the weekly Standard

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The Limits of European Populism

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL on Geert Wilders

WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

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COVER BY JASON SEILER

Tarnished Brandeis

Last week, Brandeis University withdrew the honorary degree it was going to bestow next month on human rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali. According to a statement from Brandeis, "We cannot overlook that certain of her past statements are inconsistent with Brandeis University's core values."

The Somali-born former member of the Dutch parliament has made it her life's work to speak out about how radical Islam enables the barbaric treatment of women—treatment that she herself was once subject to. But as it turns out, criticizing radical Islam violates the modern academy's perverse commitment to "diversity" and "tolerance"—even when the critic is an African feminist icon.

The decision was appalling and inconsistent with how Brandeis has handled controversy over other honorees. In 2006, the school came under fire for having bestowed an honorary degree on playwright Tony Kushner. This caused considerable angst for supporters of the school, because Kushner was on record saying, "The biggest supporters of Israel are the most repulsive members of the Jewish community." Brandeis went ahead with the award, and issued this statement from the university president in its defense: "Just as Brandeis does not inquire into the political opinions and beliefs of faculty or staff before appointing them, or students before offering admission, so too the University does not select honorary degree recipients on the basis of their political beliefs or opinions."

This was obviously a lie at the time the statement was issued, and in light of Brandeis's treatment of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, it seems a particularly baldfaced one at that. Unfortunately, dishonesty seems to be a habit among recent Brandeis presidents. As Ayaan Hirsi Ali's statement below makes clear, Brandeis University president Frederick Lawrence was both cowardly and disingenuous in caving to Hirsi Ali's opponents:

When Brandeis approached me with the offer of an honorary degree, I accepted partly because of the institution's distinguished history; it was founded in 1948, in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, as a co-educational, nonsectarian university at a time when many American universities still imposed rigid admission quotas on Jewish students. I assumed that Brandeis intended to honor me for my work as a defender of the rights of women against abuses that are often religious in origin. For over a decade, I have spoken out against such practices as female genital mutilation, so-called "honor killings," and applications of Sharia Law that justify such forms of domestic abuse as wife beating or child beating. Part of my work has been to question the role of Islam in legitimizing such abhorrent practices. So I was not surprised when my usual critics, notably the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), protested against my being honored in this way.

What did surprise me was the behavior of Brandeis. Having spent many months planning for me to speak to its students at Commencement, the university yesterday announced that it could not "overlook certain of my past statements," which it had not previously been aware of. Yet my critics have long specialized in selective quotation—lines from interviews taken out of context—designed to misrepresent me and my work. It is scarcely credible that Brandeis did not know this when they initially offered me the degree.

What was initially intended as an honor has now devolved into a moment of shaming. Yet the slur on my reputation is not the worst aspect of this episode. More deplorable is that an institution set up on the basis of religious freedom should today so deeply betray its own founding principles. The "spirit of free expression" referred to in the Brandeis statement has been stifled here, as my critics have achieved their objective of preventing me from addressing the graduating Class of 2014. Neither Brandeis nor my critics knew or even inquired as to what I might say. They simply wanted me to be silenced. I regret that very much.

Not content with a public disavowal, Brandeis has invited me "to join us on campus in the future to engage in a dialogue about these important issues." Sadly, in words and deeds, the university has already spoken its piece. I have no wish to "engage" in such one-sided dialogue. I can only wish the Class of 2014 the best of luck—and hope that they will go forth to be better advocates for free expression and free thought than their alma mater.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported me and my work on behalf of oppressed women and girls everywhere. ♦

The War on Courtesy

Distinguished lineage is no guarantee of good breeding, and in the case of the junior senator from Rhode Island, the gap is startling. Mayflower ancestry, a diplomat grandfather and father, railroad money, and education at the best schools seem, if anything, to have encouraged the hauteur and contempt for opponents for which Sheldon Whitehouse is increasingly known. They were on display again at a Senate hearing last week, when the senator greeted the solid testimony of economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth with gratuitous insult.

You might think a Budget Committee hearing on economic growth and tax reform would be of interest to a senator whose state, at 9 percent, leads the pack in unemployment. But instead of using his time for any constructive purpose, Whitehouse chose to express pique that Furchtgott-Roth had testified too many times for his liking on Capitol Hill. He proceeded

to read off a list of 17 committee and subcommittee hearings, at which she has spoken during her decades in Washington, and with each, the subject of her testimony. Furchtgott-Roth, former chief economist at the Department of Labor and the author of five books, tried to deflect this condescending exercise with humor. "Oh dear," she said, "you're showing everybody how old I am." But Whitehouse, unrelenting, went on, stressing that she had always appeared as a Republican witness (duh) and asking with heavy sarcasm, "Is there any area where you won't testify?"

Running for office in a lopsidedly Democratic state (Rhode Island twice went for Obama by 63 percent), the liberal Whitehouse hasn't had to learn to be polite to people who are not already in his camp. To him, political opponents are always deniers, fearmongers, enemies of truth. Lest you think The Scrapbook exaggerates, consider this doozy from the senator's remarks on the Senate floor shortly before the passage of Obamacare:

> Too many colleagues are embarked on a desperate, no-holds-barred mission of propaganda, obstruction, and fear. History cautions us of the excesses to which these malignant, vindictive passions can ultimately lead. Tumbrils have rolled through taunting crowds. Broken glass has sparkled in darkened streets. Strange fruit has hung from southern trees.

Opponents of Obamacare—that is, virtually all Republicans and usually majorities of the American people—as lynch mobs and fascist thugs? It looks like Furchtgott-Roth got off easy. ♦

Subsidy Barriers

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act, signed by Ronald Reagan in 1982, ranks among America's greatest free-market conservation success stories. Administered on a shoestring budget out of an obscure Fish and Wildlife Service office in Arlington, Va., the Coastal Barrier Resources System protects an area of land larger than all but one national park in the lower 48 states by imposing a simple "hands off" policy. In the marshes, beaches, and barrier islands (essentially overgrown sandbars) along the Gulf Coast, Atlantic Coast, and Great Lakes, property owners are barred from receiving subsidies for roads, housing, flood insurance, and other federal programs.

It's still possible to develop land within the CBRS with private money, but by drawing a "no subsidy zone," the law saves taxpayers more than $100 million annually, while also preserving coastal wetlands for conservation, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

That's why it's disturbing that some in Congress—many of them self-identified conservatives—want to weaken the law. In an early April hearing before a House subcommittee, several conservative members were more than willing to delete units from the system in order to open them to federal subsidies. Making matters worse is that the units are in Florida, where the state government has saddled its taxpayers with huge liabilities for property insurance in dangerous areas.

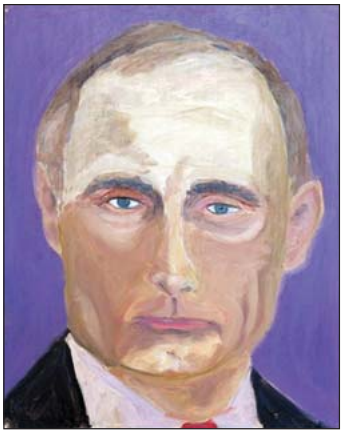
The cost of removing a given unit from the system here and there isn't enormous, but each removal sets a bad precedent. For conservatives to develop their own sensible environmental policy, the first step should be finding ways to extend the principle of a "subsidy free zone" to other areas: beaches on the Pacific Coast, areas prone to forest fire, and wetlands near river valleys also might be declared

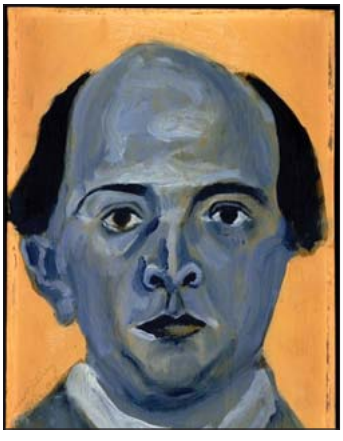
"off limits" for many kinds of federal subsidies. At minimum, shrinking the CBRS should be off the table. ♦

A Brush with Fame

When it became known last year that George W. Bush had taken up painting, The Scrapbook took note of the fact, commenting on a couple of random examples that they were "better than you would expect, show imagination, and are certainly evidence of Bush's well-developed sense of humor. . . . The paintings—in their awkward simplicity, bright colors, and irregular perspective—strike The Scrapbook as delightful. We would like to see more."

Well, it seems that the former president was reading The Scrapbook, for last week, 30 new works went on display within an exhibition entitled "The Art of Leadership: A President's Personal Diplomacy" at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. Apprentice novelists are always told to "write what you know," and Mr. Bush has translated that advice onto canvas: These are 30 head-and-shoulders portraits of world leaders with whom he dealt as president.





Bush's Putin; Schoenberg self-portrait

Attention has largely been paid to the portrait of Vladimir Putin, which, with its wary eyes, bland expression, and vague air of menace, seems to capture something of the Russian president. But the others—Tony Blair of Great Britain, Ehud Olmert of Israel, Angela Merkel of Germany, Junichiro Koizumi of Japan—are equally, sometimes startlingly, incisive. The literary scholar Willard Spiegelman, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, seemed especially beguiled by Bush's portrait of Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: Calling it a "knockout," he was clearly impressed by the nascent talent that captured "the planes of color in her violet hat and dress [standing] in contrast to the dark skin tones and folds of her flesh."

Needless to say, the former president's debut as an artist has had predictable consequences: As we noted last time, the inevitable allusions to another amateur painter—Adolf Hitler—have been duly noted on the left, and the mere mention of his name sent the *New Yorker* into verbal paroxysms ("W was and remains a vile person").

As far as The Scrapbook is concerned, we remain beguiled by Bush's art, and cannot help but notice that it shows signs of growth and confidence since last year. This has not gone unnoticed among critics and journalists, some of whom have been moved to say so. For our part, pulling on our art historian's cap, we are struck by a resemblance to the Sunday paintings of Arnold Schoenberg, the great 20th-century composer and inventor of the 12-tone method of composition. We would invite readers to compare, say, Bush's Putin with Schoenberg's 1910 self-portrait: two very different subjects, but executed with a curiously similar approach and technique.

Schoenberg's art, we should add, was admired in its day by masters such as Oskar Kokoschka and Wassily Kandinsky. We await the professional verdict on Bush with interest. ♦

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They Got Game

Arlington, Texas

The Super Bowl is boring. I checked out at halftime when Seattle crushed Denver. When the competition among TV ads is more gripping than the game, there's something wrong. The college football championship? It beats the Super Bowl. And maybe it will generate more excitement with four teams playing for the crown. The World Series has tradition and lots of tension, but major league baseball meanders through the season before playing for keeps—a month too late in the year.

My favorite is the Final Four and the two weekends of basketball leading up to it. The whole country is involved in filling out the brackets, including people who wouldn't know a basketball from a Frisbee. The first round is famous for obscure colleges with average players beating big-time schools with plenty of five-stars. Mercer beat Duke! What more do you want?

I went to the Final Four in Texas the other day. I had a heavy heart because Virginia's great team deserved to be there but couldn't get past Michigan State. The games, two on Saturday, the championship on Monday, were played in a football stadium so the NCAA could gouge extra millions from basketball fans. My seat on level C, section 308, was so far from the court that I watched most of the action on a gigantic television screen. Worse, it felt like timeouts came every 30 seconds, causing an excessive number of interruptions.

But I was thrilled to be there. Basketball has the advantage of playing two-hour games. A football game, college or pro, often takes up to four hours. Baseball games, with a parade of relief pitchers throwing to a single batter before being yanked, go on forever. I prefer shorter games.

Basketball is fun to watch because there are many different ways to play the game. Connecticut shut down Florida with great defense, then defeated Kentucky for the championship with great offense as its extremely quick guards ran rings around Kentucky's guards and outscored them decisively. Kentucky had beaten Wisconsin with a 3-pointer from the moon with two seconds to go. Wisconsin made 19 of 20 free throws. The one miss was the reason Wisconsin lost.

AP / CHRIS STEPPIG

UConn guard Ryan Boatright, right, and Kentucky guard Andrew Harrison

I like basketball coaches. Most of them are maniacs, but they know a lot. I once interviewed a few of them for a magazine article about Gilbert Arenas, the Washington Wizards star. I thought I knew a lot about basketball, but the coaches understood the game at a much more sophisticated level than I ever imagined.

That's true of Final Four coaches. Kentucky coach John Calipari is a basketball genius who wins with freshmen who stay one year before turning pro. I thought Kentucky fans might balk at cheering for basketball vagabonds who treat the school as a brief way station. I was wrong. Kentucky fans have no problem with "one and done" players, so long as they win.

During Kentucky's Final Four games, Calipari sat on a stool near the edge of the court, as close to his young players as he could possibly get. I expected the referees to order him to the bench. They didn't. Perhaps they were intimidated by Calipari's reputation as the best coach in college ball.

All the coaches stayed at the Sheraton in downtown Dallas. That was the place to be. My son and I had breakfast with Austin Peay coach Dave Loos and his friend, congressman Phil Roe from east Tennessee. We talked to Auburn's new Bruce Pearl, who had left as Tennessee coach under an ethical cloud. He said taking the Auburn job was a gamble. He's right. Auburn is a football school. Good luck, Bruce.

My ideal is a team that plays serious defense, makes a high percentage of its free throws, whose players are selective in their shooting, and whose coach is calm and dislikes calling timeouts. UCLA's John Wooden and Indiana's Bobby Knight, two of the greatest, regarded timeouts as unnecessary since they'd already taught their players not to panic and how to proceed in tense situations.

The Final Four is a mob scene. Bruce Springsteen and Kid Rock had concerts as part of the weekend. They weren't needed. If you have great basketball, you don't need rock stars. The NCAA, a monopoly in the worst sense of the word, should be aware that everyone comes for the basketball and nothing else. Sideshows add nothing.

Next year the Final Four is scheduled for a football stadium in Indianapolis. A large basketball arena would be a better venue. But the NCAA would make less money. So that's not likely to happen again. Nonetheless, I hope to be there, watching from a remote seat and enjoying every minute. With luck, UVA will be there, too.

Fred Barnes

the weekly Standard

Scare Tehran, Please

Is Barack Obama's threat of preventive military action against the Iranian regime's nuclear program credible? Would a one-year, six-month, or even three-month nuclear breakout capacity at the known nuclear sites be acceptable to him? Is he prepared to attack if Tehran denies the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, entry into undeclared facilities that may be hiding nuclear-weapons research or centrifuge production? Is he prepared to strike if the regime denies inspectors access to the personnel and documents that would allow the West to see whether—how much—the regime has been lying about weaponization?

They're not nervous enough to negotiate.

These are questions that Iran's leaders—Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards, who oversee the nuclear program, and Hassan Rouhani, who before becoming president served on the Supreme National Security Council as Khamenei's personal representative—have undoubtedly asked since 2008. The answers they reached surely shape Tehran's approach to the current negotiations with the West. Khamenei, Rouhani, and others have stated since the Joint Plan of Action was signed in November that Tehran has no intention of rolling back its nuclear progress. Here's how Khamenei put it on April 9 in a meeting with officials of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization: "But all should know that despite the continuation of these talks, the Islamic Republic's activities in the fields of nuclear research and development will in no way be halted, and not a single nuclear accomplishment will be suspended or stopped."

Participants in the Vienna nuclear talks have described the proceedings so far as a take-and-give exchange, where the Iranian negotiating team grimaces and the Americans back off. The Obama administration hasn't yet wanted to push, for example, on an inspections regime that would allow the IAEA to visit undeclared Revolutionary Guard sites that may house nuclear-weapons-related research. Since the guards oversee the entire atomic program, as well as ballistic-missile development, paramilitary expeditionary efforts (see Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Sudan, the Gaza Strip, Afghanistan), and terrorism, a rational person might conclude that a nuclear deal denying the IAEA spot inspections at Revolutionary Guard facilities is, to put it politely, defective.

President Obama's intellectual soulmates, the left-of-center nonproliferation crowd in Washington, who have been in constant retreat over the last decade about what should be demanded of the Islamic Republic, appear to be defaulting to a position where an Iranian "freeze" would be just fine and an intrusive inspections regime covering undeclared sites unnecessarily provocative. It likely won't be long before the soft nonproliferation voices at the Ploughshares Fund, the Carnegie Endowment, the New America Foundation, and the Brookings Institution tell us that pushing the "moderates" in Tehran—Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif—against the Revolutionary Guards would be counterproductive since the guards are prickly nationalists who could torpedo everything.

The nonproliferation experts often remind us that the Islamic Republic hasn't been defeated in war, which apparently limits the West's and the IAEA's acceptable inquisitiveness. Increased "transparency" of known sites, which the Iranian regime is allowing, will have to be enough—even though the capacity and proclivity to lie and cheat has been a hallmark of the Islamic Republic since the 2002 disclosure of the then-hidden Natanz and Arak nuclear facilities. We will assuredly hear some nonproliferation folks again emphasize the competence of American intelligence, playing off the public remarks of the director of national intelligence, James Clapper, who suggested the intelligence

NEWSCOM

community would know if Iran decided to build a bomb. Downplayed will be the unpleasant history of the Central Intelligence Agency, which has missed every successful clandestine nuclear weaponization (the USSR, Communist China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and probably Israel and South Africa, too) since the end of World War II, along with the possibility that the Islamic Republic's final dash to the bomb might not be conducted at a monitored site.

In other words, the final comprehensive deal that Washington should accept, so the nonproliferation left will likely argue, will contain: no dismantling of centrifuges (the new preferred terms appear to be "disabling" and "decommissioning"); no explicit ban on the future production of centrifuges; no reduction in the low-enriched uranium stockpile, allowing Tehran sufficient LEU to refine further into a half-dozen bombs; no closure of the bomb-resistant underground enrichment plant at Fordow; no dismantling of the heavy-water plant at Arak or even its conversion to a light-water reactor that can't produce bomb-grade plutonium; no meaningful, verifiable restrictions on centrifuge research; no linkage between the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles and the nuclear program; no serious debriefings of Iranian nuclear personnel with their paperwork in hand; and certainly no acknowledgment by Tehran of its past efforts at nuclear weaponization (the nonproliferation cognoscenti call this the "possible military dimensions" of the program or PMD).

