might have been acts of provocation, implying without evidence that police agents threw the bomb in Haymarket Square, Chicago, in 1886 that killed a number of policemen and sparked a fierce attack on anarchists. Discussing Leon Czolgosz, anarchist assassin of President William McKinley, he seems to hint that since he was a "lone wolf" it was somehow unfair for the public to blame anarchist organizations for his actions, without recognizing that justifications of violence by people like Johann Most, Goldman, and Berkman could inspire bitter and ignorant men to lash out.



Leon Czolgosz, assassin of President McKinley, 1901

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS / DIGITAL VE / SCIENCE FACTION / CORBIS

In fact, as many of the stories Butterworth tells make clear, the gentle souls of anarchism often found it hard to repudiate their more violent brethren. Goldman refused to condemn Czolgosz, and when Most criticized Berkman for his failed assassination attempt against the industrialist Henry Frick, Goldman leaped onto the stage where he was lecturing and attacked him with a bullwhip. European anarchists rushed to the defense of killers, reluctant to lend support to authority of any kind.

One of the subtexts of this book is the fierce conflict between Marxists and anarchists. Given the bloody legacy of Marxism and its frequent descent into authoritarianism, it is tempting to admire the anarchists' suspicion of their penchant for centralization and control. Although often appealing to similar values and goals, Marxists and anarchists became bitter enemies as early as the 1870s, when Karl Marx moved the headquarters of the First International to the United States and helped destroy it rather than see it captured by adherents of Bakunin, the fiery Russian anarchist. While both looked forward to a world without government and its legacy of oppression, the anarchists' resistance to centralization and their defense of individual revolutionary violence left them prey to just the sort of irrational and counterproductive violence that Butterworth catalogues. Marxists, at least, paid lip service to majority rule, while anarchists often refused to countenance any limit to individual self-expression.

Another peculiar tic of one segment of anarchism was its flirtation with anti-Semitism. To many anarchists, Marx was not only a tool of Otto von Bismarck's centralizing regime in Germany but a Jew to boot. Ironically, Marx frequently expressed his own hatred of Jews, explaining that capitalism was simply the triumph of Judaism and its greediness. Marx's own anti-Semitism did not deter many Jews from being attracted to his movement; particularly in Russia, the repression and pogroms

of the czarist regime proved effective recruiting tools. And despite the prominence of Goldman and Berkman, far fewer Jews were attracted to anarchism. While Marxists dreamed of an industrialized society run by workers, anarchist yearnings often harked back to a preindustrial order populated by independent artisans, a Europe where Jews were largely invisible.

Even though only one of the plotters convicted for killing Tsar Alexander II was Jewish, anti-Semitism was used as a pretext for the first widespread pogroms in Russia, beginning in 1881. Although Butterworth says little about its anti-Semitism, the People's Will, whose campaign of terror sparked the repression, accepted peasant anti-Semitism as a mark of growing political consciousness. One of his main characters, the Marquis Henri Rochefort, a Communard who captured worldwide attention with his spectacular escape from a Pacific penal colony and remained a stalwart of the anarchist cause for decades, was an inveterate anti-Semite who inveighed against Jewish bankers and Alfred Dreyfus. Butterworth even suggests, without hard evidence, that Rochefort might have collaborated with Rachkovsky to produce the most infamous and influential work of European anti-Semitism, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

Unlike the Marxists, the anarchists could rarely agree on anything but their enemies. That left them prey to a wide variety of fanatics and schemers. While serious, if flawed, political thinkers like Prince Kropotkin, the famous Russian geographer, or William Morris, the British poet and artist who longed for a feudal-like community, grappled with issues of federalism and centralization, others praised assassins as martyrs "consecrated to death" or, like one anarchist thinker, were haunted by the injustice of their enjoying more than their share of sunlight. Many of the debates in which anarchists engaged—whether seizing the property of others was restitution or theft, whether killing innocent people was "propaganda by the deed" or murder—surely must have convinced most rational people that their movement was filled with crackpots. ♦

B&A

Farewell, Olympia?

Tight budgets may yet sink Admiral Dewey's flagship.

BY SHAWN MACOMBER

'Our Admiral's Return' (1899)

THE TERZIAN COLLECTION

Ensconced within the catacomb-like coal room deep in the bowels of the USS *Olympia*, wherein soot-swaddled men endured 120-degree heat and singeing hair to keep the steamship prowling during the Battle of Manila Bay, our guide Harry Burkhardt encourages picture-snapping tourists to closely examine the images later.

