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MIKE LEE, GOP IDEA MAN
MICHAEL WARREN

THE GREEK REVOLT AGAINST THE EU

. . . and why it may be a good thing

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Contents

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Articles

Features

Books & Arts

COVER BY GARY LOCKE

The Samuel Gompers of Our Day

Last October, The Scrapbook took note of *Politico*'s curious decision to hire Mike Elk as one of the publication's labor reporters. Aside from the fact that Elk has a long history of questionable labor activism that makes impartiality impossible, he also has a history of erratic behavior and has on a number of occasions publicly said he has mental health issues. At the same time, Elk is not without ability as a reporter and his pro-labor sympathies mean he has excellent union sources.

Unsurprisingly, a follow-up is in order. Last week, Elk raised eyebrows when he started tweeting about his campaign to unionize *Politico*'s newsroom: "We got a beachhead [at] Politico & are moving inland as we are encountering almost no opposition #solidarity." Elk has also invited his fellow employees to discuss unionizing at a D.C. establishment called the Marx Cafe (which Elk, as it happens, co-owns). *Politico* has major expansion plans at the moment, and it will be interesting to see whether the threat of unionization has any implications for those.

When other media sources began inquiring about Elk's organizing efforts, he was all too eager to talk about his plans. Erik Wemple of the *Washington Post* interviewed Elk and found his rationale a bit wanting:

> Overwork is a problem that Elk plans on addressing in his union drive. "I can't work the kind of hours I did when I was 24," says Elk, who is 28. Putting in too many work hours, he says, is a problem of journalism as an industry and not exclusive to *Politico*. "Everyone works so much, it's almost tough to get people to get together to talk about" forming a union, he says.

Elsewhere Elk has said that he feels he needs to "clock out" every day at six because *Politico* has no overtime policy. *Politico* has a reputation as a hard-driving newsroom, but the available evidence suggests Elk, at least, is not being overworked. He has not had a bylined story at *Politico* since December 9.

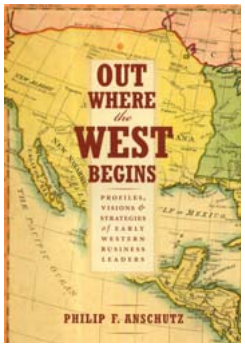
However, The Scrapbook commends Elk for his efforts, even as we confess to a little bit of *schadenfreude*. *Politico* hired Mike Elk, and they're getting what one would expect—good and hard. Further, whether Elk realizes it or not, his attempt at organizing—which may be almost entirely limited to casual conversations with his fellow employees—is a stroke of genius. He's an admittedly erratic employee who's been fired in a very public fashion before, but his nascent attempt at organizing *Politico* makes him basically untouchable by management without opening a legal can of worms. Elk may look toward Karl Marx for inspiration and solidarity, but what he's done is the pinnacle of self-interested office politics. ♦

Must Reading

The Scrapbook is pleased to note that Philip Anschutz, chairman and CEO of The Weekly Standard's parent company, has just written a book that not only adds some authorial luster to our own ranks but makes a genuine contribution to our understanding of America. *Out Where the West Begins: Profiles, Visions & Strategies of Early Western Business Leaders* by Philip F. Anschutz, with William J. Convery and Thomas J. Noel (Cloud Camp, 392 pages, $34.95), is published this week, and available at bookstores and at Amazon.com.

How was the West won? It's a question for which there will never be a single definitive answer, but *Out Where the West Begins* shows us one way to understanding.

In the hundred years between the beginning of the 19th and 20th centuries, an astonishing variety of business entrepreneurs, visionaries, inventors, and all-purpose risk-takers headed toward the Pacific to build, swiftly and largely from scratch, a frontier empire and distinct American region. They marshaled resources, settled towns and cities, created institutions, and connected the country by road, wire, and rail. They made the West a magnet for immigrants and dreamers. And they did it by putting their lives and money at risk, sustained not by government or even political doctrine, but by the larger purpose of building a society of limitless potential.



Philip Anschutz has spent a lifetime studying the lives and works of these pioneers, and frames his thesis in the form of a series of deft biographical essays. They range from the architects of business empires (James J. Hill, John D. Rockefeller) to financial wizards (A.P. Giannini, Jay Cooke), inventor-visionaries (Cyrus McCormick, Henry Ford), and master communicators (Harrison Gray Otis, Carl Laemmle). Not all were angels, of course, but each gave the West the means to grow, and something of its distinctive character.

Images and perceptions of the American West have been reflected, and in some cases distorted, by mythology. By directing our attention to the business pioneers whose hands, hearts, and brains made the West possible, Anschutz puts that image into sharper, and more accurate, focus. ♦

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Does anyone in the policy world still give credence to the *Washington Post*'s "Fact Checker" column? We've sounded this note before but are driven to reiterate: This ostensibly impartial referee is in fact a liberal column that operates under the guise of being above mere partisanship.

The duplicity that provoked us this time was its award of "Three Pinocchios" to a comment Rick Santorum made to the Iowa Freedom Summit: namely, that despite "six million net new jobs created in America" since 2000, "there are fewer Americans working today who were born in this country than there were 15 years ago."

While the Fact Checker acknowledges that the numbers appear to check out, it goes on for several paragraphs of fault-finding. It takes issue with the fact that Santorum's data derive from a study that looked only at the traditional working ages of 16-65, even though there are 2.6 million more people over age 65 working today than in 2000—and not all of them are immigrants. (Actually, we can only infer this, because the Fact Checker bungled this sentence, stating that there are only 2.6 million more native-born Americans 16 and older today than in 2000. But the Fact Checker knows that you know what it was trying to say, right?)

The Fact Checker also points out that you would get different numbers if you picked different start dates and end dates. But so what? The year 2000 was the peak of a business cycle and is eminently defensible for a starting point. If that's going to be the basis for a Fact Checker investigation, it's going to need a newspaper all its own—a very boring and self-righteous one, even by newspaper standards.

The real problem the Fact Checker finds with Santorum's statement has nothing to do with the facts but with his implications, namely that immigrants are taking the jobs of native-born Americans. It's an interpretation that doesn't comport with the view of the folks at the *Post*, so they trot out Georgetown economist Harry Holzer who declares that . . . well, he doesn't actually say it's incorrect, but he avers that it's an oversimplification.

We don't necessarily agree with all the implications of Santorum's statement, but if we wanted to take issue with them, we'd state why we disagree, not pose as an impartial arbiter of the facts and, worse, one who must torture the evidence to declare his factually correct statement "wrong." ♦

The Road Not Taken

'More than 13 years after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, in a world still menaced by terrorists and in a city at risk of attack as few others, how is it possible that basic radio communications used by the District's first responders could fail in an emergency?" asked the *Washington Post* editorial board. "How could the District's transit system be unprepared to ventilate smoke from a subway tunnel? What other lapses in preparedness will the region's residents discover, and will it take an emergency to discover them?"

The emergency referenced above was the smoke from an electrical fire that filled a subway train near L'Enfant Plaza on January 12. More than 80 people were sent to hospitals. Passengers were told to stay in the train even though it became in-

creasingly difficult to breathe—one woman died from smoke inhalation.

And yet we Washingtonians are encouraged to use mass transit as much as possible. Indeed, transit "experts" have suggested that the best way to fix the dysfunctional Washington Metro system is by having more riders—the more people, the higher the revenue, which can be spent on improvements.

Or ride a bike. Even though less than 5 percent of area residents bicycle to work, there are now 69 miles of city bike lanes, with more on the way. The section of M Street by our office had long carried two or three lanes of car traffic. With bike lanes plus parking rules in effect, it's partly down to one. Rush-hour can be unbearable. In fact, that's by design: Rather than add lanes to relieve congestion, transit planners are constricting roads even further, hoping the pain of the commute will force drivers to pursue greener options.