It wouldn't be surprising to see Khamenei finally authorize an inspection of the Parchin Revolutionary Guard facility, where IAEA inspectors and Western intelligence services strongly suspect that the regime's scientists once experimented with implosion devices and nuclear triggers. The IAEA was allowed a cursory visit in 2005; the suspect buildings have since been destroyed and paved over. Despite the uselessness of inspectors' examining a cleansed site, Khamenei's acquiescence would likely be greeted with great relief in many quarters and be seen as further proof of the Islamic Republic's turn toward moderation.

If a private poll were held, it would most likely show that the vast majority of liberal nonproliferation experts would strongly prefer a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic to preventive military strikes unleashed by Barack Obama. This nonproliferation establishment will probably wrap itself ever more tightly in the technicalities of nuclear dealmaking, as if all parties to the negotiations operated from the assumption that a nuclear weapon is no longer in the interests of the Islamic Republic, never mind the countervailing evidence of an arduous, expensive 30-year effort. The determined and deceitful nature of the regime will take a back seat, as one French official has put it, to the "right logarithm that will solve the strategic problem."

Too-eager American diplomats and their expert assistants will attempt to find a technocratic answer to a problem that probably has no technocratic solution. The West could get utterly lost in measuring the ultimate nonproliferation desideratum: Iranian SWUs ("separative work units"—the amount of uranium separation done by an enrichment process). The surreality of this whole discussion is best seen in the "formula for success" seriously put forth by Joseph Cirincione, the president of the Ploughshares Fund, the preeminent left-wing funder of nonproliferation studies. Here is his answer to the supreme leader and the Revolutionary Guards:

C = f (Qc + Cc + Lc + QLEU + Pu + R&D + V + HPMD + D + PW)
where Confidence (C) is a function (f) of
Qc = Quantity of centrifuges
Cc = Capability of centrifuges
Lc = Locations of centrifuges
QLEU = Quantity of low-enriched uranium
Pu = Plutonium production capabilities
R&D = Research and development
V = Verification of all of Iran's activities
HPMD = History of programs with possible military dimension
D = Duration of the deal
PW = Political willingness to enforce the deal.

So let's consider one pivotal component of the equation, PW. This is best translated as President Obama's willingness to bomb the ball bearings out of the Iranian regime's nuclear facilities. At this point, most liberal nonproliferation discussions get even weirder. In January, to stop Democratic senators from passing legislation that would have mandated new sanctions against Tehran if it failed to conclude a verifiable termination of its nuclear-weapons program through the Joint Plan of Action, or if Tehran engaged in a terrorist act at any time, the administration let loose the animadversion most feared among liberals, to be labeled a warmonger. The tactic worked brilliantly: Democratic senators caved en masse.

But the nuclear negotiations ultimately hinge, as even Cirincione sees, on the president's willingness to unleash the Air Force and Navy. The rub is that the White House doesn't want to use the threat of force before the negotiations end; it only wants do so after a deal has been signed, when the threat of force has no leverage. But the Iranian regime always uses *Machtpolitik* to get what it wants, and if we don't, we're not serious. It's quite likely that the administration and its partners in the think-tank community will actually call on Congress to authorize the use of force after a deal is approved by Khamenei—not because they want to scare the supreme leader and his men (that possibility will have already been lost), but to provide Democratic politicians domestic cover, a show of toughness for the electorate and perhaps a bit of psychological salve for themselves.

It's a pity. There is still a chance that if the president seriously threatened to use force before the informal deadline for the Joint Plan of Action in July—and it would be

a hard sell in Tehran after his red-line debacle in Syria—he might be able to push the supreme leader into a corner where he'd have to make crippling nuclear compromises. If the Iranian regime is "rational" when it comes to American military power, and Khamenei has clearly shown that he is, then the supreme leader would likely prove flexible so long as he were sure that an American president would strike. The United States' armed might—not economic coercion or reward—has always been the best trump that Washington could use to neutralize Tehran's atomic aspirations.

Look at the past. The Islamic Republic's clandestine nuclear-weapons program was publicly revealed by an Iranian opposition group in August 2002 (Western intelligence services were aware of it earlier). The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate asserted that Tehran's development of a nuclear trigger, which is used only in bombs, was probably halted in 2003, the year of the Iraq invasion. Other aspects of the weapons program—the development and deployment of centrifuges and uranium enrichment—also slowed or were temporarily frozen. All of Tehran was then noisily wondering whether the Islamic Republic would be the next member of the "axis of evil" to be taken down. Karim Sadjadpour of the Carnegie Endowment, who was then in Tehran with the International Crisis Group, has recounted how Iranian officials were fearfully mesmerized by the display of American will and muscle. Rouhani took great pride in his memoirs and on the stump in his presidential campaign that he, as Iran's nuclear negotiator, had kept the regime's atomic quest alive in those trying times through concessions that were only temporary. Iran's nuclear program accelerated after 2005 with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidential triumph, which Khamenei celebrated, and with the floundering of the Bush administration in Iraq.

The Obama administration—the president in particular—has had great difficulty in handling the fact that George W. Bush's decision to eliminate Saddam Hussein altered Tehran's nuclear calculations. It has been an article of faith for this president that the Iraq war was an egregious mistake. Early in his presidency, he sincerely tried to reach out to Khamenei, suggesting that the enmity between the two countries was surmountable. Obama has consistently resisted or diluted bipartisan congressional efforts to strengthen sanctions against the Islamic Republic. Such hesitancy had various causes, but the supreme leader clearly could have read it as a sign that the White House preferred a less confrontational approach.

The president's good intentions and restraint—which survived even an Iranian plan to blow up the Saudi ambassador in a Georgetown restaurant in 2011 and Khamenei's all-out support of Bashar al-Assad's savage rampage in Syria—have been reciprocated by Iranian nuclear advances and zealously nasty anti-American rhetoric from the supreme leader. Since 2008, Tehran has ramped up its centrifuge production, uranium enrichment, heavy-water reactor construction, and ballistic-missile development. Iran has probably made more progress in its nuclear-weapons program on Obama's watch than at any earlier time.

Yet some Iranian fear remains. Tehran hasn't ejected the IAEA inspectors and cameras at the known nuclear sites. It has installed and tested but not thrown into full-throttle its advanced centrifuges (this may be more a question of imported parts than fear). It has been careful about how much medium-enriched uranium, which is a small step from bomb-grade, it stockpiles. Progress at the heavy-water reactor at Arak, which if completed could produce plutonium, has been constant—but not a damn-the-consequences mad dash (again, parts may be a factor).

As July draws nearer, the White House should show that it wants the nuclear deal less than Khamenei and Rouhani do. Above all else, the president and senior officials should be playing on the supreme leader's longstanding insecurity vis-à-vis American might. Sanctions alone were never going to stop the mullahs' nuclear quest. Given the enormous progress Tehran has made in the last five years, an honest analyst would have to conclude that sanctions are probably no longer relevant to rolling back the program. But nothing could be more helpful—intimidating to Tehran—than to have Congress "handcuff" the president through legislation now clearly defining the terms of successful nuclear negotiations and the consequences for Iran of failure. Those who fear American preventive military action more than they do a nuclear weapon in the hands of the supreme leader don't really care what kind of deal is concluded with Tehran. In the end, they would accept an agreement that neither dismantles nor intrusively monitors the Iranian regime's atomic achievements. If President Obama isn't in this camp, then he needs to overcome his aversion to seeing diplomacy as an adjunct to the threat of war. The Iranian regime plays hardball. To win now, we have to openly prepare to fight.

—Reuel Marc Gerecht

The Tinkerbell Effect

In his Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony last week, Secretary of State John Kerry blamed Israel for the breakdown in peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. He argued that an Israeli announcement of 700 new housing units for a neighborhood in Jerusalem were what did in the talks. "Poof, that was sort of the

moment," Kerry said. "We find ourselves where we are."

This is an amazing claim, especially when the housing units are not in a settlement—but are in Jerusalem, Israel's capital, in a location that every Israeli and every Palestinian knows will be part of Israel in any possible peace agreement.

In fact, Kerry's actions during his 15 months as secretary of state are why "we find ourselves where we are." The only surprise here is the total lack of introspection or comprehension he exhibits. Kerry jumped into these negotiations, secure in the belief that he could deliver success—and therefore not even thinking about the damage that could be done if the talks blew up. But why—why was he so confident? What was his analysis of world affairs, of events in the region, or of the politics of the two sides that led him to conclude this was the moment—2013 and 2014—when a deal was at hand?

The answer is found in his speech last December to the Saban Forum, a gathering of Israeli and American officials and former officials at the Brookings Institution in Washington. Here are the key passages:

> Late last night I got back from my eighth visit to Israel . . . my eighth visit as secretary of state. Now, I am not a masochist. (Laughter.) I am undertaking this because I believe in the possibilities. And as many of you know, I have spent almost 30 years in the United States Senate, and I'm proud of my 100 percent voting record for Israel, but I'm proud also that I built up relationships in the Mideast with leaders in Arab countries and elsewhere who learned that they could come to trust me. And I believe that I approach this great challenge with a huge sense of responsibility about building trust and ultimately building a process that will test and provide guarantees to people about this concept called peace.
>
> I will tell you point blank, and I've read all of the history of these negotiations and I've lived part of the history of these negotiations. I was on the lawn when the famous handshake took place. And I've had many, many a meeting over the course of time as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and as a senator.
>
> But I believe that if you indeed care about Israel, and everybody here does, if you care about its security, if you care about its future, if you care about Palestinians achieving their legitimate aspirations for self-determination, which we do also, we need to believe that peace is possible. And we all need to act on that belief.

This is a combination of faith-based diplomacy and personal vanity. The argument seems to be that peace is possible because Kerry has relationships with leaders, Kerry is trusted, Kerry was in the Senate for 30 years, Kerry chaired the Foreign Relations Committee, and Kerry was on the White House lawn when Rabin shook hands with Arafat. So our job is to have faith in him, and if we believe that peace is possible, it will come.

This latter is known as the Tinkerbell Effect, based on the passage in *Peter Pan* where the fairy Tinkerbell has taken poison but can be revived if people believe in her.

> Peter flung out his arms. There were no children there, and it was night time; but he addressed all who might be dreaming of the Neverland. . . . "If you believe," he shouted to them, "clap your hands; don't let Tink die."

Apparently it didn't work with the Palestinians, who failed to clap. Kerry's casting of blame at Israel was rebuffed sharply by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: An official in his office told the *New York Times*, "Secretary Kerry knows that it was the Palestinians who said 'no' to continued direct talks with Israel in November; who said 'no' to his proposed framework for final status talks; who said 'no' to even discussing recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people; who said 'no' to a meeting with Kerry himself; and who said 'no' to an extension of the talks."

And remember, this comes after various bribes were paid to the Palestinians to get them to come to the negotiating table after four years of refusal—Barack Obama's entire first term. One of those bribes was the release of 78 murderers from Israeli jails—Palestinian terrorists who were granted a hero's welcome upon returning home. This is the rebuttal to those who believe Kerry's 15 months of efforts have produced nothing at all: Seventy-eight killers are free, anyway. It is also the rebuttal to those who think that efforts like Kerry's may of course fail but come at little cost: Freeing killers is a cost. Failure for the United States is a cost. And now, blaming Israel and thereby damaging U.S.-Israel relations is another cost.

Kerry gets an A for effort, to be sure, and was sincere and dogged throughout these 15 months of exertion. He displayed a deep desire to help both sides move forward. But his own vanity got in the way of a sober assessment of the chances for success, and the failure of the effort—even if sooner or later the two sides do sit down together again—diminishes his own prestige and effectiveness as our top diplomat. It's past time for the administration to keep him home and spend a while rethinking five years of failed Middle East policy. "Clap your hands; don't let Tink die" doesn't make the grade.

—Elliott Abrams

NEWSCOM

Who Spikes Ike?

The tangled tale of the proposed Eisenhower Memorial next to the National Mall in Washington gets more complicated by the week. On April 3, the National Capital Planning Commission stunned just about everybody by rejecting the memorial design submitted by "celebrity architect" Frank Gehry and approved by the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. In a humiliating proviso, the NCPC—sorry about the acronyms but this is Washington—told Gehry and his associates to return to the commission every two months so it could make sure they are modifying the design in acceptable ways. Frank Gehry has just been given a babysitter.

The rejected Eisenhower Memorial design

The NCPC's disapproval isn't just bad news for the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. It may be bad news for anyone who wants to see Dwight Eisenhower appropriately memorialized in the nation's capital, for it extends a process that is increasingly pointless. We should just put it plainly: Gehry's design will not be built. But no one in authority wants to say so out loud, largely out of fear of offending one another. The question now is what will replace it—a better design, or nothing at all?

The Eisenhower commission hired Gehry five years ago, swooning over what is inevitably called his "innovative" design. Since then the commission has spent $44 million producing surveys and drawings and other preliminary materials. The National Park Service backs the plan, and so does the Commission on Fine Arts, still another body charged with reviewing the project. Most others, however, have been less enthusiastic. The Eisenhower family opposes Gehry's design, along with editorialists at publications ranging from *National Review* to the *New Yorker*. Even more ominously, a growing band of House Republicans opposes it too.

In January the House struck the memorial's construction funds from the federal budget and reduced the commission's annual appropriation from the requested $51 million to $1 million—barely enough to pay the electric bill and tip the cleaning lady. The loss of Republican support leaves Gehry and the commission without a significant political constituency. The Obama administration has shown little interest in the project; indeed, its one appointment to the commission, the art historian Bruce Cole, is a vocal opponent of Gehry's plan. And Democrats on Capitol Hill see no reason to waste energy rescuing an expensive tribute to a Republican president.

As a consequence, the approval process, with its continuing back and forth and layer upon layer of endless revisions, has taken on a dreamlike quality. The NCPC says it wants "a modern and innovative approach" to the memorial. But its specific objections could be crippling to Gehry's concept. The NCPC statement singled out the most innovative element in a design fairly screaming with innovation: a series of chimney-like columns, 10 feet in diameter and 80 feet high, that will support huge steel-mesh screens suspended along three sides of a memorial square. One of them stretches 447 feet—half again longer than a football field. The screens will show misty scenes of the Midwestern prairie that nourished Ike as a youth and that he escaped as quickly as he could. The NCPC says the screens and other Gehry-like quirks confuse the flow of car and foot traffic and obscure the view of the Capitol a quarter mile away. It worries too about the durability and maintenance of the screens once they're downsized.

The worries are well-placed. Like most celebrity architects, Gehry is a big-concept man, fuzzy on the practical details that ordinary people will encounter when they put his big concepts into action. A favorite example of Gehry's obliviousness—a nicer word than "arrogance"—is his Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles. It was showy in the Gehry manner, serving less as a place for human beings to gather than a hulking testimonial to the architect's cleverness. In this instance as in others, Gehry's cleverness was severely limited by its interaction with reality. Sheathed in stainless steel, the building reflected sunlight so intensely that it baked neighboring condominiums and blinded passing drivers. Gehry was surprised but accepted no responsibility. Who knew sunlight could be so bright? In the summertime? In Los Angeles?

The Disney fiasco joined a long list of Gehry's epic fails. There was the business school in Ohio with the sloping

roof that sent chunks of ice onto passersby (it snows in Ohio?), and then the furniture plant with a large and pointlessly complicated, although quite innovative, copper trellis that had to be torn down when it sprung a leak after a few years. And we shouldn't forget Gehry's signature Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain, one of the most overpraised edifices of the last century, whose flashy titanium surfaces soon began to show large brown splotches, leading more than one observer to remark that the building had come to resemble a discarded dirty diaper. Gehry said the discoloration was the contractor's fault.

This is not, in other words, a celebrity architect whose word about pragmatic matters should be taken at face value. The commission was right to dwell on the practical flaws of the design, but we still don't know whether Gehry's firm will agree to come crawling back to NCPC every two months in an effort to preserve a project that even Gehry himself recently said may never be built. In any case, it's clear by now that what Gehry wants to do and what the system of checks and balances will tolerate, politically and aesthetically, are not compatible.

The present state of affairs raises a chilling prospect: *Maybe this is it*. With the approval and budgetary processes at a standoff, maybe nothing, in the end, will get built. This is not the worst possible outcome; a completed Gehry design, with its trivialization of a great man, would be worse than nothing. But the standoff is also a waste of money and energy. The Eisenhower Memorial Commission has a large handful of staffers and $30 million in taxpayer money already allocated and in the bank. (Efforts to raise private money have gone limp.) Like any governmental body, the commission can keep itself occupied doing not much of anything for a long time, until the money runs out: a few million dollars more to Gehry for a few more revisions, a study here, a procedural review there, a couple of subcontractors brought in . . . and then, after a span of uneventful years, the barely noticed demise.

There is an alternative. Thirty million is plenty to fund a new open design competition, one not rigged for celebrity architects. Enough money should be left over to build a more affordable and dignified memorial than Gehry's Hollywood soundstage—which is to say, a more modest memorial, in keeping with the Eisenhower that Americans loved. A handsome statue on a plinth, maybe, and a frieze or two in a leafy urban park should be enough.

Otherwise, this sad episode will stand as a monument of its own, a towering tribute to the waste, vanity, and dysfunction of a divided capital.

—Andrew Ferguson

Death Comes for the Regulated

How long can dinosaur industries stave off the inevitable? BY IRWIN M. STELZER

"The dinosaurs surviving the crunch" was how Stephen Sondheim described women living an outdated lifestyle and grimly aware that "everybody dies." If Sondheim had the slightest interest in the less exalted subject of economics, he would apply that descriptive to a host of companies and industries trying to beat the hooded man with a scythe, aided by their regulators.

The most recent example comes to us courtesy of New Jersey's automobile dealers—with an assist from their regulators and Governor Chris Christie—who have decided to follow the lead of Texas, Maryland, and Virginia and declare that Tesla, the maker of electric cars, has violated state law by attempting to sell its cars through its own network of stores rather than through franchised dealers. The New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers (NJCAR), feeling threatened by a firm that sells fewer cars in a year than General Motors sells in a day, contends that the regulations do nothing more than bring Tesla into line with other manufacturers to create a level playing field, the sort on which beleaguered competitors prefer to compete so long as the referee/regulator is on their team. For "level playing field" read status quo.

If Tesla is allowed to eliminate the middleman, Ford, General Motors, and other manufacturers will follow suit, whines NJCAR. Yes, the consumer would save money, but if Governor Christie allowed this new and possibly more efficient method of distribution to take hold in New Jersey, he would surely lose lots of dealer votes and their financial support. So Christie, no stranger to issues in the transportation sector, told Tesla it can keep its stores as galleries but not discuss price or take orders. Any orders would have to be placed in stores in other states (Texas does not allow any such referrals), which would of course reap the sales taxes associated with the sales. Other states are under pressure from dealer organizations to follow New Jersey's lead, or at minimum New York's, where the governor and the legislature have cut a deal to allow Tesla to keep its five stores—but no more.

