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the weekly Standard

APRIL 4, 2011 • \$4.95



THE PARANOID STYLE IN LIBERAL POLITICS

MATTHEW CONTINETTI
on the left's obsession
with the Koch brothers



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Contents

April 4, 2011 • Volume 16, Number 28



- 2 The Scrapbook *Apocalipstick NOW; the governor told the truth, & more*
- 5 Casual *Emily Schultheis, puppy parent*
- 7 Editorials
Give War a Chance BY WILLIAM KRISTOL
The Devil We Know BY PETER WEHNER
It's Voucher Time BY FRED BARNES

Articles

- 11 Irish Setter Dad *Whose children will succeed in life, Amy Chua's or mine?* BY P.J. O'ROURKE
- 13 The Central Front *Why health care is the essential issue for 2012* BY JAMES C. CAPRETTA & YUVAL LEVIN
- 14 Cash for Doctors Revisited *An idea whose time has come?* BY TONY MECIA
- 15 A Purge Too Far? *The economic consequences of 'de-Baathification' in Egypt* BY DAVID SCHENKER
- 17 Bahrain Falls Mainly on the Shia *A battle royal in Manama* BY LEE SMITH

Feature

- 20 The Paranoid Style in Liberal Politics *The left's obsession with the Koch brothers* BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Books & Arts

- 34 Heeere's [Fill in the Blank] *The 'Tonight Show' crisis of 2010* BY JOHN B. KIENKER
- 36 Live and Let Live *The mortal implications of man's place in nature* BY LAWRENCE KLEPP
- 38 Little Miss Liddell *The strange case of Dr. Dodgson and Mr. Carroll* BY JOSEPH BOTTUM
- 40 Bodies Count *A definition of genocide that makes sense of history* BY AARON ROTHSTEIN
- 42 Multicultural Melville *Echoes of Africa in the words of an American master* BY FRANKLIN FREEMAN
- 43 The Beauty Part *Elizabeth Taylor, 1932-2011* BY JOHN PODHORETZ
- 44 Parody *White House decision-making*



COVER BY GARY LOCKE

Apocalipstick NOW

There are only a few reliable political maxims, but one of the most reliable is this: Any organization devoted to the cause of identity politics will, over time, become more about politics than identity.

THE SCRAPBOOK was reminded of this last week when the National Organization for Women (NOW) reluctantly broke down and condemned HBO comedian—we use that term loosely—Bill Maher, who took it upon himself to call Sarah Palin a “dumb [vulgar euphemism for female anatomy mercifully redacted].”

After initially refusing to comment on the matter to Palin’s employer Fox News, NOW communications director Lisa Bennett later issued a statement: “Listen, supposedly progressive men (ok, and women, too): Cut the crap! Stop degrading women with whom you disagree and/or don’t like by using female body terms or other gender-associated slurs.” But Bennett didn’t stop there. “We are on to you, right-wingers,” she said. “You’re trying to take up our time getting us to defend your friend Sarah Palin.”

(Actually, if we really cared what NOW thought, we’d demand they apologize to Palin. On NOW’s website, they have an entire page devoted to “Fighting the Right Wing.”

On that web page, you’ll find the January press release “Rep. Giffords Shooting is an Attack on All of Us: NOW Calls on Right Wing to Disavow Violence and Hate Speech,” which accuses Palin of making a “not-so-well veiled threat” on Giffords, with the clear implication that the former governor was somehow complicit in the attack.)

This is not the first time NOW has been dragged kicking and screaming into defending a conservative woman from an obviously degrading assault on her character. In one of the more repellent examples of checkbook journalism, this past October the website Gawker paid an anonymous man to reveal the salacious details of a date he’d had with former Delaware Republican senatorial candidate Christine O’Donnell. Her candidacy was already well on its way to self-immolating, and Gawker’s pointless exposé was condemned by nearly everyone across the political spectrum.

The notable exception was NOW. When the *Washington Examiner*’s J.P. Freire called NOW for comment on the O’Donnell smear, he was twice told by NOW press secretary Mai Shiozaki, “We’re passing on this.” When Freire reported the organization had no comment, the outrage

was such that NOW folded faster than Superman on laundry day. They quickly issued a perfunctory statement condemning the attack on O’Donnell, while again taking time to attack O’Donnell’s politics.

But NOW really sank lower than a snake’s ankles when they rushed to the defense of California governor Jerry Brown last year after he was caught on tape agreeing with a campaign staffer that his Republican opponent Meg Whitman was a “whore.” California NOW president Parry Bellasalma responded by saying, “Meg Whitman could be described as ‘a political whore.’ Yes, that’s an accurate statement.” Once again, NOW backed off its defense of the word “whore”—but still endorsed Brown’s candidacy the day after, in order to help the Democrat save face. Let the irony of that sequence of events sink in for a minute.

The reality is that NOW is about combating sexism the way that men who subscribe to *Playboy* are supporting quality journalism. Lisa Bennett and the rest of NOW would happily fetch a cup of coffee for Bill Maher and let him slap them on the derriere and exclaim “Atta girl!” if they thought it would help them advance their abortion-on-demand, left-wing agenda. ♦

The Governor Told the Truth

The headline was bracing: “Emails Catch Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker Lying.” It came on a tweet from @pwire, the Twitter account for something called *Political Wire*, an online news digest. The publisher, Taegan Goddard, takes the reports of others, adds links to their articles, and sends



them out under his own name, usually with a sensational sentence or two intended to draw people in.

But on Twitter—where news nuggets come fast and furious—the headline is all many people will see. So most people who saw the tease from *Political Wire* probably believe that Scott Walker was, in fact, caught “lying” about emails. Specifically, that he had not received the level of support from

citizens’ emails that he had claimed.

The opposite is true.

On February 17, in the middle of the heated budget dispute between Walker and Wisconsin’s Democratic state senators who had fled the state, Walker held a press conference in which he declared: “The more than 8,000 emails we got today, the majority are telling us to stay firm, to stay strong, to stand with the taxpayers.”

News organizations, including the Associated Press, filed open records requests to see those emails

GARY LOCKE

and others Walker received throughout the spat. At the time Walker spoke, according to a later analysis by the AP, the tally of emails he had received that day broke down as follows: 5,900 supporting the governor and 1,400 opposed.

So as of about 5 p.m. that day, an overwhelming majority of the emails—some 74 percent—favored Walker. His claim was not only true, it was understated. After Walker mentioned the emails at his press conference that afternoon, his office was flooded with even more supportive notes. As the AP reports: “At the end of the day, he had received more than 9,400 emails cheering him on—three times the number of messages of opposition.”

Over the week that the AP studied, messages to Walker’s office ran in his favor 55 percent to 44 percent. A second study, by the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism, put the support for Walker even higher: 62 percent in favor, 32 percent opposed.

So what accounts for the confusion? Early in the week, after Walker proposed the legislation but before the Democrats had run away to Illinois, more emails had opposed Walker than had supported him. But the messages his office received changed dramatically once his opponents fled the state.

But the findings were not ambiguous. The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, a newspaper not terribly friendly to Walker, covered the same studies under a decidedly different headline than the one *Political Wire* ran on Twitter: “Walker Right on Emails, Analysis Finds.”

Political Wire has not published a correction.

Despite this misreporting—some might call it “lying”—Walker is very popular with Republicans across the country. A poll taken by a Democratic-leaning firm, Public Policy Polling, found that 55 percent of Republicans have a favorable view of him and just 11 percent view him unfavorably.

Walker 2012? ◆

SO, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU’VE WRECKED THE ECONOMY, EXPANDED AND MISUSED GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, POORLY EXECUTED THREE WARS AND ARE COMPLETELY INCOMPETENT. YET, THE PEOPLE STILL LIKE YOU. HOW DO YOU DO IT?



Reuters Is Up to Its Old Tricks

THE SCRAPBOOK has noted before the astonishing politicization of Reuters, the British news agency, when it comes to reporting on the Middle East. After the 9/11 attacks, for instance, Reuters identified Osama bin Laden with weasel phrases like “Afghanistan-based Saudi-born dissident” or “chief suspect in the plane attacks on New York and Washington” to avoid calling him a terrorist. “We do not characterize the subjects of news stories but instead report their actions,” the news service harumphed at the time.

In early 2002, as if to make sure

that no reader would be unaware of the Reuters ideology, this gratuitous independent clause came across the wires in a Reuters dispatch: “The United States, which gives Israel about \$2 billion a year in weaponry used to kill Palestinians, objected to the \$100 million [Iranian arms] shipment to the Palestinians [emphasis added].”

Frankly, but for the fact that it would soon become tiresome, we could feature such examples on a regular basis. Indeed, there was an especially noxious one last week, spied by the *Atlantic*’s Jeffrey Goldberg:

Dear Reuters, You Must Be Kidding
This is from a Reuters story on the Jerusalem bombing earlier today:

“Police said it was a ‘terrorist attack’—Israel’s term for a Palestinian strike. It was the first time Jerusalem had been hit by such a bomb since 2004.”

Those Israelis and their crazy terms! I mean, referring to a fatal bombing of civilians as a “terrorist attack”? Who are they kidding? Everyone knows that a fatal bombing of Israeli civilians should be referred to as a “teachable moment.” Or as a “venting of certain frustrations.” Or as “an understandable reaction to Jewish perfidy.” Or perhaps as “a very special episode of ‘Cheers.’” Anything but “a terrorist attack.” I suppose Reuters will mark the 10th anniversary of 9/11 by referring to the attacks as “an exercise in urban renewal.”

Goldberg kids. Alas, as connoisseurs of the Brit news agency are well aware, Reuters is never kidding. ♦

Crazy for ‘Crazy U’

Be sure not to miss George F. Will’s March 27 column, devoted

to our colleague Andrew Ferguson’s “laugh-until-your-ribs-squeak” new book, *Crazy U: One Dad’s Crash Course in Getting His Kid Into College*. Writes Will:

Ferguson goes on campus tours conducted by backward-walking students armed with Harry Potter references—the dining hall looks like Hogwarts, there are Quidditch matches, a sociology seminar explores “Voldemort and Differentiation in Imperialist Identities.” [A college admissions counselor] says that in his son’s interview at a college he must “talk about his innermost thoughts,” Ferguson shudders at this “compulsive self-exposure”:

“*He’s a seventeen-year-old boy!* I wanted to tell her: Seventeen-year-old boys do not have innermost thoughts—and if they did, neither you nor I would want to know what they are.”

“Ferguson’s whimsy is finite,” says Will. The book is also “serious—and seriously informative.” THE SCRAPBOOK wholeheartedly concurs. ♦

DON'T MISS THE BOAT!

Time is short, so don't wait to reserve your berth on *The Weekly Standard's* European cruise this May. Our onboard guests will be joined by popular faces from the magazine and by special guests John Bolton and P.J. O'Rourke. We sail May 12 from Barcelona with stops in Lisbon, Bruges, Cherbourg, London, & more.



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Mr. Darcy's Mom

Walking a dog in a quiet suburban neighborhood is a good way to commune with your neighbors, and it's a great way to squeeze in your daily exercise. But walking a dog in my Washington neighborhood of young single people is an altogether different animal.

Obviously, there are a lot more cars to watch out for. There's the occasional rat that scampers across the sidewalk and always triggers leash-pulling excitement. There are hyper-aggressive squirrels without the normal fear of humans. There are laws about poop—and they are enforced not only by the police, but also by your neighbors—so my part of town features a whole subculture of people walking around with blue plastic bags designed specifically for cleaning up after our pets.

But the most interesting part of dog ownership in the city is the distinctive camaraderie that develops among the owners. I live on a street where there are very few children and a lot of dogs that are treated like children, and we self-proclaimed puppy-parents stop and chat and let our dogs play the way I imagine real parents stop to let their children play in the rest of the country.

We advise one another on house-training and chewing and barking. We compare notes about the best doggy day cares and veterinarians. We complain about (and judge) the crazy, negligent dog parents at the too-small dog park. We also talk about our vacations and our parents and our jobs.

But we don't know each other's names. I see these people several times a week, more often than I see many close friends, and yet I know them only by the names of their dogs.

We run into each other all the time around town. I see Max-the-Cairn-terrier's mommy at the grocery store almost every week, and we stop to chat, even though our dogs aren't with us. About a month ago, I saw the dads of Jackson and Buddy, two golden retrievers, out at a restaurant with friends, and we waved. Bruno-the-pug's dad stopped recently to ask



me how I kept my dog from humping everything in the house. The last time I saw her, Daisy-the-Yorkie's mom was on her way to a costume party dressed as Marie Antoinette. Last week, I was behind Lucky's dad in line at the pharmacy, and he pretended not to know me.

Under normal circumstances, if I bump into an acquaintance who clearly can't remember my name, I just reintroduce myself. The problem among neighborhood dog-walkers is that by now we're too close for that. I have known these people for almost

two years. At some point we must have exchanged names, but they are long forgotten. We know each other's front doors and schedules and who just had an anniversary and whose roommate is driving them nuts. We borrow blue bags from each other. It's too late to exchange names.

I've also noticed a telling sidelight on this phenomenon: I do know the names of all my dogless neighbors. Vanessa, a college professor, adores my Havanese, Mr. Darcy, and keeps an eye out for when we might be ready for a walk. Linda, a tap-dance instructor, loves the neighborhood dogs and always speaks to me by name. Sharon nurtures her tiny garden and enjoys watching the birds on the feeder, so she's often there when we pass, and we stop to say hello. Liam lives a few doors down, and when he's outside smoking in the evening after dinner he likes to visit with Mr. Darcy. None of these people have dogs, so they get normal human names.

I have to admit that treatment of dogs as children is hardly confined to my current, urban environment. Since becoming an empty-nester, my mother has taken to calling her two Havanese "the Furry Girls," to distinguish Phoebe and Chloe from the non-furry girls, my sister and me. Even so, I'd like to think no one refers to her as the Furry Mom.

Of course, it's common for parents—mothers, in particular—to be known by their children. So it makes a certain amount of sense that dog owners in a mostly child-free neighborhood would recognize dog-parent-hood in each other before any other identifying trait. Mr. Darcy is a good dog, and I am proud to be known as his mom. Still, I won't be unhappy someday to drop my Mr. Darcy moniker and be known by the name of a real child.

EMILY SCHULTHEIS

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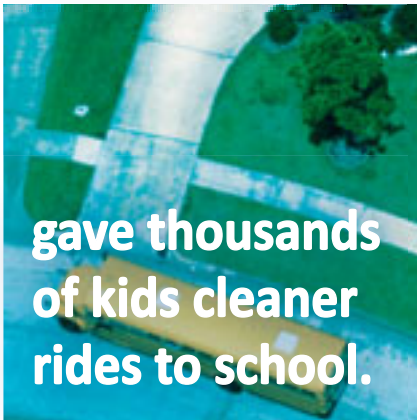
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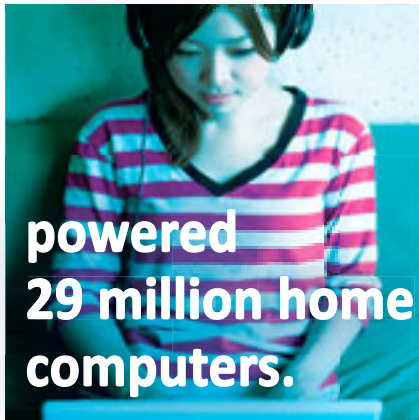
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Give War a Chance

It's not war but a "time-limited, scope-limited military action." The United States has been in the lead, but will be stepping back, ASAP, in favor of command (supposedly) by a squabbling coalition of the not-so-willing. The objective of the "kinetic military action"—which is going to last days, not weeks, unless it does last weeks—isn't regime change in Libya. Our broader objective, however, is to topple Muammar Qaddafi. The commander in chief, meanwhile, is floating above the fray, hovering over his divided administration and his muddled policy.

And yet we'll probably succeed.

The Obama administration deserves much of the criticism it's getting—both for its conduct of the war in Libya, and for its generally hesitant and passive stance toward this historic moment in the greater Middle East. One's patience, for example, is tried when one reads a senior administration official telling the *New York Times*, "We didn't want to get sucked into an operation with uncertainty at the end. How it turns out is not on our shoulders."

Now, the president may not be as attentive as he should to such criticism from the likes of us—but perhaps he'll hearken to the counsel of the *New Republic's* Leon Wieseltier:

[Obama] dreads the imputation of our influence. All his assurances of a new world notwithstanding, he is haunted by the ghost of imperialism. . . . [But] if the men and women in the streets of Tehran and Cairo

and Tripoli and Tunis continue to understand their fate with primary reference to imperialism, why do they implore the American president to help them? Clearly the peril of authoritarianism looms larger for them than the peril of imperialism. . . . [A]wakening peoples prefer our assistance to our penance. . . . In that struggle the United States must choose sides. . . . [W]e must have their backs.

The United States really should have the backs of those fighting for freedom. How willing the president is to overcome his prejudices and to reorient his whole attitude toward the Middle East and the world, we don't know. But we can hope for change.

In the case of Libya, though, we do suspect that the president knows that we—and he—can't afford to lose. So Obama won't cut and run. Nor should we underestimate the capabilities of the American military, and Qaddafi's weakness and vulnerability. And to be fair to the Obama administration, the United States has fought previous wars—and won them—with muddled goals, mixed messages, and less than inspiring leadership. The outcome in Libya could well be satisfactory.

We should of course hope it is, and we should work to see that it is. Meanwhile, here's a word of counsel to some of our fellow conservatives: Chill.