Take, for example, Interstate 66, which connects the nation's capital to its Virginia suburbs. Concerns over traffic volume have led the state's transportation officials to consider tolls inside the Beltway. Of course, Virginia already has added some high-occupancy toll lanes, in which cars with one or two passengers are required to pay a fee that fluctuates depending on demand. But I-66 near Washington had been spared. There was some talk of adding an extra lane, but the goal now seems to be not to ease congestion but to worsen it, so as to encourage us not to drive. At all.

Don't take our word for it. Here is what Renée Hamilton, deputy district administrator for the Virginia Department of Transportation, told the *Washington Post*: "The ultimate goal, Hamilton said, is 'to create a culture on I-66 where people get out of their cars and use transit.'"

So the goal for the Interstate is to get people not to use the Interstate? If current trends continue, one day they may just turn I-66 into a super-wide all-bicycle pathway. And if you don't like to bike, you can always take the Metro. Just don't forget to bring your gas mask. ♦

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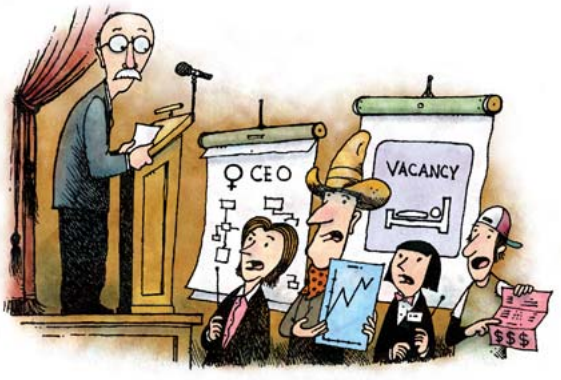
BPA WORLDWIDE

Listening Tour

The itinerant sing-for-your-supper bunch who travel the country sharing wisdom for a fee have a dirty little secret. As a member of the fraternity, I have found that I learn as much as I teach, maybe more, during speaking engagements. But don't tell those who hand over rather large sums of money to hear what we have to say, lest the groups that host us reverse current practice and charge us a fee.

I recently gave a talk on the economic outlook to a luncheon group of women CEOs, most of whom started and now run small-to-medium-sized companies. Hardworking risk-takers, many hanging on by their fingernails in recent years, they have yet to feel the effects of the economic recovery that has been creeping along for many months. But they are optimistic about their prospects, if only . . . If only the government doesn't do them in before they can get on firmer financial ground. When I explained that a rise in the minimum wage just might create added purchasing power, I almost lost my chance to eat a rather nice dessert. To a woman, they laid out financial data showing the adverse effects a higher minimum wage would have on their puny profit margins. It reminded me that macroeconomic policy can have unwanted microeconomic consequences. These women kindly did not charge me for the reminder, or for the more important lesson that there is an emerging group of entrepreneurs who want the government to help them—by leaving them alone.

Then I gave a dinner talk on immigration in Arizona, a conservative state where people know a thing or two about the subject from personal experience. No one in my audience believed that there are only 11 million illegals in America—the word "undocumented" was never used—and almost all complained about that, except one businessman who said that without illegals we wouldn't have food on our plates. Almost everyone, meanwhile, expressed fondness for "their illegal"—hardworking, family-loving, deserving of an opportunity to make a better life, and therefore not to be burdened with producing a green card when cleaning their pool or watering their garden. Americans might grumble, but in the end we are generous, eager to offer a hand up.



DAVID CLARK

On to Pebble Beach and a talk to a group of hoteliers that includes 600 individual owners in more than 85 countries, clustered under the banner of the Preferred Hotel Group. It seems that it is not necessary to have a huge chain of hotels in order to reap economies of scale in advertising. The Ueberroth family—Pete, you remember, chaired an Olympic committee that had no need for government funding, then was commissioner of baseball—lured these feisty hotel-owning entrepreneurs into the Preferred tent by enabling them to obtain supplies on better terms, develop more effective advertising, establish an international frequent-guest program, and learn from each other new tricks of the trade.

These hoteliers know something we don't: The idea of family is not dying in America. Data gathered for Preferred Hotels by travel-industry researchers suggest there is life left in the old institution. More than three out of four grandparents surveyed reported that their travel is now multigenerational—it includes their children and grandchildren. And it sure is a kid-dominated world: Seventy-seven percent of grandparents say their grandchildren influenced the choice of daily activities, and 62 percent that the kids influenced the destination, which may be why Orlando (yawn) tops the list of domestic destinations, while Las Vegas ranks second.

Final lesson: The world is supposed to be a fraught place for millennials, the roughly 80 million people between the ages of 18 and 34. Their student debt is so burdensome that taxpayers must take it over lest gloom descend on these young adults, the largest age cohort in America. The hoteliers' research tells a different story. A larger portion of millennials (80 percent) than any other age group is optimistic about their jobs, the future of the country and the world, and their children's futures. My first guess was that this is because these young adults have yet to confront teenage children of their own. But then I did a bit of digging and found that, "compared with young adults in 1989, young [employed] adults in 2013 [had lower net worth but] were more likely to own homes, stocks . . . and less likely to have high debt payments than older adults [or] young adults in 1989 and . . . 2001."

We speakers can learn a lot by listening—by staying around to mingle instead of dashing for a plane. And the lessons are a bonus, free for the taking. Not a bad deal.

Irwin M. Stelzer

the weekly Standard

Beyond Sanctions

Last week, the Obama administration succeeded in pressuring Democrats to insist there not be a vote on the Senate floor in support of the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2015 until after the March 24 deadline for negotiations with Tehran over its nuclear weapons program. Lacking the votes in the Senate to impose cloture, Republicans had little choice but to go along. But the delay is unfortunate. Senate Democrats may simply have ensured that sometime prior to the deadline, the administration will announce a framework agreement with Iran as deeply flawed as the current interim agreement, which the White House claimed, falsely we now know, would freeze Iran's nuclear program.

With the congressional fight over sanctions seemingly on pause, it's a good time to take a look at what's happening in the real world. While talking away at negotiating tables in various European capitals, the Iranian regime is also on the march. In the Middle East.

The Iranians know that they can fight (e.g., in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen) and bargain at the same time, so there is no real harm to them in talking. On one condition. What the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ali Khameini, cannot afford is rapprochement with the United States. A framework deal that gives Iran cover for an eventual nuclear breakout, while effectively acknowledging Iranian interests around the region, is what Khamenei wants. The historic reconciliation that the White House seeks is a nonstarter for Tehran, since the legitimacy of the regime rests on its resistance to the Great Satan and its allies, with the Little Satan, Israel, foremost among the latter.

From Iran's perspective, it's fine if the Obama White House wants to believe that it's thawing relations and getting to know the Iranians better by talking. What Iran gets out of talks is delay and, as a bonus, some discord in Washington. The recent fight over sanctions no doubt reassured the masters of intrigue in Tehran that U.S. policymakers are more ready for war with each other than with the Islamic Republic.

John Kerry and Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif

NEWSCOM

For Republicans and hawkish Democrats concerned about an expansionist Islamist revolutionary regime acquiring a nuclear weapon, sanctions were one of the few tools available to pressure a White House that seems all too eager to strike a deal. The Obama administration never wanted sanctions in the first place. In time, the White House came to see sanctions largely as a form of concession to and deterrence of its domestic opponents, a way to mollify critics and show that, all evidence to the contrary, it was serious about stopping Iran from getting the bomb.

Accordingly, the Iranians understood that the White House would be willing to provide sanctions relief. If Obama didn't sweeten the pot, and if Tehran then threatened to walk away and crash negotiations, that would potentially unleash the wrath of a foe the administration considers more hateful than the Iranians—its opponents on Capitol Hill.

So in order to fend off Republicans and a few hawkish Democrats, Obama had to keep appeasing the Iranians. That meant not only sanctions relief, but also, among other things, laying off Bashar al-Assad and recognizing Iranian interests in Syria. It meant coordinating with IRGC-Quds Force commander Qassem Suleimani in Iraq against the Islamic State. It meant sharing intelligence with Hezbollah in Lebanon. All these are serious strategic victories for Tehran. But perhaps Iran's most valuable win is to have neutralized the power capable of stopping its drive for nuclear weapons—the United States—by inducing American policymakers to tie themselves down in a fight over sanctions.