Tesla does not come to this fight with cleanly scrubbed hands. Elon Musk, its founder, principal shareholder, and CEO, and an important contributor to Obama campaigns and the Democratic party, is not exactly a paragon of free-market virtue. He has received handsome subsidies from the Obama administration both for Tesla and for his SolarCity solar-panel operation, in which Al Gore is involved. (In the world of high-tech, Musk is so highly regarded that Larry Page, cofounder of Google, says he would rather leave his billions to Musk, who can change the world, than to charity.) The Tesla founder decided to sell his much-subsidized, high-priced cars (base model $69,900) from Tesla's own stores because the product needs detailed explaining by skilled sales people, and because cutting out the middleman seems to Tesla's managers and shareholders the efficient thing to do. That plan is now under threat.

Then there is the taxi industry. With the exception of the chauffeur-driven elite, the limousine l iberals who favor but rarely use public transportation, and the very poor for whom taxis are unaffordable or unwilling to enter their neighborhoods, most Americans rely at times on the taxicabs that cruise city streets in search of fares. To say that in cities such as New York and Washington, D.C., the service leaves something to be desired, is to put it mildly. I served as head of a commission set up by Mayor Ed Koch to reform taxi service in New York, and lost the reform fight to the clout of the fleet owners and drivers who had paid small fortunes for the medallions, the permits to share in the monopoly profits from regulators' refusal to increase the supply of taxis for decades during which demand soared. Regulators saw it as their role to preserve the monopoly profits, and high fares,

GARY LOCKE

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that would support the prices paid by owners of the precious, scarce medallions (just as regulators for a long time thought it important to limit access to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to preserve the value of floor traders' seats).

Enter Uber and similar services that replace inefficient and emissions-maximizing cruising with pick-up-by-appointment. And begin what *Bloomberg*'s Brad Stone calls "The Invasion of the Taxi Snatchers." Tap the right app, and a clean vehicle piloted by a polite driver with at least a minimal acquaintance with the English language, and possessed of gadgets that enable him to get you to where you want to go in a more or less direct fashion, and you have a moderately more expensive alternative to the often difficult task of finding an available cab, especially on a rainy evening in the rush hour, when Uber et al. keep their drivers on the road by charging a premium based on the level of demand. Uber too pricey? Try a ride-sharing app such as Lyft or Sidecar. Geoffrey Fowler of the *Wall Street Journal* organized tests in several cities and found that "over more than 30 rides, we had [ride-sharing] drivers offer us candy, fist bumps, and even mediation coaching. They all got us where we needed to go safely, and almost as quick as a taxi, but not always as cheap."

All of these services provide a real incentive to courteous service: Riders report their ratings of each driver, and other users can see those ratings when asking for service. The services themselves must vet drivers if they are to stay in business, and report to future customers the less-than-stellar safety habits of any NASCAR wannabes they allow to remain with the company. Ask yourself: Would you rather ride with a driver who has been rated by other passengers, with that rating posted on your cell phone and monitored continuously by a company with a stake in maintaining consumer confidence, or one who has been cleared by some local political appointee who might, just might, see approval of a driver as a source of income?

All this new competition is anathema to regulators, who see their jobs disappearing if enough customers prefer the new, technologically based services to stand-and-hail-and-hope. From the District of Columbia to Seattle, and in cities and states in-between, regulators are rallying to the side of their pet dinosaurs. They want to require Uber to use a payment system that is incompatible with its technology, report all rides to them for analysis, and comply with a host of new regulations designed to drive them (pun intended) from the streets. If apps-based companies send taxis the way of the horse and buggy, regulators, too, will become redundant as the market replaces them as the determinant of just how many vehicles will be on the streets, and who will be driving them.

That is not the only example of consumers seeking alternatives to outmoded business methods that regulators seek to preserve. As banks become less and less willing to lend to small businesses, alternative lenders are emerging—"shadow banks" incumbents and regulators like to call them, implying that these "indistinct financial entities . . . lurk in the dark corners of the financial system," writes Tracy Alloway in the *Financial Times*. In fact, she continues, these nontraditional lenders often do what traditional banks do, but "in a cheaper and more efficient way." There is peer-to-peer lending, provision of capital by cash-rich companies such as Google, a variety of ways to do without the banks that impose such systemic risk on the economy, and new alternatives for the 28.3 percent of households, predominantly low-income, who choose not to rely on the mainstream banking system because it is either too expensive or too inaccessible.

The incumbent banks, their profit margins declining in the face of new competition and more stringent regulation, now see profit in serving the under-banked. Unfortunately, that is not their great strength; witness their overreach when they raised fees on debit cards. So they are counting on their regulator to stop or at least rein in these "dicey" competitors, presumably including rock-solid Walmart, which survived the recent downturn without a government bailout and is expanding financial-service offerings to its mostly low-income customers. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation says that the providers of Alternative Financial Services (AFS) "may lack consumer protections."

I'm with *Forbes*'s Halah Touryalai, who studied the new competition and concludes, "For consumers in the under-banked and unbanked demographic the increased competition is great news." The only question is how rapidly competition will spread to other sectors now served by traditional banks. Regulators in every sector in which I have been involved, from taxis to airlines to telecoms, always claim they can protect consumers better than consumers can protect themselves, a process that

inevitably involves protecting the incumbents with whom the regulators are accustomed to dealing. As the acknowledged dean of regulatory economists, Cornell's Alfred Kahn, liked to point out, regulators all too often come to see themselves as responsible for the financial viability of the companies they are supposed to regulate in the interests of the public, which makes them take a dim view of new technologies and challengers who threaten the value of the regulated companies' sunk investment.

The lessons are clear. For traditional incumbents the days of customer abuse are coming to an end: The dinosaurs—filthy taxis, unneeded middlemen, arrogant bankers—are feeling the crunch. But their regulators are attempting to relieve them of the necessity of adapting and improving their customers' satisfaction.

Fortunately, sooner or later even the most powerful regulator can't withstand the economic and political pressures to meet or beat competition. Doubt that, and think of the airlines, telcos, and electric utilities whose monopolies have withered either because regulators decided they were no longer needed (Kahn's Civil Aeronautics Board) or because they were unable to withstand the onslaught of new technology, new entrepreneurs, and a new public awareness of the costs of regulation. Yes, there are situations in which regulation remains necessary, as with nontransient monopoly power and the production of goods that impose costs on society. But they are more the exception than the rule.

The great Joseph Schumpeter wrote that the "animal spirits" of bold entrepreneurs create a "gale of creative destruction" that forces capitalism to shed the old and adopt the new, driving living standards and growth forward. Economic dinosaurs can extend their lives with the aid of their regulators—but sooner or later they will be unable to survive the crunch created by new technology and more efficient forms of economic organization. Sooner, if public policy comes down on the side of competition. ♦

Can They Come Back?

The Republicans' struggle in Northern Virginia.

BY MICHAEL WARREN

John Vihstadt campaigning door to door

It's hard to believe, but the rebirth of the Republican party in Virginia may be happening in the unlikeliest of places: the liberal bastion of Northern Virginia.

Take what happened last week in Arlington, Northern Virginia's unofficial capital. For the last 15 years, the county government has been controlled entirely by Democrats. Arlington has Democratic representation at the state and federal level, and it hasn't voted for a Republican presidential candidate since 1980. If you were looking for the perfect cross-section of the Obama-era Democratic coalition, you could find it in what some half-jokingly call the People's Republic of Arlington. This inner suburb of Washington is a mix of college-educated young people, Hispanics, single women, federal employees, African Americans, wealthy white liberals, recent immigrants, and environmentally conscious greenies. It's one of the wealthiest counties in the country and one of the most diverse in Virginia. It's also the kind of place where public officials believe strongly in the transformative power of community gardens.

So it was big news on April 8 when a Republican won a special election for a vacant county board seat. Not only did John Vihstadt, a Washington lawyer and Arlington resident since 1981, win, he did so with 57 percent support. Okay, technically, Vihstadt ran as an independent. But the 61-year-old says he made little attempt to hide his personal party affiliation during the campaign.

"I really consider myself a big-tent Republican," Vihstadt tells me. He's not a social conservative or a member of the Tea Party, and he says he cares chiefly about local fiscal concerns. He actively campaigned against some of

WASHINGTON POST / AMANDA VOISARD

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the county's massive spending projects, like a $1 million bus stop, a nine-figure streetcar proposal, and an $80 million aquatic center. But Vihstadt also spoke about his longstanding ties to the community, including service on a number of civic boards and the PTA. On his campaign website's biography page, he bragged that his daily commute includes a combination of carpooling, mass transit, and walking. A Republican, sure, but a Republican Arlingtonians could support.

Vihstadt cautions that his is a unique example: a special election based on local quality-of-life issues. Besides, he's got another election to win in November, when loyal Democratic voters will be turning out in bigger numbers.

The truth is, the Virginia GOP is in a real mess, thanks in large part to Northern Virginia's steady turn away from the party. The Republican middle-class families that built postwar Northern Virginia have been replaced by wealthier government consultants, twentysomethings living in highrise apartment buildings, and Asian and Hispanic immigrants—all of whom favor the Democrats. A booming technology industry and the ever-growing federal government mean the region is more populous than ever before; it's also less instinctively conservative. To have a reasonable chance at winning statewide these days, a Republican candidate has at the very least to split the vote in the Northern Virginia counties of Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun. In 2009, Bob McDonnell did better than that—61 percent in Loudoun and 59 in Prince William—to win his gubernatorial race handily. Four years later, Ken Cuccinelli fell below 50 in Loudoun and Prince William and was blown out in Fairfax on his way to a three-point loss to Democrat Terry McAuliffe.

But Republicans could take a valuable lesson from the Vihstadt victory. Tom Davis, the former Republican congressman from Fairfax County, says the GOP has been too bogged down in ideological purity tests that result in candidates too conservative for Northern Virginia. The party, Davis says, needs to learn to "run candidates that fit the districts."

You could call that the Vihstadt rule, and Pat Mullins, chairman of the Virginia GOP, assures me that his party will be following it. "There are going to be very strong candidates in Northern Virginia," says Mullins.

One of them may be Barbara Comstock. A state delegate and onetime congressional aide, Comstock is running in a crowded, party-organized "firehouse" primary on April 26 for the House seat being vacated by her former boss, retiring Republican Frank Wolf. The district, which Wolf has held since 1981, stretches from the West Virginia border to the outer Washington suburbs in Loudoun and parts of Prince William and Fairfax.

The Virginia GOP is in a real mess, thanks in large part to Northern Virginia. Republican middle-class families have been replaced by wealthier government consultants, twenty-somethings living in highrise apartments, and Asian and Hispanic immigrants.

Despite the GOP's longtime hold on it, the district now leans only slightly Republican (Mitt Romney won it in 2012 by just one point). Comstock boasts a conservative record: She's pro-life, opposes Obamacare, and has fought back in the state assembly against union interests. But she also argues she'll be a better representative of the party in the general election than her chief rival for the nomination, fellow delegate Bob Marshall. Marshall is a social conservative whose rhetoric on those issues is too strident for Northern Virginia. In 2010, for instance, he asserted that the number of children with disabilities born to women who have had an abortion has increased in recent years.

"Because when you abort the firstborn of any, nature takes its vengeance on the subsequent children," he matter-of-factly explained at a press conference. Nominating Marshall would be a clear violation of the Vihstadt rule.

"We can be conservative, but we understand we've got to grow the pie here," Comstock says. Republican primary voters seem to be agreeing. One recent poll showed Comstock leading Marshall by more than 30 points.

Republicans will have a tougher time unseating Democrat Gerry Connolly in the Fairfax-centered district next door, which is far less favorable to the GOP. Party insiders agree the favorite for the nomination and the candidate with the best chance is Suzanne Scholte, a former Capitol Hill staffer and human rights activist. As president of the nonprofit Defense Forum Foundation since 1988, Scholte has argued for strengthening national defense spending and promoted freedom and human rights in totalitarian countries like North Korea. Her work has elevated her profile within Fairfax County's sizable Korean-American community, one of the many immigrant groups in the district that she wants to peel away from the Democratic party.

Scholte describes herself as someone who "came up in the Reagan era" and still believes Republicans can win by focusing appropriately on economic, social, and defense issues. She opposes abortion except in cases of rape, incest, and the life of the mother, a position she says most Americans hold. On the trail, she'll argue that it's the Democrats who hold extreme views on abortion. "We need to be slamming them on this," she says.

She calls Connolly a "partisan, bitter hack" who doesn't represent the federal workers of the district well. She notes that he voted for the budget sequestration plan that made indiscriminate cuts to federal agencies, the military, and employee benefits. "He broke faith with the people he represents," she says.

Tom Davis and other Northern Virginia Republicans hope Scholte and Comstock can win in November, but at the very least their candidacies could change the face of the party and

help the Republican most likely to be at the top of the ticket: U.S. Senate candidate Ed Gillespie.

Gillespie is a longtime party strategist and former Republican National Committee chairman with plenty of experience running campaigns. He's also leading the race for the Senate nomination heading into the party's June 7 nominating convention in Roanoke. Gillespie's announcement in January that he would challenge incumbent Democrat Mark Warner turned more than a few heads in Washington. Suddenly Warner, a popular former governor and perceived moderate, looked vulnerable.

Gillespie points out that Warner votes with Barack Obama "97 percent of the time" and isn't the "radical centrist" he claims to be. Like every Republican running against a sitting Democratic senator in 2014, he'll make the case that Warner was the deciding vote on Obamacare. Gillespie promises to bring a strong donor base and organizational infrastructure. It may also help that Gillespie lives in Northern Virginia, which he suggests gives him a nuanced understanding of how to run a campaign across a diverse state. It's not enough simply to run against a bad economy. "Northern Virginia isn't feeling the same kind of economic pain as in Southwest Virginia, but there is some economic anxiety" associated with the high cost of living there, he says.

Faced with a middling economy, Democrats have succeeded in driving up their margins in Northern Virginia in particular by casting Republicans like Mitt Romney and Ken Cuccinelli as too extreme on issues like abortion and birth control. The pro-life Gillespie claims he's willing to fight back against "war on women" rhetoric. "You can't let charges go unanswered," he says. Having women like Barbara Comstock and Suzanne Scholte running down-ticket couldn't hurt. Nor does the renewed sense among Republicans that after more than a decade of frustration in Northern Virginia, the party is beginning to adapt to reality.

"I think Republicans are hungry to win again," says Gillespie. ♦

The Art of the Deal

Detroit's restructuring proposal.

BY DAVID SKEEL

Can its riches fund payouts to just some city creditors?

From the moment Detroit filed for bankruptcy last summer, comparisons to the 2009 Chrysler and General Motors bailouts have abounded. Most highlight the differences, noting that the federal government is unlikely to pump billions of dollars into Detroit. But although the differences are real, the restructuring plan that Detroit has recently proposed suggests that the city's bankruptcy may have more in common with the car bailouts than anyone imagined. Unfortunately, it's the abuses of the latter that could be replicated—and even extended—if Detroit's plan is upheld in its current form.

The centerpiece of the proposed plan, which was released in February and revised late last month, is an $816 million art-for-pensions deal. A group of foundations and other donors, including the Ford, Kresge, and Knight foundations, propose to pay at least $330 million for the Detroit Institute of Art's (DIA) collection so long as, among other things, the state of Michigan contributes $350 million, the collection is transferred to a nonprofit trust that will keep it in Detroit, and the funds are used to increase the bankruptcy payout to Detroit's retirees. This last feature, the insistence on picking winners and losers, comes straight from the Chrysler bailout.

The art deal is in some respects a brilliant stroke. Ever since Detroit emergency manager Kevyn Orr hinted that some of the DIA's art might need to be sold, and arranged for a Christie's appraisal, the art world has fretted about the possibility of sales (and insisted, as has Michigan's attorney

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general, that sales would be illegal). The proposed deal would put these fears to rest. By directing the proceeds of the sale to Detroit's working-class pension beneficiaries, it also preempts complaints that fine art is unimportant as compared with the needs of struggling Detroiters. The $816 million would assure that pension beneficiaries receive a much higher percentage of what they are owed than many feared.

But the art-for-pensions deal achieves these benefits by flouting the bankruptcy rules. Detroit's pension beneficiaries are only one of many groups of creditors. The idea that Detroit could sell its art and use the proceeds to pay them but not other creditors flatly contradicts the core bankruptcy principle that similarly situated creditors need to be given similar treatment. The city and the foundations cannot simply decide that they will pay pension beneficiaries but not, say, the holders of Detroit bonds.

When a bankruptcy lawyer and I described the deal to a handful of other bankruptcy experts who have not been following the issue closely at a dinner last week, two of the experts literally started shouting. One said, "They can't do that!" And another: "That's a fraudulent transfer of assets!"

To complaints like these, defenders of the art deal argue that a buyer can set any terms it wants for a sale. In this case, the buyers won't put up the money unless the funds go to pension recipients. Before the car bailouts, arguments like these wouldn't have passed the proverbial straight face test. But they now must be taken very seriously.

In 2009, the government arranged for Chrysler to "sell" its assets to a newly created entity for $2 billion, far less than the assets were worth. The new entity (also funded by the government, of course) was required to make massive payments to Chrysler's retirees and trade creditors, while giving its senior lenders only a fraction of what they were owed. The transaction was deeply problematic, but it was allowed to proceed.

In one respect, the Detroit art deal is even worse. With Chrysler, the government at least pretended that the buyer, New Chrysler, had simply decided to make payments to the favored creditors after and apart from the sale itself. The $2 billion sale price was distributed to Old Chrysler's creditors in accordance with normal bankruptcy rules, according to this reasoning. The proponents of the Detroit art deal aren't even pretending. They not only want to be the only bidders in the sale; they also want to decide what happens with their funds in the bankruptcy case.

Diego Rivera's Detroit industry mural: Spot the bailout cash.

Oddly enough, Detroit's unions have complained nearly as loudly about the art deal as other creditors, even though union members would be the main beneficiaries. Why is this? One reason is that the unions seem to be worried about the precedent. If Detroit's pensions can be restructured, so can the pensions of other cities, and not just in Michigan. Second, although the bankruptcy judge has said, rightly, that the pensions can be restructured, union representatives run the risk of being voted out of office unless they insist that pension beneficiaries be paid every last penny, even if other creditors get far less.