We're at war. We need to succeed in that war. By all means, be generous with the constructive criticism. (For example, it seems ridiculous

THOMAS FLUHARTY



for the United States not to be arming the Libyan opposition.) Note for the historical record the Obama administration's dithering and double-talk. But don't carp and cavil in ways that suggest America can't prevail, or that America shouldn't prevail. Don't revel in every administration misstep. Don't chortle at every misstatement. Don't exacerbate the administration's failure to build domestic support for the mission. Put the mission, and the country, first.

Which means, to some extent, that we might consider biting our collective tongues, wishing the president well because he is our president, and helping him get it right rather than pointing with glee to everything he's doing wrong. Which in turn means that we might want to cool it with the 24/7 criticism. Let's support our troops and their mission, and give the war a chance—even though it's a war that's not being perfectly conducted by an administration that offers plenty of cause for frustration.

You go to war with the president you have. This isn't the one we conservatives preferred. We have a good chance to remove him in 2012. We should work to do so. But first let's remove Qaddafi, help get Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Yemen right, and—who knows?—despite our reluctant president, push the administration to have the backs of those fighting for regime change in Syria and Iran.

The modern left expects the United States to lose its wars. Some on the left often seem to be rooting for Ameri-

can defeat. We argued in this space last week that at their best, today's conservatives—and the Republican party that is their vehicle—constitute the party of freedom. They are also the party of victory. So Republicans should vote for victory in Congress, as conservatives argue for victory in the public square. After all, if we prevail in Libya—and in Afghanistan and Iraq—the victory will be America's.

—William Kristol

The Devil We Know

Critics of America's intervention in Libya have wondered how much we really know about the anti-government opposition. This is a legitimate line of inquiry. We should be thinking about the devil we may not know. But in Libya today there is also a devil we do know. His name is Muammar Qaddafi.

Born in the desert near Sirte in 1942, Qaddafi seized power in a military coup in September 1969. He has never relinquished it. During his reign, Libyans have lived

Crisis in Japan

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

The world is rallying around Japan as it deals with a triple crisis—damage from a 9.0 earthquake, devastation inflicted by the resulting tsunami, and prevention of a nuclear disaster. Last week, Japanese officials predicted that the cost of the disasters could top \$300 billion. What can't be calculated is the emotional and spiritual impact of thousands of dead, missing, and wounded and the hundreds of thousands who are displaced.

However great the tragedy, we can be inspired by the outpouring of generosity from the world community. The response from the business sector has been swift, generous, and effective. As of March 23, the business sector had donated more than \$200 million to the relief effort, and it is helping with logistics, nuclear power management, food safety, debris removal, and other technical assistance.

Following the disaster, the U.S. Chamber's Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC)—a

recognized national and international authority on private sector business response—activated its emergency aid protocols. It began monitoring public, private, and nonprofit emergency responder and relief operations. It coordinated with relevant government and nonprofit organizations to address specific needs. And it expedited business disaster responses by cutting through bureaucratic, regulatory, and logistics obstacles that were keeping valuable goods and services from reaching the people and places that need them the most.

If your business or organization is among the many generous donors that have already contributed, we thank you. If you are currently weighing a donation, BCLC encourages you to consider three important factors. First, allow first responders to do their jobs and provide needs assessments from the impact zone. Do not send volunteers or material goods to an impact zone unless you know for certain they are needed and can be used effectively by a partner on the ground.

Second, work only with credible

humanitarian organizations that are operating within the impact zone. If your company needs help finding a credible organization that can use your contribution effectively, contact the *Disaster Help Desk for Business* at bclchelpdesk@uschamber.com.

Third, distinguish between a pledge and a donation. It is often unnecessary and unwise to distribute the full amount of your donation immediately when first responders are inundated with offers of help. The long-term recovery and rebuilding stage is when many resources are still needed, but when the fewest donors give support.

The U.S. Chamber is committed to marshaling the resources of its members to help the people of Japan, ensure its recovery, and maintain the stability of the global economy. Visit bclc.uschamber.com for more information.



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under one of the most repressive regimes in the world.

How repressive? Freedom House gives Qaddafi's regime the worst possible ranking in political rights and civil liberties. Political parties are illegal. Organizing or joining a party is punishable by long prison terms and death. Corruption is pervasive. There is no independent press or freedom of assembly. Human Rights Watch reports that since he assumed power, Qaddafi has repeatedly used arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances, and political killings to maintain control over the population. Now he is hiring mercenaries to wage war on his own people, promising to "punish [those seeking liberation] without mercy."

Not content to have turned his own country into a giant prison, over the years Qaddafi has also supported maniacs like Ugandan president Idi Amin, Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam, and the Liberian dictator Charles Taylor. He has embarked on military campaigns into Chad and Egypt and provided aid and comfort to a Who's Who of terrorist groups, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Italian Red Brigades, the Basque separatist group ETA, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) of Colombia. He has encouraged assassination attempts against dozens of Libyan dissidents and émigrés and political opponents throughout the greater Middle East and Europe.

And let us not forget that he has committed acts of terrorism against America. In April 1986, Qaddafi ordered an attack on the La Belle discothèque in West Berlin, killing several U.S. servicemen and injuring well over 200 others. President Reagan responded to this attack by striking targets in Tripoli and Benghazi. Two years later, on December 21, 1988, a bomb aboard Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 innocent passengers. Abdel Basset al-Megrahi, a Libyan intelligence agent, was convicted of planting the bomb. In 2003, after denying Libyan involvement for years, Qaddafi's regime formally accepted responsibility for the attack. In February, Libyan justice minister Mustafa Mohamed Abud Al Jeleil told a Swedish newspaper that Qaddafi personally ordered the Lockerbie bombing. It was not for nothing that Ronald Reagan called Qaddafi "the mad dog of the Middle East."

Qaddafi, while malevolent, is also shrewd. He is capable of adjusting his behavior when under pressure. After America decapitated Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, Qaddafi—fearing he might meet a similar fate—agreed to abandon his support for terrorism, relinquish his programs for developing missiles and weapons of mass destruction, and made payments totaling \$1.5 billion to the families of those killed on Pan Am 103. The United States later rescinded Libya's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. Libya began to normalize relations with Western nations. Even a mad dog, it seemed, could be contained for a time. But as we have seen in recent weeks, in his response to the uprising of those seeking liberation from his rule,

Qaddafi remains capable of wanton brutality and threats of terrorism against the West.

The United States, having gone to war against the Libyan regime, now has to decide whether or not to allow Qaddafi to stay in power. Acquiescing to Qaddafi's continued rule in Tripoli not only would be a disgrace, but a moral and strategic error of enormous consequence. The only decent outcome that can emerge from Operation Odyssey Dawn is to see Qaddafi gone. A person of unusual cruelty, the Libyan tyrant has built a grotesque and soul-destroying regime. Four decades-plus in power have been more than enough. It is time for the Butcher of Tripoli to leave the stage.

Whether that exit is accomplished by means of exile or cruise missile or hangman's noose is irrelevant. In this instance justice may be delayed. But it need not be denied.

—Peter Wehner

It's Voucher Time

Social Security's looming deficit can be handled, for the time being, by adjusting benefits a tad downward. Medicaid's runaway spending can be restrained by giving state governors more flexibility in administering the program. These are modest solutions. Medicare is different. It needs a big solution.

And there's only one thing that would preserve the best of the American medical system while keeping Medicare's skyrocketing costs from bankrupting the country. It's called "premium support" or "defined contribution." Those are clunky euphemisms for what's really involved: vouchers that would let seniors pick their own health insurance, just as they already choose their provider of prescription drugs.

This isn't a new idea. President Clinton's National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare proposed a version of it in 1999. House Republicans endorsed premium support in the little-noticed budget they drafted in 2009. The so-called Debt Reduction Task Force headed by former Republican senator Pete Domenici and Democratic economist Alice Rivlin supported defined contribution last year.

Most Republicans in Congress favor Medicare vouchers and say so privately. Now they need to step up publicly in the 2012 budget that Paul Ryan, chairman of the House Budget Committee, will release in early April. Not to do



so would be an act of evasion, timidity, and political cowardice. It would prevent a voucher program from emerging front and center on the political agenda. And it would make it difficult for Republican presidential candidates to talk about Medicare vouchers in 2012.

The budget will set a ceiling on Medicare spending. That much is clear. A policy statement on how that level of spending would be achieved is not required. But in this case it's necessary to designate vouchers as the preferred method of curbing Medicaid's cost and averting a debt meltdown. Otherwise it will be left to Democrats to specu-

seniors. The fear that few providers would join the program was unfounded. Dozens have.

(4) Medicare's current fee-for-service approach is a magnet for lobbyists. It sets the price for everything from medical devices to health care facilities. When providers face a reduced payment, they lobby furiously to undo it and often succeed. "A voucher system would put downward pressure across the entire spectrum of care," says Michael Cannon of the Cato Institute. Without a fixed schedule of prices, who would providers lobby? Seniors? Not likely.

(5) Medicare recipients don't have a strong moral claim to benefits as established in fee-for-service. Andrew Biggs of the American Enterprise Institute has calculated that the average 65-year-old retiree in 2009 had paid \$64,971 in Medicare payroll taxes. Minus premiums, the retiree will get \$173,886 in lifetime benefits. You can figure out the size of the windfall.

Vouchers got a boost last fall when Ryan and Rivlin, both members of the president's fiscal commission, collaborated on what's now known simply as "Ryan-Rivlin." The commission didn't adopt their plan but Republicans should in their budget. Fiscally sensible Democrats would be wise to sign on too.

The Ryan-Rivlin plan offers real structural reform, not tinkering. Current beneficiaries and those 55 and older could stick with traditional Medicare. A decade from now, new retirees would get a fixed payment from the government to purchase insurance. The well-to-do would receive a lower subsidy, the sick a higher

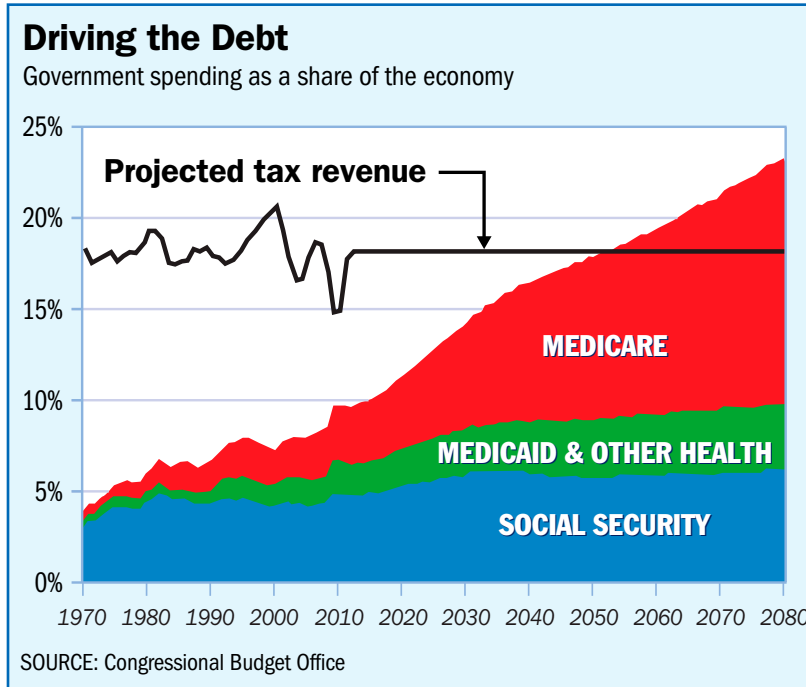
one if their health worsened. Low-income seniors would get added coverage for out-of-pocket expenses.

In the past, the thought of reforming Medicare, one of the most popular government programs ever, has terrified Republicans. That Democrats would attack them for cruelly leaving the elderly without adequate medical care was a certainty (and still is). This, in turn, might touch off an anti-Republican backlash among seniors.

By proposing vouchers, Republicans might lose some votes. But a seniors' revolt? Not likely. In 1995, Republicans trimmed Medicare and survived. They lost nine House seats in 1996 but remained in the majority for the next 10 years despite Democratic attacks on Medicare. When they lost Congress in 2006, Medicare was not the cause.

Given the public's aversion to debt and support for cuts in spending, a better moment than the present for overhauling Medicare may never occur. But nothing will happen unless Republicans take the first step by proposing a specific plan. The time is now.

—Fred Barnes



late darkly about what Republicans would do to Medicare. That wouldn't be pretty. The necessity of Medicare vouchers is buttressed by five facts:

(1) Medicare is growing at about 7 percent annually. Medicaid's cost is rising slightly faster, but its growth is easier to control. Social Security's cost increases at roughly 5.8 percent yearly. Those numbers, while alarming, scarcely suggest what's just beginning: an explosion in Medicare's growth. Social Security and Medicaid will have gently rising growth paths over the next 60 years. Medicare's will soar. If unchecked, it will produce a debt crisis all by itself.

(2) Supporters of President Obama's health care law tout its pilot projects to reduce Medicare's cost. Nothing wrong there. But we've seen hundreds of such projects over the past 40 years—with minimal impact on Medicare. Few resulted in cost savings. Pilot projects aren't the answer.

(3) What has worked is competition. The Medicare prescription drug benefit program, enacted in 2003, has cost 40 percent less than projected. This is due to competition among providers for the business of millions of

Irish Setter Dad

Whose children will succeed in life,
Amy Chua's or mine?

BY P.J. O'ROURKE



What's all this bother about Chinese Tiger Moms? Amy Chua, author of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, has America's female parents in a swivet. You'd have to take Sarah Palin to a NOW convention to see so many ladies mad at a

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

fellow woman. Practically a third of the *Atlantic's* April issue is taken up with Caitlin Flanagan and Sandra Tsing Loh giving Amy Chua the dickens in terms strong enough for Hillary Clinton's private thoughts on Monica Lewinsky. My wife put it more succinctly: "This person is factory farming her kids."

I gather Ms. Chua is a total bitch with her children, making them finish

homework before it's assigned, practice violin and piano 25 hours a day, maintain a grade point average higher than Obama budget numbers, and forbidding them from doing anything they might enjoy, such as exhale.

But being a male parent with a typical dad-like involvement in my children's lives—I know all of their names—I thought *Battle Hymn* was great. That is, I thought it made *me* look great. Not that I read the dreadful book, but I did buy each of my children a copy and inscribed it, "So you think *you've* got it bad?" What with three editions lying around because my kids would rather fool with the Wii than read, I admit I gave in to the temptation to skim.

Here are some of the things that "unlike your typical Western overscheduling soccer mom, the Chinese mother believes." (By the way, Amy Chua isn't Chinese. Her parents are Filipinos of Chinese extraction and she was born in the United States and grew up in Indiana.)

- an A-minus is a bad grade
- your children must be two years ahead of their classmates in math
- if your child ever disagrees with a teacher or coach, you must always take the side of the teacher or coach
- the only activities your child should be permitted to do are those in which they can eventually win a medal
- that medal must be gold

You might think that Amy Chua is a fascist pig. She wrote a previous book, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*, so she is. She also possesses the most unpleasant personality I've ever seen projected into print, and I've read *Earth in the Balance*. Some Amy Chua personality snippets:

"Sophia excelled in nursery school."
"Sophia's first three piano teachers were not good fits."

"According to Sophia, here are three things I actually said to her at the piano as I supervised her practicing:

"1. Oh my God, you're just getting worse and worse.

"2. I'm going to count to three then I want *musicality!*"

ZACH FRANZEN

“3. If the next time’s not PERFECT, I’m going to TAKE ALL YOUR STUFFED ANIMALS AND BURN THEM!”

Sophia is Amy Chua’s older daughter, the obedient child, the one with whom she has a good relationship. Lulu is Chua’s younger daughter, the rebellious child, the one with whom she has a relationship that’s not so good. Here is an exchange between Amy and Lulu on vacation in Russia:

“We’re in Russia and you refuse to try caviar! You’re like a barbarian. And in case you think you’re a big rebel, you are *completely ordinary*. There is nothing more typical, more predictable, more common and low, than an American teenager who won’t try things. You’re boring, Lulu—*boring*.”

“Shut up,” said Lulu angrily.

“Don’t you dare say shut up to me. I’m your mother . . .”

“I *hate* you! I HATE YOU. . . . I *hate* the violin. I HATE my life. I HATE you, and I HATE this family!”

You’d have to have a heart of stone not to be feeling better about yourself as a parent after that.

I loved *Battle Hymn*. Of course I couldn’t bear much of it. The prose, like the author, belongs in hell. But what I did read really put the Freud in my *schadenfreude*, so to speak. Especially loathsome fun was Chua’s notorious Tiger Mother List, currently making the rounds on the Internet and getting more outraged hits than a YouTube video of a Justin Bieber head shave:

Here are some of the things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

- attend a sleepover
- have a playdate
- be in a school play
- complain about not being in a school play
- watch TV or play computer games
- choose their own extracurricular activities
- get any grades less than an A
- not be the #1 student in every subject except gym and drama
- play any instrument other than the piano or violin
- not play the piano or violin

I just wasn’t cut out to be a Chinese Tiger Mom. I’m more of an Irish Setter Dad. Here are some of the things my daughters, Muffin and Poppet, and my son, Buster, were never allowed to do:

- go to Mass naked
- attend a sleepover at Charlie Sheen’s house
- mix Daddy a martini using sweet vermouth
- play the violin within earshot of me

Have you ever heard a kid learning to play the violin? A cat in the microwave is nothing to it. And let me add an addendum to the things my children were never allowed to do—put a cat in the microwave. I’m not saying

I’ve got bad news for Chua. ‘A’ students work for ‘B’ students. Or not even. A businessman once corrected me. “No, P.J.,” he said, “‘B’ students work for ‘C’ students. ‘A’ students teach.”

it didn’t happen; I’m just saying they weren’t allowed to do it.