Even in the best-case scenario, sanctions were designed not to stop the Iranian regime from getting the bomb, but rather to force them to the table, where they might be persuaded to come to their good senses and abandon their dangerous dreams. Now with sanctions apparently off the

table until at least March, it's a good time to recalibrate by returning to first principles. The policy of the United States is to stop Iran from getting the bomb—by any means necessary, including, as even President Obama has said, through the use of military force. No policy of sanctions, bargaining, or inducements can work unless the use of force becomes once more a credible possibility. But is that possible with this president?

—Lee Smith

A High Impact Case

As Scalia goes . . .

In one of the biggest Supreme Court cases of the year, Justice Antonin Scalia seems destined to cast the critical vote. *Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs* v. *The Inclusive Communities Project*, argued late last month, concerns the Fair Housing Act of 1968, specifically its prohibition of discrimination in housing.

The FHA makes it unlawful "to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status or national origin." This provision plainly forbids the "different" or "disparate" treatment of individuals because of race or one of the other proscribed grounds—what is commonly called intentional discrimination.

But does the statute also prohibit "disparate impact"—in which a practice neutral on its face and nondiscriminatory in its intent has a disproportionate effect, statistically expressed, on some racial or other protected group?

The answer seems clear upon consideration of the following: When Congress has outlawed disparate treatment, it has used certain language—the "because-of-race" formulation in the FHA quoted above being a good example—but when it has targeted disparate impact, it has included some different language as well. Thus, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws practices that "adversely affect" an employee because of that individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act has a provision to the same effect, forbidding practices that "adversely affect" an individual because of that person's age.

Writing at *ScotusBlog*, federal appellate lawyer Will Consovoy says that Congress obviously knows how to legislate against disparate impact. Yet it has never done so with respect to housing. Neither "adversely affect" nor its equivalents are in the original FHA or the amendments added to it in 1988. Concludes Consovoy, "This is not a hard case."

You would think Justice Scalia, one of the Court's great textualists, would see it that way, too, and could be counted on as a vote against reading disparate impact into the FHA. But during the argument Scalia suggested that three scattered provisions in the 1988 amendments were added to bar some specific disparate-impact lawsuits, and that this might mean that in all other circumstances such lawsuits were to be permitted. Scalia said that in the statute as amended there "seems to be an acknowledgment that there is such a thing as disparate impact."

There is a persuasive reply to Scalia (it being duly noted that he might have been assuming the role of devil's advocate). To begin with, it is common for statutes to have redundant provisions. That alone could explain the anomalies in this case. It is also just as easy to read the provisions at issue as clarifying what is and is not "disparate treatment" as it is to read them as making three curious disparate impact exemptions—especially since the amendments did not codify disparate impact.

In the amendments, Congress added new prohibitions of discrimination on grounds of familial status, handicap, and real-estate appraisals; it also created exemptions to them that clarified their reach in three sticky situations. To judge by the terms of the exemptions, Congress didn't want occupancy limits to be regarded as discrimination against families with children—and thus targeted in lawsuits claiming disparate treatment. Nor did it want "handicap" to become a basis for claims of disparate treatment made by convicted drug dealers, as opposed to former drug addicts, trying to qualify as handicapped. Nor, finally, did Congress want real-estate appraisers held liable for disparate treatment when they simply follow market pricing. The amendments to the FHA thus do not have to be interpreted as acknowledging disparate impact.

The importance of Scalia in this case is evident. If he concludes that as a matter of statutory interpretation the

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FHA does not authorize disparate impact liability, and if the other judicial conservatives and Justice Anthony Kennedy agree, as seems likely in this scenario, he will establish a five-justice majority.

On the other hand, if Scalia believes that the FHA does provide for disparate impact, he will be one of five justices—the other four being the Court's judicial liberals—taking that view. But that will not necessarily result in a 5-to-4 majority, because Scalia also sees disparate impact from a constitutional perspective. Indeed, it's possible that he would vote against a disparate impact reading of the FHA for constitutional reasons.

Consider that in the 2009 *Ricci* case, Scalia wrote separately to identify a question that he felt the Court had postponed and must someday resolve: "Whether, or to what extent, are the disparate-impact provisions of Title VII consistent with the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection?" For Scalia, the Title VII provisions are inconsistent with equal protection if they lead to race-based actions—such as an employer's deciding to hire (or not) or promote (or not) some workers on account of race or ethnicity in order to avoid disparate impact liability.

The issue transposes to this case: A landlord might take race-based action in rental decisions to avoid disparate impact claims. Scalia may well see the same problem in housing as he does in employment, and if he does—and wishes to address the tension—he will likely invoke "constitutional avoidance" (or "constitutional doubt," as he calls it in his book *Reading Law*). This is a canon of statutory interpretation that holds, to quote *Reading Law*, that "a statute should be interpreted in a way that avoids placing its constitutionality in doubt." It would seem to compel an interpretation of the FHA that defines discrimination in terms only of disparate treatment.

Should Scalia take that route, there could result a plurality opinion in which five justices agree on the judgment but split on the rationale for it. Thus, Scalia, perhaps joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, would vote against disparate impact in order to avoid constitutional problems, while Chief Justice John Roberts and associate justices Samuel Alito and Kennedy (and perhaps Thomas) would vote against it on purely statutory grounds.

A decision is in the offing. It has taken a long time to get to this point. The Court accepted cases in 2011 and 2013 that presented the same question but which the administration and its political allies, fearing they'd lose, managed to get withdrawn just weeks before oral argument. Now, at least, the argument in the third of the disparate impact cases in the Obama years has actually been heard—as scheduled. May an actual decision now ensue.

For Texas.

—Terry Eastland

A Culture of Fear in Argentina

Alberto Nisman spoke his mind despite the danger. BY DOVID MARGOLIN

Rescue workers search for survivors and victims in the rubble of the Buenos Aires headquarters of the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association, July 18, 1994.

Buenos Aires

The sudden death on January 18 of prosecutor Alberto Nisman, shot in the head at close range just hours before he was to have offered damning testimony against President Christina Fernández de Kirchner and Foreign Minister Hector Timerman, is the latest twist in a long-running mass-murder mystery. The saga began on July 18, 1994, when a white Renault van loaded with explosives slammed into the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) building on Pasteur Street in the center of the city. The blast leveled the seven-story building, killing 85 and injuring more than 300. It came just two years after the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed, with 29 killed. Immediate suspicion fell on Iran, accused of working through Hezbollah with local contacts. But in the decades since, presidents have come and gone, investigation after investigation has taken place, yet nobody has ever been convicted. Justice has never been served.

Argentina's Jewish community, centered in Buenos Aires, numbers around 250,000 people. It is mostly made up of the children and grandchildren of Jews who fled the pogroms and economic hardships of Eastern Europe at the turn of the last century, or those who came two generations later, as the Nazis rose to and fell from power in Europe. Argentina, in the minds of those early Jewish immigrants, was a faraway land, a place so exotic and distant from the ones they were leaving that they could begin their lives anew. Even today Buenos Aires feels isolated; it is an 11-hour plane ride to New York, even further to Europe and Israel. World events always seemed to happen elsewhere.

Until the AMIA bombing.

"It was a shock for all of us here," explains Karina Falkon, a psychologist who lives in Buenos Aires. "It showed us how connected we were to the rest of the Jewish world. They showed everyone that when they want to hurt us, they can do it here, too."

Falkon had lived in Israel in the early 1990s, so she recognized the sound she heard on that July morning as an explosion. She and friends ran to the site to see how they could help. "At night we tried to save the books from the building—the police officially didn't let us, but we were collecting them so that they could somehow get preserved."

AMIA is the umbrella for all Jewish organizations in Argentina, and the blast brought devastation to nearly every segment of the Jewish community, from secular to religious. All who were old enough remember where they were that day.