If Detroit wanted to, it probably could simply sell the art to the foundations, without waiting for the judge's blessing. Because of concerns about interfering with state (and city) sovereignty, municipal bankruptcy laws do not give the judge any say-so on a sale that takes place during the case. But Detroit and the "buyers" do not have the power to unilaterally dictate what happens with the funds from the sale. That must be approved by the judge. A key requirement for approval is that the restructuring cannot "unfairly discriminate" in favor of one group of creditors and against other groups. Giving pension beneficiaries nearly 100 percent of what they are owed, and bondholders less than 20 percent, is obvious discrimination. Proponents may argue that the foundations and the state would not put up these funds unless they were given to pension beneficiaries, but other buyers clearly could be found for the art if the city really intended to sell it. Indeed, a bond insurer has now identified four potential buyers, each of which would pay more than $816 million for some or all of the art.

I do not mean to suggest either that Detroit should be indifferent to the plight of its pensioners or that the DIA's art should be scattered to the four winds. The unfair discrimination standard has enough flexibility to justify a somewhat higher payout for pension beneficiaries than for bondholders and other creditors. As I have argued in these pages in the past, there are very good reasons for doing this ("More Bankruptcies, Please," August 5, 2013). And keeping Detroit's magnificent art collection in Detroit is a piece of any feasible strategy for building a more promising and sustainable future. But these concerns do not justify running roughshod over the rules.

As T.S. Eliot wrote, "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason." As the Detroit bankruptcy heads into the homestretch, with a hearing on the city's proposed debt adjustment plan scheduled for this summer, the bankruptcy judge would do well to keep Eliot's admonition firmly in mind. ♦

Three Men Out

They had it all . . . and then.

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

A Masters without Tiger: It is not quite the case of an athlete dying young. He will almost certainly recover from the back surgery that kept him out of the tournament and play at Augusta again next year and, probably, for many years after that. He may even win again. After all, Jack Nicklaus won the Masters when he was 46 years old and Woods is only 38.

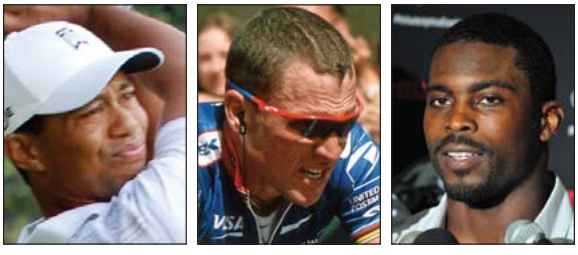
That win at Augusta was the 18th of Nicklaus's major championships. This is a record, and one that has been Woods's nearly lifelong goal to beat. That 19th is his white whale, and the quest has already cost him dearly. In body, soul, and riches.

He has fallen a long, long way since 1997, when he won his first Masters by 12 strokes. He finished the tournament at 18-under par. The record was 17, held by . . . Nicklaus. Woods, at 21, was the youngest Masters winner ever.

Television ratings and attendance at the course also soared into record territory. It was as though a new comet had appeared in the sporting heavens. Woods burned ever brighter, winning 14 major tournaments, four of them consecutively and becoming a first-order celebrity and major brand. He seemed to want to set endorsement records as much as he craved major tournament titles. His image was everywhere. Until it wasn't.

The flameout was dramatic, tawdry, and sad. A sex scandal involving prostitutes and porn stars and embarrassing emails. A divorce from his beautiful wife and mother of his two children. The endorsements went away, and suddenly you could walk the long concourse of a major airport without his larger-than-life image selling you a watch, a car, financial expertise . . . anything. He had gone, almost overnight, from being everywhere to being nowhere.

It wasn't the same on the golf course, either. His remorseless pursuit of majors stalled at 14, and he has played 22 of those tournaments, now, since winning one. The golf savants continue to say that he can do it, but then all of golf wishes devoutly that he were back in the hunt.



Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong, Michael Vick

Among its other effects, the Tiger phenomenon had made golf into a sport that was followed by people who didn't play the sport or, in truth, care much about it. It seemed far too slow—not to mention elitist—for mass tastes. But the overwhelming force of Woods's personality and his undeniable skills drew fans who were followed closely by marketers.

But golf was not the most improbable sport brought out of obscurity and into the glare of mass appeal by the force of one athlete's personality and talent. That would be bicycle racing before the advent of Lance Armstrong, who made it, and himself, into something approaching a cult. Armstrong won—indeed, dominated—in his sport as Woods did in his. He won the Tour de France a record seven times (in consecutive years), which is easily the equivalent of Woods actually winning those 19 majors. Armstrong not only demolished his competitors; he also beat death.

He was diagnosed with testicular cancer and told it had spread, giving him a 50/50 chance of surviving. This was before he won his first Tour de France. Armstrong used his celebrity to create the Livestrong Foundation, and he became the face of survival through defiance. Millions wore his jerseys and plastic wristbands—both yellow—in a show of solidarity and regard. He was, to them, more than a celebrity athlete. He was unconquerable will.

Through his long ride to glory, however, there had been rumors—widely and loudly broadcast—that his success was a case of winning through chemistry. That he was a doper. Armstrong denied it with characteristic intensity, threatening to sue and ruin some who published and spread the stories. He had been tested and declared clean. That was his story, and he was sticking to it.

And then, the rumors turned out to be the undeniable truth, and the entire edifice of celebrity and riches crumbled. Armstrong has lost some $75 million in future earnings. He finds himself on the other end of lawsuits, and were he to lose them all, he would owe more than $100 million. He has lost a lavish home in Texas. He is still defiant but reduced, now, to saying not "I didn't do it" but "*Everybody* did it."

Armstrong's legal woes, even if every case goes against him, will be about money and reputation. If, that is, there is any of that left for him to lose. He will still be able to get on his bike and ride. He will not go to jail.

In that regard, the flameouts of Tiger Woods and Lance Armstrong are less spectacular than the crash of Michael Vick, another athlete who had it all—or close enough.

Vick was the quarterback of the future. The hottest star in the grandest and gaudiest sport in the world, American professional football. The broadcast of the Super Bowl is the highest-rated show on television, year after year, and in 2005, Vick had fallen one game short

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WOODS: MOLLY A. BURGESS; ARMSTRONG: BENUTZER-HASE; VICK: ED YOURDON

of getting his team, the Atlanta Falcons, into the game. It seemed inevitable that he would get there. If not the next year, then eventually.

He was a new kind of quarterback. He could throw and he could run and he could throw on the run. The words "elusive" and "electrifying" became default modifiers for his name in the millions of words of excited commentary that were written and spoken about him and helped turn him, like Woods and Armstrong, into something more than a star athlete. Like them, Vick was a celebrity and a brand, especially in Atlanta, where he played and endorsed Coca-Cola, the iconic home town product, and where his face was ubiquitous. And he had the right face for it. He was movie-star handsome, with a smile that lit up his face so brilliantly it seemed just short of artificial.

But this was not the movies, and Vick revealed a bad boy side, occasionally, while the cameras of real life were still rolling. He made an obscene gesture to some fans who were heckling; was pretty nearly caught with some marijuana concealed inside a water bottle that he denied, not very credibly, was his. He lived fast.

But none of that prepared the world for his exposure as someone who liked to watch dogs fight and kill each other, who owned pit bulls that he gambled on in fights and on several occasions killed by hanging or electrocution after they had lost.

Vick, who had made more than $20 million the previous year, lost everything and went to prison.

He came back after his release, made all the right moves and said all the right things. The Philadelphia Eagles took a chance on him. But there are millions of fans who will never forgive him. He is now an aging quarterback on a troubled franchise. The Eagles recently traded him to the Jets, who already have their quarterback of the future, a nimble kid who may even be the "next Michael Vick." Meanwhile, fans are petitioning the school where the Jets are planning to train this summer. They do not want the dog killer on their campus.

Is there a moral to these three stories? Perhaps only that a celebrity culture seems destined to produce an Icarus subculture. It is interesting to ponder the human capacity for self-destruction, even as we enjoy the games. Scott Fitzgerald famously wrote, "Show me a hero and I'll write you a tragedy." Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, Marine Corps ace and Medal of Honor recipient, modified that to "Show me a hero and I'll show you a bum." In sports, maybe you just split the difference. ♦

Monotony Motors

Why today's cars all look alike.

BY PATRICK COOKE

Anyone who's ever misplaced the family car in a parking lot at the mall must surely sense that we are not living in a golden era of automobile design. Gazing in panic out across that vast tar pit, every car seems to look like every other car. Late-model midsize sedans and compacts, especially, appear nearly identical. It's no help that there are only a handful of basic paint colors to offer clues: white, black, silver, and gray. The quest appears to be at an end when you climb behind the wheel and realize that you are . . . in somebody else's car.

Déjà vu? A new Lexus at the Geneva auto show.

When doors open this week at the New York International Auto Show, the grumbling will continue, as it has for the past few years, that there isn't much new and different to see. The public once flocked to auto shows to marvel at groundbreaking designs created by giants in the field like Harley Earl at General Motors who "styled" magnificent sculptures in the early to mid 20th century. They bore names like Firebird and Golden Rocket. Today, mileage standards and safety regulations largely determine what most cars rolling off assembly lines look like. Auto styling may not yet be a dead art, but the artists have certainly been thwarted. As standardization by governments has taken hold—there are more than 200 safety and environmental regulations that go into building a car—the challenge for designers is no longer to create something uniquely beautiful, but to turn out a product that's in compliance—and hope people buy the result.

Federal interference began in the 1970s with a mandate to provide drivers with bumpers capable of surviving a five-mile-per-hour crash without sustaining damage to the body of the car. Bewildered manufacturers responded in many cases by simply bolting on front and rear rubber bricks, obliterating the lines of the car, which they then attempted to compensate for by adding gaudy touches like carriage lamps and vinyl roofs.

The energy crisis only made matters worse for designers when, in 1975, Congress introduced the first mandatory Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulations that set mileage quotas for new automobiles. The easiest way to meet the mandate was to lower the drag coefficient on cars, and so began the automakers' mad dash for the wind tunnel. With only so many

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solutions to be expected from rounding off fenders and tilting windshields, stylists began producing cars that converged more and more on the same shape. Built less of steel and more of lighter plastic material, the new cars were smaller, more expensive, and less safe. (A 2007 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study estimated 250-500 deaths per year attributable to CAFE downsizing.) "You had designers who were constrained and occupied with only one goal, and that was weight and miles per gallon," says Sam Kazman, general counsel at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. "They still are. It's the reason why many new cars come with no spare tire."

In the quest for greater fuel mileage, cars may have become less safe but, ironically, safety rules have done more to create the cookie-cutter clones than anything else—safety for pedestrians, that is. Pedestrian safety regulations imposed in Europe and Asia during the 2000s are not yet law in the United States, but domestic automakers must adhere to them if they expect to sell their products overseas. Hood ornaments were the first to go. Door handles were recessed and rear-view mirrors rounded and made inwardly collapsible. Front ends were lowered, creating a kind of cowcatcher appearance.

The biggest influence on design is what might be called the "hood hump." Because flying pedestrians are most seriously injured by striking the hood, lawmakers demanded that there be a collapsible void between the top of the engine and the underside of the hood.

That created a bubble in the hood—and headaches for stylists. "This raises not only the front of the hood, but also its trailing edge by at least 0.8 inches," writes Jim Hall, a veteran auto journalist at *Car & Driver* magazine who has studied the changes. Some automakers added three inches or more to hood height. That doesn't sound like much, but because the hood now bears a high crown, the dashboard looks too low and must be raised. Which means the seats must be raised as well for adequate forward visibility. And of course you can't have passengers hitting their heads, so the roofline must go up. Now the car looks lopsided, like a cubist-period Picasso. Flared wheel wells and bigger wheels and tires are often added to even out proportions, but there's another problem: Alterations have made the doors taller and in some cases narrowed the windows, creating a bigger blind spot for drivers. Not to worry: Last week the National Transportation Safety Board approved a new regulation that will require all new cars to be equipped with rear-view cameras by 2018. The auto industry has argued that it will cost manufacturers as much as $2.5 billion annually to comply.

The cumulative effect of all these changes is a wedge shape, seen from the side, from the low nose swooping upward toward a high tail—the startled stance of a cat with its rump in the air. And what about the view from the rear? With only so many ways for stylists to efficiently "separate" moving air from that high trunk lid, thus reducing drag, there is scarcely any difference in design resolution today from one car to another. Henrik Fisker, creator of the hybrid electric Fisker Karma sport sedan, once told me that when he's stuck in traffic he compulsively changes lanes in the forlorn hope of finding tail lights visually interesting enough to sit behind.

The former head of Ford design, J Mays, once observed that cars reflect the times in which they are created. If that's true, what will auto shows of the next few years be featuring? Maybe better to ask: What will Pajama Boy drive? It's possible he may just not be interested in cars. Last July an American Automobile Association study found that millennials are delaying getting driver's licenses, in part because the smartphone has supplanted the automobile as a teen obsession—though it's hard to imagine a Jan and Dean ode to the Samsung Galaxy S5—but largely because owning a car is too expensive.

And it's not going to get cheaper. In 2011, the Obama administration, in a move that EPA head Lisa Jackson declared an act of "environmental justice," announced the raising of CAFE standards yet again to 54.4 miles per gallon by 2025, double what is required today. The EPA itself said the compliance cost would be $157 billion. The National Automobile Dealers Association estimates that the new regulation will add nearly $3,000 to the price of a new car, and that affordable low-end cars may simply become too expensive to build at all. Meantime, the European Union has decreed that, beginning in 2015, all new cars be designed so that impact with a pedestrian is survivable at 25 miles per hour. Costly pedestrian airbags *outside* the car are under consideration.

It's worth noting that today's cars are engineering miracles and a testament to problem solving. The lowliest 2015 Ford Focus at this year's auto show will be light years more technologically advanced than the most sophisticated Mercedes-Benz of a decade ago. Sadly for stylists, most of that action is under the hood hump and not on the surface. They remain tasked with thinking up cars that look not the way they, or we, might want them to look, but the way they have to look. It's not that they turn out ugly cars, just uninteresting ones.

Eager for designs that will connect with buyers, automakers have in recent years reached back into the golden age of the 1950s and 1960s to revive beloved classics. It's what is called "retro-futurism." Marketers have disinterred long-ago hits like the Mini, the Fiat 500, the VW Beetle, and the Thunderbird, among others. Those designs have been upgraded, then poured into the regulatory jelly mold. What comes off the assembly line are, if not quite classics themselves, at least something that lets the heart race a little bit. As the manufacturers would put it, they make an "emotional statement."

Which is what buyers have always wanted, and the reason why the biggest draw at any auto show remains concept cars, those daring futuristic designs born of anything-goes imagination. They are dream cars ripped from the drawing boards of young Harley Earls, cars that, sadly, will most likely never be built. But seeing them, fans leave the auto show filled with hope for what's possible. It's a feeling that lasts until they get outside to the parking lot and ask: Dude, where's my car? ♦

More or Less?

Geert Wilders and the future of European populism

By Christopher Caldwell

Amsterdam

"Do you know this man?" Geert Wilders asked, gesturing at a closed-caption screen set up in his heavily guarded office in the Dutch parliament. "Some kind of fundraising guy who just became your ambassador?" The new U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands is Timothy Broas, a wealthy "bundler" for many Democratic campaigns. It was the week of President Obama's visit in late March, and Broas was using the occasion to make his first major pronouncement. He warned that a recent statement by a certain Dutch politician about Moroccans "conflicts with Dutch values."

That politician would be Wilders. On the night of municipal elections the week before, he had greeted supporters in the Tijd café and—more important—launched his party's campaign for the upcoming election of Dutch representatives to the European parliament. Wilders asked the riled-up crowd three questions. Did they want more or less—*meer of minder*—of the European Union? "Min-*der!* Min-*der!* Min-*der!*" the crowd began to howl. Of course they wanted less of the EU. The whole country had said so again and again. The Netherlands had voted almost two-to-one against a European constitution when it was put to the voters in a referendum in 2005, and yet its politicians had kept handing over more and more sovereignty to officials—"scoundrels," Wilders calls them—in Brussels. Wilders's PVV, the most stridently anti-EU party in the country, held a commanding lead in the polls.

Wilders then asked a second question. Did the people in the room want more or less of the PvdA, the country's center-left party? Again: "Min-*der!* Min-*der!* Min-*der!*" You didn't need the crowd to tell you that. The PvdA's own voters had already done so. It had suffered an electoral wipeout that night, losing Amsterdam, Groningen, Utrecht, The Hague—cities where a non-PvdA government would until recently have been unthinkable. The whole electorate wanted less of the damn PvdA. Once a benefit-bestowing powerhouse that commanded a third of the 150 seats in the national assembly, it has lost touch with the country's working class. Although the party still serves as a junior partner in the national coalition, it would take only 13 seats—fewer than a tenth—if elections were held today.

It was replaced in the hearts of an increasingly upper-middle-class left by D66. That party was named after the year it was founded, and it has never traveled far from the mid-1960s limousine liberalism of then-New York mayor John Lindsay—a politician to whom the D66 leader, the equine Alexander Pechtold, bears a striking stylistic resemblance. So the PvdA are the leading victims of what the pollster Maurice De Hond has called "the slow-motion demolition of the Dutch political system," just as Wilders seemed, until that night in March, to be its greatest beneficiary.

Wilders had one more question, though. After explaining that his party rested on straight talk and avoided political correctness, he asked the room: "Do you want, in this city and in the Netherlands, more or fewer Moroccans?" Wilders would explain in an interview a few minutes later—the post facto clarification is his political signature—that he didn't mean all Moroccans, only the criminal ones. But the room did not insist on that qualification and hollered, "Min-*der!* Min-*der!* Min-*der!*" as lustily as it had for the other questions.

The fallout was almost immediate. One German news agency compared Wilders to the Nazi rabble-rouser Joseph Goebbels. Two of his 14 members of parliament exited the party. So did two city councilors and one of his European candidates. Then Wilders's adversaries began to file judicial complaints against him for discrimination, 500 of them in a single day in the left-wing city of Nijmegen. The other parties debated whether to freeze Wilders's party out of any involvement in governing, through what is called a *cordon sanitaire*. (Labour said yes; D66 said it would be undemocratic.) Wilders fell from 27 percent to 22 percent in the polls.