Whose children are going to succeed in life, Amy Chua’s or mine? Her Lulu has that violin going for her—there’s hardly a Silicon Valley billionaire, Wall Street plutocrat, senator, four-star general, or pope who isn’t a violin virtuoso. And Sophia, who tickles the ivories, can always say, “Don’t tell Mom I work for Goldman Sachs, she thinks I play piano in a house of ill repute.” But my kids practice too, hour after hour every day. They practice being jerks. And since almost every boss I’ve ever had was a jerk, this gives them a leg up. Plus there’s the cat in the microwave. That shows an inquisitive, experimental turn of mind. You can see how electronic cat-zapping could lead directly to the invention of something like Facebook.

On the other hand, what with all the A-pluses and never being allowed to

disagree with teachers, Chua’s kids are headed straight to the Ivy League. The more so since Chua is a Yale law professor. (Oooh, maybe she’s a Nazi *and* a Commie, making *Battle Hymn* the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of parenting advice.) The Ivy League is supposed to be good for success. Barack Obama went to an Ivy League school, not that he’s doing very well in his career at the moment. Let’s check on the most successful people in America. Sarah Palin went to the University of Idaho. Warren Buffet went to Nebraska. John Boehner went to Xavier. Glenn Beck didn’t go to college at all. And I’m not sure whether Justin Bieber’s mother even finished high school. Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates did go to Harvard but—doubtless this is somewhere on the “never allowed to do” list—they dropped out.

My kids fit the success profile. I’ll bet Muffin and Poppet are accepted at the University of Idaho, assuming Wii is a Title IX thing. And Buster will be waving goodbye to Harvard while he’s still in junior high.

Amy Chua, I’ve got bad news. “A” students work for “B” students. Or not even. A businessman friend of mine corrected me. “No, P.J.,” he said, “‘B’ students work for ‘C’ students. ‘A’ students teach.” Teaching in the Ivy League gives you a lot of time off, Amy—enough to write a crap book, worse than Yale prof Erich Segal’s *Love Story*. Maybe when you get some time off again you should come to rural New Hampshire and meet the Irish Setter Dad children.

Buster, age 7, is a master of passive resistance who can turn staying up past his bedtime into Tahrir Square. He could hire himself out as a civil disobedience coach to Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, if they weren’t dead. Poppet, 10, is a persuasive saleswoman, not to say charming con artist, who can hand you a sheet of black construction paper with a hole in it and convince you it’s a science project on collapsed supernovas. And Muffin, 13, has her own .410 shotgun and knows how to use it.

Try your Chinese Tiger Mom stuff on my kids. ♦

The Central Front

Why health care is the essential issue for 2012.

BY JAMES C. CAPRETTA & YUVAL LEVIN

Even as they engage in heated battles over the budget and try to define a new agenda from their perch in the House of Representatives, conservatives clearly understand that the key to turning things around—to averting a debt crisis and defending the ideal of limited government—is winning the 2012 election. Only with a new president can they halt and reverse the leftward leaps of the past few years and address the increasingly dire consequences of six decades of welfare-state expansion.

It may be less obvious, however, that the key to what that president will need to do, and therefore also to how he will need to run, is health care reform: undoing Obamacare and replacing it with real reforms that can contain costs while providing consumers with high-quality care.

This is so, first of all, for political reasons. Obamacare remains very unpopular with Republican and independent voters—no less so than it was when it passed a year ago—and even Democratic voters are not very happy with it. To a degree that Democrats in Washington seem not quite to have grasped, health care was at the center of the populist uprising that produced a Republican House in last year's elections. Other issues—the oversold “stimulus,” the bailouts, the regulatory overreach, the persistent levels of high unemployment—certainly provoked outrage. But President Obama's health

care push was the fuel that kept the populist fire going.

This was no coincidence. For substantive reasons, and not only political ones, it is right that health care should be so important to voters alarmed about our fiscal crisis and intent on restoring some limits to government. Even before Obamacare, health care spending was the number one reason for growth in government and the driving force behind the explosion of our debt. In 1975,

spending on Medicare and Medicaid was just 1.3 percent of GDP. By 2010, it had risen to 5.5 percent, a 400 percent increase.

Moreover, Medicare and Medicaid are big reasons why health care costs are rising for everyone. Instead of encouraging efficiency, both programs reward excessive cost growth with larger taxpayer subsidies. Medicare has a massive unfunded liability that will leave future generations with punishing tax hikes, paltry benefits, or quite possibly both. Medicaid claims to provide millions with insurance coverage but its reimbursement rates are so low that Medicaid patients can't get care in mainstream physician practices or clinics. The government estimates the programs pay out nearly \$70 billion annually in fraudulent claims.

Obamacare doubles down on this failed entitlement approach, adding 15 to 20 million more people to the Medicaid rolls (so that more than 70 million Americans will be Medicaid recipients) and at least 20 million more to a new entitlement for the lower middle class.

Even with very optimistic assumptions, that's at least \$200 billion

annually in new entitlement obligations on top of the massive amounts already being spent. There's little question that if these obligations are allowed to stand, pressure for large tax increases will not be far behind.

Obamacare attempts to deal, moreover, with the problem of rising costs by centralizing management of the health sector at the federal level. Through Medicare's price controls, and other mechanisms like comparative effectiveness research, the federal government is going to micromanage how doctors and hospitals organize and care for patients.

The result will be even more bloated government expenditures, crushing tax burdens, and middle-class dependency on government-arranged health services.

The design of Obamacare, particularly the fact that its major provisions do not take effect until 2014, means that there is time to avert this disaster. But there is not much time. Once Obamacare's major entitlement expansions go into effect in three years, it will be very difficult to reverse them. And the structure of our existing health care entitlements, combined with the retirement of the baby boomers (which began last year), means that serious reforms of Medicare and Medicaid are needed very soon.

The outlines of such a reform have been clear for some time. What's needed is a functioning marketplace in health care, with cost-conscious consumers seeking and finding more value for their money. To get there, the government must stop subsidizing excess in all of the major health care settings—Medicare, Medicaid, and employer-sponsored plans. Instead, the government should provide fixed levels of financial support toward insurance and care that patients can control. The government would oversee the marketplace, but resources would be allocated based on consumer choices and preferences.

This reform would bring costs under control and head off the impending fiscal crisis. But it's not simply a fiscal reform. It would also transform American health care for



James C. Capretta is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a health policy consultant. Yuval Levin, also a fellow at EPPC, is the editor of National Affairs.

the better. Health care and insurance providers would have to become far more efficient and productive to avoid losing market share to competitors, and they would be forced to focus on the needs and desires of patients, not government payers.

For Republicans committed to maintaining a vibrant and free society, there is no choice but to make genuine health care reform the centerpiece of their domestic agenda. If the health

care debate is lost, then the fight for limited government is lost as well.

That means that the effort to repeal and replace Obamacare and to fix our health care entitlements must be well underway by 2013. And that, in turn, means that a Republican president must be elected in 2012 having run on a platform of real health care reform. For those who aspire to be that Republican president, the time to develop that platform is now. ♦

Cash for Doctors Revisited

An idea whose time has come?

BY TONY MECIA

The last time THE WEEKLY STANDARD caught up with Dr. Brian Forrest, Obamacare had just passed and the North Carolina doctor was confident that his approach to health care would prove popular (“Cash for Doctors,” May 24, 2010).

His practice, Access Healthcare outside Raleigh, doesn’t accept insurance. Instead, Forrest takes payment from patients on the spot, and he lists prices in his waiting room in an effort to be transparent, “like a Jiffy Lube.” At the time, he said he figured his approach would become more popular as people opted to circumvent the hassles and cost of regulations from government and insurance companies.

Now, nearly a year later, Forrest says he’s more sure than ever that his business model makes sense. He’s planning to franchise his practice,

Raleigh

with six similar doctors’ offices scheduled to open in North and South Carolina this summer, and plans to open others as far north as Baltimore and as far west as Indiana.

He’s obviously seeing interest from patients. But he’s finding a groundswell of interest from other quarters, too, including from doctors who want to emulate his practice, employers who are looking for less-expensive alternatives to traditional insurance, and even from insurance companies. “I think we’re going to see this model explode,” he says.

Skeptics say Forrest’s approach—known as

“subscription-based” or “direct pay”—wouldn’t work everywhere, and it’s not for every medical practice. A lot of existing practices don’t want to dump insurance cold turkey with no guarantee of success, says Jeffrey J. Denning, a practice management consultant in La Jolla, Calif. “We run into a lot of physicians who are interested in it,” Denning says, “and want to know how to

go about it, because they’re angry with what insurance companies are doing to them. They say, ‘How can I get out of the insurance business?’”

A lot of the discussions come this time of year, around tax time, he says. He advises doctors to think hard about why a fee-for-service approach would work for them, and most end up sticking with the traditional model.

Forrest’s approach is one of several that are gaining popularity as doctors—fed up with health care bureaucracies—search for new business models. Some, known as “concierge” practices, charge a monthly fee, typically of \$100 or more, in exchange for enhanced access to physicians. Some accept insurance, others don’t.

Forrest’s patients pay for services off an à la carte list, or they can pay a \$39 monthly fee for a discount off the price list. He says the economics work because he doesn’t have to hire employees dedicated to dealing with insurance companies. Patients pay him on the spot and in full. While he’s a primary care physician, he says even specialists can make such a business model work. He’s even negotiated discounts for his patients with local networks of specialists who appreciate being paid promptly. Forrest believes this simpler, market-driven approach is poised to take off.

Last spring, when Obamacare passed, he was making money on the side by consulting with physicians on how to transition their practices away from accepting insurance. But the demand became too great. So last summer, he launched a website—forrest-directpay.com—that sells an online how-to kit for \$3,500. He says he sold 50 in the first month: “We realized, Wow! There really is a demand out there.”

But he scaled that effort back a few months later, as new opportunities arose. His practice was growing, and he needed to expand. At the same time, businesses were starting to approach Access Healthcare about sending employees his way. A local sushi restaurant, for instance, pays him \$379 per year per worker—far less than the national average insurance premium



Tony Mecia is a freelance business writer in Charlotte, N.C.

of about \$5,000 a year per worker. The restaurant's owner couldn't afford full-blown insurance, but wanted to do something. So now, workers receive an annual physical and unlimited visits to Forrest's office for \$20 per visit.

"The best part is that the employees sometimes bring sushi as tips," Forrest says. "They bring some great lobster rolls."

Forrest says he's read some legal interpretations that suggest paying workers' health care fees at a doctor's office directly—as the sushi restaurant does with him—could satisfy the Obamacare mandate that businesses with 50 or more workers provide health care coverage for their employees beginning in 2014.

"A lot of businesses are thinking that way," he says. "At least when the coverage police come around, you can say you're doing something for your employees."

More significantly, Forrest says a major national company—which he declines to name for now—is encouraging him to open doctors' offices all over. The idea there is that the company

could save money by directing its workers to one of Forrest's clinics. The company would still offer traditional insurance, but because premiums are linked in part to utilization, premiums would stay low since workers would start by heading to a practice that didn't accept insurance.

Perhaps most surprising in the last year, though, is that insurance companies—"typically our enemy"—are taking an interest in Forrest's work. They were intrigued after Access Healthcare was named one of 33 "Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence" by the Consortium for South-eastern Hypertension Control.

"They said, 'Huh, you have better outcomes than most doctors have,'" Forrest says. "We said, 'Yeah, that's because our focus is on patients, not insurance.'"

Forrest says insurers are trying to figure out ways to work with his model, without imposing the usual burdens of filing, coding, and billing.

"There are so many people who are really becoming interested in this," he says. ♦

A Purge Too Far?

The economic consequences of 'de-Baathification' in Egypt. BY DAVID SCHENKER

During Egypt's Papyrus Revolution, the state's jails were emptied. Hundreds of convicts—Islamists and secularists alike—escaped and vanished. Still others were released by the doomed Mubarak regime to attack pro-democracy demonstrators in Tahrir Square. Some foreign terrorists in Egyptian custody even quit their cells and auto-repatriated to Gaza and Lebanon.

David Schenker is director of the Program on Arab Politics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and author of a soon-to-be-published study on Egypt after Mubarak.

More than a month after longtime Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was removed from power, Egypt's jails are again filling up. But this time, it's not the usual Islamist suspects behind bars. Instead, Egypt's holding cells and court dockets are swelling with senior officials of the fallen Mubarak regime.

Like post-Saddam Iraq circa 2003, Egypt is in the early stages of its own de-Baathification process, purging and prosecuting former Mubarak regime functionaries. Some members of the former regime, including Minister of the Interior Habib el-Adly and four of his deputies, have

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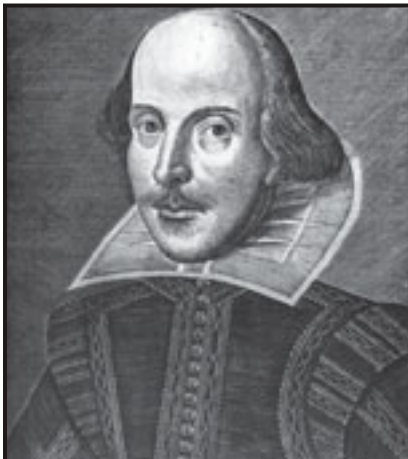
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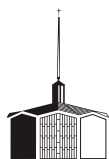
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been indicted for killing protesters during the Tahrir Square demonstrations. To date, though, more than murder and torture, members of the Mubarak regime are being charged with financial corruption and illegal profiteering.

In addition to facing a murder rap, the once feared former interior minister is on trial for laundering money; the former tourism minister stands accused of embezzling government funds; executives responsible for Egypt's gas industry—and the sweetheart export deal with Israel—are under investigation. The former speakers of Egypt's upper and lower houses of parliament are likewise being scrutinized by the state's central accounting office.

No doubt the arrests and trials of Mubarak functionaries will provide overdue catharsis for the vast majority of Egyptians who never enjoyed the trickle-down benefits of Egypt's macroeconomic success. But carried too far, the cleansing could backfire on Egypt's economy.

To date, the most consequential individuals targeted have been top figures from the "Government of Businessmen," who drove (and benefitted from) Egypt's remarkable economic growth from 2004-2011. Just this week, for example, Egypt's attorney general said he would be issuing an arrest warrant for the former minister of finance, Yousef Boutros Ghali, for allegedly siphoning off millions of dollars from state coffers to illegally bankroll Mubarak regime propaganda activities. Most prominent of this incarcerated group is Ahmed Ezz, the steel baron-monopolist long considered among Egypt's most corrupted officials, currently incarcerated in Cairo. Should Ezz—a close associate of the ousted president's son Gamal Mubarak—be convicted, the popular *schadenfreude* will be considerable.

But a warrant was also issued for the widely respected former minister of industry and trade, Rachid Mohamed Rachid, who is charged with assisting Ezz to illegally amass millions. Outside of Egypt, Rachid is viewed as a skilled and noncorrupt

technocrat. Unlike Ezz, Rachid was spirited from the country prior to his arrest and remains on the lam in Dubai.

After 30 years of the corrupt and brutal Mubarak regime, emotions in Egypt are understandably running high. Resentment toward the ancien régime—and calls for vengeance—have spiked. Rachid may ultimately be found guilty of something, but at present, it appears to be more a case of guilt by association.

No one is debating the importance of repatriating stolen Egyptian assets and prosecuting former regime profiteers. The longer and deeper the purges run, however, the more difficult it will be to attract foreign direct investment and resume normal economic activity. Hard times lie ahead for Egypt, and the state can ill afford to excise all the skilled technocrats and entrepreneurs who profited under Mubarak.

During the revolution, the local stock market bottomed out and closed, foreign capital fled, and S&P downgraded its rating of Egyptian debt. Since Mubarak's departure, the state has likewise been beset by dozens of strikes, slowing the resumption of economic growth. Worse, tourism, Egypt's second largest source of revenue, a leading source of employment, and the oil that fuels the domestic economy, will likely not rebound for some time.

But that's not all. Egypt is the world's largest importer of wheat, and the daily *Al Masry al Youm* is reporting that food processing factories are running at only 60 percent of capacity in large part because foreign suppliers now insist on being paid in cash.

Simply stated, a deepening crisis of confidence in Egypt's economy is brewing. The next government—liberal, Islamist, military, or a combination of the three—will be faced with deepening economic woes amidst euphoric public expectations. Macroeconomic reform—the key accomplishment of the Mubarak regime—will likely be reversed as the state intervenes to alleviate poverty.

Despite anticipated rollbacks in

economic reforms, the international community needs to provide urgent assistance. Renegotiating Egypt's foreign debt and providing the state with an advance on the seized assets of Mubarak regime officials would be a good place to start.

For its part, to meet profound economic challenges at home, Cairo will need to assemble an economic brain trust, just as the former regime did in 2004. Not only will the new team have to be squeaky clean, it will also have to be up to the task, no mean feat in a state that the 2010 U.N. Human Development Report said turns out

locally educated workers with degrees of "limited value."

With the Mubarak regime vanquished, it's time for Egyptians to get to work on rebuilding their state, an undertaking that will require deploying all the human capital the state can muster. To ensure high standards of transparency in this process, those deemed corrupt at home must be weeded out. Weeding, though, is the proper metaphor. Amidst the enthusiasm to rid the state of the former regime, Egyptians will have to take care not to uproot also the productive parts of their economy. ♦

republic and explains this is why he left his political society (use of the word "party" is outlawed). "It was a gift to the government," says Rabia. "It was also useful in telling the GCC states and the United States that we are facing a danger."