Rabbi Tzvi Grunblatt has headed Chabad-Lubavitch of Argentina since 1978. Chabad, a Hasidic Jewish outreach organization with over 4,000 representatives all over the world, is one of the largest Jewish groups in Argentina, with more than 52 centers, including schools, synagogues, and social service organizations spread throughout the country. Its headquarters on Aguero Street is less than two kilometers from the AMIA building.

"I was here in my house," Grunblatt recalls of that day. "I had just arrived back from New York. I went to pray in the morning and then I got back home and I went to lie down because I was exhausted after traveling. I woke up when I heard the bomb."

With memories of the Israeli embassy attack still fresh, Grunblatt called his office at Chabad headquarters to find out what happened. "They

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Dovid Margolin writes on international affairs for Chabad.org and is the director of Hebrew literacy at the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute in New York.

told me, 'The building of AMIA does not exist anymore. There was an explosion and the building just disappeared.'

"Everyone was affected. A member of my community's mother was killed. Another member was passing through the building to pay for his father's gravestone—his father passed away earlier that month—he was paying for the gravestone and got killed. We have a young man whose father worked as security there, he was also killed. It was a great hit for the entire community."

"We were all there digging for days," adds Grunblatt's wife, Shterna. "It was just devastating."

Today, concrete security barriers guard every Jewish center in Buenos Aires. They all have security guards as well, with the higher-profile centers employing Israeli-trained professionals.

The rebuilt AMIA building—which also houses the offices of DAIA, Argentine Jewry's political umbrella organization—is an impregnable fortress, a monument to the precautions the Jewish community has been forced to take since the attack. Set far back from the bustling street, the front entrance to the compound is a single, nondescript steel door in a protective wall. Peering through dark sunglasses, two Israeli security guards monitor and question each person going in or out.

When I arrived in mid-December to interview an AMIA official, I handed over my ID to the guards, then was instructed to stand behind two lines of yellow tape on the sidewalk, under a large black metal sign bearing the names of all of the bombing's victims. Fifteen minutes later I was allowed in. After going through a metal detector and a number of enormous security doors with red and green lights signaling me to stay put or move forward, I was finally in the building's courtyard, which is dominated by a memorial to the victims designed by Israeli artist Yaacov Agam.

My purpose was to ask about Argentina's continuing negotiations with Iran. These talks were agreed to in January 2013, when, on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Addis Ababa, the foreign ministers of Argentina and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding that called for a joint "truth" commission to investigate the AMIA bombing. At the time, the move was condemned by AMIA's leadership, Israel's foreign ministry, and major American Jewish organizations.

To be sure, the Argentine investigation into the attack had been mishandled for years; a new start was needed. But Argentina's decision to invite Iran—which had been formally charged by Nisman, together with Hezbollah, in 2006—to participate in an investigation of its own alleged actions seemed positively sinister.

If I had expected the official I interviewed (who asked not to be named) to express disapproval and anger about the Memorandum of Understanding—as Argentine Jews do regularly in private—I was wrong. The years without justice, but full of bungled court proceedings, cover-ups, and misdirection, complicated by ever-present local corruption, whispers of government intimidation, and charges of obstruction of justice against various political figures, in addition to the negotiations with Iran, have left the Argentine Jewish community in a state of fear.

"The relationship between the government and the Jewish community is a respectful one," the official began, measuring his words. "Whatever we decide to work on together we work on together. We understand very well that there is interest on the part of the Argentine government to reach the truth and to come to the results of who is responsible. One of the tools to be used is the Memorandum, and the Jewish community of Argentina does not feel the proper way to reach the solution is through collaborating with the potential perpetrators."

As he spoke it became increasingly clear that this was not a disingenuous bureaucrat, but a Jewish community official who, knowing full well what his government was capable of, was protecting himself and his community. Now, in the light of Nisman's death as he was about to accuse the president and foreign minister of conspiring to cover up Iran's involvement in the bombing in exchange for positive trade relations, the official's caution appears abundantly justified.

"I believe that the Argentine government and the world really do want to know the truth," the official continued. "But it's not the job of the Jewish community to find the answer, it's the obligation of the government that's responsible to run this country. The Jewish community can help, can

Charlie

For the twelve
who died
for laughter
a million marched
thousands wept
rulers of nations
linked arms
how wonderful
so human
yet how empty
the streets when
Jews
vanished
when
Lenin
Stalin
Mao
and their mini-me's
shot
hanged
tortured
starved
froze
worked
to death
(scholars
estimate)
ninety-four
million
unbelievers
Hitler
unveiling
his solution
asked who remembers
the armenians
making
his sycophants
chuckle

—Charles McCarry

support, think together with them, but we can't lead this investigation. The Argentine government is the only one that can do it."

Because of the Argentine government's entanglement in the cover-up of Iran's suspected crimes, the circumstances in Argentina are darker and more dangerous than anything we face in the United States. But there is still a lesson to be taken from Argentina's negotiations with Iran. The Jewish community, victim of an atrocity, has been reduced to self-censorship and mumbled platitudes to express its displeasure at Argentina's friendly dealings with its attacker.

In his recent State of the Union address, President Obama said: "Our diplomacy is at work with respect to Iran, where, for the first time in a decade, we've halted the progress of its nuclear program and reduced its stockpile of nuclear material. Between now and this spring, we have a chance to negotiate a comprehensive agreement that prevents a nuclear-armed Iran; secures America and our allies—including Israel; while avoiding yet another Middle East conflict."

Does Obama's call for further negotiations with Iran, like the Argentine-Iranian Memorandum of Understanding, place Israel in a position of danger? Does it undermine America's own security by showing softness and creating new targets?

"It's always dangerous not to know the truth," were the AMIA official's parting words. "When the people who made the worst attack ever [on Argentine soil] aren't brought to justice, that leaves Argentina scared of more attacks. There is a sense that, because nothing was done about the previous attack, there won't be peace."

When a government assigned to protect its people by investigating crimes and bringing the perpetrators to justice switches roles and becomes a friendly negotiator with the likely criminal, the victims are vulnerable and frightened. Contemplating events in Argentina, it is impossible not to wonder whether Obama is leading the United States and its allies down a similar path. ♦

Non-candidate Mitt Romney non-campaigning at Little Dooey, a restaurant in Starkville, Mississippi, January 28, 2015

The Authentic Mitt Romney

Version 3.0.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Meet the real Mitt Romney. The Mitt Romney you thought you knew from 2012, from 2008, from his tenure as governor of Massachusetts, from his run for the Senate against Teddy Kennedy—those versions of Mitt Romney were the constructs of political consultants, artifices designed to win elections but nowhere near the real Mitt Romney.

The real Romney is the man you saw in the postelection documentary *Mitt*, a man who is loose and likable, quirky and congenial, genuine and true. This is what we are to believe about the 2016 version of Mitt Romney, the one now being beta-tested for a third possible run for the presidency.

"If he runs again in 2016, Romney is determined to rebrand himself as authentic." That's how Philip Rucker of the *Washington Post* put it in an article last week. The new authenticity campaign will likely be headquartered in Utah, home of the Mormon church, where Romney has resettled as he contemplates another presidential bid. In previous campaigns, Rucker reports, "political consultants urged him to play down his Mormonism" out of fear that bigotry and narrow-mindedness would cost him votes.

This time it will be different. As part

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AP / ROGELIO V. SOLIS

of the effort to repackage this Romney as real and unscripted, he is talking about his faith and even "crack[ing] jokes about Joseph Smith's polygamy."

Those same political advisers were responsible for Romney's decision to focus less on himself and more on the economy and Barack Obama. "Last time, consultants argued it was a referendum campaign and that was what the campaign's central message should be," Tagg Romney, the candidate's oldest son, told the *Post*.

All of that is in the past. The new Mitt Romney—the real Mitt Romney—is positioning himself as carefree and spontaneous, as a consequences-be-damned paragon of authenticity.