It was a signal that there are limits to what a populist candidate can say—but also that those limits might be getting less and less constraining. Five percentage points is not that many. As the days passed, it appeared that Wilders might be in the process of winning them back.

Wilders is often cast, along with Marine Le Pen in France, as a hangdog reactionary, a voice of the aging white

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working classes of the immigration-swamped welfare states of northwestern Europe, a tribune of the losers of globalization. He is actually not typical of much. Wilders stopped school at age 18. He sports a wild peroxide-blond pompadour. Much of his family comes from "India," as the Dutch called the much-lamented Indonesian colony they abandoned in 1949. He traveled as a young man to Israel and worked on a kibbutz. That experience became a lodestar of his political thinking, reinforced by his twin obsessions: sovereignty (which he likes) and Islam (which he does not). Islam is the one issue on which Wilders is unambiguously radical. He has suggested taxing headscarves, has attacked fellow legislators of Turkish and Moroccan background who hold two passports, and considers the Koran a "fascistic" book, an utterance for which he had to defend himself in a celebrated court case.

Geert Wilders

Wilders, 50, comes from Venlo, in Catholic Limburg, but his conservatism, if conservatism it is, is not at all of a traditionalist kind. Wilders cares a lot about fighting homophobia and protecting the Dutch welfare state. In this he is one of many Dutch politicians shaped by the example of Pim Fortuyn. A flamboyant gay academic, Fortuyn rose out of nowhere in the months after September 11, 2001, arguing that immigrant violence and Muslim piety were incompatible with the freewheeling Dutch lifestyle that he considered the country's proudest achievement. Fortuyn might have become prime minister had he not been assassinated on the eve of the 2002 elections by an animal-rights activist, Volkert van der Graaf, who felt Fortuyn was using Muslims as "scapegoats." Two years later, the filmmaker and anti-Muslim cracker of jokes Theo van Gogh was knocked off his bicycle and stabbed to death by Mohammed Bouyeri, a Dutch Islamist of Moroccan background. After multiple death threats the Somali-born feminist politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali left the country.

Wilders has lived under heavy police protection for more than a decade. Credible threats have been made against him on many occasions, and plots broken up to take his life with bombs and guns. The spokesman for a group called Sharia4Holland called for giving "this dog of the Romans" the same treatment van Gogh got. More recently, hundreds of jihadists have left the Netherlands to fight in Syria, including one—"Khalid from Almere"—who can be seen on right-wing websites posing with heads he has separated from infidel bodies. (Wilders's party is the top vote-getter in Almere.) All this immigration-related violence has changed the country from top to bottom. It was announced the week of Obama's visit that van der Graaf will be released in May after serving 12 years of an 18-year term. The usual reaction among the Dutch has been incredulity that they once lived in a country that sentenced people so leniently.

The Netherlands is the country in Europe in which a negative assessment of Muslim immigration is most openly voiced. The liberal VVD party's posters for March's elections in Rotterdam read: "In Rotterdam we speak Dutch." Even before Wilders's outburst, worries about the country's 400,000 or so first- and second-generation Moroccans were freely expressed. Moroccans commit a wildly disproportionate percentage of street crime—40 percent have been arrested by age 24, according to a notorious 2011 report from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. Somalis and Antilleans may commit more crimes per capita, but there are more Moroccans. On the true-crime series *Opsporing Verzocht*, the perp the policemen run down at the end of the show is almost always some Moroccan kid, or a "Mocro," to use the street slang. The tabloids are full of stories about Moroccan gangs robbing nursing homes. "These places are defended as if they're Fort Knox," one of Wilders's candidates told me. An anti-Wilders march held in Amsterdam and attended by the mayor, Eberhard van der Laan, was supposed to be dedicated to the proposition that "We are all Moroccans," but wound up marred by signs reading: "Wilders—Dog of Israel."

There are signs that Moroccans are slowly becoming part of the Dutch mainstream. The PvdA once claimed the whole Moroccan (and Turkish) electorate. To an extent, the unanimous vote of ethnic minorities carried the left through the years in which it was losing the votes of the Dutch working class. But today, young immigrants' children are abandoning the PvdA, some for the D66, some for new Islamist parties. Wilders's postelection remarks were greeted by a Twitter campaign in which stylish-looking young Dutch Moroccans held up their passports under the words (in English) "Mocros be, like, born here." Dutch attitudes towards their young Moroccan fellow-citizens are full of pathos, as were those of Americans towards violent black youths during the crime wave of the late 1970s. In many quarters, a genuine despair about Moroccans coexists with a genuine wish to assimilate them.

James Kennedy, an American-born historian at the Free

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University in Amsterdam, was struck by a question nobody asked: whether Wilders meant "Moroccan" as a legal description of Moroccan citizens or an ethnic description of certain Dutch citizens. Kicking the former out was fine; kicking the latter out was unthinkable. Alas for clarity, the two definitions overlap. Dual citizenship is common. Wilders really does want fewer Moroccans in almost every sense of the word. He intends to stop fresh immigration from Muslim countries. He would like to encourage those already in Holland without Dutch passports to leave. And he hopes that a law passed more than a decade ago which permits stripping terrorists of dual nationality can be adapted and used for all crimes. So there has been a shift: Wilders used to criticize a body of belief. Now he criticizes a body of people.

Wilders, though, does not see this as such a shift at all. When I last interviewed him, in 2005, he was already living under death threats and had just left the free-market/liberal VVD party. He said at the time that his new party would be very different—and very distant—from the French National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen, with his habit of baiting Jews about the Holocaust, or the Flemish Bloc of the Belgian separatist Filip Dewinter, with his anti-immigrant vitriol. "That's not me," he said. And yet last winter, Wilders agreed to an electoral pact with Le Pen's daughter and successor, Marine, and was scheduled to speak in late March before Dewinter's group in Antwerp until he canceled amidst controversy over his Moroccan remarks. He now speaks of "parties like mine" in France, Sweden, Austria, and Italy, which he calls "patriot" parties. While such parties differ in tactics and values—Wilders would leave both the European Union and the euro currency, for instance, while Italy's Northern League would leave the euro but not the EU—he unquestionably now sees himself as part of a Europe-wide movement. The anti-Wilders daily *NRC Handelsblad* now holds that the question is no longer whether Le Pen is too right-wing for Wilders's tastes, but whether Wilders is too right-wing for Le Pen's. What has changed: Wilders, those parties, or the world?

"I think all three," he says. "Let's be happy that nothing stays the same. Certainly there is a big difference between Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter. You cannot get so successful and so big in polls if you are extreme or radical." This seems to be a core belief of his, that above a certain size there is no such thing as a radical party, and he sounds sincerely hurt by the Hitler comparisons and all the other imputations of radicalism. "Did we change? Well, of course," he says, but he adds, "Not so much on the issues. I still would not work closely with parties that come close to racism, or hatred of Israel or Jews."

It is a secret to Wilders's success that he so often confounds our expectation that an extremist be someone who makes you go, "Yikes." Wilders seldom seems angry or out of control. There is a humor, albeit a bitter humor, in his description of how Dutch immigration policy was handed over to the European Union's bureaucracy. "Today, when it comes to 90 percent of our immigration policy," he says, "there is a leftish liberal hippie lady from Sweden, Cecilia Malmström, the European commissioner in charge of immigration. And she is in charge of our immigration policy. Nobody in Holland knows who she is. Nobody in Holland voted for her. And she's in charge of what we do on immigration." Wilders has used Malmström again and again on the hustings as a symbol of violated sovereignty.

Wilders has an unusual freedom from "spin." One expects an honest, if slanted, account from politicians regarding the state of their society—but one almost never expects the truth regarding their own prospects. Speaking to Wilders days after the *minder-minder* incident, I found him strikingly candid about the damage it had done him. "It got more turmoil than before," he said. "I have to be honest, Thursday, Friday … there was a lot of criticism internally. For the first time, I said, 'I don't know where this will end, but whatever happens, I will continue.'"

It is this direct and straightforward side, as much as any dark and devious side, that caused Wilders trouble. From a Machiavellian perspective, it was a foolhardy thing for him to raise Moroccans the way he did. Every last Dutchman who considers North African immigration the country's largest problem will vote for him, and has long known he will vote for him. What Wilders needed to do—and what his high percentages in the polls show he has been doing—was harvest as many votes as possible among the vast number of Hollanders uncomfortable with globalization and for whom establishment politicians are, for whatever reason, unwilling to speak.

This may well be a majority. The vote against the European treaty in 2005 was 62 percent to 38. Every day in the newspapers, Dutch people see their traditions run down. Consider Zwarte Piet. Although the Dutch celebrate Christmas, the highlight of their holiday season comes earlier in December with the festival of Sinterklaas—Santa Claus. To say "highlight of their holiday season" is to put it mildly. Sinterklaas is the symbol of Dutch childhood. Even more than clogs and raw herring, it may be the most Dutch thing about being Dutch. There are Sinterklaas societies and a Sinterklaas magazine. There are women in middle age who (much like our own frequenters of Christmas stores in the Midwest) spend much of their year planning for Sinterklaas.

The Dutch tradition varies slightly from our own. Where our Santa Claus gives coal to bad little boys and girls, the Dutch Santa Claus has a coal-black sidekick, Zwarte Piet, or "Black Pete," who carries bad little children off to Spain in a sack. A rapper has compared this tradition to the Holocaust, and a young immigrant performance

artist from Curaçao named Quinsy Gario, rich with the cultural sensitivity of his twenty-some-odd years, has led a campaign called "Zwarte Piet Is Racisme."

A few years ago, such remarks would have been derided. Yet it was not the young multiculturalists but the prime minister Mark Rutte who became the subject of ridicule in the press when he said his friends in the Antilles were fortunate that when they dressed up as Zwarte Piet they didn't have to ash their faces. A majority of people in Amsterdam today are of non-Dutch background, and momentum is gathering to either ban the Zwarte Piet tradition or turn it into some kind of festival of diversity, with Piets of different colors. In March, Ineke Strouken of the Dutch Center for Popular Culture told a national newspaper that she had been involved in such discussions since last fall. These things are not a big deal, except that they are a big deal. Strouken told the press that she is misunderstood, and that she gets mail from people threatening to behead her.

These are the subjects Wilders talks about well. He caters to people who think a lot about Sinterklaas. Most Dutch politicians cater to people who think about the World Economic Forum in Davos. While the Netherlands has come through the financial and economic crisis relatively well, life has gotten worse for ordinary people in a whole bunch of ways. Unemployment has risen to its highest level in 20 years (nearly 9 percent). The country's sales tax is at 21 percent. In 2010, Wilders commissioned a study from NYFER, the Forum for Economic Research, on the effects of immigration and found, controversially, that non-Western immigrants to the Netherlands cost the country $10 billion a year. "We have to make a choice," he said in March. "Either we will be an immigration country, or we will have a welfare state." When he gets rolling he has a gift for bundling all of these and many other problems into a brief against Europe. While he condemns Russia's annexation of Crimea, Wilders—who has visited Ukraine many times—was just as harsh against members of the European parliament who incited the Ukrainian protesters.

"People are fed up that, in the Netherlands, the government has austerity programs, is raising taxes, while at the same time they send billions to Eastern and Southern Europe." He resents the $15 billion EU package for Ukraine, and EU efforts to keep Greece and Cyprus in the euro currency zone, which he calls a one-size-fits-none policy. "People are fed up with it. They don't feel 'European.' There is no European people, so there is no European democracy."

Why, then—with such a rich variety of European issues to talk about and such a fine-tuned repertoire of one-liners for winning votes with—did Wilders alienate people with his comment about Moroccans? "It's the same problem, Moroccans and Europe—it's the same. Today we are not in charge of our own borders. We want to regain national sovereignty. Budget, borders, money, immigration, laws. I am not saying we should accept nobody under any circumstances," he says, meaning immigrants, "but we should decide ourselves. We signed our sovereignty away and I want it back."

Dutch is the language from which we get our word "boss." The way he described his wish to his followers on the night of March 19 was to say he wanted "that we be the boss again in our own country." In a way that few of Wilders's foes probably understood at the time, what made the evening ominous was not so much what Wilders said—he has said such things before. It was how the crowd behaved. When politics grows heated and unpredictable, followers can lead. Things take on a life of their own. Note how, during the Ukraine crisis, the moment of maximal Western alarm and maximal Western resolve came not after any pronouncement or maneuver by Vladimir Putin but after the people of Crimea voted overwhelmingly (even if not so overwhelmingly as reported) in a referendum to join Russia.

The clash between Wilders and the Dutch political establishment, although it has over the past decade been largely a matter of reciprocal posturing, could now be growing more serious. Both pro-Europeans and anti-Europeans share a belief in what we could call the conservation of sovereignty. Any power the historic nation-states lose is acquired by Europe and can be "taken back," undamaged, by the nation-states. Hardened Brussels bureaucrats believe this as ardently as the most dug-in supporters of Wilders. But it is wrong. The "European project" is about dismantling states, and then reconstituting the powers they used to wield at the level of the EU. The two processes do not necessarily take place simultaneously. It may be that Europe is not competent to replace the nation-state in its most important tasks. And it may be that, through disuse, nation-states will have lost their capacity to take up the work of governing again.

A few days after Wilders asked whether Dutch people wanted more Moroccans or fewer, David Pinto, the Moroccan-born director of the country's Inter-Cultural Institute, published a disturbing op-ed in the daily *De Volkskrant*. "With a level of confidence verging on certitude," Pinto wrote, "I can say that in no case would the answer ever be 'More.'" A more troubling question for Pinto was "What violation did Wilders commit, exactly, that was the cause for so much rage?" That really is a poser. A tradition-minded country could respond that Wilders's question was just wrong, that it's simply not done, that it ought to be a matter of common sense, and that's that. But for decades, public debate in the Netherlands has snickered at tradition whenever it has been invoked in matters of sex, religion, sovereignty, the nation, and much more besides. Where does anyone get the idea that it can be summoned back now? ♦

Winston vs. the Webbs

A century-old precursor to the Obamacare debate

By Gertrude Himmelfarb

The debate over Obamacare may remind a student of British history of the debate in Britain over the National Insurance Act of 1911, which was in effect until the initiation of the welfare state after World War II. The protagonists in that debate (like ours, not formally a debate, but implicitly that) were Winston Churchill and Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Churchill, a rising star in the Liberal party and a member of Herbert Asquith's cabinet, heartily promoted the act. The Webbs, prominent members of the Fabian Society and vigorous polemicists ("public intellectuals," we would now call them), sharply criticized it.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb

Fabianism is generally described as a moderate, reformist form of socialism, achieving its ends not by class war and revolution but by persuasion and "permeation." Yet in a sense it was more radical than Marxism because it sought control not so much of the economy or polity as of society itself. It is fitting that the Fabian Society should have been founded, in 1884, as a society, not a party, for its primary focus was the "social organism," and its ultimate purpose "the regeneration of society," "the reconstruction of the Social System." (If we now speak of it in the past tense, it is because, although it still exists, it has been largely absorbed into the Labour party.) Sidney Webb was not literally a founding father of Fabianism, but he was very nearly that. A 26-year-old civil-service clerk (admitted to the bar but not practicing law), he joined the society a year after its establishment and quickly became one of its leading figures. His marriage in 1892 to the no less talented and energetic Beatrice made the couple something like the First Family of Fabianism.

Sidney Webb's contribution to *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (published in 1889, the book sold over 25,000 copies in two years) followed the lead essay by the editor, George Bernard Shaw. Where Shaw focused on private property, "the economic action of Individualism," as the nemesis of socialists, Webb made individualism itself the archenemy. Just as the "anarchy" of laissez-faire must be corrected, he argued, so must the "anarchy" in society. The "social organism," once a union of individual men, had evolved, so that the individual is now "created" by the social organism of which he is a part. It is the social organism, therefore, not the individual, that must be cultivated and perfected.

> The perfect fitting development of each individual is not necessarily the utmost and highest cultivation of his own personality, but the filling, in the best possible way, of his humble function in the great social machine. We must abandon the self-conceit of imagining that we are independent units, and bend our jealous minds, absorbed in their own cultivation, to this subjection to the higher end, the Common Weal.

Beatrice carried the argument further by extending the case against individualism to a case against democracy as well. In her diary she compared herself and Sidney with her brother-in-law Leonard Courtney, a Liberal member of Parliament and a "democrat at heart."

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> Possibly he is more of a democrat than we are ourselves; for we have little faith in the "average sensual man," we do not believe that he can do much more than describe his grievances, we do not think that he can prescribe the remedies. . . . We wish to introduce into politics the professional expert—to extend the sphere of government by adding to its enormous advantages of wholesale and compulsory management, the advantage of the most skilled entrepreneur.

The combination of little faith in the "average sensual man" and complete faith in the "professional expert" was the earmark of Fabianism. "Nothing in England is done," Sidney wrote soon after joining the society, "without the consent of a small intellectual yet practical class in London not 2000 in number. . . . We, like the homeopathists and the old Radicals, shall win without being acknowledged victors, by permeation of the others." He might have enlarged that figure in later years as the society grew in numbers and influence, but he would have been confirmed in the strategy of "permeation." Sidney dominated the London County Council for many years, Beatrice was an influential member of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, and they coauthored the Minority Report in 1909 proposing, among other things, penal colonies for those who refused to work. When they were not permeating the existing institutions of society, they created new ones—the London School of Economics in 1895 and the *New Statesman* magazine in 1913—all of this while incessantly writing (more than half-a-dozen books before the war), lecturing, organizing meetings, and hosting dinner parties that were long on talk and notoriously short on food. (Later Sidney permeated, so to speak, Parliament itself, sitting in the House of Commons for much of the 1920s, until moving to the House of Lords as 1st Baron Passfield.)

Winston Churchill, 1911

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It may have been the intention of the Webbs to recruit, if not to the Fabian Society, then to their select "class" of experts, a new and promising member of Parliament, Winston Churchill, when they invited him to dinner in 1903. Beatrice's account of him in her diary was hardly favorable, yet not entirely hopeless.

> First impression; restless—almost intolerably so, without capacity for sustained and unexciting labor—egotistical, bumptious, shallow-minded and reactionary, but with a certain personal magnetism, great pluck and some originality—not of intellect but of character. . . . No notion of scientific research, philosophy, literature or art, still less religion. But his pluck, courage, resourcefulness and great tradition may carry him far unless he knocks himself to pieces like his father.