But the presence of what amounts to an occupying force—a foreign Sunni constabulary with no accountability to the Shia population it is policing—is only making matters worse. Some here blame the GCC forces for much of the violence, including detentions, disappearances from hospitals, midnight raids in Shia villages, and the shooting death of a 51-year-old woman, Bahía al-Arabi, as she was driving in her car.

Much of the opposition sees the government's actions as unjustified. "So what if some of the opposition asked for a republic?" says Khalil Marzooq, a member of Al Wefaq, a Shia grouping and the largest bloc in parliament until its deputies walked out in late February. "As long as they did it peacefully, what's the problem with that? If there were pro-regime figures on the other side who said we should leave the government alone and accept things the way they are, should we say we're going to kill them?"

Al Wefaq, explains Marzooq, is taking the middle road in pushing for a constitutional monarchy. "We want a constitution written by the people," says Marzooq, rather than the one imposed in 2002 by the ruling family. "And a representative parliament." At present, the al-Khalifa's Sunni coreligionists enjoy disproportionate representation. Before the GCC force arrived, the crown prince, Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, accepted the idea of dialogue with the opposition.

To some observers this suggested a split in the royal family, with "hardliners" taking control and summoning the GCC force. Others wondered if the decision had really been made by the Bahraini government, or if the Saudis themselves were calling the shots.

"More than three-quarters of Bahrain's budget comes from the Abu Saafa oil field," says Abdul Jalil Khalil, a colleague of Marzooq's from Al Wefaq. "That field produces 300,000

Bahrain Falls Mainly on the Shia

A battle royal in Manama.

BY LEE SMITH

Manama, Bahrain

Even as tensions surrounding the protests that have left 20 dead here since February 14 seem to be waning—curfews have been relaxed and people are slowly returning to work—they're not going away. The sticking point isn't the sectarianism that divides the Shia majority (some 65 percent of the population) and the ruling Sunnis. Nor is it that Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah see here a potential opening for their influence. The issue is older and more profound, dating back to the time two centuries ago when the al-Khalifa conquered Bahrain and the indigenous people who'd lived there for thousands of years.

Some longtime observers of Bahraini politics believe it was the call for replacing the Sunni monarchy with a republic that brought escalation.

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THE WEEKLY STANDARD and the author of The Strong Horse: Power, Politics, and the Clash of Arab Civilizations.

In response, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa two weeks ago invited in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) force composed of 1,000 Saudi troops and another 500 from the United Arab Emirates.

"There was a paper signed by some of the opposition groups wanting to topple the government," says Ali Rabia, a democracy activist for over 35 years. A well-known Sunni, Rabia is proof that the opposition movement is no simple sectarian affair. "I very much doubt these groups' loyalties are with Iran," says Rabia. "The Iranians would not treat them well, and they know it. The relationship between Persian and Arab Shia is not a good one."

Rabia notes that in 1970 the Bahrainis voted in a U.N. poll not to join Iran and to remain an independent Arab state under the al-Khalifa. Now he fears that discontent, brewing for many years, may be reaching the point of no return. In his office in downtown Manama, he shows me a copy of the document calling for a Bahraini

barrels a day, half of which goes to the Saudis and the other half to Bahrain.”

That is to say, Riyadh essentially determines the economic health of Bahrain. Most real estate investment

was under intense pressure from the United States to enter a dialogue,” says one source close to the government. “The Americans did not want to see any use of force. So the Bahrainis’

congratulated the commander of the GCC forces as though he’d waged a successful campaign against foreign invaders rather than Bahrainis. This is because the royal family does not perceive the Shia community as part of their own people.

“It’s a tribal matter,” says one Shia intellectual. “It’s not sectarian. It goes back to pre-Islamic days when the tribes invaded each other. You have the Bedouin and you have the townspeople. For the Bedouin there were eight months of raiding, raping, and robbing each year and four months of rest. The al-Khalifa conquered this island. They are the winners and we are the losers, and they believe they owe us nothing. This is Bedouin style—who has the sword can do what he likes.”

The al-Khalifa play the sectarian card because it has resonance with Bahraini Sunnis and with Washington, which fears Iranian influence in any Shia movement.

In reality, the ruling families of the Arab Gulf states are more like a confederation of organized crime families. Each has a stake in the others’ maintaining their power and collecting tribute. Most of the families originated in the Nejd region of what is now Saudi Arabia. The al-Khalifa started there and moved first to Kuwait, where their cousins, the Al-Sabah, rule. From Kuwait they went to Qatar, ruled by the Al-Thani, another Nejd tribe, and then to Bahrain.

“Therefore,” says my Shia informant, “the Shia have to be under them. But it wouldn’t matter if all the Shia one day converted to Judaism or Christianity or even Sunni Islam, because the bottom line would still be the same. We lost.”

If Bahrain seems to be getting back to normal, it’s also true that a GCC force cannot put down a protest movement whose roots go back long before the recent regional wave of uprisings kicked off in December. Khalil Al Marzooq says indigenous Bahrainis have been agitating for their rights since the 1920s. “If you keep repressing people,” says Marzooq, “eventually they’ll respond. People cannot continue to live like this.”



The enforcers: Saudi troops roll into Bahrain on March 15.

in Manama is Saudi, and the Saudi royal family sees Bahrain as a vital strategic interest. Bahrain refines up to 270,000 barrels of Saudi oil a day, and trucks coursing the 16-mile King Fahd causeway between the two countries carry vital goods to Saudi Arabia. Coming the other way are Saudi tourists heading into Manama for shopping and the liberal cultural climate. They can let their hair down in the city’s bars and nightclubs.

If Bahrain serves as an escape valve for the Saudis, however, it’s precisely Bahrain’s relaxed atmosphere that poses a threat to the Saudis. “The Saudis are not worried about sectarianism,” says Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. “Shia make up only 20 percent of the Saudi population. They’re worried about democracy, or anything that would wrest power out of their hands.”

If the Saudis see Bahrain as a place to project power and dishearten their own opposition before it takes off, other observers argue that it wasn’t the Saudis who made the decision to send in troops.

“The Bahraini establishment

hands were tied, and they brought in the Saudis because of their special relationship with the Americans.” In other words, bringing in Riyadh was meant to shield Manama from Washington’s scrutiny.

Manama has more than enough firepower to quell any uprising all on its own. Bahrain, with a population of 1.2 million, has some 40,000 troops—a larger army than Tunisia, which has 10.5 million people. Add the security forces (police), the national guard, and the intelligence services, and Bahrain has more armed forces per citizen than just about anywhere else in the world. The vast majority of those forces, moreover, consist of foreigners from Pakistan, Yemen, Jordan, Syria, and Sudan that the government has made citizens in an effort to tilt the sectarian balance in its favor. The number of Shia in the armed forces is minuscule.

Why is the army so large? The al-Khalifa are afraid of Iran, but that’s why the U.S. Fifth Fleet is based in Manama: to protect Gulf oil and its producers from hostile external forces. The GCC forces are supposed to serve the same purpose. And yet the king



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The Paranoid Style in Liberal Politics

The left's obsession with the Koch brothers

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Wichita

David Koch's secretary told him the news. This was in February, during the rowdy standoff between Wisconsin governor Scott Walker and demonstrators backing 14 Democratic legislators who'd fled to Illinois rather than vote on a bill weakening public employee unions. Koch's secretary said that an editor for a left-wing website, the *Buffalo Beast*, had telephoned the governor posing as David Koch and recorded the conversation. And Walker had fallen for it! He'd had a 20-minute conversation with this bozo, not once questioning the caller's identity. But then how could Walker have known? Sure, David Koch was a billionaire whose company had donated to his campaign. But Koch (pronounced "Coke") had never talked to Walker in his life.

Yet here were the media reporting that he and his brother Charles were behind Walker's push against public employees. Anger washed over David like a red tide. He'd been victimized by some punk with a political agenda. "It's really identity theft," he told me a month later, during an interview at Koch Industries' headquarters. "And I think it's extremely dishonest to misrepresent yourself. I think there's a question of integrity. And the person who would do that has got to be an incredibly dishonest person." Up until Walker's showdown with the Democratic state senators, Koch had never seen a photograph of the governor. He didn't know him at all. But now the protesters occupying the Wisconsin state capitol were calling Walker a "Koch Whore."

Why? Because the Koch Industries PAC had given \$43,000 to Walker's campaign. That was less than one half of one percent of Walker's total haul—but still

enough for the left to tie Koch Industries to the battle royal in Wisconsin. David found the whole affair disturbing. "One additional thing that really bothered me," he said, "was that the press attacked *me* rather than the guy who impersonated me! And I was criticized as someone who's got a death grip on the governor and his policies. And that I control him—I mean, that's *insane!*"

Ah, but such is life when you and your brother are suddenly two of the most demonized men in American politics. For decades David and Charles have run Koch Industries, an energy and manufacturing conglomerate that employs around 50,000 people in the United States and another 20,000 in 59 other countries. Depending on the year, Koch Industries is either the first- or second-largest privately held company in America—it alternates in the top spot with Cargill, the agricultural giant—with about \$100 billion in revenues. David and Charles are worth around \$22 billion each. Combine their wealth and you have the third-largest fortune in America after Bill Gates and Warren Buffett. Like most billionaires, the brothers spend a lot of time giving their money away: to medical and scientific research, to educational programs, to cultural institutions, and to public policy research and activism.

That last part has caught the attention of the left's scouring eye. For unlike many billionaires, the Koch brothers espouse classical liberal economics: They advocate lower taxes, less government spending, fewer regulations, and limited government. "Society as a whole benefits from greater economic freedom," Charles wrote in a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed. Judging by the results of the 2010 elections, there are millions of Americans who agree with him.

Over the years the Kochs have flown beneath the radar, not seeking publicity and receiving little. But then the crash of 2008 arrived, and the bailouts, and the election of Barack Obama, and pretty soon the whole country was engaged in one loud, colossal, rollicking, emotional argument over the size, scope, and solvency of the federal government. Without warning, folks were springing up, dressing in colonial garb, talking about

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The progressives' latest two minutes' hate: anti-Koch protesters in Rancho Mirage, California, January 30, 2011

the Constitution, calling for a Tea Party. Some of them even joined a group called Americans for Prosperity—which the Kochs helped found and partly fund.

For progressives confused at the heated opposition to their do-gooder agenda, the Kochs became convenient scapegoats. Invoking their name was a way to write off opposition to Obama as the false consciousness of racist rubes stoked by greedy businessmen. In the liberal imagination the Kochs ascended from obscurity to infamy in record time. Starting in the spring of 2009, whenever you turned on MSNBC or clicked on the *Huffington Post* you'd see the Kochs described in terms more applicable to Lex Luthor and General Zod.

As last year's midterm elections approached, the White House singled out the Kochs for attack. President Obama relied on innuendo: "They don't have to say who exactly the Americans for Prosperity are," he said in August. "You don't know if it's a foreign-controlled corporation. You don't know if it's a big oil company, or a big bank." Obama's lieutenants were more direct. Also in August, an administration official, later identified

as the economist Austan Goolsbee, delivered a background briefing to reporters in which he falsely alleged that Koch Industries paid no corporate income tax. (An inspector general is now investigating whether anyone in the Obama administration accessed confidential tax information prior to the attack.) The Kochs, former White House adviser David Axelrod wrote last September, are "billionaire oilmen secretly underwriting what the public has been told is a grass-roots movement for change in Washington."

But that was just for starters. Liberals in the media turned into Koch addicts. They ascribed every bad thing under the sun to the brothers and their checkbooks. Pollution, the Tea Party, global warming denial—the Kochs were responsible. The liberals kneaded the facts like clay until the Kochs resembled a Lovecraftian monster: the Kochtopus! Its tentacles stretched everywhere. "Their private agenda is really the eradication of the federal government in almost all of its forms, other than the parts of it that protect personal rights," *New Yorker* writer Jane Mayer told NPR's Terry Gross. Anonymous, the hackers' collective,

accused the Kochs of attempting to “usurp American Democracy.” The Koch brothers manipulated the Tea Partiers, according to Keith Olbermann, by “telling them what to say and which causes to take on and also giving them lots of money to do it with.”

“They have an interest that is hard core ideological, hard core conservative. And dad’s money to pursue that agenda, it turns out, goes a long, long way,” said Rachel Maddow. Another left-wing radio host, Mike Papantonio, called them “inheritance babies who don’t want to pay taxes.” “The billionaire Koch brothers spent millions to have a seat at the Republican table in Washington,” said Ed Shultz, also of MSNBC, “and let’s be upfront about this now, folks. Now, they *are* the table.” For Paul Krugman, “What the Koch brothers have bought with their huge political outlays is, above all, freedom to pollute.” Frank Rich called them “fat cats.” Howard Dean was blunt: “We don’t want the right wing buying elections.” The Kochs, wrote a group of liberal bloggers, are “the billionaires behind the hate.”

By the time the rhetoric trickled down from the president of the United States to MSNBC talking heads to anonymous email writers, any pretense to civility or actual fact had vanished. The emails that showed up in Melissa Cohlma’s inbox each morning were unhinged.

Cohlma is director of corporate communication for Koch Industries. Every day when she arrived at work, the first things she’d read were emails with subject lines like “This is the result of the hate you’ve been spewing,” “Corrupt Polluting Scum,” “I am boycotting Koch Industries,” “Treason,” and “Eat s—t you jerks.”

Koch Industries has a target on its gargantuan back. The brothers are the latest victims of the left’s lean, mean cyber-vilification machine. Cohlma spends her time trying to debunk the falsehoods being spread about her bosses and her company. It may be a losing battle. There’s just too much junk. And every so often Cohlma has to stop and wonder: How on earth did it come to this?

MARKET SCIENCE

The Kochs’ grandfather, Harry, immigrated to the United States from the Netherlands in 1888. He settled in Quanah, Texas, where he bought a newspaper and printing company. His son Fred was born in 1900.

Fred Koch graduated from MIT, where he studied

engineering. In 1925 he moved to Wichita. There he developed an oil refining process that led to bigger yields and helped smaller, independent oil companies. This made him few friends in the industry. Instantly, the major companies sued. Koch spent years fighting 44 different lawsuits. He won all but one—and that verdict was overturned when it was revealed that the judge had been bribed.

With the big firms working against him, Fred looked to opportunities overseas. He found them in, of all places, the Soviet Union. Stalin, engaged in a massive program of industrialization, was hiring capitalists to assist him. Between 1929 and 1931 Fred Koch built 15 oil-cracking plants in the USSR. The experience changed him irrevocably. The Soviet Union, he wrote in his book *A Businessman Looks at Communism*, was “a land of hunger, misery, and terror.” During one of his trips, his handler was an old Bolshevik named Jerome Livshitz. “In the months I traveled with him he gave me a liberal education in Communist techniques and methods,” Fred wrote. Fred began to fear what would happen if communism spread. “Many of the Soviet engineers he worked with were longtime Bolsheviks who had helped bring on the revolution,” Charles Koch told me



Charles and David Koch as Deerfield prep-schoolers

during an interview in his office. “As a matter of fact they would tell [my father] that some day they were going to destroy him. And then for them to be purged, to be killed by Stalin, it was *shocking*, because they had been totally dedicated to [Stalin’s] cause.”

After he returned to America, Fred started a family. Charles, the second of four sons, was born in 1935. David followed five years later. Fred tried to instill in his boys the lessons he’d learned overseas. “He was a very conservative Republican and was not a fan of big government,” David said. Conversations at the kitchen table often revolved around the Communist threat. “He told me that once there were a couple of engineers [from Russia] in the office here in Wichita,” Charles said, “and the KGB came looking for them, and he hid them in the bathroom. Later the engineers were going back to the Soviet Union, and one of them supposedly jumped out of a hotel window and committed suicide.” Fred smelled foul play. “He was always convinced that they pushed him out,” Charles said.

Fred was a member of the John Birch Society. The Birchers, famously drummed out of the conservative

movement by William F. Buckley Jr., believed that Communist infiltration spread all the way to the top of the U.S. government, including the Eisenhower presidency. Fred Koch's conspiratorial worldview, in other words, anticipated the manner in which liberal writers would describe his sons decades later.

Fred was a towering personality. "My father was a man of enormous integrity, and he wanted his children to grow up to be great men, and fine, honest, decent people," David said. Charles and David attended their father's alma mater and studied his chosen field. When Charles graduated, he stayed in Boston. He found a job with the consulting firm Arthur D. Little, where he worked in business development and management services. Life was good. Then in 1960 he got a call from his father: *My health is failing*, Fred told him. *You need to come back and work for the company and succeed me.* "I said, 'God, I'm doing great here, so I'd rather stay here,'" Charles said. Which he did.

A year later Fred called Charles again. *Return home and work for me*, Fred said, *or I'll sell the company.* Charles complied. "He was very strong, and Dutch, and one of his favorite sayings was, 'You can tell the Dutch but you can't tell them much,'" Charles said. He took over the company after his father's death in 1967. In the years since Charles Koch went to work for Fred, Koch Industries has grown more than 2,600-fold. The notion that Charles and David are "inheritance babies" is nonsense.

David joined the company in 1970 and became president of Koch Engineering nine years later. These days he runs the Koch Chemical Technology Group from his home in New York City. It is Charles, though, who oversees the whole operation from the headquarters in Wichita. It is Charles who developed the theories behind the company's management practices and politics. The same philosophy drives Charles's business, philanthropy, politics, and personal conduct. And the key to that philosophy, more than anything else, is a passionate belief in free markets.