So last week, on a trip to Mississippi, Romney allowed political reporters to tag along with him as he ate barbecue with Dan Mullen, the head football coach at Mississippi State University. Romney told reporters he was breaking an "unwritten rule" of campaigning by eating in front of the cameras. The risk, of course, is that an unflattering photograph could be splashed across the front pages of newspapers or that a candidate might be captured in an ungraceful moment with food on his chin or a dab of sauce on his nose.

The new Romney wants you to know he doesn't care. "I'm going to eat whether the cameras are here or not," he declared last week.

Reporters were allowed to listen in on the conversation between Mullen and Romney, a chat in which the once and possibly future candidate "peppered Mr. Mullen with questions ostensibly about football," as Jonathan Martin of the *New York Times* put it. Romney wanted to know how Mullen "handles the news media glare" and deals with "the agony of losing and the swift judgments based on success" or the lack of it.

Complicating matters for the new, authentic Mitt Romney is the fact that he is now considering a 2016 presidential run after having said for more than a year that he was not considering a 2016 presidential run.

"Oh, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no," he told the *New York Times* in January 2014. "I'm not running again." In February, he said: "You know, I'm not Ronald Reagan. And I'm not running for president."

In June, he told NBC News: "I'm not running for president." And in October, he told Bloomberg television: "I'm not running, I'm not planning on running, and I've got nothing new on that story." Ann Romney, not to be outdone by her husband, put it this way: "Done, completely. Not only Mitt and I are done, but the kids are done. Done. Done. Done."

It's possible, of course, that Romney just changed his mind. It's possible that his interest in running again is a reflection of his new authenticity rather than a departure from it.

As part of the effort to repackage himself as real and unscripted, Romney is talking about his faith and even 'crack[ing] jokes about Joseph Smith's polygamy.' The new Mitt is positioning himself as carefree and spontaneous, as a consequences-be-damned paragon of authenticity.

With his new openness to having cameras around all the time, he'll have plenty of opportunity to explain why he was doing so many of the things one would do in preparation for a run even as he insisted that he wasn't considering a bid. Romney made repeated appearances on the Sunday political talk shows, for instance, and reportedly made 80 congratulatory phone calls to winning campaigns on election night in 2014. All the while, Romney advisers whispered to top contributors and members of Congress that the 2012 nominee remained interested in a bid despite his public denials.

Among the biggest challenges Romney will face is the perception that he is not concerned about the very poor, driven in part by his declaration, during that last campaign, that since they have a safety net he was "not concerned about the very poor." And then, of course, there were his comments about the 47 percent.

"There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what," he said. "All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it. That's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what. . . . Our message of low taxes doesn't connect. . . . So my job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."

Romney defenders said that these comments, secretly recorded at a high-dollar fundraiser and provided to the media, gave voters a mistaken impression of the man they know. Critics point to the remarks as a major reason Romney performed so poorly with low-income and minority voters. Of the voters in 2012 who told exit pollsters that they valued a candidate who "cares about voters like me," 81 percent voted for Barack Obama. Just 18 percent voted for Romney.

To correct the misimpression that he sees poor and minority Americans primarily as political commodities, Romney would reportedly focus a 2016 campaign on poverty.

"The rich have done historically well," Romney said. "I'm concerned about the middle class and the poor in this country." He added: "We tend to go to the audiences that vote in a Republican primary and tend therefore not to be as involved in minority communities as we need to be to win the general election," he said. "So we've got to stop thinking so much about the primary and start thinking more about making sure we have people that support us in the general election."

Meet the real Mitt Romney? ♦

Scholars of American Politics

The contributions of Walter Berns and Harry Jaffa.

BY HARVEY MANSFIELD

Two friends of mine, Walter Berns and Harry Jaffa, died on January 10. They had not been on friendly terms for many years, but death took them together. They were joined also by being leaders, with Herbert Storing, Martin Diamond, and Ralph Lerner, of a group of a dozen or so students of Leo Strauss (who died in 1973), the philosopher who revived philosophy and especially political philosophy from decline and irrelevance. Strauss founded a school of "Straussians," tolerably well known but not well understood today, and these two were among the original Straussians who had learned from Strauss himself.

This group among the original Straussians were scholars mainly of American politics and political thought rather than the old masters of the history of political philosophy with whom Strauss was so intimate. Strauss had little to say in print about American politics, but he encouraged some of his students who were so inclined to study the politics of their country, which they did. America was Strauss's adopted country, and he had some sensitivity for the difference between a naturalized citizen like himself and a native. He once gave it as a reason, no doubt jocular, why he should not be made president of the American Political Science Association—not that there was ever any groundswell to offer him this honor.

There was another reason to attract Straussians into the study of American politics. This was the evident, self-announced status of America as a kind of philosophic republic, based on "self-evident truths" according to the Declaration of Independence and offering an experiment in the possibility of founding "good government" according to "reflection and choice" rather than "accident and force," as is said on the first page of *The Federalist*. To enhance these statements of universal import we also have the testimony of Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address citing the Civil War as a test of whether America "or any nation so conceived and so dedicated" to a universal "proposition that all men are created equal" can long endure. And besides, there is the continued reference in *The Federalist* to political science as the source of American political institutions rather than parochial custom or inherited history.

Harry Jaffa, left, and Walter Berns

JAFFA, COURTESY OF OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

This evidence of avowed purpose and conscious design adds up to a picture of America as the country that believes it has solved the political problem of popular government by establishing a government that is strong enough to defeat all dangers and free enough not to become a danger itself. This perfect republic designed by philosophy and science, however, is just what Strauss denied could be achieved. His work was defined by emphasis on the subversiveness of philosophy, which asks questions, as opposed to the self-satisfaction of politics, which believes it has answers and insists on them. For Strauss, the fate of Socrates in Athens, where he was killed for philosophizing, is emblematic of the human situation, in which men are torn between the twin needs (borrowing from *The Federalist* as above) to "reflect" in philosophy and to "choose" in politics. Philosophy and politics, as with Socrates and Athens, will always sense danger from one another, philosophy sensing complacency in politics, politics fearing intrusion from philosophy.

Among followers of Strauss, one issue is the importance of politics in the relationship of politics and philosophy. Politics thinks it is the most important human activity because it decides who rules in the world. Every human activity, including the most private matters such as the philosopher's reflection, takes place under the rule of some authority that protects or permits it. It is philosophy's business to question this authority and its self-proclaimed importance, and to bring its assertions to the bar of reason and its assurances to the test of eternity. The issue then is whether philosophy's claim to importance is sovereign over politics so as to eclipse politics, or does philosophy have something to learn from politics in a way that rescues the importance of politics?

Walter Berns and Harry Jaffa both took the latter view, and they studied American politics as a serious subject and America as a kind of philosophical republic. Since both of them spent their lives in the study of American politics, their lifelong professional premise required that they take the notion of political virtue seriously and not make its inferiority to philosophy their main theme—as does Plato in his *Republic*. But each of them did this differently.

Berns was impressed by men of

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political and moral virtue. His work was in American constitutional law, but he approached that subject from the standpoint of virtue. His first book was called *Freedom, Virtue and the First Amendment* (1957), and the zinger in the title was the word "virtue." Dominant opinion in the field had come to suppose almost that "freedom" meant above all freedom from the demand to have and show virtue. Virtue would set too high a standard for democratic freedom; in practice, it would be hardhearted and lack compassion for the unfortunate who need more money, not more virtue. Berns upheld the view that freedom and virtue had to be compatible if not identical, and it was the purpose of the Constitution to set both government and people where they could excel. The Constitution is as much a way of life as a structure of limited government, in fact more a way of life because the constitutional limitations on government were an invitation to virtue in the people, not a substitute for it. In this he shared the view of legal realism, also dominant at that time and still today, that there is something more powerful than the law that the law serves. But for him it was virtue as opposed to money and power, for money and power are means to an end, which is virtue (somehow understood). Virtue is and deserves to be more powerful because it is higher, not lower, than the law.