Churchill had then been in Parliament for three years, as a Conservative (like his father), hence Beatrice's characterization of him as "reactionary." But he was something of a maverick from the beginning, which is perhaps why she found him interesting. He was at odds with his party (and his own constituency) principally on the issue of free trade, for social as much as economic reasons. Protectionism, he said, meant "dear food for the million, cheap labor for the millionaire"; workers were justified in seeing tariffs as "taxing every mouthful they eat." But there was something else that must have endeared him to the Webbs. "Our movement," he told a group of Liberals in May 1904, "is towards a better, fairer organization of society"—"organization of society," practically a Fabian slogan. Two weeks later, Churchill moved to the opposition benches, deliberately seating himself next to David Lloyd George—the same seat his father had occupied during his term in the opposition.

Churchill's rise in the Liberal party was rapid. One of Henry Campbell-Bannerman's first acts, as Liberal prime minister in December 1905, was to appoint Churchill undersecretary of state at the Colonial Office. And one of Herbert Asquith's, when he became prime minister in April 1908, was to bring Churchill into the cabinet as president of the Board of Trade. Two years later Churchill became home secretary and the following year first lord of the Admiralty. By that time, he had supervised and seen through Parliament a series of major reforms: the Old-Age Pensions Act, the Mines Eight-Hours Act, the Labour Exchanges Act, several prison reforms, and the National Insurance Act providing health and unemployment insurance in those industries where unemployment was chronic. The last act was not passed until late in 1911, by which time Churchill was in the Admiralty, but he had been an enthusiastic promoter and defender of it for two years, culminating in the final debate in the House of Commons. To his chagrin, the bill was officially introduced by Lloyd George, the chancellor

of the Exchequer. "Lloyd George," Churchill wrote to his wife, "has practically taken Unemployment Insurance to his bosom, and I am I think effectively elbowed out of this large field in which I consumed so much thought and effort. Never mind! There are many good fish in the sea."

Asquith and Lloyd George had been enthusiastic about the bill from the beginning, but the other members of the cabinet were not, which makes Churchill's role all the more important. Unemployment insurance was, as he reminded his wife, the product of "much thought and effort"—and not only unemployment insurance, but social reform in general. "Political freedom, however precious," he wrote in 1908, "is utterly incomplete without a measure at least of social and economic independence." To Asquith, who had visited Germany and been impressed by Bismarck's reforms, he cited the example of Germany. "Dimly across gulfs of ignorance I see the outline of a policy which I call the Minimum Standard. . . . Underneath the immense disjointed fabric of safeguards and insurances which has grown up by itself in England, there must be spread—at a lower level—a sort of Germanised network of State intervention and regulation." Another memorandum, in a curious amalgam of Bismarckianism and Fabianism, proposed a "tremendous policy in Social Organization," including labor exchanges and unemployment and health insurance. "She [Germany] is organized not only for war, but for peace. We are organized for nothing except party politics. . . . I say—thrust a big slice of Bismarkianism over the whole underside of our industrial system, and await the consequences, whatever they may be, with a good conscience."

To the Webbs, the National Insurance Act of 1911 was 'dangerous' because it provided for 'a free choice of doctors,' permitting the patient to choose a doctor 'who interferes least with his habits' and might order such 'medical extras' as food and alcohol. In effect, the bill was 'paying the people to be ill.'

If the Webbs would have appreciated Churchill's appeal to "social organization," they did not appreciate the reforms he proposed in that name. Indeed, they were very critical of both the Labor Exchanges Act and the National Insurance Act, for much the same reason, because they were insufficiently rigorous and too permissive, pandering to those they professed to help. The Labor Exchanges Act authorized the Board of Trade to establish "labor exchanges" where workers would be informed of the availability and location of work, would be assisted in applying for a job, and be given money to travel to it. The act was voluntary for both the employer and worker; the employer was not obliged to register his need for labor, nor was the worker obliged to use the facility of the exchange or accept the job offered him.

Introduced by Churchill in 1909 to a nearly empty House of Commons, the Labor Exchanges Act was passed with little dispute. To the Webbs, however, it was deeply flawed. What was wanted, they insisted, was a compulsory system, binding upon employers and laborers alike. Anything short of that would encourage "malingering" on the part of workers who need not apply to the exchange or accept the job offered them, relying on unemployment insurance to support them in lieu of work. "My wife and I," Sidney informed the Board of Trade, "had come to the conclusion that compulsory insurance was impracticable unless we had a compulsory labor exchange; and that, along with a compulsory labor exchange, compulsory insurance was unnecessary." In her diary, Beatrice described her meeting at 11 Downing Street with the lord chancellor followed by a breakfast with Churchill: "I tried to impress on them that any grant from the community to the individual beyond what it does for all, ought to be conditional on better conduct and that any insurance scheme had the fatal defect that the state got nothing for its money—that the persons felt they had a right to the allowance whatever their conduct."

"Conditional on better conduct"—this was at the heart of the issue. The insurance bill was "dangerous" because it provided for "a free choice of doctors," permitting the patient to choose a doctor "who interferes least with his habits" and might order such "medical extras" as food and alcohol. In effect, the bill was "paying the people to be ill." The Webbs recalled the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897, which tempted workers to make "the most of every mishap," avoid treatment so as to collect compensation, and then squander the money.

It may seem ironic that socialists (of the Fabian or any other variety) should have opposed the National Insurance Act while a Conservative (temporarily lapsed, to be sure) enthusiastically supported it—and, more ironic, that they both did so under the banner of "social organization." Both of them took that term seriously, but with different intent. The Webbs wanted to organize society in order to curb the anarchy of individualism and create a

rational society in which the average sensual man would be prevented from indulging his whims and vices. Churchill wanted to organize society in order to create the conditions in which individualism would thrive, and the average sensual man—that is to say, everyman—could live his life freely, whims, vices, and all. In a memorandum entitled "Notes on Malingering," Churchill defended the proposed act to another Fabian, Llewellyn Smith, the permanent secretary of the Board of Trade:

> I do not feel convinced that we are entitled to refuse benefit to a qualified man who loses his employment through drunkenness. He has paid his contributions; he has insured himself against the fact of unemployment, and I think it arguable that his foresight should be rewarded irrespective of the cause of his dismissal, whether he lost his situation through his own habits of intemperance or through his employer's habits of intemperance. I do not like mixing up moralities and mathematics. . . . Our concern is with the evil, not with the causes, with the fact of unemployment, not with the character of the unemployed.

"I do not like mixing up moralities and mathematics"—that memorable sentence encapsulates the debate between Churchill and the Webbs. The strength and merit of insurance, Churchill insisted, was that it depended not on the moral, or immoral, behavior of individuals (of employers and workers alike, both prone to "habits of intemperance"), but on "clear, ruthless mathematical rules," the "mathematics of averages." "We seek to substitute for the pressure of the forces of nature, operating by chance on individuals, the pressures of the laws of insurance, operating through averages." He made the same point in the House of Commons, praising the bill for bringing "the magic of averages to the aid of the millions."

While repudiating the "moralities" the Webbs brought to the debate, Churchill attributed to the act a larger moral purpose. By making workers more secure, it would make them better human beings, and by giving them a "stake in the country" (in quotation marks), it would also make them better citizens.

> The idea is to increase the stability of our institutions by giving the mass of industrial workers a direct interest in maintaining them. . . . With a "stake in the country" in the form of insurances against evil days the worker will pay no attention to the vague promises of revolutionary socialism. . . . It will help to remove the dangerous element of uncertainty from the existence of the industrial worker. It will give him an assurance that his home, got together through long years and with affectionate sacrifice, will not be broken up, sent bit by bit to the pawnshop, just because through no fault of his own maybe he falls out of work. It will make him a better citizen, a more efficient worker, a happier man.

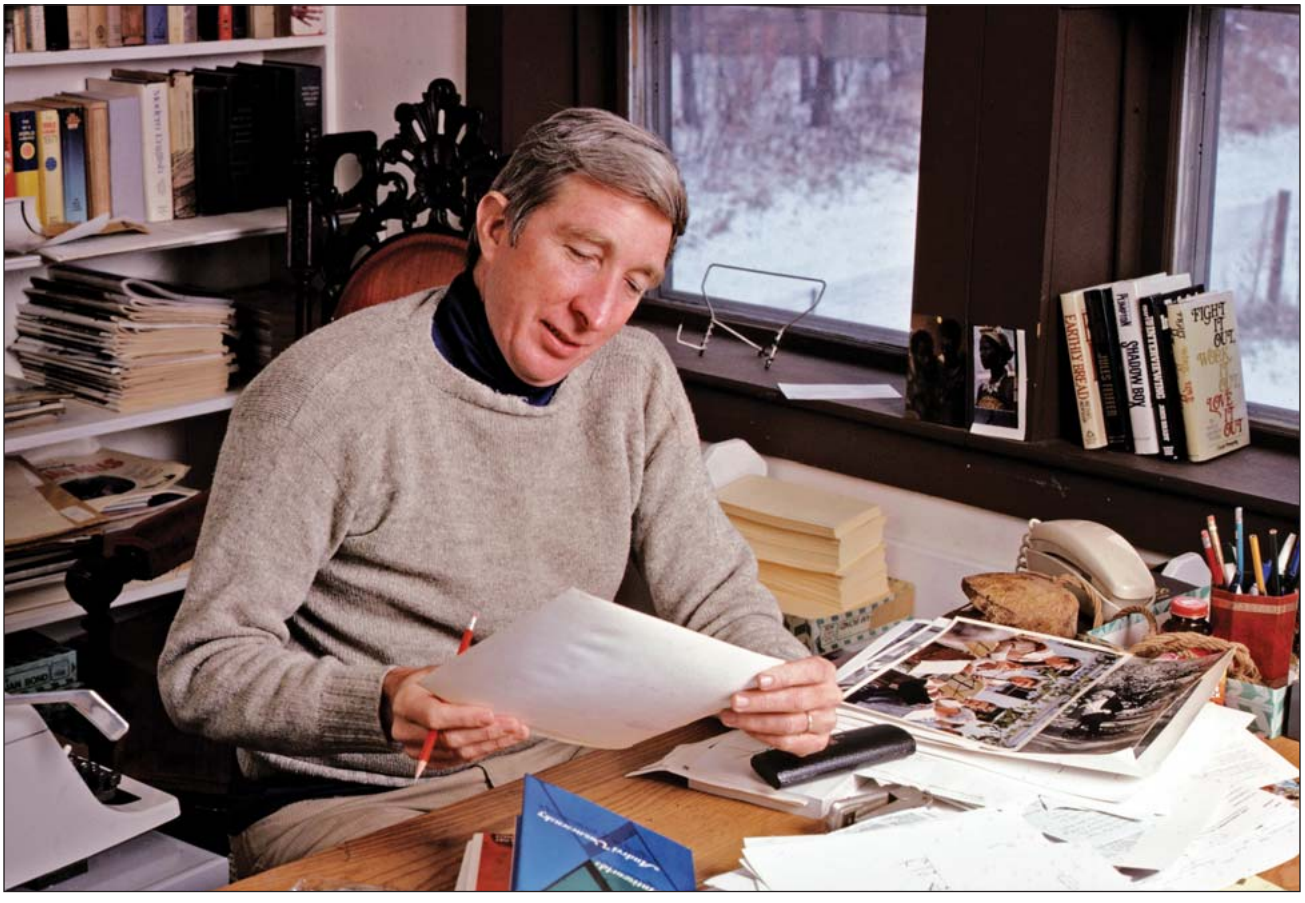
This is not the Churchill we remember today, and for good reason. It is a minor episode occupying only a few years in the life of the man who, for more momentous reasons, has been hailed as "the savior of his country," even "the savior of Western civilization." Yet it is a major episode in the social history of his country. And it may be an object lesson for Americans today.

Supporters of Obamacare have praised it as in the best tradition of progressivism. Critics have decried it as an ominous example of socialism. A more appropriate term might be Fabianism. We may hear the echoes of

George Bernard Shaw (left) addresses a London crowd, 1910.

the Webbs' distrust of the "average sensual man," in the present law that denies the individual a choice of doctors and mandates types of insurance he might not want or require. Or their reliance upon the "professional expert" to "prescribe the remedies" for the individual's "grievances," in the administrative agencies now authorized to establish the proper medications for all ailments, overriding the doctor as well as patient. Or their impatience with the democratic process of legislation, in the recent presidential fiats modifying or suspending provisions of the law enacted by Congress. More dramatically, we may see the Fabian vision of "the regeneration of society," "the reconstruction of the Social System," in Barack Obama's exultant pronouncement just before his election: "We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America."

The National Insurance Act of 1911 may have been a passing event in the life of Churchill. But its American counterpart is a climactic event in the presidency of Barack Obama and a critical event for Americans today. We may well look back to that debate more than a century ago and recall Winston Churchill's quip, "I refuse to be shut up in a soup kitchen with Beatrice Webb." ♦



John Updike, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts (1978)

Updike's Story

The Great American Novelist of the nuclear age. BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

There never was a good biography of a good novelist. There couldn't be. He is too many people, if he's any good.

Thus says F. Scott Fitzgerald in his *Notebooks*, the dictum used as an epigraph to John Updike's talk on literary biography. Compelling as this sounds at first, it just can't be the case, given the number of good ones that have been written in the last century, to go no farther back. Adam Begley's biography of Updike may now be added to the list for the way it issues from the laudable motive of desiring (in Updike's own words) "to prolong and extend our intimacy with the author."

Updike
by Adam Begley
Harper, 576 pp., $29.99

John Updike died at the end of January 2009, after a two-month siege of lung cancer. In the weeks that followed, with no "official" biography commissioned, Begley went swiftly to work. Although Updike's wife Martha declined to participate in the project, Begley was able to talk to a number of people close to the writer, the most important of whom were Updike's first wife, Mary, and their four children. Perhaps as important in facilitating the biographer's task was the availability of the immense Updike archive purchased by Harvard, an overwhelming mass of manuscripts, letters to and from Updike, and first drafts and false starts of novels—all the papers that he had been so assiduously handing over to Harvard since the mid-1960s, forming what he referred to as "the refuse of my profession."

GETTY IMAGES

William H. Pritchard is Henry Clay Folger professor of English at Amherst College.

As one who briefly consulted the archive some years ago, I can testify that to engage fully with this material, and live to tell the tale, is in itself a heroic feat. Although Begley was allowed only to paraphrase, not quote directly from, the archive, this is not a serious limitation, since Updike filled so many published volumes with declarations, original formulations, and *trouvailles*. The archive's "vast paper trail, possibly the last of its kind," in Begley's words, provides irrefutable evidence of Updike's faith in the enduring significance of his achievement.

The resulting volume, at 500-plus pages, could have been even longer, and it is much to Begley's credit that he has managed the job in 12 chapters—each of them, beginning with Updike's upbringing in Berks County, Pennsylvania, clearly focused on and skillfully intertwining the most important events of Updike's life and the many works that he produced as a prolific man of letters.

The boyhood chapter is perhaps the richest in the book. Absolutely central, as we surely knew already, was the dominating presence of his mother Linda, whose aspirations for her son were virtually unbounded. (The fine early story "Flight" dramatizes her vision and the son's response to it.) "I was made to feel I could do things," Updike told an interviewer, adding, "If you get this feeling early and can hold it until you're 15, you tend never to lose it." The move, when he was 13, from his already-beloved Shillington to the farm in Plowville 11 miles away was his mother's idea, and it provided the son, for all his distress at being uprooted from his town and classmates, with what he called "the crucial detachment of my life." He would use that event as the key motive for so much of his writing to follow.

At Harvard, he began a long autobiographical novel, *Home*, which the publisher Harper encouraged him to submit, but about which they were ultimately less enthusiastic. Begley notes how fortunate it was that Updike followed Harper's rejection by abandoning the novel, "doing himself a big favor" by using all of its best material to construct the great "Olinger" stories in *Pigeon Feathers* (1962), which were then supplemented by his novel *The Centaur* (1963). But first, instead of the autobiographical work, in a relatively short time he wrote and published *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959), which Begley terms "an anti-*first* novel" about a group of old people living in an institution, the principal character of which is based on Updike's maternal grandfather, John Hoyer.

"We need a writer who aspires both to be great and to be popular," Updike wrote his mother in one of countless letters they exchanged over the course of his years at Harvard. Not long after he graduated, he had both poems and stories accepted by the *New Yorker*. "Is there an American writer who so quickly . . . established himself with a magazine?" asks Begley rhetorically, while making the point that such "frictionless success" would be held against him by unfriendly critics. One of his colleagues on the Harvard *Lampoon*, of which he became president, testified that Updike could outwork anyone, the proof of which is found in the more than 200 items—cartoons, drawings, poems, and prose pieces—he contributed to that publication.

After a year spent in England on an art fellowship with his wife Mary and a baby daughter, he began work at the *New Yorker* in 1955, where, according to Brendan Gill, he "struck [the magazine] like an absolute bombshell." The stories he wrote in the 18 months he spent on staff feature a young married man, his wife, and child living in apartments on Riverside Drive, then in Greenwich Village. Although these stories don't command much attention in comparison with ones to follow about Pennsylvania and about the Maple family, they are early examples of (in Updike's words) "the truth slightly arranged" so as to yield authorial resonance.

It wasn't until he left New York that he began to say "the Pennsylvania Thing" in his stories. His early mentor at the *New Yorker*, Katherine White, had discouraged him from such nostalgic efforts, but her successor, William Maxwell, encouraged them during his 18-year career as Updike's editor at the magazine. (Updike's ride with the magazine was not always effortless; in his first year in New York, half his submissions were rejected.)

The Updikes and their two children left New York in 1957 and moved to Ipswich, Massachusetts. Aside from the pressures of city life, and especially the literary life that Updike was becoming more and more part of and wary of, the motive for departure, in the biographer's homely phrase, was that the writer's ambition required him to be a big fish in a little pond. Updike's own retrospective way of putting it was to declare, "If Shillington gave me life, Ipswich was where I took possession of it." Taking possession of it involved feats of composition; he wrote three pages every morning in an "effortlessly industrious" manner he would continue for 50 years. Both *The Poorhouse Fair* and its successor *Rabbit, Run* (1960), which inaugurated the Rabbit tetralogy, were written in less than a year.