During college Charles had a revelation. "I became convinced that it was an ordered universe," he said. The natural world was governed by laws that could be understood by rational men. But not only nature—organizations, economies, entire societies operated according to the same fundamental principles. "How well a society followed these laws determined the extent to which

it would have peace, prosperity, and progress," Charles said. He began reading everything he could get his hands on: economics, philosophy, history, psychology, anthropology, the philosophy of science. His studies consumed his spare time. One day he came across the Austrian school of economics. Von Mises, Hayek, F.A. Harper, Sowell—these free market thinkers were his gurus. He read *Maslow on Management*. He read Michael Polanyi. He would take insights from one author, attach them to insights from another, and try to make everything fit together.

What Charles was studying, he later concluded, was the "science of human action." The concepts behind free market and liberal societies, he believed, could be applied in every sphere of life. In his quest to apply them, he made

Koch Industries his laboratory. "I had to do trial and error," he said. "That is, experiment with capturing the benefits and finding the mechanisms in an organization that would create the same power that private property, free exchange, the rule of law does in a society." Building a business wasn't about short-term profit. It was about creating long-term value. It was an intellectual odyssey. "And that's really what the development of Market-Based Management involved," Charles said.

Market-Based Management: The words cast a spell on Koch Industries employees. The coinage is Charles's.

A Koch Industries website defines Market-Based Management (MBM for short) as "a holistic approach to management that integrates theory and practice and prepares organizations to deal successfully with the challenges of growth and change." MBM does this "by applying the principles that allow free societies to prosper." It's hard to get more specific than that, however. Sometimes it seems as though Market-Based Management is whatever Charles Koch says it is. "He's a teacher," Rod Learned, director of internal communication for Koch Industries, told me. "He's trying to get people to understand there are principles in life, like in engineering."

At its heart, Market-Based Management seems to be about trial and error, about turning employees into entrepreneurs, about devolving power so that individuals in a project team or on the factory floor ask questions, make decisions, and feel like they have a stake in the company. And what a company: By the time Charles published *The Science of Success* in 2007, Koch Industries had expanded to include 10 major business groups containing hundreds of different entities and employing tens of thousands of people. There was also the Matador Cattle Co.—the descendant of Fred

Fred Koch built 15 oil-cracking plants in the USSR. The experience changed him irrevocably. The Soviet Union, he wrote in his book 'A Businessman Looks at Communism,' was 'a land of hunger, misery, and terror.'

Koch's ranches—and a venture capital group called Koch Genesis. The scope of the enterprise was mind-boggling.

During the course of four decades Charles had transformed Koch Industries from a company that processed and transported oil and natural gas into a manufacturing giant. What employees called Koch's "legacy industries" were still there—refining, chemical production, asphalt, pipelines, fertilizer, engineering equipment—but a slew of new businesses—polymers, paper, finance—had been overlaid on top. "Our various companies are good at operating large, complex plants that require lots of technology to process some sort of commodity, typically a liquid or solid," Steve Feilmeier, Koch Industries' executive vice president and chief financial officer, told me. "And then we combine that with a trading and marketing capability."

In 2004 Koch Industries acquired Invista from DuPont, giving Charles and David ownership of Lycra, Stainmaster Carpet, Antron, Dytek, and other polymer brands. The following year Koch Industries acquired Georgia-Pacific in a \$21 billion deal. Angel Soft, Soft 'n Gentle, Dixie, Brawny, Mardi Gras, and many other paper goods brands came with it. The one thing Koch Industries doesn't do, in fact, is drill for oil. "Our roots are in refining," Rod Learned said, "but it isn't accurate to describe us as a major oil company." No, not at all. Koch Industries is much bigger than that.

You wake up in the morning and turn on a light using electricity generated by oil and natural gas that Koch Industries discovered, sold, refined, and delivered to the power plant. You get out of bed and your feet touch a carpet made from Koch polymers. You drink from a paper cup manufactured by Koch. You use a Koch paper towel to clean up water spilled from the cup. You get dressed in Lycra products made by Koch. You leave the house, built from materials that in all likelihood have at some point intersected with a Koch company, and get into a car powered by gasoline made by Koch Industries. You drive to the airport where you get on an airplane using fuel refined at a Koch facility. If the airplane is Air Force One, when you get thirsty you have some coffee from the Koch-produced official presidential coffee cup. You hijack the plane and demand that the pilot take you to a country where there is no Koch presence, no Koch employee, no Koch brand. But he can't. He just stares into space. Because there is no escape.

It's enough to make you a conspiracy theorist.

THE MAN IN BLACK

Back when Charles was first captivated by free markets, the luminaries of the Austrian school of economics were in political exile. Despite their trenchant analysis of credit and the business cycle, the Austrians hadn't done enough econometric modeling to be

taken seriously by the mainstream. Keynesianism reigned supreme. Market-oriented professors preferred Milton Friedman and the Chicago school. Few people read *Human Action* or *The Counter-revolution of Science*.

In the 1960s Charles got to know F.A. "Baldy" Harper, the Cornell economist who founded the Institute for Humane Studies. Taking a cue from Hayek's *Intellectuals and Socialism*, Harper and Koch wanted to advance the careers of young academics interested in free enterprise. The trouble was that they'd hold a seminar and maybe six professors would show up. "No one was familiar with these ideas," Charles said. He'd have to build an intellectual infrastructure to spread the word.

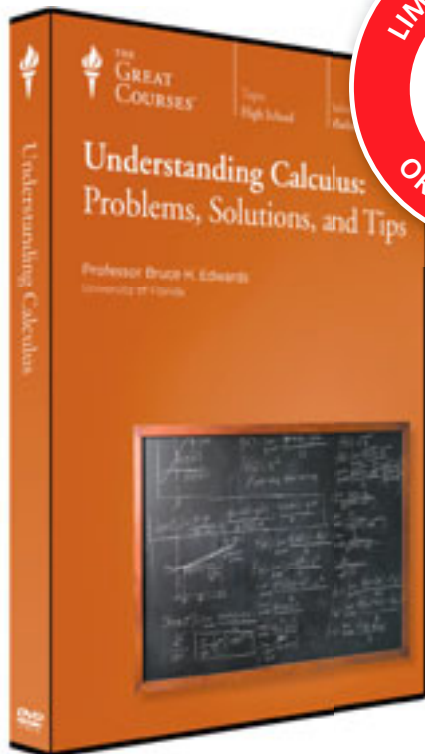
What happened next was crucial to the development of American libertarianism. In the 1970s Charles got to know Ed Crane, the chairman of the national Libertarian party, with whom he'd discuss politics and strategy. They had the idea of setting up a think tank "to take these concepts and apply them to public policy issues," Charles said. The Cato Institute was founded in 1977 with money from the Charles G. Koch Foundation. The intellectual engine was up and running. Then Charles met Richard Fink.

Fink was an economics Ph.D. at New York University. He'd been offered a teaching job at Rutgers, where he'd earned his bachelor's degree. He wanted to set up a research center devoted to the Austrians. The department told him he could do whatever he wanted as long he raised the money himself. So Fink went to work. He called two donors but both turned him down. The third donor he called was Charles Koch. Try as he might, however, Fink couldn't get through to Koch directly. He kept calling until one day Charles picked up the phone himself. The billionaire told Fink to fly to Wichita and deliver his proposal. Fink was elated: This was his chance!

There was just one hitch. Fink didn't own a suit. He was a grad student with long hair and a wild beard and a gold chain, and he had to impress one of the richest men in the country. What to do? He and his wife went to a store in Manhattan that was having a fire sale. He picked out a black polyester suit with white piping, a black and white checkered shirt, and a bright blue tie.

On the day of his trip to Kansas he put on his clothes, appended his Phi Beta Kappa pin to the azure tie, and looked in the mirror: *Nice threads!* When he got off the plane in Wichita he noticed people staring at him and assumed they were impressed with his outfit. This was the seventies, after all. Fink told me, "I thought I was hot stuff."

When the man in the black polyester suit arrived at Koch Industries, Charles offered him a drink. Fink turned it down. "Good," Charles told him, "because we don't have any alcohol." Fink asked Charles if he'd read the proposal.



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Charles said he hadn't. He picked it up from a pile and read it quickly while Fink sat there. The meeting was brief. Fink spent the plane ride back to New York thinking he'd bombed. But Koch called a few days later: He was willing to fund Fink's project.

In 1980 academic politics forced Fink to relocate to George Mason University in suburban Virginia. There, with Koch's support, he founded the Center for the Study of Market Processes. Years later Fink asked Charles why a badly dressed hippie economics Ph.D. had been given all this money. "I like polyester," Charles told him. "It's made of petroleum."

In 1999 Fink's think tank was renamed the Mercatus Center. By then Fink had become a fixture in Koch Industries, coordinating business ventures, philanthropy, and activism and becoming Charles Koch's intellectual sounding board. "There are a lot of people who have ideas but they don't know to get it done," Charles said. "Rich always had a sense for how to get something done and make it effective." And Fink has plenty to keep him busy: He's executive vice president and board member at Koch Industries and chairman and CEO of Koch Companies Public Sector LLC. He sits on the board of the Mercatus Center, the Charles G. Koch, Claude R. Lambe, Fred C. and Mary R. Koch charitable foundations, the Institute for Humane Studies, the Market-Based Management Institute, and the Americans for Prosperity Foundation.

The Kochs' politics didn't match traditional categories. Republicans, in their view, were just as implicated in big government as Democrats. To this day the Cato Institute calls for a much smaller defense budget, a noninterventionist foreign policy, and liberal positions on social issues. Some of these views have made movement conservatives uneasy. In June 1979 *National Review* went so far as to publish an essay critical of Cato Institute libertarians by Lawrence V. Cott. The title of the piece was "Cato Institute & the Invisible Finger." The finger in question belonged to Charles Koch.

The intraconservative friction was evidence that Charles was becoming influential. In 1980 David Koch ran for vice president on the Libertarian party ticket. As a candidate, David could use his fortune to educate the populace about the free market. Yet it isn't quite accurate to say, as many have, that David was running to "Reagan's right." Yes, the Libertarians wanted to shrink government. But they also believed it was important to distinguish themselves from Chamber of Commerce, "family values" Republicans. Ed Clark, the party's presidential nominee, described himself as a "low-tax liberal."

There must not have been many of those. Libertarians got 1 percent of the vote in 1980. But David and Charles were pleased nonetheless. "Compared to what they'd gotten

before," Charles said, "and where we were as a movement or as a political/ideological point of view, that was pretty remarkable, to get 1 percent of the vote."

It would take more than 1 percent to turn their vision into reality. Voters didn't have access to all the nifty ideas being cooked up inside Cato and Mercatus. "No one was bringing it down to the average citizen," Fink said. So in 1984 Charles and David established Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE). Richard Fink was its first president.

CSE was an exercise in community organizing. It rallied grassroots voters in support of reduced spending and lower taxes. "What we needed was a sales force that participated in political campaigns or town hall meetings, in rallies, to communicate to the public at large much of the information that these think tanks were creating," David said. "Almost like a door-to-door sales force that some of the cosmetics organizations have." CSE was an innovation in interest group politics, marrying business practice and libertarian ideology: Mary Kay meets von Mises.

Citizens for a Sound Economy's greatest success came in 1993, when it sponsored rallies and ad campaigns opposing President Clinton's proposal for a BTU energy tax. Yet the victory was diminished by controversy within Koch Industries. The nineties were a difficult time. Charles and David's brothers, Freddie (the eldest) and William (David's twin), attempted to take over the company. William ensnared Koch Industries, Charles, and David in a web of litigation. Making matters worse was a series of industrial accidents and environmental violations that drew the attention of Clinton's EPA.

Politics fell by the wayside as Charles and David worked to maintain their positions and comply with federal requirements. "We had some problems," Charles said. It took a massive effort to right the ship. "There's no question we had some tough issues," Jim Mahoney, Koch Industries' executive vice president for operations excellence and compliance, told me. "But I would say two things happened. Number one, we took responsibility for it, and number two, we learned from it."

In David's case the legal rigmarole was accompanied by personal trauma. In 1991 he was the only passenger in first class to survive when his US Airways 737 collided with a commuter jet on a runway at Los Angeles International Airport. The following year he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. "I had a terrible panic attack," David said. "I thought I was going to die." He underwent radiation at Sloan-Kettering, surgery, hormone therapy—each time the cancer came back. "Once you get that disease," David said, "and I've had it for 20 years almost, you become a

crusader to try to cure the disease not only for yourself but for other people.”

David poured himself into his philanthropy. Most of his money went to medical research and cultural institutions. His multimillion-dollar gifts went to MIT, Johns Hopkins, Lincoln Center, the American Museum of Natural History, the National Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and elsewhere. None of these places is known for right-wing politics. “Probably the least area in terms of my overall contributions is public policy,” David said. The difference is in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Things had settled down by the time George W. Bush was inaugurated president. The election of a self-described compassionate conservative did not allay the Kochs’ fears for the future of economic liberty. Charles and David quickly found themselves disappointed in Bush. “What he did led to the current administration,” Charles said. Charles’s favorite presidents were George Washington, Grover Cleveland, and Calvin Coolidge. “Harding was very good too,” he said, “but he had some other issues.” It’s been downhill since Hoover.

Bush wasn’t all bad: He was personally a nice guy, he made some excellent appointments to the Supreme Court, and he was business friendly. His foreign policy, the invasion of Iraq in particular, was a different story. “Boy, that’s cost a lot of money, and it’s taken so many American lives,” David said. “I question whether that was the right thing to do. In hindsight that looks like it was not a good policy.”

In 2003 Charles Koch and Richard Fink had an idea for a seminar that would educate donors in the importance of economic freedom. “It was obvious we were headed for disaster,” Charles said. Something had to be done to stop the coming fiscal collapse. The plan was to organize people interested in market issues, explain what was at stake, and suggest ways the participants could promote free enterprise. The first seminar was held in Chicago. Fifteen people attended.

The seminars gained momentum during Bush’s second term. Soon the meetings were held twice every year, and by the winter of 2011 they were attracting around 300 people. The Kochs hosted big-name speakers: Antonin Scalia, Eric Cantor, Clarence Thomas, Paul Ryan. “We’re not a bunch of radicals running around and saying strange

things,” said David. “Many of these people are very successful, and occupy very important, respected positions in their communities!” At the end of each seminar the participants would pledge money to conservative groups. One attendee told me the Kochs were among the best political fundraisers he’d ever seen. “They’re almost as good as AIPAC,” he said, referring to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Around the time the seminars began, there was an internal shake-up at Citizens for a Sound Economy. The group split into FreedomWorks, chaired by Dick Armey, and Americans for Prosperity (AFP), chaired by David Koch. “I see AFP as having a huge number of boots on the ground,” David said. Its ranks have swelled to upward of 1.6 million people.

Charles and David sensed that Bush’s failure would drive Americans into the arms of Barack Obama. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the financial crisis of September 2008 made a toxic brew, and Americans turned to the young Democratic senator who promised hope and change. Change is what they got. Ask Charles Koch what he thinks about Obama and he looks like he’s just bit into a lemon. “He’s a dedicated egalitarian,” Charles said. “I’m not saying he’s a Marxist, but he’s internalized some Marxist models—that is, that business tends to be successful by exploiting its customers and workers.”

David agreed. “He’s the most radical president we’ve ever had as a nation,” he said, “and has done more damage to the free enterprise system and long-term prosperity than any president we’ve ever had.” David suggested the president’s radicalism was tied to his upbringing. “His father was a hard core economic socialist in Kenya,” he said. “Obama didn’t really interact with his father face-to-face very much, but was apparently from what I read a great admirer of his father’s points of view. So he had sort of antibusiness, anti-free enterprise influences affecting him almost all his life. It just shows you what a person with a silver tongue can achieve.”

The silver tongue promised to build a “New Foundation” for America based on greater federal government involvement in health care, education, and energy. Taxes would be raised, regulations increased, mandates imposed to guarantee a more equitable distribution of wealth. Charles and David agreed with none of this. The larger

In 2003 Charles Koch and Richard Fink had an idea for a seminar that would educate donors in the importance of economic freedom. ‘It was obvious we were headed for disaster,’ Charles said.



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government grows, they believed, the worse off societies become. Obama had to be stopped.

The Kochs weren't the only ones opposed to the president's vision. Within months of Obama's inauguration, the Tea Party had begun. "The way it's grown, the passion and the intensity, was beyond what I had anticipated," Charles said. It was beautiful—a sight to behold. But there was one other thing the Kochs didn't expect: the buzz saw of the contemporary left.

ADDICTED TO KOCH

A few years ago Richard Fink told Charles and David to prepare for the worst. The brothers were raising their political profile, Fink said, and that would come at a cost. There would be a lot of name-calling. Their opponents would impugn their beliefs, characters, and business. Charles understood what Fink was talking about. "I believed that when we were considered effective we would be attacked," he said. Before Obama's election, those who were aware of the Kochs' political activities tended to assume they were tilting at Austrian windmills. The Kochs had an exotic philosophy, but few took them very seriously.

Not anymore. During the fight over health care and cap and trade in 2009 and 2010, liberals went looking for baddies against whom to mobilize public opinion. The Kochs' wealth and political involvement made them an obvious choice. Reflecting on the ferocity of the onslaught that ensued, Charles told me, "I didn't anticipate the hatred, the advocacy of violence." He must not have been paying attention.