Socrates would not have been killed by the Athenians if they had had a Constitution with a First Amendment. But perhaps this is because the First Amendment makes Americans indifferent to philosophy. In that case one might be permitted to speak of America as a "philosophical republic" that allows philosophy but ignores it, as Alexis de Tocqueville remarked, rather than listening to it and taking it seriously like the Athenians. The First Amendment gives intellectuals free rein to attack the morals, the religion, and the politics of the multitude, in sum to offend virtue and its practitioners and defenders to the utmost. This is how it looked to Walter Berns in *The First Amendment and the Future of American Democracy* (1976) as well as in his first book. But the First Amendment also allowed him to speak as an anti-intellectual, and in support of virtue.

Berns was a man of strong, well-directed loyalties—to his friends, to his family, to his country. Reflecting on this fact, for he knew himself well, he wrote a book defending patriotism, *Making Patriots*, toward the end of his life. He was a man with a chest, and he wanted to give thoughtful expression to the passions of his heart. Why does virtue, which seems to lift us above our attachments, nonetheless show itself most impressively, if not inevitably, within the narrow bounds of one's family and country?

Harry Jaffa was a man of greater zeal than loyalty, if loyalty means paying honor to things and persons as they are (as I believe it does). As his kind of patriot he would pledge his fealty to an America that he would show was a philosophical republic. Never a fan

of Tocqueville, he did not appreciate Tocqueville's analysis of America as a country of Cartesians who had never read Descartes, and of moral citizens who hid their moral passion under an overmodest doctrine of "self-interest well understood." Whereas Tocqueville makes no mention of the Declaration of Independence in his great work *Democracy in America*, Jaffa makes everything of it. The declaration is not so much of "independence" as it is of the self-evident truth of human equality, which in denying that men are divided into free and slave is the source of all morality and sound politics. Jaffa did this through his study of Abraham Lincoln.

In 1959 Jaffa published his *chef-d'oeuvre*, *Crisis of the House Divided*, the best book ever written on Abraham Lincoln, the one that proved him to be the greatest American. In it Jaffa laid out the relation of Lincoln's politics to his thought, his strategy to his intent. Treating Lincoln's writings with the seriousness of a difficult philosophical text, and using the sensitivity to the tools of indirection that he learned from Strauss, he brought Lincoln's thoughtfulness fully to light for the first time. Lincoln, he argued, even more than the Founders, was the statesman who explained to America what it was, who made America aware of itself as "the last best hope of earth." Tocqueville could praise untheoretical America for its practice rather than its philosophy of freedom only because he died in 1859, before he could learn of Lincoln. As to the myriad crowd of Lincoln scholars, Jaffa quieted their sullen defamation by bringing out the intelligence and noble purpose of Lincoln's maneuvers.

One might think it impossible to exaggerate the importance of this book if Jaffa had not shown us how. In other books he made the understanding of Lincoln's America the solution to all difficulties, the combination of all good things: democracy and aristocracy, ancients and moderns, prudence and principle, Christians and pagans, philosophy and statesmanship, the good and one's own. The only dualities he left intact were liberal and conservative, Jew and Gentile. These he kept in order to maintain or, more accurately, appease his excess of fighting spirit.

Walter Berns and Harry Jaffa were both in their respective ways fighters for liberty, liberals of the old school—hence conservatives today. They were characters with plenty of definition, outstanding, beneficial, and memorable. ♦

Stuck in the Middle with You

Our confusing discussions of class in America.

BY TAMAR JACOBY

Are you middle class? Upper middle class, maybe? Do you think you and your family are the people being talked about when politicians debate solutions for the middle class and its problems?

It's a premise rooted in the very heart of the American project: that everyone is or can be middle class. So when Obama uses the presidential bully pulpit—starting but not ending with the State of the Union—to focus the nation on the plight of the middle class, he knows the theme will resonate, big time.

But who exactly is he talking about? It was hard to tell from the speech. Sprinkled among the paragraphs about the middle class, there were also references to "working families." If you dig a little deeper into the policies proposed in the address, it turns out several are designed for people with low to moderate incomes. But when Obama went on the road to elaborate on his proposals and presumably meet some middle-class Americans, he ended up in a café in Baltimore that serves vegan sandwiches and charges almost five dollars for a chai latte—not exactly working-family fare.

The SOTU poster couple—Rebekah Erler, who sat in the gallery with Michelle Obama, and her husband Ben—was even more ambiguous. The president made it sound as if they might be working class: Ben was in the construction business before he lost his job, Rebekah attended community college. But it turns out the speech glossed over a lot about the Erlers, and not just that Rebekah had worked as a volunteer for Patty Murray, the Democratic senator from Washington. She also has a four-year college degree—putting her squarely in the solid middle class, not the lower or precarious middle where Obama seemed to want to situate her.

There are several possible explanations for the president's loose language. It's hard to believe it's just carelessness, or ignorance. He and his speechwriters can't live such sheltered lives that they really don't know the difference between college-educated professionals and blue-collar workers. So perhaps the vagueness is a political calculation. Maybe Obama is deliberately using the catch-all term *middle class* to create a sense of solidarity and spur concern for people at risk of slipping out of the middle into what once might have been called the working poor. Sounds well-intentioned. But is it really helpful? Surely the worst thing we could do for this group is to fail to see them for who they are and misdiagnose their problems. That does no service to working families—and it obscures the choices we face as a nation.

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The truth about class in America is complex and hard to get at. Partly, we just don't like to talk about class. It's something we feel our ancestors left behind, and happily so, in the old, unequal, stratified societies they left to come to America. When we finally do get to the conversation, it's often muddy and misleading. Economists, sociologists, and public opinion all use different definitions and different yardsticks. Is the key variable income, education, occupation—or is what really matters what you think you are? Many studies rely solely on self-identification. And it's easy to fall back on the view Obama tapped in his speech: that except for small, distinct strata at the top and the bottom—the very rich and the chronic poor—we're all pretty similar in aspirations and values.

The data tell a different story. Economists divide American households into five income brackets, or quintiles, each containing exactly one-fifth of the population. In 2013, the lowest fifth earned less than $20,900, the top fifth more than $105,900. A catch-all definition like Obama's puts everyone in between in the middle class. But it's hard to view that as a meaningful category—an earnings gap that wide makes for differences in the kind, not just the degree, of opportunities open to you and your family. Using all five tiers allows social scientists to distinguish between an upper-middle, a lower-middle and a truly middle category: households making roughly $40,000 to $60,000 in 2013.

Public opinion falls somewhere in between the nuanced and unnuanced views. Perhaps, in a loose sense, all Americans consider themselves middle class. But when put on the spot by pollsters, people can and do make distinctions. According to a 2012 Gallup poll, some 55 percent of Americans see themselves in the middle or upper-middle class, while roughly a third call themselves working class and 10 percent put themselves in the bottom tier. Self-identification shifts with the business cycle. But unlike Obama, most Americans distinguish between the middle class, the very poor, and a somewhat shadowy group in between.

One of the reasons for our confusion: The lower middle class has all but disappeared from American politics. Sometimes, like Obama, we lump these families with the tier above. Other, equally misleading analyses group them with the chronic poor. In fact, they are much more likely than people in the bottom fifth to have graduated from high school, twice as likely to be married, more than twice as likely to work full-time, and dramatically less likely to rely on public assistance. *Working class* has a dated, leftist ring. But what's stunning is that we have no term to replace it. The old industrial factories where this tier once worked may be shutting down, but the people haven't gone up in smoke.

Which brings us back to the State of the Union. Middle-class people down on their luck—people like Rebekah Erler—sometimes appear to fall into this forgotten lower tier. She herself told the president that "everyone that we are surrounded by is blue-collar, dealing with the [exact] same" problems she and her husband are dealing with. But the truth is most of her problems are different—and not just in degree. That's not to say her concerns don't matter, or that politics shouldn't address them. But surely what she needs is not the same as that of a young person who doesn't have a four-year degree and has scant hope of obtaining one, who owns nothing but, at best, a bank account and has no middle-class parents to fall back on. The biggest difference between the working poor and the middle class is not their incomes, which may go up and down, as the Erlers' did, but their social capital, or connections, and kinds of opportunities they have.