"There are ghosts," the volunteer docent and merchant marine captain intones.

Unfortunately, the clock may be ticking on whatever phantasmic revelations the spectral crew has planned for its landlubber visitors. If the Independence Seaport Museum cannot raise $20 million for essential repairs, or convince another group or museum to adopt her, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will likely be commissioned to accomplish what the Spanish fleet in 1898 could not: Sink the *Olympia* as coral reef primer, abandoning her spirits to swim with the fishes off Cape May rather than haunt Philadelphia tourists.

The waterfront atmosphere has taken on the air of a living funeral for what historic ships manager Jesse Lebovics astutely dubs "a unique Victorian Age symbol of the shift in the American mindset from that of a large colony to world power." One recent sun-drenched Saturday, for example, the Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia held its 34th annual (and perhaps final) celebration of Philippine independence from Spanish colonial domination, complete with a wreath-laying ceremony on *Olympia*'s deck, a jazzy Filipino youth brass band, picnic lunch, and polite elision of the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

"If this boat is sunk, it will be a little

Shawn Macomber is a writer in Philadelphia.

bit like they're sinking our Liberty Bell," council president Rommel Rivera lamented, and a city councilwoman's promise that a City Hall conference room might be available for next year's celebration was not regarded as much of a consolation prize.

Meanwhile, C.J. Bauman IV ambled through the ship, admiring the ornate wood paneling, peering into displays. Children scampered to and fro, taking turns standing on a pair of steel footprints marking the place on the bridge where Admiral George Dewey famously declared, "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley." Bauman's great-grandfather shoveled the coal that powered the *Olympia* from France to Washington in 1921, body of the Unknown Soldier in tow. The great-grandson was making one final pilgrimage from Virginia before the ship closes to the public in November.

"It's emotional," he said. "When your family heritage overlaps with national heritage, you just assume some things will always be there. It seems a damn shame this one won't."

Not everyone is ready to scuttle the *Olympia*'s ghosts. Harry Burkhardt, shirt unbuttoned to mid-chest, a gold anchor hanging alongside a pewter pendant engraved with his name in hieroglyphics, South Philadelphia to his gills, stalks the crowds between tours, passing out business cards advertising Friends of the Cruiser Olympia, the newly minted nonprofit he founded to save and revitalize the ship as both a historic destination and a merchant marine school for inner-city youth.

"Most people have a midlife crisis, they get a toupee, maybe a convertible," Burkhardt explains between puffs on a cigarette. "Mine is the world's oldest steel-hulled warship. Crazy, right?"

The cause is new, the romance old. Burkhardt first began volunteering on the boat in the late 1960s, and he and his sons spent years painstakingly refurbishing many of the steam-operated motors and gadgets on board, including an earthshaking foghorn, which he takes an almost transcendental joy in employing to scare the wits out of unsuspecting tourists strolling the boardwalk below. Burkhardt likens news of the *Olympia*'s potential fate to "a sledgehammer to the chest," and it generates a reaction not far removed from Landsman John T. Tisdale's contemporaneous description of the *Olympia*'s crew on the eve of Manila Bay: "Our hearts threatened to burst from desire to respond."

While demurring a bit on specifics, Burkhardt says that, aside from a few outliers who believe *Olympia* should be "cut up for razor blades" as a symbol of Yanqui imperialism—fans of Evan Thomas's *The War Lovers* and Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chávez seem to have time on their hands—enough positive interest has been sparked to transform his crusade into a near full-time job of fundraising, media inquiries, Facebooking, and nascent coalition building.

"In the age of dollar Bic lighters and rub-off lottery tickets, we're betting a national historic landmark is still worth a few dollars to Americans," he says.

In Burkhardt's wake, the Seaport Museum has come under (mostly undeserved) fire as the bearer of bad news. "I'm not a very popular guy these days," museum interim president James McLane sighs. We are sitting on petite Ikea-donated furniture in the room housing *It Sprang from the River!*—an exhibit revealing the maritime thread connecting such divergent items as bellbottoms, GPS, and the Slinky. It's cute, light, and presumably much less expensive to maintain than *Olympia*, which has its own fine, likewise low-maintenance, paneled "Dewey Madness" exhibit upstairs.

By McLane's lights, the museum has been an exemplary caretaker, investing more than $5.5 million in *Olympia* since taking stewardship of her in 1996, removing tons of asbestos, restoring the bridge deck, shoring up the integrity of the inner hull, and more. But the ship has not been dry-docked for maintenance since 1945—standard procedure for steel-hulled vessels is to dry-dock for repairs every 20 years—and it has taken its toll. Comprehensive ultrasounds of the hull reveal it to be perilously thin.