Back in 2005, when Republicans controlled the federal government, liberals had asked themselves, Where do we go from here? They'd long studied what they called the "counter-establishment," the array of conservative foundations, think tanks, and media. These institutions, liberals concluded, had pushed America to the right. What the left required was the mirror image of the Olin and Bradley foundations, the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, *THE WEEKLY STANDARD* and *National Review*, talk radio and Fox News Channel. The left needed to build a "counter-counter-establishment," a "vast left-wing conspiracy" to combat the "vast right-wing conspiracy" that had impeached Bill Clinton and elected George W. Bush.

Since most of America's preeminent intellectual and media organizations already tilted left, the activists could focus on energizing the grassroots. A rich liberal could fund talk radio—Air America. Moveon.org became the leader of the antiwar movement. MSNBC transitioned from CNN-lite to Fox News for Democrats. The Brookings Institution may have been the most famous think tank in America, but it lacked Heritage's political pull. The new Center for American Progress would have a separate entity—the Center for American Progress Action Fund—devoted to turning its ideas into law.

This institution-building coincided with the rise of the blogosphere. Over the last decade the left took to the Internet like conservatives at a gun show: They felt right at home. By 2006 the progressive bloggers (the term "liberal" had too many negative connotations) had become a powerful force. They called themselves the Netroots, organized conferences, pooled resources, and played a key role in forcing Joe Lieberman out of the Democratic party. The Internet served as a virtual community for liberals who'd lacked a sense of belonging. The web's immediacy allowed writers to connect, comment, propose, report, fact-check, and update in real time. No utterance from a Republican, no matter how banal, went unexamined.

By the time the Tea Party was getting started in 2009, the left-wing counter-counter-establishment was a juggernaut, investing vast energy in destroying the reputations of its favorite targets: Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, Rush Limbaugh. Inside this Death Star were legions of

twenty-something writers, most of them fresh out of college, tapping furiously at their keyboards, discoursing on the subtleties of macroeconomics and the depravity of American conservatives. An hour or so spent on Google was research enough to write a blog post that would be read by producers for Keith Olbermann and editors at the *New York Times*. Seemingly random accumulations of fact would be presented breathlessly in purple prose: *Look at what the bastards are doing now!* In a matter of hours attacks that originated in the bowels of the Center for American Progress Action Fund would traverse heaven's ladder and reach White House speechwriters.

What happened to the Kochs was a classic example. A young researcher at the Center for American Progress noticed that some Tea Party rallies had been organized by Americans for Prosperity. On April 9, 2009, he wrote up



Charles Koch

his discovery and posted it on a Center for American Progress Action Fund blog under the headline “Spontaneous Uprising? Corporate Lobbyists Helping to Orchestrate Radical Anti-Obama Tea Party Protests.” Here was the definitive proof, he wrote, that the yokels in tricorns were only pawns of moneyed interests. A little googling revealed that Charles and David Koch had been active in politics for decades, that they’d given money to all sorts of conservative causes, that they operated—this was almost too good to be true—an energy company that had had run-ins with the EPA. Sound the alarm! Rachel Maddow is on line one!

Other sharks caught whiff of the chum. In March 2010 the environmentalists at Greenpeace released a report titled “Koch Industries: Secretly Funding the Climate Denial Machine.” Its authors contained their fury long enough to conclude, “Koch Industries has become a financial kingpin of climate science denial and clean energy opposition.” In the liberal mind, Koch had displaced ExxonMobil on the Top Ten Enemies of Gaia list.

Koch addiction became a left-wing pandemic. In August 2010 the *New Yorker* published Jane Mayer’s “Covert Operations: The billionaire brothers who are waging a war against Obama.” Mayer drew heavily from the writings of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, the Greenpeace report, and public tax records. For several thousand words, relying on interviews with anonymous sources, Democratic operatives, a disgruntled conservative, a historian of libertarianism, and the author of “A Pagan’s Blog,” Mayer unspooled a fantastic tale of manipulation and malpractice.

She reported ominously that “many of the organizations funded by the Kochs employ specialists who write position papers that are subsequently quoted by politicians and pundits.” She unironically quoted former Democratic congressman Dan Glickman, who told her that before the voters in Wichita threw him out in 1994, “I’d been in Congress 18 years. The Kochs actually engaged against me and funded my opponent.” The impertinence! The outrage! “With the growing prominence of the Tea Party,” Mayer wrote, “and with increased awareness of the Kochs’ ties to the movement, the brothers may find it harder to deflect scrutiny.”

How right she was. “Covert Operations” became a sort of Rosetta Stone for Koch addicts. It was the template for any liberal wanting someone to blame for all the trouble in the

world. Mayer had unlocked the secrets of the Kochtopus.

Her story contained four main lines of argument. The first was that the Kochs used Americans for Prosperity to control the Tea Party. For anyone remotely familiar with the history of the Tea Party, the assertion was laughable. In one guise or another, AFP had been around for 25 years before Obama showed up and brought the Tea Partiers out of hiding. What had taken so long?

Did the Kochs order Keli Carender to organize the first “porkulus” protest in Seattle in February 2009? Did they direct Rick Santelli to call for a Tea Party live on CNBC a few days later? The suggestion was absurd. “I see these people on TV, and they’re interviewed, and it’s obvious no one’s pulling their strings,” Charles said. Neither brother has attended a Tea Party. If anything it was the Tea Partiers who used Americans for Prosperity: They would have invented it if it hadn’t already existed.

The second charge was that the Kochs’ talk about free markets was merely cover for economic self-interest. But if that were true, why doesn’t every major corporation full-throatedly support limited government? Are we really to believe that Koch Industries is the only self-interested corporation in America? The reality, of course, is that an easier way to advance corporate self-interest is the one taken by most giant companies: securing monopolies, bailouts, tariffs, subsidies—the opposite of free enterprise. “It’d be much safer economically to sit on the sidelines or curry favor with the Obama administration,” said Richard Fink.

It was impossible for the liberal activists to acknowledge that libertarians might actually operate from conviction. Charles and David believed in low taxes, less spending, and limited regulation not because those policies helped *them* but because they helped *everybody*. “If I wanted to enhance my riches,” said David, “why do I give away almost all my money?”

Particularly outrageous was Mayer’s claim that David used his position on the National Cancer Advisory Board to lobby against classifying formaldehyde as a carcinogen. David was on the board for almost seven years. Not once did he hear formaldehyde discussed. Koch Industries’ position on the status of formaldehyde, he told me, was totally separate from his being a cancer patient and medical philanthropist. “That chemical is used in thousands of different applications,” David said. “And we of course rigorously, religiously follow all those regulations and rules about its use.” It was a perfect example of the tortured logic



David Koch

omnipresent in the blogosphere. *David Koch has prostate cancer. David Koch sat on a cancer board. David Koch's company doesn't think formaldehyde, which the human body produces naturally, should be regulated as a carcinogen. Conclusion: David Koch is abusing his position!*

It was more than passing strange for Mayer to use the “self-interest” canard. In “Covert Operations” Mayer trotted out a spokesman for George Soros, the liberal billionaire and political activist, who “argued that Soros’s giving is transparent, and that ‘none of his contributions are in the service of his own economic interests.’” Six years earlier, however, in a profile of Soros for the *New Yorker*, Mayer had written differently. The hedge fund king told her how he’d once established a think tank in England “which had at first looked like a fruitless venture”—right up to the minute his connections opened a door into the British bond market. “I made many millions,” Soros told Mayer. (The pound sterling wasn’t as lucky.)

The Kochs’ chief heresy, according to Mayer, was their dismissive attitude toward global warming alarmism. Charles and David were deemed “anti-science.” The brothers—both of whom held master’s degrees from MIT and ran successful companies that refined oil, produced chemicals, and manufactured polymers—scoffed at the accusation. “These people aren’t interested in science,” Charles said. “Science isn’t about consensus. Science is about skepticism, about challenging the status quo.” The Kochs believed the cost of a carbon-free economy would be too high. “There’s a direct correlation between the energy use of a country and its standard of living,” David said. “If your energy use is massively reduced, it’s going to damage your standard of living.” The available data didn’t justify the cost. “With the uncertainty and the politicization of the science so far,” Charles said, “to go spend trillions of dollars a year changing the whole world economy to satisfy something this uncertain, because you have some religious zealots like Al Gore going around preaching this—it doesn’t make sense.”

Mayer’s final line of attack also had to do with the environment. Koch Industries’ record wasn’t spotless. In the 1990s in particular the Kochs had to settle several lawsuits with the government. Oil had spilled and leaked from pipelines into bodies of water. Two teenagers had been killed when an underground butane pipeline ruptured. An employee at the Corpus Christi

refinery had covered up illegal discharges of benzene. The repercussions were severe. “The only time I’ve ever seen Mr. Koch upset is when we had a misstep around compliance,” Koch Minerals president Steve Tatum, who’s been with Koch for 27 years, told me.

In order to avoid further violations, Koch Industries adopted the goal of “10,000 percent compliance”: 100 percent of personnel acting in accordance with regulations 100 percent of the time. What bothered Koch employees was that the left’s attacks were devoid of context. Many of the criticisms were simply a function of Koch Industries’ long history and size. “You’ve got 74 years of opportunity to talk about fines or spills or what have you,” said Rod Learned, the internal communications director. “If you look at industry averages and look at Koch, we compare very favorably.” It’s true, for example, that Koch is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the country—as you’d expect from one of the largest companies. “The investment banks, they don’t pollute very much, because they don’t make anything,” said Tatum. “We make stuff.”

Koch employees felt as if they’d entered a parallel dimension. There was a whole other side to the history of the company that the media totally ignored. “We suffer from folks recycling things that happened many years ago, and who haven’t looked at our performance since then,” Sheryl Corrigan, senior vice president at

Koch subsidiary Flint Hills Resources, told me. Since the disasters in the 1990s Koch had been praised for its compliance—by Democratic administrations.

On July 25, 2000, Clinton’s EPA sent a letter to Charles Koch congratulating his company on plans to reduce emissions at the Pine Bend and Corpus Christi refineries. “I appreciate that Koch took the initiative to work with EPA to develop an agreement that would advance the common interests of Koch, EPA, and the general public,” wrote Office of Regulatory Enforcement director Eric V. Schaeffer. “The Koch representatives were outstanding in their cooperation throughout the negotiation process.” None other than Janet Reno said she was “pleased” with the agreement. Koch’s cooperation, said then-EPA administrator Carol Browner (now President Obama’s climate czar), was “unprecedented.”

Koch made Herculean efforts to get ahead of the regulatory curve. The engineers lessened the amount of excess gas burned at Koch refineries—a practice known as flaring. “We’ve reduced the flaring at our refineries to almost nil,”

Mayer argued that the Kochs’ talk about free markets was merely cover for economic self-interest. But if that were true, why doesn’t every major corporation full-throatedly support limited government?

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Dave Robertson, the company's president and chief operating officer, told me. In August 2003 the EPA selected Koch subsidiary John Zink Company for its prestigious National Environmental Performance Track program. Koch employees traveled frequently to Washington for consultation with government officials. "I think we have a constructive relationship with EPA," said Jim Mahoney.

Koch's efforts continue to elicit notice. Since Obama's inauguration, Koch companies have been recognized more than 280 times by local, state, and federal agencies for safety and environmental stewardship. In 2009 Invista voluntarily agreed to a huge settlement with EPA. "Invista is making a clean start in a settlement that achieves significant environmental benefits," an EPA administrator said at the time. In October 2009 the EPA gave its SmartWay Excellence Award to Georgia-Pacific for reducing pollution in the freight industry. In October 2010 Flint Hills Resources agreed to a deal with the federal government over permitting rights at its Texas refinery. "The process we have agreed to with Flint Hills Resources is an excellent one," said EPA regional administrator Al Armendariz in a press release, "and we look forward to working with the company to complete the work to transition their permits."

Well, hold it right there, Mr. EPA regional director! Where's the Center for American Progress Action Fund when you need it? Someone explain to Al Armendariz: You never give the devil his due.

THE NEW PURITANS

No amount of contrary evidence was enough to dislodge the left's conviction that Charles and David Koch ran an empire hellbent on America's destruction. Koch addiction was too powerful. As the media campaign intensified, demonstrators started showing up at the Koch campus in Wichita. A left-wing blogger ambushed David when he traveled to Washington to see the 112th Congress sworn in. The liberal group Common Cause organized a protest at the most recent Koch fundraising seminar in Palm Springs. The lefties outside the hotel unfurled a white banner with the words "KOCH KILLS" printed in red. Drops of blood fell from each letter. "These people were very, very extreme," David said, "and I think very dangerous."

The imputation in February that Governor Scott Walker had brought Wisconsin to a standstill to further the interests of Koch Industries was of course ridiculous. But it also demonstrated the power of the left-wing vilification machine. As the assaults piled up Charles couldn't help thinking of Schopenhauer's "Art of Controversy." The German philosopher had noted that people who can't win an argument through reason attack their opponent's

motivation. "I thought I was cynical enough," Charles said. "But that was pretty shocking, to see what we're up against, or what the country's up against: to have an element like this."

The left's inability to understand where the Kochs were coming from puzzled Charles and David. Wasn't it obvious that small government and free markets resulted in a better world? "Why don't we teach in schools things that make society more prosperous, and more peaceful, and people will respect each other more? It's a strange thing, isn't it?" said Charles. "It's unbelievable how they distort what your message is!" said David. The Kochs thought their aim was to increase the standard of living for everyone. The way to do this, they believed, was by applying to society the same methods that had grown their company.

To Charles, the call for bigger government was egalitarianism run amok. Liberals, he thought, fetishized equality of condition at the expense of personal liberty. "They cannot stand that some people are better off than others," Charles said. "I think part of it fits Mencken's definition of a Puritan: someone that's miserable because he knows that someone, somewhere, is enjoying himself. He cannot stand that. And I think they all slept through Economics 101."

The controversy surrounding the Koch brothers was a classic illustration of the saying that liberals think conservatives are evil while conservatives think liberals are stupid. For the engineer Kochs, devotees of the "science of human liberty," the answer to the social problem was as clear cut as a blueprint for an oil fractionation device. They assumed that if you educated people in the laws of economics, they would see the light. "I can't figure out how they can look at the data and not see the overwhelming benefits of the free market," said Richard Fink. "I just don't understand it." The Kochs' critics, it turned out, had no interest in the truth about them. What made the Kochs interesting was their usefulness as symbolic enemies: objects of the progressives' latest two minutes' hate.

The raw emotions and mindless smears left employees of Koch Industries hurt and befuddled. They kept searching for an answer. It was as if the universe had turned upside down. "All of us are given something, some more than others, and it's up to us to build on it," said Koch Minerals executive Steve Tatum. "Charles and David did. They built on what they inherited from their family. Hopefully, I have too. And I inherited nothing but a little help with college.

"What doesn't seem right is when a person works to get through college, gets a degree, works for 25 years to become successful—and now you're the bad guy," Tatum said. "And I think, that's the American dream, isn't it?"

Tatum reclined in his chair and extended his hands, palms up. "Isn't that what we want for everyone?" ♦



Conan O'Brien, Jay Leno, 2003

Heeere's [Fill in the Blank]

The 'Tonight Show' Crisis of 2010.

BY JOHN B. KIENKER

Before last fall's elections gave pundits a chance to wring their hands once more over the divide between Red and Blue America, another episode in the culture war—as instructive as it was destructive—played itself out at the beginning of 2010, this time in television's late-night programming.

Even if we hadn't watched the late shows in years, we all caught the general story from the headlines and the more acerbic monologue jokes: After usurping *The Tonight Show* in 1992 from presumptive heir David Letterman—a tale memorably told in Bill Carter's earlier *The Late Shift* (1994)—Jay Leno struck again almost

The War for Late Night
When Leno Went Early and Television Went Crazy
by Bill Carter
Viking, 416 pp., \$26.95

two decades later by renegeing on his announced retirement and forcing Conan O'Brien into cable exile after less than eight months in the host's chair. But as Carter, national media reporter for the *New York Times*, shows in his new book, the truth is a little more complicated than that.

It begins not in 2004, with Leno's announced retirement, but in 2001:

Conan O'Brien's career as host of NBC's *Late Night* had ignited, and the Fox Network was aggressively wooing him in order to compete with the Big Three beyond primetime. NBC didn't want to lose their hot young up-and-comer, so they eventually convinced O'Brien to turn down seven times his *Late Night* salary (Fox was offering him \$21 million) for a chance to fulfill his dream of hosting *The Tonight Show*. For his part,

O'Brien had such cherished memories of staying up late with his father to watch Johnny Carson that he was willing to wait. But did Leno want to give up the gig just yet? NBC was not looking to the future so much as haunted by the past. The once undisputed number-one network was now in fourth place, and the NBC executives, led by entertainment president Jeff Zucker, thought that with careful planning they could set up a smooth transition for the next phase of *The Tonight Show* franchise and avoid the mess they had on their hands when Johnny Carson retired.

The deal hit Jay Leno like a ton of bricks. Here he was at the top of his game, consistently beating David Letterman's CBS *Late Show* in the ratings to make *The Tonight Show* the number-one show in late night for a decade—and he was being suddenly shown the door? Still, ever the good soldier, he dutifully

John B. Kienker is managing editor of the Claremont Review of Books.

KEVIN WINTER / GETTY IMAGES

went through the motions of publicly announcing his retirement in 2004 and promising to hand the baton off to O'Brien in 2009. Like his bosses, Leno didn't want a repeat of what happened in 1992 when he was vilified as a ruthless schemer for his part in becoming the new *Tonight Show* host. But because all Leno ever wanted to do (as he put it) was "tell jokes at 11:30," the NBC team now faced the prospect of losing the number-one star in late night to ABC, which was hinting it would dump its news show, *Nightline*, and shift late-night newcomer Jimmy Kimmel to 12:35 to make room for Leno.