Barack Obama aims for the middle in Lawrence, Kansas, January 22.

AP / TRAVIS HEYING

Conventional wisdom tells us this is the next big thing—that politicians on the left and right are going to spend the next two years talking about the middle class, or whoever it is we mean when we say *middle class*. The State of the Union tells us that conversation needs to start with some tough-minded questions. Who exactly are we talking about? What are the challenges they're facing? Truth is we don't really know—about either the middle class or the working poor. And that's before we even get to the hard questions: what society owes either group, and how best to provide it.

Obama wants to use the plight of the poor to expand what we promise the middle class—universal child care, for example. Republicans aren't buying that—it's a nonstarter. But the GOP still needs to face up to the questions that Obama and other Democrats have been papering over. And it's about time—both the middle class and the working poor need better answers. ♦

Growth Versus Equality

Striking the right balance.

BY CHARLES WOLF JR.

If only it were that easy.

President Obama can't run again, as he noted in the State of the Union last month, but he sought to use his address to set the tone for the 2016 campaign. His repeated references to "middle-class economics" were tactful code, speaking in front of a Republican-controlled Congress, for that perennial Democratic favorite, the inequality debate.

High and rising levels of inequality will doubtless resound in the politicking leading up to the presidential election. In fact, likely Republican contenders focused on it in their responses to the president's address. "Income inequality has worsened under this administration. And tonight, President Obama offers more of the same policies—policies that have allowed the poor to get poorer and the rich to get richer," Sen. Rand Paul declared. Jeb Bush had the same reaction: "While the last eight years have been pretty good ones for top earners, they've been a lost decade for the rest of America." And Sen. Ted Cruz said, "We're facing right now a divided America when it comes to the economy."

Recent data show the Gini coefficient for (pre-tax) income distribution in the United States—the most-used measure of inequality—at its highest level since 1985: tenth out of 31 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (Income distribution in China and most other less-developed countries is still more unequal than in the United States.)

Another indicator of inequality—the ratio between average CEO compensation in the United States and average workers' wages—conveys a similar picture: CEOs' average pay is 331 times workers' pay. The corresponding ratios are between 15 and 20 times less unequal in Japan, Germany, Canada, and Britain.

Concerns about inequality and efforts to reverse or at least mitigate its rise derive partly from its causes—whether they're deemed legitimate, attributed to differences in productivity and "value-added," or illegitimate, attributed instead to discrimination, favoritism, unfairness, or some other corruption—and partly from its effect on social stability. The two are intimately linked. To the extent inequality is seen as legitimate, its adverse effects on social harmony are minimized: People generally focus on enhancing their own living standards rather than comparing themselves with the "super-rich" 1 percent or "rich" 5 percent. But if inequality is deemed illegitimate, unfair, discriminatory, or due to corruption, its impact on social harmony is magnified. Countervailing interventions—protests, laws, and regulations—become unavoidable, as well as warranted.

Conservatives and liberals, unsurprisingly, differ over those interventions. Conservatives focus on supply-side measures, favoring economic growth by reforming and lowering taxes, lighter and smarter regulations, and a business-friendly environment. The accompanying rhetoric intones that "a rising tide lifts all boats"; critics assail this as "trickle-down economics," expressing concerns about those who are left behind—-the boats left on the beach.

Liberals focus on demand-side measures, invoking neo-Keynesian economics and redistribution. They advocate increased taxes on the rich and government borrowing to subsidize lower-income recipients, expanding entitlements and thereby stimulating demand. The accompanying rhetoric extols a more egalitarian society and economy. Critics assail this as mortgaging future generations, calling the approach "sleight-of-hand" and "bubble-up" economics.

Neither side is devoid of merit—each suggests what's lacking in the

NEWSCOM

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other. But both views reflect wishful, rather than realistic, thinking. They fail to confront the reality of a daunting tradeoff between economic growth and income equality. Growth has been and increasingly is causally associated with less equality, greater equality with slower growth.

The ineluctable connection between growth and inequality lies in the crucial role of innovation in driving growth in technologically advanced economies. The enormity of rewards garnered by the innovators and their close associates creates a strong tilt toward increased inequality of income and wealth.

Economists refer to an economy's maximum output level as defining its "production-possibility frontier." Expanding the frontier depends on one or more "game-changing" innovations. In the recent past, these have mainly been in information technology. In the future they may emerge from other technologies: biogenetic and stem-cell technology, nanotechnology, robotics, or something else. The effect on growth will likely be large, as will the ensuing disproportionate rewards for the innovators and their close associates—leading to greater inequality.

Evidence to support this proposition is both anecdotal and empirical. Consider Bill Gates/Steve Ballmer and Microsoft; Steve Jobs and Apple; Sergey Brin/Larry Page and Google; Jeff Bezos and Amazon; Larry Ellison and Oracle; Michael Bloomberg and Bloomberg L.P.; Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook—all of these innovators are in the IT domain—but also the Walton family and Walmart, major innovators in global-scaled procurement and retailing. These noteworthy innovators (except for the deceased Jobs) are all in *Forbes*'s current list of the world's three-dozen richest billionaires. Their combined wealth is more than a half-trillion dollars; their accumulated wealth equals 3.5 percent of annual U.S. GDP. Their incomes place them comfortably among the "super-rich" 1 percent. Successful innovation spawns inequality.

The link between growth and inequality is also reflected in an accompanying change in the shares of national income represented by wages and profits. Wage income redounds principally to middle-income recipients (notwithstanding the skewing effect of CEO vs. worker pay mentioned earlier), while profits accrue to the owners of capital assets—notably the super-rich who are already upper-income. In the past decade-and-a-half of modest but fluctuating growth, the years of slower or negative growth (2007 to 2009) were accompanied by wage income amounting to 64-65 percent of total income, while the years of relatively higher growth exhibited wage shares reduced by 3 percent with equivalently increased profit shares. Although notably high-income recipients are included in the wage category, profit income is more concentrated among higher-income recipients than is wage income. Hence changes in which the profit share rises and the wage share falls signify increased inequality.

These data do not imply that innovators, as essential drivers of economic growth, are motivated only or even mainly by profit and income incentives. The venture capital industry, however, is laser-focused on these goals, and venture capital is vitally important in seeking, spotting, and financing successful innovation—moreso now and in the future than ever before.

Notwithstanding the strong three-sided connections between growth, innovation, and inequality, there are social considerations that warrant measures to moderate the trend toward greater inequality. Herewith three suggestions toward this goal: The first relates directly to the tradeoff between growth and equality, while the second and third relate to the separate issue of the huge disparity between CEO and worker pay in the United States compared with other countries.

(1) Stock options for middle- and lower-income workers (as distinct from corporate executives, who, by and large, already have access to stock options). These new option plans would provide vesting over a defined and limited period, along with transferability after vesting if workers decide that equities other than those of their present employer will have higher yields than the assets they've acquired. The aim of the options program is to give workers a stake in growth-promoting, innovative companies, while the attendant costs of the program would be shared among employers, middle- and lower-income workers, and state and local government.

(2) On-the-job training to enhance labor skills and enable workers to qualify for higher-skill, higher-paying jobs, thus lowering the CEO-worker pay ratio by raising the denominator. Allowing part of the program's costs to be expensed or receive tax-exempt status would give employers an incentive to provide such training. Costs could be higher because of the uncertainty over whether the skill-enhanced workers would eventually be employed by the provider of on-the-job training or by another firm.

(3) Closer monitoring of CEO compensation by corporate boards in the interests of reducing the CEO-worker pay ratio by lowering the ratio's numerator. Recognition of this goal's importance is already reflected in the increased frequency of shareholder resolutions and proxy voting calling for corporate boards to inform shareholders in advance whether, when, and by how much boards plan to increase CEO pay. Although most of these nonbinding resolutions have been defeated or ignored, their increased number has apparently already had some effect: Today's high ratio is about 40 percent lower than it was several years ago. Nonetheless, our CEO-worker pay ratio remains high compared with those of other countries—something of which the public should be made more aware.