"We're more than willing to keep the ship, but money is a real issue," McLane says. "People have to understand that if we do nothing the *Olympia*'s going to sink anyway, and not from torpedoes." McLane frames the intuitively revolting prospect of sinking the USS *Olympia* as artificial reef—a fate he is working daily to avert—as the best of bad alternatives: "At least you maintain the ship, even if it's below a hundred feet of water. Better that than the scrap yard."

Indeed, with one of its federal benefactors (Save America's Treasures) set to be eliminated in the Obama administration's 2011 budget, state and private funds battered by the recession, and a U.S. Navy unwilling to pony up the funds necessary to overhaul a ship, whatever its historical merits, decommissioned in 1922 (Old Ironsides in Boston retains a multi-million-dollar fixer-upper benefit as the oldest commissioned vessel in the world), the situation is dire.

In this new paradigm, the ship suffers from the wars it served in: The Spanish-American War doesn't have much of a romantic glow in the cultural imagination, and World War I is receding into our collective background as an unproduced prequel to a Tom Hanks miniseries. Yet *Olympia* has beaten tough odds before. "A fine set of fellows, but unhappily we shall never see them again," Admiral Dewey recalled British officers lamenting with chipper condescension as *Olympia* left Hong Kong to engage the Spanish. The ship consigned to oblivion instead became, as the historian B. F. Cooling noted in the title of his *Olympia* biography, the "Herald of Empire"—an appellation the author does not back away from despite the ship's current verge-of-orphan circumstances.

> Internationalism and industrialization can be symbolized by what the *Olympia* was, what she did, and how she reflected the nation and Americans of that pivotal age between 1890 and 1920. If today the *Olympia* and her famous flag officer George Dewey are forgotten items consigned to the dustbin of history, then it is our own fault—educationally, patriotically, symbolically. ♦

B&A

Herself Remembered

Beryl Bainbridge, 1932-2010.

BY JOHN WILSON

Marinated in whiskey and cured in cigarette smoke, Beryl Bainbridge's ravaged, mask-like visage—the most memorable since Auden's—was familiar to every literate Briton. Over there, she was a personality, holding court in her ramshackle London home, recounting her misadventures, lamenting and excoriating the changes—architectural and otherwise—that had made her native Liverpool unrecognizable (not to mention the changes in the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II), reviewing theater for *The Oldie*, and repeatedly landing on the Booker shortlist without ever winning the prize. Not so on this side of the Atlantic.

When she died on July 2, at the age of 77, Bainbridge was largely out of print in the United States. She rarely shows up on undergraduate or grad school reading lists; her novels don't fit any of the competing agendas driving the curriculum these days. But maybe that's a blessing: no motive for reading her at all beyond the promise of instruction and delight.

She liked to say that, no matter what the ostensible subject of the novel at hand, she was always writing about her own experience, especially her childhood in a fractious household. This was but one of many deceptive bromides she served up to interviewers. (Before she was a writer, she was an actress.) It would be truer to say that, whether she was writing about a weekend with Claude or the sinking of the *Titanic*, a bottle factory outing (she worked for a short time putting labels on wine bottles) or the Crimean War, a narcissistic womanizer or Robert Scott's fatal expedition to the Antarctic, Bainbridge maintained a detachment, an aesthetic distance, that unsettled many readers.

She wasn't Oprah material.

That detachment was evident in the first novel she wrote, although not the first to be published: *Harriet Said*, about two schoolgirls who conspire in murder. When it was finally published, in 1972, the flap copy gleefully quoted from a publisher's letter of rejection:

> Your writing shows considerable promise, but what repulsive little creatures you have made the two central characters, repulsive almost beyond belief! And I think the scene in which the two men and the two girls meet in the Tsar's house is too indecent and unpleasant even for these lax days.

What gave offense was the very quality that attracted a faithful following, always waiting impatiently for the next Beryl Bainbridge novel. The distance she maintained was the condition for her distinctive humor, for pity and wonder at the sheer strangeness of our common lives. If you constantly prattle about "wonder" in a chummy way, as some religious people do (joined by certain New Atheists who proclaim the wonders revealed by science), you kill wonder. If you make a profession of commiseration, you kill pity. If you are desperate to provoke a laugh, you kill humor.