The NBC execs never could come to terms with whether O'Brien or Leno would be the least hurtful competitor if one of them jumped to another network the way Letterman had done. NBC wanted O'Brien in order to attract the ever important 18-49 demographic; they just needed a way to keep Leno on board, too. After Leno repeatedly refused the idea of doing a comedy show at 8 P.M., Jeff Zucker's last shot was to make *The Jay Leno Show* O'Brien's lead-in at 10. NBC would no longer compete to air the kind of quality dramas that had helped cement its reputation and, instead, would be content to be viewers' second choice if the other networks were in repeats.

Soon after O'Brien's *Tonight Show* debuted, Letterman started beating him in overall audience numbers—a fact breathlessly reported in the entertainment media—even though O'Brien maintained the holy grail of 18-49-year-olds, and an even bigger lead among 18-34-year-olds. Meanwhile, *The Jay Leno Show*, although cheaper to produce than fare like *Law and Order*, was a disaster: hapless, pointless, and driving away audiences.

Faced with affiliates in mutiny, NBC once again tried to have it all. They would return Leno to 11:35 and keep O'Brien in his dream job by moving *The Tonight Show* to 12:05. The storm finally broke with O'Brien's "People of Earth" letter, in which he publicly rejected NBC's offer to host *The Tonight Show* a few days after, stating, "I cannot participate in what I honestly believe is its destruction."

Leno and NBC, just as they had feared, found themselves the public villains, and O'Brien rode a wave of "Team Coco" adulation such as he had never known, aided by fellow late-night hosts. Jimmy Kimmel eviscerated Leno—on Leno's own show, no less—in an interview segment. (*Leno*: What's the best prank you ever pulled? *Kimmel*: ... I told a guy that five years from now I'm gonna give you my show, and then when the five years came, I gave it to him. And then I took it back almost instantly.) Letterman took his shots, too, calling the conflict "vintage Jay"—although he eventually threw Leno a lifeline by inviting him to film a Super Bowl commercial with him and Oprah Winfrey. (Letterman had invited O'Brien as well, who was in no mood to make light of what had happened.)

Jay Leno never understood why he wasn't the hero in a great comeback story: Hardworking everyman unfairly fired wins back his old job in the last reel. Zucker, for his part, thought he had made the right decisions all along, arranging all the pieces as skillfully as he could in order to keep as much revenue as possible flowing into NBC's coffers. (Ironically, Zucker had been Conan O'Brien's early and adamant supporter to take over *The Tonight Show*.)

Carter tells a breezy tale of court intrigue with wit, confidence, and, above all, sharp sympathetic portraits of all the key players. *The War for Late Night* is filled with drama, laughs, and behind-the-scenes details. But does a retelling such as this offer anything more than a recap of tabloid fodder? Whether NBC's dealings were dishonorable, or just good business, *The Tonight Show* is still on at 11:35, Jay Leno is back at the helm, and things seem pretty much as they were.

So why was all the fuss so partisan? Carter chalks up a lot of the enmity directed at Leno to a difference of age: The NBC affiliates and some of the network's old guard like the graying Leno, the Internet crowd prefer the hip, younger O'Brien. But this overlooks the fact that the same younger viewers who love Conan O'Brien and Jimmy Kimmel and Comedy Central's Jon Stewart also love David Letterman,

who is even older than Jay Leno. We get closer to the truth when, at the end, Carter quotes Jeff Garlin, a comic actor who roomed with O'Brien in Chicago when the two were struggling to break into show business: "The people that Jay appeals to are not comedy fans. ... It's just the general public." Comparing Letterman and O'Brien to Leno, says Garlin, is like

comparing John Coltrane to Kenny G. One of Kenny G's albums probably sold more than all of John Coltrane's library. But you can't tell me for a second that Kenny G is better than John Coltrane.

Jay Leno became the popular scapegoat not for being a joke-telling machine, but for being a bland one. He exemplifies the rewards mediocrity can reap from a mass audience, the same audience that made CBS's *Two and a Half Men* the country's number-one sitcom and ventriloquist Jeff Dunham its number-one comedy act. The late-night war became another skirmish in our culture wars, in which, as William Voegeli has put it, "good taste is mostly a matter of good distaste: the positional value of denigrating the wrong things is more important, and more reliable, than appreciating the right things." Conan O'Brien, now sporting a beard, relocated to cable's TBS channel after Fox couldn't commit unreservedly to a show for him. Perhaps it's for the best.

Paul Cantor has written that we are living in television's golden age. But that golden age is playing itself out on cable with shows like *Rome*, *The Shield*, *The Wire*, *Mad Men*, and *Breaking Bad* which have thrived with smaller, more discerning audiences. For the time being, network TV still holds an edge on comedy, although even the past decade's funniest shows—all of them on NBC ironically enough, with the exceptions of *Arrested Development* and a couple of British imports—lanquid despite critical praise. Now solidly competing with Jon Stewart among 18-34-year-old viewers, Conan O'Brien still has a chance to craft something new and original, and redefine late night comedy—if not *The Tonight Show*, for the new millennium. ♦

Live and Let Live

The mortal implications of man's place in nature.

BY LAWRENCE KLEPP



John Gray, 1995

John Gray, not to be confused with the John Gray who wrote *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Cincinnati*, or however that went, is a maverick conservative British political philosopher and sworn enemy of all militant versions of progress. He was an adviser to Margaret Thatcher, but long ago, in books like *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (1998), turned against free-market economics. As an admirer of Hume, Burke, and Mill, and a friend and disciple of the late Isaiah Berlin, he arrives at his own

party-of-one conservatism by way of skepticism and pluralism. It's allowed him to become an unpredictable but effective saboteur of utopian, apocalyptic, and end-of-history projects.

The Immortalization Commission

Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death

by John Gray

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 288 pp., \$24

Yet in *Straw Dogs* (2002), he presented, with a certain sour misanthropic relish, his own end-of-history vision:

Homo sapiens is only one of very many species, and not obviously worth preserving. Later or sooner, it will become extinct. When it is gone the Earth will recover. . . . The Earth will forget mankind.

What? Even Lindsay Lohan?

He seems to have decided that man, or at least modern man, isn't the rational animal so much as the radical animal (not that he sees much difference between rationalism and radicalism). And Mother Earth is the last real conservative. In *Straw Dogs* he defended the Gaia hypothesis, which presents the Earth as a living organism that will eventually rid herself of any lesser organisms. Here, the human race gets a sharp elbow nudge that drastically disturbs her complex, self-preserving balances. For Gray, human beings, given their unsustainable numbers and their reliance on technology and massive extractions of resources, have become a revolutionary horde, burning and pillaging.

The Earth, in other words, can't, and won't, take much more progress. The Enlightenment ideal of progress, he believes, is just a secular ghost of the millennial Christian belief that history must have a final goal and meaning. He much prefers the ancient Greek view of history as cyclical, a going-nowhere process in which the destinies of individuals and societies are ruled by arbitrary fate or chance.

This is a bit reductive about the Enlightenment utopianism that was rare until the Jacobins arrived, and the American Founding Fathers, like their mentors Locke and Montesquieu, never succumbed to it. Nor did Voltaire and Diderot, or Hume, Hutcheson, and Smith. But his point is that, if we are to take Darwin seriously, we have to admit that we're just part of Nature in all its chaotic randomness, not set apart for a special destiny that we can rationally or willfully control. Ultimately, this desire for control, however scientific its guise, takes on an occult character.

At least that's what he suggests in this fascinating and puzzling new book, which is about two very different pseudoscientific attempts to deny or defy death. The first was typically Victorian/Edwardian British: modest, empirical, tentative, genteel, eccentric, high-minded. The second was typically Russian/Bolshevik: extreme, feverishly ambitious, lethal.

In late 19th-century England,

Lawrence Klepp is a writer in New York.

some nice, well-dressed people who were deeply disturbed by the implications of Darwin's theory of evolution went looking for a kind of spiritualist extension of it in order to soften and moralize it. They attended séances or engaged in "automatic writing"—believed to channel cryptic messages from the departed—hoping that some scientific evidence for human immortality would turn up. If they could succeed in communicating with the dead (including members of their own psychical-research set who had promised to send specific messages back to them as soon as they got wherever they were going), then human life might recover, with the prospect of further spiritual evolution, the higher meanings and dutiful morals that seemed to be lost in the Darwinian melee.

Darwin himself attended a séance in 1874, but quickly walked out, convinced that it was all humbug, a conclusion shared by the novelist Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), who was there, too. But other eminent Victorians took the plunge. They included Alfred Russel Wallace, a collaborator with Darwin, Henry Sidgwick, a distinguished and perplexed Cambridge don, Frederic Myers, whose idea of a "subliminal self" anticipated the unconscious of Freud and Jung, and Arthur Balfour, the philosopher and future Tory prime minister.

Gray's treatment of these people is sympathetic. They were motivated by a yearning not only for science-licensed intimations of immortality, but for lost or unspoken loves that might be retrieved in the afterlife. It was a refined, insular, class-bound world doomed to vanish; but while it lasted, they wanted it to last forever: "Dying was only a move from one wing of a great country-house to another, a shift in which nothing was lost." Tea would still be served at four in the Beyond.

The Bolsheviks, of course, burned down the country house and just about everything else. It's a familiar historical abyss, but Gray wants us to know about the occult contribution to the debacle. He tells the story of the "God-builders," moonstruck late-Czarist

and Bolshevik intellectuals who had a "magical faith in the power of science" and believed the revolution would eventually conquer death and produce a race of godlike immortals. They included the writer Maxim Gorky, who had a kind of cyberdream of science dissolving matter and replacing corporeal humanity with beings of pure thought, Anatoly Lunacharsky, who was appointed commissar of Enlightenment in the new regime and declared that "God is the humanity of the future," and Leonid Krasin, who tried to freeze Lenin's embalmed body with the aim of eventually bringing him back to life. Most of them were eventually murdered by Stalin.

Gray isn't the first to see communism as a kind of warped religion, or version of the Gnostic heresy, but he's trenchant about the way the movement aimed to "deliver humankind from Nature" and thus became a war of annihilation on both nature and human nature: "Materialism in practice meant the dematerialization of the physical world. An integral part of the process was the destruction of human life." The Bolsheviks devastated the countryside and "executed more people in their first four years of power than the Romanovs did in all of their 300-year history."

The wistful English and the baleful Bolsheviks have nothing in common, and neither group has much in common with occult celebrities such as Madame Blavatsky and Gurdjieff and Krishnamurti, who make brief appearances. Their common pursuit of mirages takes them, and the book, in completely different directions. The only major figure here linking England and Russia is a beautiful Russian woman known as Moura (born Maria Ignatyevna Zakrevskaya), who was the lover of both Gorky and H.G. Wells. Gray goes into some detail about Wells who, except when he was writing dark science-fiction works such as *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, had a view of the future not unlike the God-builders. A scientifically trained elite would take ruthless

control of humanity and its evolution and produce a race of (one gathers) superior Wellses and Mouras. The problem was that Moura, who seemed to him his feminine alter ego, was spying on him (and on Gorky, too) for the Soviet secret police. When Wells found out, he finally realized that his view of the future had no future. He wasn't in control of his own life, never mind evolution.

The Immortalization Commission, then, is a set of somewhat discordant variations on Gray's established theme: the perils of claiming to know too much and trying to control too much, an ambition that he thinks always strays into occult territory or mad hubris. Given the history of the past hundred years, it's a point that's unarguable and, especially in the Soviet section, powerfully and chillingly made. But when you come to his reflections at the end, you are puzzled by the way Gray can reconcile his reliance on Darwinism and science in general for his view of humanity's humble and precarious place in the scheme of things with his pessimism about the validity of any scientific description of the world.

In *Straw Dogs* he asked, "Illusion is our natural condition. Why not accept it?" And here, while he's defending religious myths from literal-minded New Atheists, he suggests that the order we perceive in the universe is probably just a figment of our own order-seeking imaginations. The world is, at bottom, chaotic and unknowable. But if this means something, it means inviting progress, utopia, the search for a cryptic occult order in the universe, and the other modern illusions or myths he's been busy kicking out of the house, in through the back door.

There are other passages where Gray seems to be, like history according to the Greeks, going in circles, but the main idea comes through unscathed: "Science is not sorcery. The growth of knowledge enlarges what humans can do. It cannot relieve them from being what they are. . . . The afterlife is like utopia, a place where no one wants to live." ♦

Little Miss Liddell

The strange case of Dr. Dodgson and Mr. Carroll.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) was a pedophile, by the standards of today. Of course, by the standards of today, no parent would have knowingly allowed him to take that famous photograph of the 7-year-old Alice Liddell—the one of her dressed in ragamuffin clothes, posed against the garden wall, a too-old look of allure in her eye, and her nipple exposed through the drop-shouldered dress. The picture is a pedophile's dream, a pervert's fantasy of a child who understands and would welcome a grown man's sexual advances, and if the 26-year-old Carroll had taken it in the summer of 2008 instead of 1858, he might well have ended up in jail.

So what are we to make of the fact that, in a High Victorian summer, and for years afterward, no one seemed particularly to mind? Either such indifference indicts the 19th century, or it indicts the 21st; with regard to sexuality, either the Victorians were a sick, sick people, or we are.

"Alice Liddell as The Beggar Maid"—as the picture is carefully labeled in Carroll's display album—is one of nearly 3,000 photographs he took through the 1850s and '60s before abandoning his interest in the new technology. Now, in *The Alice Behind Wonderland*, the popular writer Simon Winchester takes the picture as a starting point for accounts of photographic history, Oxford University, book publishing, and the progression by which a shy, half-deaf mathematician named Charles Dodgson became, under his pen name of Lewis Carroll, the

The Alice Behind Wonderland

by Simon Winchester
Oxford, 128 pp., \$16.95



Charles Dodgson, ca. 1890

most famous children's author in the world—to say nothing of Winchester's forays into Muscular Christianity, the headmasters of Rugby School, Anglican theology, and the grown Alice's romance with Prince Leopold, Queen Victoria's youngest son.

In fact, *The Alice Behind Wonderland* covers nearly every subject that might be prompted by reflecting on that famous picture of little Alice—everything, that is, except the real question of sexuality. Even at barely over a hundred pages, the book feels padded. Yes, it's good to be reminded that the child was acting out Tennyson's wildly popular poem "The Beggar Maid" (1842)—*Barefooted came the*

beggar maid / Before the king Cophetua—but no, it's not really necessary to be informed that "Charles Dodgson had ordered his camera in London, at a shop named Ottewill & Company, at 24 Charlotte Terrace, off the Caledonian Road in Islington."

Perhaps Winchester had to bulk up his text with such things because he refused to examine, in any serious way, what the photograph means for our understanding of the Victorians, and what it means for our understanding of ourselves. *The Alice Behind Wonderland* practices a curious bait-and-switch: The first chapter opens with an extended description of the room in which Dodgson's photograph album is stored (the American financier Morris Parrish's Victorian study, re-created within Princeton University's Firestone Library), but it turns quickly enough to the beggar-maid picture—which Winchester describes in openly sexualized terms: The girl's slender legs, her tiny feet, her left nipple, the shift folded and tucked, all ardently photographed.

There is sufficient shoulder, ankle, and skin revealed about Miss Liddell to excite and, these days, to infuriate.

And immediately thereafter, the book runs away to "Daresbury, in Cheshire, where Dodgson had been born on January 27, 1832," never really to find its way back from that rabbit hole. Throughout *The Alice Behind Wonderland*, Winchester assumes that the children's author engaged in no sexual activity with, or even possessed a prurient interest in, the children he photographed and took on long boating picnics and wrote about. All of which may well be true. But surely it deserves some open evaluation—particularly in a book so titillated by the photograph it uses as its launching pad?

This may be the worst of Winchester's books, his first real flop since he hit his stride (and the bestseller list) with *The Professor and the Madman*, his 1998 tale of the making of the Oxford English Dictionary. Through the 1970s and '80s the now-66-year-old Winchester was a well-known English jour-

Joseph Bottum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

nalist, writing mildly popular travel books and reporting for the *Guardian* on everything from the Irish Troubles to the resignation of Richard Nixon. *The Professor and the Madman* changed all that. Optioned as a movie by Mel Gibson, and catching a wave of interest in Victorian and Edwardian England, the book made its author wealthy, and he's followed up his success with one nonfiction bestseller after another: His story of the geologist William Smith in *The Map That Changed the World* (2001); his second crack at the characters behind the Oxford English Dictionary in *The Meaning of Everything* (2003); his volcano story in *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded* (also 2003); and his earthquake history in *A Crack in the Edge of the World* (2005)—together with *The Man Who Loved China* (2008), *Atlantic: Great Sea Battles, Heroic Discoveries, Titanic Storms, and a Vast Ocean of a Million Stories* (2010), and a pair of travel collections.

In other words, he's writing only slightly more slowly than the average book buyer can read. That's all right, you understand. Winchester has an easy prose, perfect for conveying his wide-eyed wonder at the past. His talent for personalizing events, a tying of history to biography, makes it all somehow come alive. None of his books are scholarship, of course; they're more like the plundering of what real scholars do, in order to create middlebrow bestsellers. But why not? The fact is that Simon Winchester writes pretty good middlebrow bestsellers.