The other main act of possession was a social one, his eager participation in the parties and sexual attachments that would later be anatomized in *Couples* (1968). Updike called his Ipswich character a "delayed second edition" of his high school self, and Begley describes this edition as "a sparkling entertainer, a witty, clowning charmer." He fell in love with another woman, Joyce Harrington, the only one of the Ipswich women Begley talked to whose name he reveals, figuring rightly that an unnamed partner of Updike would be likely to talk more freely. His marriage nearly collapsed, saved at the last minute by Updike's reluctance to leave his wife and family, and by Mary's staying power, evoked strongly by Begley as consisting of "studious unruffled passivity—leavened by dry humor, bolstered by tenacious dignity, and sealed with maturing beauty."

The effect of the near separation on Updike's short fiction was powerful, as he began to favor what he called "the abstract personal mode," writing stories that weren't exactly "stories" but meditative, usually gloomy, evocations of a failed romance. He also

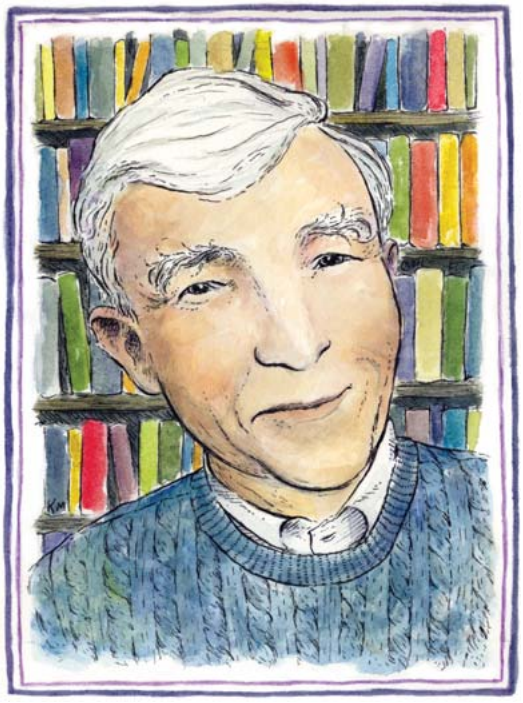
wrote a novel, *Marry Me*, but didn't publish it until 1977, after he and Mary had divorced.

With a writer of such massive production, the biographer must, out of necessity, treat some of the items in a summary way, if at all. Begley's distinction lies partly in the large number of novels and stories he makes pertinent comments about. For example, he finds that what Updike called "the mutual forgiveness of mother and son" makes his brilliant novella *Of the Farm* (1965) seem "kinder and gentler than it is." *Couples*, for all the "baroque splendor" of its exuberant prose, goes on too long and makes us feel at least ambivalent about the delight the writer seems to take in his less-than-noble events and characters.

Surprisingly to me, Begley judges *Rabbit Redux* (1971), second of the developing tetralogy, to be Updike's most powerful novel, and he is unambiguously sympathetic to the long "teach in" in which Harry Angstrom is educated by the demonic black prophet, Skeeter. *A Month of Sundays* (1975), a pretty much forgotten tour de force written just after his separation from Mary, Begley finds "somewhat off-putting in its razzle-dazzle and stiff-arm irony" (my feelings exactly). He also interestingly suggests that the Nabokovian flamboyance of that novel and the one to follow, *The Coup* (1978), may have served as a welcome distraction from the disarray of Updike's life as a separated man not yet fully established in his second marriage.

Begley concurs with most readers' admiration for the superb reach and particularity, much of it comic, of *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), completing the long work christened *Rabbit Angstrom*. As for the stories, he discusses with penetration some of Updike's best, such as "The Happiest I've Been," the four-part sequence beginning with "Packed Dirt," and "Separating," but also takes time to direct us to ones it has been possible to overlook, like "Toward Evening," "Plumbing," "The Gun Shop," and the consummate tribute to his mother, "A Sandstone Farmhouse." Begley also makes good connections between the Bech stories, some of which are situated abroad, and Updike's increasing travel to many countries.

In 1969, after the financial bonanza of movie rights for *Couples*, Updike was a millionaire. Five years later, when he and Mary separated, he moved to Boston, then to Georgetown, Massachusetts, with the woman he married in 1977, Martha Bernhard.



(He joked that if he should marry a third time it would have to be to Lazarus.) Since Begley did not interview Martha Updike, his treatment of her is somewhat problematic. But there is no doubt that, her husband having perfected, as Begley puts it, a "convincing, engaging impersonation of an eminent man of letters," Martha became, with his cooperation, "gatekeeper" to his unstoppable literary production.

With too many people wanting the writer to do too many things, Martha's vigilant supervision was unstinting. In 1982 the couple purchased a large property, Haven Hill, a secluded, grand house in Beverly Farms with views of Massachusetts Bay. In the 27 years Updike spent there until his death, he wrote 13 novels, 100 stories, over 250 poems, and some 300 reviews.

More than once in this biography, Begley says, in more or less these words, that Updike couldn't help himself. He couldn't help himself, for example, from returning, in the very last two months of his life, to his boyhood home in Shillington, which presented, in some lines from his moving sequence of poems, *Endpoint*,

> *. . . all a writer needs,*
> *all there in Shillington, its trolley cars*
> *and little factories, cornfields and trees,*
> *leaf fires, snowflakes, pumpkins,*
> *valentines.*
> *. . . Perhaps*
> *we meet our heaven at the start and not*
> *the end of life.*

When he published his late novel *Villages* (2004), in which the first village is a stand-in for Shillington, he must have known that more than one reader would say something like *Well, there he goes again, he just can't help himself*. The seven novels that succeeded *Rabbit at Rest*, Begley says, correctly, were "more likely to be met with polite indifference than with hostility," although David Foster Wallace's intemperate attack on the writer and James Wood's steady disapproval were exceptions. Yet, whatever the verdict on his late novels, the stories, essays, and reviews were as good as anything he had written earlier.

The prolonged and extended "intimacy with the author" this biography produces is, of course, a bittersweet experience. Or so I found it to be, reading about his late years, living with his wife at Haven Hill with a calendar of limited social engagements, an increasing list of grandchildren to be visited and admired, and the never-ceasing piling-up of words. "The Lonely Post," as Begley titles his penultimate chapter, is occasionally broken in upon—in one instance, for a weekend visit from the English novelist Ian McEwan (he would write a fine posthumous tribute to Updike) of which we are given a play-by-play account. Yet the visit was not allowed to disrupt the daily

KATHERINE MESSENGER

three-hour writing stint, and McEwan was impressed by Martha's "protectiveness," declaring that "she made a very good writing environment for him, and he clearly valued that."

The final, brief chapter, "Endpoint," much the shortest in the book, may be thought of as appropriate to the suddenness and mortal finality of the lung cancer that killed Updike. In November 2008, he suffered from a cough that wouldn't go away; two months later he was dead. There is a particularly affecting and painful account of a short visit paid him by Mary and his youngest daughter, Miranda. In Begley's words, prompted by Mary's remembrance of the sickroom:

> Updike tried to look cheerful buried under the covers, trying to keep warm, but the effect, as far as Mary was concerned, was miserable. "I felt I shouldn't touch him," she remembered, "except for his feet, so I was massaging his feet, and that seemed to be all right."

Out of the blue comes a remark from the sick man: "Now remember Aunt Polly," a reference to Mary's aunt who lived into her 90s, which Mary took as Updike's hope that she should live a similarly long time. He was finally moved to a hospice in nearby Danvers and died 48 hours later, leaving behind, along with a final book of short stories, the magnificent sequence "Endpoint," the centerpiece of his final book of poems, which contains, most poignantly, the ones he wrote about his illness.

Remembering that, 40 years previous, he had published a long, autobiographical poem called "Midpoint" brings home to us the remarkable but typically Updikean determination to finish the story his life and works had made. As lines from "Endpoint" have it, *No piece was easy, but each fell finished, / In its shroud of print, into a book-shaped hole*. In some further words from his essay on biography, Updike wrote that reading about an author's life "allows us to partake again, from another angle, of the joys we have experienced within the author's oeuvre, in the presence of a voice and mind we have come to love." ♦

NEWSCOM

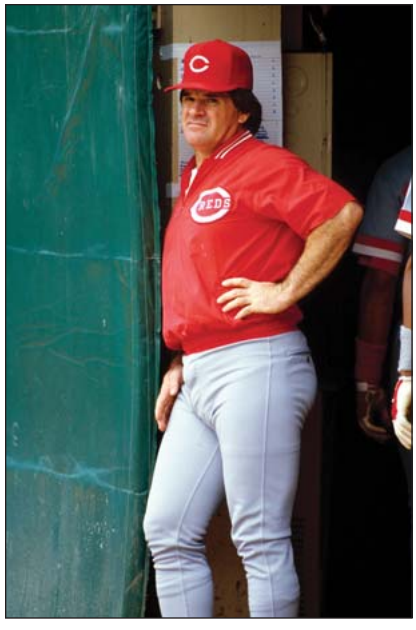
B&A

Secondhand Rose

Will he, won't he, should he be in the Hall of Fame?

BY EDWARD ACHORN

Pete Rose
An American Dilemma
by Kostya Kennedy
Sports Illustrated, 352 pp., $26.95



Do we really need another book about Pete Rose?

I'm not so sure. Anyone who watched him play baseball already knows he was a marvel of hustle and intensity—a joy to study in action. Anyone who consults his records recognizes instantly that if play on the field were the only criterion, baseball's all-time leader in hits would belong in the Hall of Fame. Anyone who knows anything about his personality understands that he was his own worst enemy: an impulsive gambler, a compulsive womanizer, a self-aggrandizing liar and meat-headed man of the people, devoid of prejudice and snobbery, but boisterous with sixth-grade witticisms about body parts and bodily functions.

Kostya Kennedy brings the story of this character up to date, and wraps it in a glossy package of highfalutin writing and literary artifice. We get plenty of jerking the reader back and forth in time, probably because a straight narrative would seem boring. We get some injections of historical context, particularly about Rose's hometown of Cincinnati and race relations in the 1960s, when he was becoming a star. We get friends and relatives in abundance, because Rose himself either charges too much to talk or doesn't have much to say that is interesting or trustworthy. We get painstaking descriptions of the places Rose signs his autograph for big bucks, and a protracted dissertation on the origin of the fable of the Scorpion and the Frog. We get splashes of clever writing: "He bounded into the big leagues like a golf ball on hot concrete," for example. The dialogue between two of Rose's thuggish acquaintances is described as "a dash of salted Runyon, a heap of Paulie Walnuts."

But at the heart of this latest treatment is the nearly unbelievable hollowness of its central character, a man so swinish and self-centered that he almost seems inscrutable. Trudging down these familiar hallways, no matter how dazzlingly they are decorated, feels like a dreary journey, because we know exactly where they lead: to Rose's callous and despicable betrayal of the game he loved passionately and did so much to serve as a player. His gambling on his own team's games as a

Edward Achorn, editorial page editor of the Providence Journal*, is the author of* The Summer of Beer and Whiskey *and* Fifty-nine in '84.

manager of the Cincinnati Reds is the primal crime against baseball, and his lying about it for years before fessing up in a transparent bid to win a place in the Hall of Fame makes him seem even worse. How many times must we revisit this American dilemma?

To be sure, Kennedy brings the man to life, bouncing us in and out of Rose's career. As an 18-year-old at Boston College, I managed to see all four games of the classic 1975 World Series played at Fenway Park—albeit from the last row on the third-base side, deep under the roof—and the baseball played on those hallowed grounds (especially by Rose) was so compelling that I was able to forgive the Red Sox their heartbreaking loss. "This is the greatest game I ever played in," Rose told Carl Yastrzemski, arriving at first base during Game Six. "You'd want the World Series to go on for 30 games if it could," he later added, even after Carlton Fisk launched his legendary shot, waving his home run fair in the 12th inning, and the Reds lost. But as Kennedy deftly explains, it was Pete Rose who turned it around in Game Seven, breaking up a double play when the Red Sox were leading 3-0, thus shifting the momentum and leading to a Reds triumph.

With his eye for detail, Kennedy also introduces some classic Pete Rose moments from his post-baseball career: So greedy is he for cash that he is willing to autograph copies of Major League Baseball's official report on his gambling—something that, I admit, made me laugh and feel a kind of fondness for the fallen hero. For his part, Kennedy remains agnostic about the central question of whether Rose deserves forgiveness and a place in the Hall of Fame.

After steroids-stuffed players have ruined the record books that made baseball so special, it is tempting to think that Pete Rose wasn't so bad. Kennedy does fume about a rule change that kept those barred from baseball (namely Rose) out of the Hall of Fame, calling it an assault on the "democratic process" and "a direct rebuff to the spirit and intentions of the Hall of Fame's founders." Maybe. But gambling in baseball was understood to be a fearfully malignant cancer long before the Hall of Fame came into existence, even before the Chicago "Black Sox" threw the 1919 World Series. We don't know if Pete Rose changed his managerial decisions because of the bets he had placed on games, but if baseball should draw a bright line on anything, it is gambling.

In my view, there is much to be said for the approach that National League president William Hulbert took after the Louisville Grays threw the 1877 pennant. When Louisville's star pitcher, Jim Devlin, showed up at Hulbert's office in threadbare clothes, pleading poverty and tearfully begging to be reinstated, Hulbert slipped him $50. "That's what I think of you, personally," Hulbert said. "But damn you, Devlin, you are dishonest; you have sold a game, and I can't trust you. Now go; and let me never see your face again; for your act will not be condoned so long as I live."

Baseball still requires that kind of tough love. ♦

B&A

America Behind Bars

Does the punishment fit the crimes?

BY ROBERT F. NAGEL

Inferno
An Anatomy of American Punishment
by Robert A. Ferguson
Harvard, 352 pp., $29.95

How should we react to the fact that the average length of a prison sentence in the United States has nearly doubled in the last 30 years? That 140,000 inmates are serving life sentences, and more than 100,000 are in prolonged solitary confinement? That California alone incarcerates more inmates than France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined? That 67.5 percent of prisoners commit new crimes after being released? That life in prison is almost always dangerous, humiliating, and profoundly destructive?

Perhaps the most common response to these and other distressing facts, if they are acknowledged at all, is a kind of tragic complacency: Yes, prison life is ugly, but punishment is inherently painful. Warehousing inmates for long periods of time is harsh, but less barbaric than older forms of punishment, such as mutilation, flogging, or banishment. Moreover, *something* must be done to protect society from lawbreakers; if the actuality of living in prison is miserable, so are the consequences of criminal acts for the lives of innocent people. In short, even on a massive scale, imprisonment is a necessary evil.

Inferno is a passionate, wide-ranging effort to understand and challenge these and the many other reasons for our heavy reliance on imprisonment. It is an important book, especially for those (like me) who are inclined towards avoidance and tragic complacency. If Robert A. Ferguson is persuasive on nothing else, he is convincing in his claim that we should look our use of imprisonment full in the face. That means examining the psychological, philosophical, cultural, institutional, and political reasons for locking so many away.

This examination can be uncomfortable indeed. Ferguson is relentless in demonstrating how our use of the

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language of fairness and rationality can obscure vindictiveness and arbitrariness. We make great efforts, for example, to assure consistency and proportionality through sentencing guidelines. The result is a set of detailed legal prescriptions that, when implemented by the sentencing judge, often require highly relevant circumstances to be ignored. Moreover, the guidelines set carefully calibrated terms according to the relative severity of the offense. But in order for a system of comparative judgments to work, somewhere down the chain of judgment an appropriate term for some offense must be first be established. And that assignment, which enables the others to seem rational, is necessarily artificial and arbitrary.

Ferguson brings this unblinking honesty to other aspects of the punishment system. He insists that we uncover and acknowledge the pleasure people can take in retribution. He shows how the sterile influence of legal positivism has helped to strip legal language of its moral component. Ferguson notes that the American emphasis on individualism and personal responsibility facilitates harsh condemnation. He demonstrates how the division of public authority over punishment among legislators, judges, and prison officials diminishes everyone's responsibility for the system as a whole. And he points out that severe punishments can be in the crass self-interest of politicians, unions, and prison operators. He is especially insightful in identifying the psychological and intellectual dynamics that cause punishment systems to increase in severity and yet be underestimated.

Nevertheless, many readers will understandably be inclined to discount *Inferno* as the work of an erudite, but hopeless, bleeding heart. And, indeed, Ferguson dismisses the hardheaded thinking of Herbert Morris and James Q. Wilson in a few pages. Both assume, we are told, that criminals act out of self-interest; they excessively emphasize retribution and neighborhood safety. And—gasp!—they are scornful of liberal reform policies.

Ferguson especially condemns victim impact statements. He writes as if the only purpose of allowing accounts of the harm caused by the criminal's acts is to bury reason in emotion. He traces America's punitive impulse to cultural norms, like widespread gun ownership and respect for the military, that are distinctly conservative. And he attempts to situate the feasibility of prison reform in a litany of modern liberal accomplishments that include extraordinary progress for women, racial minorities, and homosexuals.

Pleasant Valley Prison, Coalinga, California (2003)

But while Ferguson is, perhaps, a liberal do-gooder, his book is too balanced and thoughtful to be disregarded on that ground. For example, his description of what might be labeled "conservative" in American culture acknowledges that these norms are, in important ways, positive. His effort to evaluate the prospects for prison reform includes not only an optimistic list of liberal accomplishments but also a complete picture of social and economic deterioration. Ferguson's general disapproval of severe punishment must be set against his brief, but important, concessions: He notes, for instance, that the United States has higher homicide rates and higher unsolved crime rates than do other modernized nations. Even in proposing his own reforms, Ferguson admits that all previous ideas for prison reform have led eventually to new abuses.

Inferno posits a humane but limited moral objective for prison reform. Ferguson rejects the common proposal that reform be constructed on an edifice of legal rights. He recognizes that society as a whole, and not just judges, must confront the reality of punishment. He knows that punishment, including incarceration, is necessary; but he insists, nevertheless, that every life should have at least some worth. The meaning of this essentially biblical imperative is established by a short account of the distinction between the inferno and purgatory in Dante's *Divine Comedy*: The torments of the inferno are endless, and the souls condemned to suffer there have no hope; the torments of purgatory, while horrible, might end with deliverance. To have worth, then, is to suffer merited punishment, but to suffer with hope.

So Ferguson's proposal is not that the American prison system be made pleasant. He wants to make it into a purgatory. As a moral objective, this is difficult to resist; but operationally, what would a life of some worth mean for prisoners?