Conjoined with the severe discipline that made Bainbridge an artist (however much she pooh-poohed any lofty conception of what she did with her life) was a deep anarchic streak. Her first historical novel, *Young Adolf* (1978), was based on an apocryphal account of a five-month period in 1912-13 which Hitler allegedly spent in Liverpool with his brother, Alois, and Alois's wife, Bridget, whose "memoir" was the source of the tale. Despite her comments about the plausibly mundane quality of Bridget's account, it is clear that Bainbridge really didn't care whether the story was true or not. She says she "intended to base the character of Adolf on that of my own father, a minor dictator in his own way even if he never came to power." (She adds a bit later: "I have never felt the necessity for invention, life itself being stranger than fiction.") She knew quite well that in treating Hitler this way (the faux-naïveté of her comparison between the Führer and her father is characteristic) she would outrage many custodians of propriety.

Hitler in Liverpool! Who could resist the conception?

Her last published novel, *According to Queeney*, on Dr. Johnson's sojourn with Henry and Hester Thrale, appeared in 2001. It is one my favorites. With my fellow readers I kept an eye out for news of its successor. Several years ago, a new Bainbridge showed up on Amazon as forthcoming: *The Girl in the Polka-Dot Dress*, the story to be tied in some way to the assassination of Robert Kennedy. By the time the announced date of publication had arrived, a later date was listed. And so it went for three or four years. Assorted obituaries report that the book was nearly finished when she died. I for one am eager to see it. I just hope that the publisher will not see fit to have the ending tidied up by another hand. The author, I feel sure, would not approve. ♦

PENNY TWEEDIE / CORBIS

John Wilson is the editor of Books & Culture.

B&A

Farce Gone Wrong

A problem in translation from French to Hollywoodese.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

In 1998, the French writer-director Francis Veber made one of the cinema's most compact and clever farces, a 80-minute piece of clockwork called *Le Dîner de Cons* (*The Dinner of Idiots*). Now, a dozen years later, it has been remade as the comedy-star-studded *Dinner for Schmucks*, with Steve Carell and Paul Rudd and Zach Galifianakis. The new title is in every way an improvement on the dull name that was slapped on the original when it was released here—*The Dinner Game*. But that is the only improvement.

Dinner for Schmucks
Directed by Jay Roach

Dinner for Schmucks is wild and occasionally imaginative, and it generates its share of amusement. But it is also labored, overwrought, and overproduced in the manner of one of those lumbering 1960s musicals that made people want never to see a musical again. (It's nearly a half-hour longer than the original.) *Dinner for Schmucks* takes tiny details from Veber's plot, whose tininess is essential to making the scenario work as efficiently as it does, and expands them out of proportion to chase desperately after laughs.

It gets those laughs, which is a good thing, and which is why audiences will flock to *Dinner for Schmucks*. But the anything-for-a-yuk style robs it of the signal quality crucial to all successful farces: a sense that the hilarious disaster unfolding before your eyes is inevitable, and that the disaster has arisen from the bad behavior of the pivotal character whose life is spinning out of control.

The biggest mistake is the softening of the lead character, played by Paul Rudd. Rudd is usually wonderful, but here he struggles with his part—which is understandable, because it makes no sense. In the original, the Rudd character is a smart, self-satisfied, cold-hearted intellectual, a successful book publisher whose circle of equally self-satisfied and cold-hearted intellectuals has an odd hobby. They attend a weekly dinner at which they compete to host a deluded and foolish person with a ludicrous vocation to give a presentation—the sole purpose of which is quiet, silent, and deadly mockery so sophisticated that the idiot in question never even knows he's being made fun of.

In the remake, Rudd is a nice but ambitious guy who wants a promotion at work. His boss, whom he barely knows, is the host of the dinner for schmucks. He is invited to join in, with the understanding that if he fails to do so, and fails to bring a quality moron to the dinner, he will lose his job. He doesn't want to participate, but he does so anyway, because he wrongly believes his delightful girlfriend will finally marry him if he makes it big.

He then encounters a peerless dope, an IRS accountant played by Carell—an amateur taxidermist who makes dioramas of great historical events featuring dead mice dressed up in doll outfits. He invites Carell to the dinner, and then, having brought Carell into his life, the idiot unwittingly ruins it. He is a "tornado of destruction," Rudd complains—endangering his job, his apartment, his car, and his relationship. The positive alteration in Rudd's character makes a hash out of the farce. Since he is basically someone with whom we are in sympathy, the destruction Carell wreaks on him seems wildly out of proportion and unjust. One feels more for Rudd than for Carell, and this upsets the movie's balance.