Except for this one. In *The Alice Behind Wonderland*, the detail palls, the narrative flags, and even the diction eventually falls to the floor in exhaustion, unable to keep up the pretense that the text isn't boring. You would think it impossible to make the birth of *Alice in Wonderland* dull; readers are fascinated by this stuff. When the fragile 80-year-old widow Alice Hargreaves arrived for a visit to New York in 1932, she was mobbed by admirers and photographers, the newspapers filled with reports of her every word and deed. For that matter, debate still rages today about whether Dodgson was using the younger children of the distinguished classicist



Alice Liddell as the Beggar Maid' (1858)

Henry Liddell to get near Liddell's wife (or governess or eldest daughter), or whether he was using the wife and governess and eldest daughter to get near the prepubescent children.

Of course, one way or another, out of the relationship came that July day in 1862 when little Alice asked Charles Dodgson to write up the stories he had been telling as they rowed along the river. And so, under the name Lewis Carroll, he did. It's a wonder that Winchester has managed to scrub this story down to something so lifeless; but perhaps his mistake

was starting with that disturbing photograph. *The Alice Behind Wonderland* wants to personalize history, but it succeeds only at the drearier task of historicizing personality.

Winchester would have been better off accepting the challenge and facing up to the problem that Victorian sexuality poses for us. Or even, better yet, skipping the whole thing and spending his time rereading the reasons we're interested in this story: those strangely perfect books called *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*. ♦

Bodies Count

A definition of genocide that makes sense of history.

BY AARON ROTHSTEIN

In his biography of Stalin, Leon Trotsky wrote that “the twentieth century . . . has returned us in many respects to the ways and methods of the Renaissance.” Stalin’s world, Trotsky proclaimed, had deteriorated into “the most cruel Machiavellism,” where a ruler’s success depended not on his morals but on his ability to retain power.

Trotsky was right; he was even one of the victims when Stalin had him murdered. But Trotsky underestimated the extent of the cruelty. The numbers of those murdered are so enormous that it is still a struggle to comprehend their scale. One way has been to introduce the concept of genocide, a term that has been much more readily applied to Hitler than to Stalin. In 1933, Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jewish intellectual shocked by the mass slaughter of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915-1918, unsuccessfully attempted to convince the League of Nations that anyone who tries to exterminate a “racial, religious, or social collectivity” is “liable for the crime of barbarity.” But in 1944, recognizing the enormity of Hitler’s crimes, he gave that barbarity a name: He coined the word “genocide” and argued that it included the “practices of extermination of nations and ethnic groups.”

In *Stalin’s Genocides*, Norman Naimark, the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies at Stanford, wonders why Lemkin, and those who followed his analysis at the United Nations in writ-

ing the Genocide Convention, created a concept that incorporated Hitler’s killings—the attempt to extirpate the Jews was an attempt to exterminate an ethnic group (and nation)—but did not extend as far as Stalin’s murders. Naimark points out that Lemkin’s 1933 argument, unlike his 1944 book, included a reference to the extermination of a “social collectivity.”

Such collectivities include political parties or groups organized around particular ideas; they could be almost any group considered to be a political opponent. In Lemkin’s earlier analysis, the attempt to exterminate such groups would also have been considered genocide. But not in 1944. And not in 1948, either, when Lemkin’s work influenced the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. That document also leaves out social and political collectivities, stating that genocide includes the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.”

Naimark suggests that the reason for this alteration in the concept was simple, but it has had large consequences: Lemkin did not want to upset Stalin who, despite brutally exterminating political groups in the Soviet Union, was vital to the Allied war effort against Hitler. For similar defensive reasons after World War II, the Soviets refused to include social and political groups in the U.N. definition of genocide. They opposed a permanent U.N. tribunal for genocide, fearing what Aron Trainin, a leading Soviet specialist in international law, argued would

be “unjustifiable interference in the internal life, in the justice system of individual states.”

It was ironic, too, that, although the United States was the Soviet Union’s nemesis, it took a similar position and also refused to ratify the convention. In *A Problem from Hell* (2002), Samantha Power argued that “American opposition was rooted in a traditional hostility toward any infringement on U.S. sovereignty.” Many politicians and lawyers worry that the convention would give *carte blanche* to the international community to violate the sanctity of U.S. sovereignty. So on December 9, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly compromised and adopted the convention without including political collectivities, thus protecting the Soviet Union from any recriminations while also making the United States uneasy about future interference.

This was the history of how genocide has been treated. On the one hand, as Naimark argues, the concept was made too narrow to encompass many crimes, but the early unease of the United States indicated that it was too broad as well. As far as the history of Stalin is concerned, Naimark shows that any reasonable concept of genocide should include Stalin’s crimes. And although much of what Naimark covers here has been explicated many times in many volumes, Naimark neatly summarizes the horrific history.

In 1929, Stalin began an aggressive program to collectivize the Soviet Union, which placed peasants on communal farms and socialized agriculture. But because many of the peasants, known as kulaks, refused to give up their land, Stalin ordered 10 million of them forced from their homes between 1929 and 1932, and declared that the kulaks “were to be eliminated as a class.” In total, Stalin had more than 30,000 kulaks killed outright and around two million deported to labor camps in the far north, Siberia, and Central Asia. Half a million of those deported to the camps had died by 1932.

As Stalin shipped off kulaks to their death, he also targeted Ukrainians for deportation. Part of the process of col-

Stalin’s Genocides

by Norman Naimark
Princeton, 176 pp., \$26.95

lectivization required the state to collect grain after it had been harvested as a way to pay for rapid industrialization, leaving peasants hopelessly underfed. In total, three to five million people died in Ukraine due to hunger. And as Naimark reminds us, Stalin encouraged this: Soviet authorities set up roadblocks to prevent Ukrainians from entering urban centers where food was available, refused shipments of food from abroad, and exported grain despite shortages. Stalin commanded that grain be obtained from Ukrainians “at all costs” and wrote that the Ukrainians “deliberately tried to undermine the Soviet state. It is a fight to the death.” Stalin, in other words, saw Ukrainian peasants as a political entity intent on undermining the revolution, and he sought to exterminate them.

There were also cases in which Stalin could have been condemned using the narrower concept of genocide as the murder of national enemies, particularly the Poles. One Soviet official, for example, declared that the Poles were to be “completely destroyed,” and Stalin commanded one bureaucrat to “dry up and purge this Polish espionage mud in the future as well. Destroy it in the interest of the USSR.” Stalin had 144,000 Poles arrested and 111,000 of those killed. Additionally, in what Naimark calls one of the clearest cases of genocide, Red Army soldiers removed Polish officers from detention camps and killed 4,400 of them in the Katyn Forest. This went beyond a simple political purge: “There is good reason to think that these actions,” Naimark writes, “derived from deeply embedded Russian and Soviet prejudices of anti-Polonism.”

But omitting political and social exterminations from the U.N. convention, Naimark argues, still weakened the concept of genocide. Samantha

Power claims that because political groups were excluded from the convention, international lawyers had a difficult time accusing the Khmer Rouge of committing genocide in Cambodia when they “set out to wipe out whole classes of alleged ‘political enemies.’” A redefinition of the convention, Naimark believes, might allow for a more successful prosecution of genocidaires. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have passed their own laws which “have broadened the definition of genocide

cide. In places such as Rwanda and Sudan the international community failed to act even though the mass killings committed there fell under the old definition of genocide. A wider definition wouldn’t necessarily alter things.

A broader legal definition could also be a double-edged sword, making things worse for Western democracies who value human rights. In a U.N. Human Rights Council meeting in 2009, Libya and Iran both accused Israel of committing genocide in the



‘For the Happiness of Our People’ (1949) by Dimitri Nalbandyan

to include specific crimes . . . such as forced deportation and the execution of a group of resisters and their supporters,” and have convicted the first Soviet officials of genocide.

Naimark’s case is compelling: Who, after all, would want to leave loopholes for mass murderers to escape punishment they rightfully deserve? But one important problem with Naimark’s argument is his failing to consider the mixed consequences of such a major shift in the law. It is worth wondering what the immediate pragmatic results of such a change would be, given the failures of international law to pursue clear cases of racial and ethnic geno-

Gaza Strip, while Yemen’s representative referred to Israel’s military response to Gaza rocket fire as the “Gaza Holocaust.”

Naimark’s new definition makes the most sense in principle. It would be right to include oppressed political groups in our definition of genocide, especially if it allows us to make a stronger legal case against genocidaires. But broadening the convention’s definition will not make any difference in preventing genocide, and may multiply the accusations against countries, such as Israel or the United States, defending themselves against terrorism. ♦

Multicultural Melville

Echoes of Africa in the words of an American master.

BY FRANKLIN FREEMAN

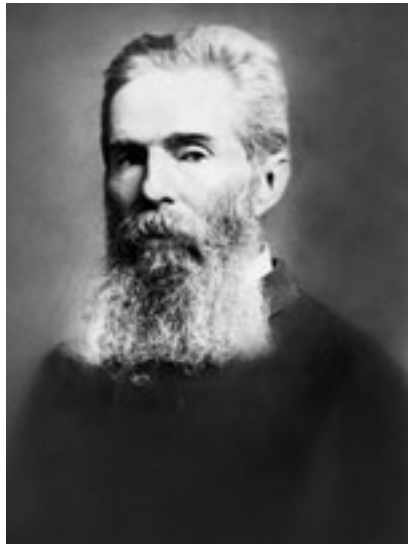
One of the few things I remember from my graduate school days in English is the distinction to be made between internal and external evidence. Internal evidence is collected from the texts themselves, external from biographies and works of history. So I have been surprised, whenever I have picked up a volume of literary criticism in recent years, to see that this distinction is not as rigorously applied as in the past.

Sterling Stuckey, professor emeritus of history at the University of California at Riverside, gives only a passing nod to the distinction in the footnotes of this fascinating book, newly released in paperback. In the second chapter he writes that, in *Benito Cereno*, the story of a slave uprising on a Spanish ship and its discovery by a dunderheaded Captain Delano, “Melville created Atufal [a huge African of noble bearing] mainly from a nameless Ashantee found in Joseph Dupuis’s *Journal of a Residence in Ashantee*, long unknown to Melville critics, which appeared in 1824 and was probably first read by Melville as a teenager.” But in the footnote after this sentence we read, “Though we cannot prove conclusively that Melville as a teenager read Dupuis’s *Journal* . . . it is not unlikely, considering that Newton Arvin writes, ‘The names of the great travelers indeed—Krusenstern, Captain Cook, Vancouver, Ledyard, Mungo Park—had scintillated before him like constellations during his whole boyhood, as the names of great soldiers do before other boys.’”

But then when the reader returns to the text, he learns that “Melville reimagined the slave after whom Atufal is modeled as king in the novella,”

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African Culture and Melville’s Art
The Creative Process in Benito Cereno and Moby Dick
 by Sterling Stuckey
 Oxford, 168 pp., \$18.95



Herman Melville, 1885

and there are many other places in the book wherein Stuckey proclaims, without qualification, exactly from what sentences, paragraphs, and phrases from various travel journals Melville took his material and transformed it into his art. The problem is not with the content of his argument but with the proclamation of it as indisputable truth.

Stuckey can even read Melville’s mind:

But [Melville] must have experienced lasting unhappiness in knowing that African cultural influences that join the two great works [*Benito Cereno* and *Moby Dick*] were not only invisible to critics but foreign to what they considered worthy of attention. It would hardly have been less disturbing to him that resonances between *Benito Cereno* and *Moby Dick*, noted

in this chapter, would not be recognized for more than 150 years after their publication.

Personally, I think Melville was probably more concerned with the financial failure of his writing and his having to go to work in the Custom House of New York. Which is not to say that Melville was not deeply influenced by African culture in the writing of *Benito Cereno* and *Moby Dick*. Stuckey makes a strong case that Melville was intimately familiar with black music and dance in his childhood through the recurrent parades of black musicians in New York streets, and through the proximity of his family’s neighborhood in Albany with Pinkster Hill, where blacks and whites would gather for festivals featuring much black music and dancing. And the connections between images in Melville’s reading and art seem very probable and intriguing, and point the way to new interpretations of Melville’s writing, broadening them to include an indictment of racism and slavery.

I was hoping, however, to learn more about Melville’s creative process; that is, how he wrote his fiction. But perhaps that is too much to ask of anybody. Merely to point out “intertextualities” does not say much except that Herman Melville read works of history and fused them with his imagination into works of art, which we already knew. Sterling Stuckey shows us that Melville’s art includes many facets of African culture that have been overlooked or ignored, but his assurance that Melville used specifically this or that word or sentence undercuts its effectiveness.

There is one interesting thing to note, however. Stuckey dedicates his last chapter, “Cheer and Gloom,” “to the Melvillean Viola Sachs, who asked me years ago if I didn’t hear the blues in *Moby Dick*.” Stuckey then goes on to contend that you can hear them, and I think convincingly so. This led me to dip into *Blues Fell This Morning* by Paul Oliver, for which Richard Wright wrote the foreword and says this: “All blues are a lusty lyrical realism charged with taut sensibility.” Has anyone ever written a finer description of Melville’s art than that? ♦



The Beauty Part

Elizabeth Taylor, 1932-2011. BY JOHN PODHORETZ

A few years ago, on Turner Classic Movies, I came upon a 1952 MGM movie called *Love Is Better Than Ever* that was entirely unknown to me. It turned out to be a delightful romantic comedy about a fast-talking press agent whose head is turned by a young dancer. The press agent is always insulting the dancer: “Ah, I see you took your ugly pill today,” he says, or “Hey, hideous.” It doesn’t sound very nice, but she doesn’t take it personally, and those of us watching completely understand why he’s doing it and why she doesn’t take offense. This ordinary-looking guy has to do *something* to cope with the fact that he is in the presence of something all but supernatural. For the dancer is played by Elizabeth Taylor in one of her first leading roles. The mere sight of the 20-year-old Taylor in this movie is literally gasp-inducing, and not just at first glance. These apneas continue throughout *Love Is Better Than Ever*, whose cameraman wisely and lovingly lingers on that face, that figure, those eyes.

In the wake of her death on March 23 at the age of 79, eulogists and obituarists have universally taken note of Taylor’s extraordinary beauty. But the quality that made Taylor seem almost as though she were not quite a mortal being among us was due neither to her perfectly symmetrical visage, nor to her womanly form, which was exceptionally supple. There was something within, a still serenity, as though the fact that she had not only retained the eerie gorgeousness of her adolescence (as seen in such classics as the 1943 *Jane Eyre* and the 1944

National Velvet) but had somehow actually *improved* on it gave her the confidence to know she had been blessed by the gods.

That serenity gave the young Taylor a comfort and ease that made her complete lack of range as an actress—she sounded the same and acted the same in any and every setting—entirely incidental to the overwhelming force of her



‘Love Is Better Than Ever’ (1952)

cinematic presence. In her twenties, she had the peculiar freshness that is usually the hallmark of a nonprofessional performer. Her uninflected line readings as the ultimate object of desire in *A Place in the Sun* (1951) don’t matter; it’s the combination of sympathy and sexuality as she places Montgomery Cliff’s head on her shoulders and murmurs, “Tell Mama all,” that makes the viewer understand why Cliff’s character would want to murder his pathetic wife just to be near Taylor. And while Rock Hudson galumphs around her and James Dean broods over her in the glorious and endless *Giant* (1956), the best movie she ever made, Taylor slowly but surely becomes the cool magnetic center of the entire state of Texas.

In the course of her twenties and thirties, Taylor also achieved a kind of fame that is all too common now but to

which, in retrospect, she held the patent. She was successively the wife of a playboy (Nicky Hilton) and the widow of an aged impresario (Michael Todd) before the married singer Eddie Fisher came charging at her in a move that first destroyed his career and then destroyed him personally when she moved on to Richard Burton—in what was the most-discussed romantic relationship since the days of the King and Mrs. Simpson.

The first movie they made together, *Cleopatra*, took three years to film and seems to last as long onscreen. Its only value even now comes solely from the great apocryphal story about the female bit player sometime toward the end of Year One sitting around Rome and moaning, “Who do I have to sleep with to get off this picture?”

But in 1966—oh, in 1966. It was the film version of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* And out of nowhere, perhaps in the downdraft of her otherwise sad two marriages to a remarkably intelligent and self-destructive man who could have been the greatest actor of the age if drink had not intervened, Elizabeth Taylor let herself loose and knocked the world’s socks off. As the drunken and disappointed academic wife of everyone’s nightmares, Taylor begins at fever pitch and never relents in a hilarious, terrifying, heartbreaking performance. She was not quite 35, but her gorgeousness had already begun its fast fade, and rather than disguise it, she made the most of it: Her Martha is a woman who knows her husband married her for her looks and now regrets it every second.

This time she won one of the most deserved Oscars ever given, but she had given it her all, and it turned out she didn’t have anything left. She phoned in most of her work afterward. She could no longer take our breath away, as she did for 15 years and then as she did when she stripped herself bare for *Virginia Woolf*, and she knew it. And somewhere she must have known, too, that taking our breath away had been her surpassing gift, and that without it, she was just another actress of the second rank. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD’s movie critic.

MOVIE PRODUCTION COMPANY

“Chief State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley resigned Sunday after angering the White House by calling the treatment of WikiLeaks suspect Bradley E. Manning ‘counterproductive and stupid.’”

—Washington Post, March 14, 2011

PARODY



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

MEMORANDUM

To: WHITE HOUSE ALL STAFF
 From: Bill Daley, White House Chief of Staff
 Date: 21 March 2011
 Re: Job Security

As you all know, the White House switchboard is understaffed due to House Republican budget cuts. So in response to all the strikingly similar inquiries from cabinet members and other appointees that have been flooding my office, I have prepared the following decision matrix to head off any additional requests for guidance. I trust that this will answer all further questions, as I don't need to tell you how my family has customarily dealt with ungrateful public servants back in Chicago.

—WMD

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