Ferguson mentions some of the standard proposals offered for prison reform: shortening sentences, reducing population density, eliminating long-term isolation, providing better protection against violence, and so on. Such measures sound sensible, but can, of course, be debated. All have costs, financial and otherwise, and some may be impossible, given the basic realities of prison life.

Ferguson's major emphasis, however, lies elsewhere. With near-missionary zeal, he first wants Americans to confront the realities of our system

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of punishment and our role in creating it. Precisely because *Inferno* is so perceptive in uncovering the deep reasons for both severity and inaction, it is tempting to respond, "Well, good luck with that." Be that as it may, Ferguson wants our confrontation with the realities of punishment to produce a set of programmatic changes designed to restore, to most inmates, some sense of worth.

The main change would be an ambitious job-training program intended to provide inmates with a measure of control over their futures, with some possibility of productivity and growth. The essential innovation here is that the training programs must be strictly separate from prisons: Selected inmates would be released into the community to complete educational and vocational training, after which they would be placed in small public/private business ventures that might include what sound like public-works projects. By physical separation from the place of punishment, this program of restoration would be cleansed of the corrupting influence of the retributive instinct.

It is here, I am afraid, that my conversion experience ends. My doubts are not about the moral imperative of allowing convicts some sense of self-worth. Nor do I doubt that productive labor is a highly useful, often essential, means to that end. The problem is one of priority: This is a society, as Ferguson recognizes, that does not educate, train, or provide jobs for untold numbers of people who have committed no crime. According to what moral compass should we start providing effective education and jobs for felons before making them available to, say, inner-city youth?

Of course, Ferguson anticipates this question. His answer is that government is directly responsible for establishing guilt and imposing punishment; government is *not* responsible in the same way for other problems of social justice. This is true enough—and the distinction unquestionably imposes on government the duty to rethink overly harsh sentencing schemes, mitigate prison violence, provide inmates with adequate medical care, and so on. But an ambitious and costly job-training/job-creation program? To do this, first, for prisoners, rather than for the law-abiding, would be perverse. When faced with problems of scarcity and priority, the progressive impulse is to assume an adequate supply of available public resources so that difficult choices are unnecessary. (To his credit, Ferguson does not indulge this impulse—although in urging the affordability of prison reform, he does descend to an argument based on claims about how much money hedge fund managers earn.)

The issue is not whether there is enough wealth in the United States to institute Ferguson's proposals. The issue is whether there is sufficient *available* wealth (and knowledge) to institute those reforms—and, also, to address our inadequate public education system and our high unemployment rate, as well as other public needs that are arguably more morally compelling than the self-worth of felons. Ferguson's sense of moral urgency is, in itself, surely admirable, and it impels him to provide revealing insights about punishment. But his major policy recommendation, while desirable in a more perfect world, is not persuasive in the one we occupy. ♦

B&A

City of Angles

Understanding—and appreciating—Los Angeles by design.

BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

I'm a Los Angeles girl, born and bred. My hometown is Pasadena, about 12 miles northeast of L.A.'s downtown, in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. My husband is another Angeleno, raised in Hawthorne, in far southwest Los Angeles County, on the South Bay flatlands abutting the Pacific Ocean. Hawthorne was then a postwar working-class paradise (the big employer was Northrop Corporation, now Northrop Grumman) that was socioeconomically and geographically diagonal to snooty, old-money Pasadena. Later, Hawthorne, its fortunes much deteriorated, became the iconic crud-Los Angeles setting of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994).

My husband and I thus had a keen interest in seeing a mixed-media exhibition titled *Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940-1990* at the National Building Museum in Washington. The exhibition was organized by the Getty Research Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum—Los Angeles entities that promised a vision of the city that would be a welcome break from the typical traffic-choked, freeway-riven, *City of Quartz* dystopia of dying palm trees that is East Coast intellectuals' stereotype of America's second-largest city.

We were only slightly disappointed. The show's opening wall text declared: "Los Angeles' identity is inextricably linked with the automobile." True enough. Los Angeles County is so enormous—more than 4,000 square miles, with the city of Los Angeles alone taking up nearly 500 of them—that it can only be gotten around efficiently by motor vehicle, meaning that the automobile inevitably shaped L.A.'s man-built geography. Yet even though the show was titled *Overdrive*, the wall-text authors didn't seem to know what the overdrive mechanism on a car is. "The term . . . alludes to the fact that an engine churning at top speed may overheat," they wrote. Actually, the overdrive *prevents* overheating by

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reducing the engine's RPM while the car is at peak velocity.

In truth, aside from some tub-thumping for the Metro Rail (Los Angeles County's far-from-finished and astoundingly expensive current experiment in public transportation) and an inexplicable demographic reference to Los Angeles's white population as "Northern European"—as though it consisted of recent immigrants from the Netherlands—the exhibition was commendably ideology-free. And there were many wonderful things to be seen among the hundreds of photographs, maps, models, architectural drawings, and videos that the Getty people collected.

The most riveting of them was Pop artist Ed Ruscha's 1973 black-and-white tracking shots, taken by a car-mounted 35-millimeter camera traveling along the entire length of commercial Hollywood Boulevard. Ruscha duplicated his Hollywood Boulevard tour de force in color in 2002, so it was possible to watch both filmstrips simultaneously and see which buildings, businesses, and ways of living disappeared or persisted as the boulevard changed. The Ruscha filmstrips, exhibited in a room titled "Car Culture," displayed the crucial understanding that Hollywood Boulevard, like all the arteries in Los Angeles constructed during the 20th century, was designed and built primarily to be driven through, not walked along. Street intersections in Los Angeles were (and remain) dauntingly wide, unlike the walkable intersections of older American cities. And at least through the early 1970s, there was scarcely a shady tree on Hollywood Boulevard to deflect the blinding Southern California sun from the seemingly interminable blocks of low-slung storefronts.

A vintage video clip in the exhibition celebrated "cruising," the now-defunct practice of Southern California teenagers during the 1950s and early '60s of jamming themselves into a car in which they could see and be seen by their peers as they showed off their vehicles, their girlfriends, and their hoped-for sex appeal as they drove at millipede speeds up and down their town's main drag on Friday and Saturday nights. Cruising formed the narrative spine of George Lucas's 1973 coming-of-age flick *American Graffiti*. *Graffiti* was set in Lucas's more northerly hometown, Modesto. But that only went to show that Los Angeles's car culture quickly became the culture of the entire state, except in a handful of bohemian redoubts such as San Francisco.

The exhibition focused admirably on Los Angeles's frenzy of postwar commercial construction, as the city's population increased from 1.5 million in 1940 to 2.4 million in 1960, thanks to the burgeoning Southern California defense industry, whose generous wages at all levels also made it possible for nearly every Southern California household to afford at least one car. The dominant architectural style of those two decades was a kind of vehicular futurism, with overtones of Space-Age optimism. Designers not only crafted buildings that would be automobile-friendly—with parking lots, ramps, and drive-in service—but that actually incorporated features of postwar automobile design. Gas stations, shopping centers, office buildings, bowling alleys, drive-in movie theaters, auto showrooms, and television studios (most notably CBS's Television City, completed in 1952) mimicked the flamboyant design of the high-horsepower (gas was cheap) postwar vehicles that rolled from Detroit's assembly lines.

Standard design elements in buildings of that era included upward-tilted roofs (resembling tailfins); cantilevers (for an illusion of suspended airiness); wraparound glass windows; decorative elements that incorporated neon, boomerangs, and starbursts; and impressively ground-hugging horizontal length (because real estate was cheap). They tended to be stationary versions of V8-engined Cadillac Eldorados. Or they were stationary versions of flying saucers, such as the L.A. architecture firm Pereira and Luckman's elevated concrete-and-glass "Theme Building" restaurant, which opened in 1961 at the Los Angeles International Airport.

Theme Building and control tower, Los Angeles International Airport

MICHAEL ZARA

The most emblematic commercial building of the 1950s was the coffee shop, typically featuring towering, free-standing signage (so as to be visible to passing drivers); capacious floor plans; luxurious, padded booths; sleek, elongated counters; floor-to-ceiling windows that gave the buildings an indoor/outdoor ambiance; pole-suspended aluminum light fixtures that exuded modernity and warmth; and a generous indoor use of flagstone and boulders, rough-and-ready materials that architects had heretofore

employed only in outdoor landscaping.

Art historians have dubbed Los Angeles's pop-futuristic architectural style of the 1950s "Googie," after a long-since-razed West Hollywood coffee shop called Googie's that was designed by the midcentury architect John Lautner and that incorporated every element of futurism that had been invented. The leading practitioner of coffee-shop architecture, however, was the firm Armet and Davis, whose Pann's—built in 1958 on La Tijera Boulevard near the airport—is still open for business, with its skyward-angled roof and boulder-and-palm-tree landscaping. The Armet firm's most glorious creation was the Wich Stand (1957) on Slauson Avenue, the subject of some exquisite color photographs in the exhibition. With its towering, 35-foot spire and parking-lot configuration (100 cars) optimally designed for drive-through cruising, the "Stand" was also the epicenter of Los Angeles hot-rod culture (oddly ignored in the exhibition), in which young men used their shop-class training to soup up the cheap used-car-lot vehicles left over from their parents' Depression youth.

In fact, so enchanted were the curators of *Overdrive* with the first half of the 50-year period that the exhibition purported to span, that they paid little attention to much that was built after 1965. The vast bulk of *Overdrive* was devoted to more and more 1950s: the evolution of the freeway from a lushly landscaped East Coast-style "parkway" (Pasadena's Arroyo Seco Parkway, opened in 1940) to a distinct architectural genre of its own, with its elevated parabolas and concrete ribbons of cloverleafs; the glass-walled residential creations of the high-end Austrian émigrés Richard Neutra, Rudolf Schindler, and their numerous imitators; Disneyland's Tomorrowland (opened in Anaheim in 1955), whose "Autopia" ride was and still is a miniature Los Angeles freeway, and whose showcase attraction was then the "TWA Moonliner," an airline-sponsored model rocket ship.

The most important architectural history of Los Angeles—and its most important cultural history as well—is Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, published in 1971 but not at all out of date. The then- (and still-) prevalent perception of Los Angeles was that it's essentially a formless, sprawling, infrastructural ectoplasm: "nineteen suburbs in search of a metropolis," as Aldous Huxley wrote. Banham was a Londoner, and he saw that Los Angeles was very much like London, which began as a series of villages along the Thames that, over time, agglomerated themselves into a large city. Banham viewed Los Angeles as a similar collection of populated nodes, some of them descending from Indian, and later Spanish, settlements, and only one of which was L.A.'s downtown. Each of the "four ecologies"—the foothills with their luxury real estate; the plenteous beaches ("Surfurbia" in Banham-speak); the vast flatlands that housed the working class; and the vaulting connector freeways—fostered its own architectural culture. Banham relished all of them. He understood, too, that Los Angeles architecture was fundamentally vernacular, catering to popular taste and desires, not architects' sensibilities.

Hollywood Freeway (ca. 1950)

Los Angeles architecture was also an architecture of boundless optimism. Both my husband and I, growing up at opposite ends of Los Angeles County, were certain not just that we lived in a city that was constructing its future but that we ourselves were living in the future. My father would often take our family for Sunday drives along the Hollywood Freeway as it was being built, out to whatever exit happened to be its end at the time. We harbored a genial contempt for the cramped, shabby cities of the East Coast, with their freezing winters and summer humidity; who would want to live there? A 1950s photograph in the Building Museum exhibition showed a promotional display poster for the Department of Water and Power: "Be Thankful That You Are an American and Live in Los Angeles."

That was us.

As the Building Museum exhibition moved past the mid-1960s, it foundered. That was because Los Angeles architecture did as well, trading in its lowbrow homegrown exuberance for a range of dreadful but undoubtedly more sophisticated-seeming international styles and configurations. These included: concrete-block Brutalism (best exemplified by the Death Star-like campus of the University of California, Irvine, a Pereira folly of 1965); Lincoln Centeresque "total design" complexes, such as the Los Angeles County Music Center, located downtown; marble-faced *poshlost* (Edward Durell Stone's grandiose Ahmanson Center on Wilshire Boulevard, built in 1970); and the skyscraper mania of the 1970s and '80s that filled the skyline with towering but uninteresting office structures.

Los Angeles is now pretty much like every other city, with impassable freeway traffic and myriad urban problems. But, paradoxically, that may be all for the good. As auto travel between the numerous component parts of this vast urban entity becomes ever more difficult, it is gradually reverting to what Reyner Banham once recognized it as: a network of distinct neighborhoods and subcities, each with its own individualized features and cultures. In that sense, Los Angeles really *is* becoming more like London. ♦

GETTY IMAGES

B&A

Fear and Loathsome

The comic-book movie enters its Commie Age.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Aficionados often refer to comic books in terms of eras: the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age. The same may now be true of the comic-book movie. Judging from last year's mega-hit *Iron Man 3*, and the brand-new mega-hit *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, the comic-book movie has entered the Commie Age.

The great villain in these two movies isn't an evil alien, or a dastardly villain, but "Fear." You remember Fear. Fear is what leftists began telling us we were being peddled after 9/11 to advance the corporatist neoconservative agenda to take over the world. There was no real Islamist threat, according to this line of argument; it was ginned up to induce Fear. This was and is the favored line of argument on Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now!" and of the activist journalist Glenn Greenwald, the front man for Edward Snowden.

In *Iron Man 3*, the world was driven into paroxysms of fear by a mysterious character called the Mandarin, designed to look and sound like Osama bin Laden. It turns out that the Mandarin is a fiction—that he is a character being played by a drug-addicted cockney actor hiding out in a pirate TV studio in Miami. The real villain is, of course, the billionaire head of an evil corporation who is using the Mandarin to sow Fear.

Captain America: The Winter Soldier takes this all to a new level. (Spoilers from here on out.) The plot is a weird amalgam of WikiLeaks and *The Boys from Brazil*, the 1976 Ira Levin potboiler about the discovery of Hitler clones in South America being overseen by Josef Mengele. In *Winter Soldier,* it turns out that the global hero running the planet's security is secretly a Nazi, and that the hidden agency he runs has actually been a Nazi front since before the end of the Second World War.

Captain America: The Winter Soldier
Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo

In the first Captain America movie, we saw the title character defeat the Nazi bad guys and their organization, Hydra, in the midst of World War II. Now it turns out that he didn't destroy Hydra after all, and that it has been responsible for all the world's disorder ever since. It has made everything bad so that the world's people would willingly surrender their freedoms for security. Given that it's almost 70 years after the end of that war, you'd have to say this was a pretty dumb scheme. But then, such are the workings of Fear.

As the movie begins, Hydra's plot is coming to fruition. The secret agency has collected all the world's metadata, and its computers have figured out how to predict which people on earth are going to do Bad Things in the future. It is about to launch three spaceships that will kill every possible bad person—about 20 million or so—all at once. It's like the Death Star from *Star Wars* with 20 million drones.

So the good guys are the bad guys, or the good guys are unknowingly working for the bad guys, or the bad guys might actually be the good guys, depending on what they're doing—or something. The only hope of saving us all from this dastardly inside job is to put every state secret out on the Internet.

Captain America, newly freed from the block of ice in which he has been frozen since the end of the war, must now deal with his failure to rid the world of the Nazi threat. As one character asks him, "How does it feel to know you died for nothing?"

That's quite an interesting message for a superhero movie. Since coming into existence as a genre of its own with *Superman* in 1978, the comic-book movie has served as the successor to the classic Western—a moral pageant in which a classic white-hatted hero faces off against a black-hatted villain who has upset the moral order. The white hat sets things right and then rides off to do more good deeds.

In the late 1940s, after a generation in which more westerns were made than any other kind of movie in Hollywood by a factor of two, directors and writers began to tire of the formula and looked to broaden it. They made villains out of characters who would have once been heroes, like Henry Fonda's martinet officer in *Fort Apache* (1948). And they made heroes out of former villains, like the Indian warrior Cochise in *Broken Arrow* (1950).

The superhero movie is Hollywood's dominant fare. And now its makers—in this case, the gentlemen behind Marvel Studios, the Disney-owned behemoth—have had enough, in the same way that John Ford and Howard Hawks and other western-makers had had enough by the late 1940s. Those men incorporated liberal themes like tolerance and a more complex view of the uses of violence. In keeping with the more radical tenor of our times, Marvel Studios has bypassed that kind of mushy liberalism and gone straight to far-left radicalism.

It isn't hurting at the box office; *Iron Man 3* was the most successful movie of 2013 and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* set box-office records its opening weekend. So get ready for next year's blockbuster, *Noam Chomskyman*—the perfect hero for the Commie Age. ♦

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

"The G8 is an informal club, with no formal membership, so no one can be expelled from it."
—Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, March 24, 2014

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Despite White House ban, Russians still attend G8 events

'You will not feel welcome,' vows Obama

By Hugh Carnegy in Paris

"Who the bloody hell invited that man?" asked an irate William Hague, Britain's foreign secretary. The man in question was Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, who casually walked into the Salon de l'Horloge inside the Quai d'Orsay and helped himself to a slab of foie gras. "This is a private meeting!" Mr. Hague exclaimed, though Mr. Lavrov did not appear to hear him.

Despite the West's declaration that Russia has been banned from future G8 summits following its annexation of Crimea, Mr. Lavrov has continued to attend any and all G8-related events. Last week in Rome, he showed up at a surprise birthday party for Italy's foreign minister, Federica Mogherini. "He ruined everything!" said U.S. secretary of state John Kerry, who spent months planning the event. "It was all perfect: the balloons, the catering, even my hiding place—behind a very tall plant. Then Sergei showed up at the same time as Federica." Prior to entering the party room, Mr. Lavrov wished Ms. Mogherini a happy birthday, tipping her off to the surprise.

U.S. president Barack Obama has expressed grave concern regarding Russia's continued presence at the meetings and has vowed to take action. The president, however, was quick to add that such actions will not include forcefully barring Mr. Lavrov and others from attending these events. "We are not going to be getting into a physical altercation with the Russians," he stressed. Rather, "What we are going to do is mobilize all of our diplomatic resources to make sure these Russians do not feel welcome. By giving them the cold shoulder, avoiding eye contact, and not laughing at their jokes, we will send them a clear message: You are not invited."

Yet there are already signs the international coalition is beginning to fray. When asked how he found out about the Quai d'Orsay meeting, Mr. Lavrov pointed in the direction of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the German

Sabrina Matus

John Kerry listens as Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov objects to his G8 delegation's being given hotel rooms without terry cloth robes.

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