In the original, by contrast, the protagonist is a Nietzschean superman whose comeuppance at the hands of a Kryptonite-like idiot is emotionally satisfying. He's a ferocious snob who stole his best friend's girl, is now cheating on her with someone else, *and* cheating on his taxes, and is the leader of a heartless scheme to wring cruel humor out of the quirks of his fellow man.

Veber's splendid farcical point is that this intelligent sophisticate proves to be as much a fool as the unquestionable fool who, good-heartedly and without a speck of malice, takes a hatchet to the sophisticate's life in the space of a single hour. *Le Dîner de Cons* is, at root, an assault on intellectual arrogance of a specifically Gallic sort.

One could imagine a setting in which an analogue of the Parisian affect might work: Among bored academics in a university town, for example. But clearly, screenwriters Michael Handelman and David Guion and director Jay Roach thought Veber's use of intellectuals as villains would go over the heads of a mass American audience. And so they resorted to (what else?) evil financial-services guys. The concept of an "idiot dinner" is believable in the original; it just seems like a weird plot gimmick here.

Dinner for Schmucks features hilarious turns from Jemaine Clement (the star and writer of the HBO series *Flight of the Conchords*) as a conceptual artist and a British comedian named David Walliams (one of the leads on the comedy show *Little Britain*) as a preening German aristocrat. Their spark-pluggy performances give *Dinner for Schmucks* a crazy energy that's missing from Veber's original. But they don't fix what's wrong with *Dinner for Schmucks*. They only serve as window dressing for its fatal flaws. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

"This fall I am taking my talents to South Beach," said LeBron James, announcing his decision to leave the Cleveland Cavaliers and join the Miami Heat. —News item

PARODY

JULY 21, 2010 — ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

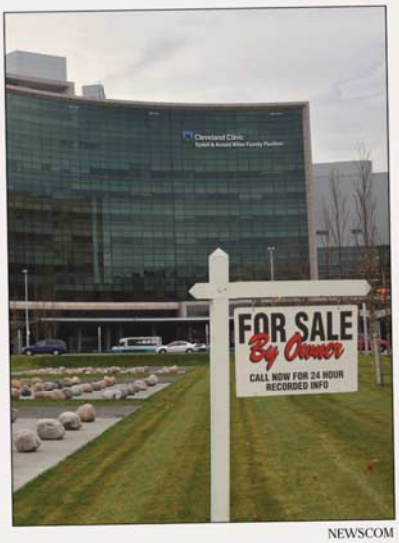
CLEVELAND CLINIC PULLS OUT, FOLLOWS LEBRON TO FLORIDA

Orchestra in Uproar, May Also Move to South Beach

By PETER BAKER AND JEFF ZELENY

CLEVELAND — This city, suffering high unemployment and a staggering boredom rate, was delivered another body blow yesterday when Rocco Colavito, director of corporate communications for the Cleveland Clinic, announced that the clinic, famous for its treatment of heart patients, would be moving in the autumn, following LeBron James, former superstar of the Cleveland Cavaliers, to South Beach in Florida.

"Now that LeBron is gone," said Mr. Colavito, "our staff, and our surgeons especially, seem listless, unable to concentrate on their work. Morale in our hospital is so low that this past Tuesday two nurses were found dozing on the heart-and-lung machine during a bypass surgery." The departure of LeBron James, known by his sobriquet of "the King," is clearly demoralizing, not to say heartbreaking for this gray city on Lake Erie.



NEWSCOM

Hoping to cure its "listless" staff, the Cleveland Clinic follows LeBron James to the Sunshine State.

As if this weren't bad enough, Franz Welser-Möst, director of the Cleveland symphony, in an exclusive interview with the New York Times, has admitted that the renowned orchestra is also contemplating following LeBron to South Beach. The Austrian Mr. Welser-Möst, in his strongly accented English, agreed that making beautiful music with the orchestra during the days "vhen ze King still reigned in zis city vas a schlam doonk. Now is all I can do to keep ze reed zection from quarelling vis ze horns or ze percussionists avake. A change in ze locale is clearly indicated."

No plans are underway at the moment to move Case Western Reserve University to Florida, though the entire suburb of Shaker Heights, which has broken the national record for per capita consumption of antidepressant pills, is also reported to be considering

Continued on Page A3

Zuckerman Clarifies Role As Ghostwriter for Obama

'Just the Few "Hope" and "Change" Speeches'