Needless to say, these and other possible suggestions are easier to list than to implement. While implementation costs would not be negligible, they would be small relative to the gains made. There's a difficult tradeoff between equality and the growth that comes from successful innovation. But one doesn't have to overwhelm the other. ♦

The Flag-Waving Greek Left

A collision between national sovereignty and the European Union in the birthplace of democracy

By Christopher Caldwell

In Athens in mid-January, two weeks before the election that would make 40-year-old engineer Alexis Tsipras Greece's new prime minister, a bunch of cleaning ladies explained to me why they planned to vote for his party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza, for its Greek acronym). We met where they had lived, at least part of the time, for the past 16 months: among tents on the sidewalk in front of the economics ministry in downtown Athens. The 595 Agonizomenes Katharistries, as they call themselves, had been laid off from the nearby finance ministry in September 2013 as part of a plan devised by the so-called Troika of multinational institutions to help Greece clear its mountain of debt—which now stands at $350 billion, almost twice the country's GDP.

The Troika consists of the European Central Bank, the European Commission, and the International Monetary Fund. All of them see the kind of high-paying, low-skilled government job the ladies had lost as an example of mid-twentieth-century clientelism that will put any country on the road to poverty, and risks Greece's newly won spot in the club of developed countries. The cleaning ladies, in turn, believe this is so much pseudo-economic baloney. They were victims of a heartless, pointless, counterproductive cutting-for-cutting's-sake that, as they see it, has shrunk the Greek economy by a quarter, handed over good jobs to illegal immigrants willing to work for a euro an hour, humiliated a proud country, and undermined Greek democracy to benefit rich people.

But now the ladies are on their way back to work. Syriza has taken power at the head of a two-party coalition, sweeping away the country's carefully built austerity program and its four-decade-old party system. The whole of Europe may be shaken to its core. It is not certain that is a bad thing.

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WALLET HALF-EMPTY

Greece's problems are formidable. A quarter of workers are unemployed, with all the human toll that implies. One meets journalists at top national dailies who have not been paid since last summer, and clerical workers in their 40s who have returned home to live with their parents. The country produces almost nothing of export value besides tourism and olive oil.

Corruption is as endemic as people say. Greece has been in default for half the years since its independence in 1832. Nor did it ever really establish a properly functioning democracy after the end of military rule in 1974. Since 1981, two parties, the Panhellenic Socialists (Pasok) of the Papandreou family and the New Democracy (ND) of the Karamanlis family, have alternated in power. Pasok has received interest-free loans from the government; ND added 150,000 government employees in its last five-year stint before the crisis. The Oxford professor of law Pavlos Eleftheriades has written about other rackets. Until recently a lawyers-and-judges pension fund was entitled to collect a 1.3 percent tax on all property transactions. Doctors got a 6.5 percent take of the drugs they prescribe. Unionized utility workers had similar deals. The arbitrariness of such exactions does not escape the notice of those meant to pay them. Tax avoidance has been rife.

State finances built this way are rickety. Greece's did not survive the rattling they got from the U.S. subprime crisis of 2008. In May 2010, Greece ran out of money, and in 2012, the Troika wrote its stringent recovery plan—the Memorandum of Understanding. In some ways the Memorandum is making matters worse. Authorities relied on a new property levy, called Enfia, which overnight took the country from among the lowest property taxes in Europe to among the highest. The middle class took it on the chin. The tax was progressive, hard to evade, and broad-based, since Greeks had high rates of home-ownership. Soon people were selling off

homes their families had owned for centuries—and family homes had been the backbone of an informal Greek welfare system. Syriza campaigned on changing the tax. Once the party looked likely to win, people stopped paying it altogether. Revenue is down 70 percent since last January, according to one outgoing ND official.

The new taxes were meant to backstop a program of free-market reforms. The cleaning ladies were not the only state employees fired. Wages were cut. Rights to unionize were stripped. There was something arbitrary about these policy recommendations. Taxi services were liberalized, but Athens was already aswarm with taxi drivers. It even has Uber. And it is hard to see why requiring Sunday shopping in a relatively pious country should be the business of foreigners. "No employers' association asked for it," a Pasok aide complained to me of a plan to deregulate other professions. "No other country has it."

Alexis Tsipras gives his victory speech, January 25.

NEWSCOM

While Greece's debt has not grown much in absolute terms, its GDP has shrunk so rapidly that the debt-to-GDP ratio has run out of control, to 177 percent. "The debt will never be repaid," one international economist told me in January. Almost everyone agrees. After a debt forgiveness of a quarter of a trillion dollars in 2012, Greece is still paying 4.4 percent of its GDP to service the debt that remains. That is less than Portugal is paying, but it is so crippling a burden that some economists have said Greece's best move would be to default once it starts running a primary surplus (that is, when it can cover all of its expenses except for interest payments). It is running one now.

One of Tsipras's campaign promises was that "democracy will return to Greece." Whether one likes the Memorandum or not, it humiliates the country politically, demanding that a government grow more efficient while shedding half its personnel. It reportedly requires some 800 political actions a year, to which the government can do no more than assent meekly. So the Memorandum undermines Greece's self-determination and its pride, something Tsipras talked about through the campaign. And being a member of the European Union means a large encroachment on national prerogatives to begin with. That renders more sensitive a problem that is often mentioned in countries bankrolling bailouts (such as Germany) but less often in the context of countries receiving them (such as Greece): their dubious legality. When the euro was set up in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, Article 123 forbade "monetization of debts" (printing money to pay off deficits, a policy that the European Central Bank began in mid-January) and Article 125 forbade bailouts. But EU officials have deemed the common currency important enough to be governed via emergency measures. As with much of the Obama agenda, authority is found in the it's-only-just-this-once and it's-so-important clauses of the constitution.

LEVERAGED BAILOUT

To a man of Communist background like Tsipras, such constitutional ad-hockery probably looks like the sign of a power structure beginning to wobble. He has laid out an agenda so sweeping—a minimum wage, a restoration of unionization rights, rehiring of government employees, reconnection of utilities for those cut off for nonpayment, a new food stamps program—that it amounts to a repeal of austerity. Tsipras has claimed he does not wish to risk Greece's good standing in Europe's common currency, but many of his economic advisers are quite willing to run that risk. Tsipras himself has clearly made a calculation that the EU needs to keep Greece in the euro more than Greece needs to stay in it. After all, there are other debtor nations, and a Greek exit or expulsion may cause a financial contagion.

There has always been an affinity between leftist politicians in Greece and Iberia. Spain and Portugal got rid of their military dictators in the mid-1970s at the same time Greece did. Syriza is very close to Spain's similarly anti-austerity, similarly university-centered leftist party Podemos. Its leader, Pablo Iglesias, who will run in Spanish elections in December, even hit the campaign trail with Tsipras. Podemos was founded only about a year ago. Drawing more than 20 percent of likely votes, it is closing in on being the largest party in Spain. This creates a dilemma for the European Union. A successful Syriza departure from the euro could create a precedent for Spain and other high-debt countries. On the other hand, any concession the EU offers to keep Greece in the euro will be claimed by other countries, too.

If European Union and German officials have thus far taken a hard rhetorical line against Syriza, it is because they believe Tsipras will be driven to compromise.

First, he does not have the leverage he thinks. In a sense he is frozen in the world of five years ago, and certain of Tsipras's advisers seem to realize this. His finance minister Yanis Varoufakis—a professor in Athens, Austin, and Australia, as well as a prolific blogger and an in-house economist for the video-game streaming company Valve—recently published a book arguing that Greece should

have defaulted in 2010, but keeping quiet about whether it should do so now. Back then, Greek debt was held by French and German private banks. European authorities were spooked by the possibility of another Lehman Brothers event, in which hard-to-quantify interlocking debt obligations led to bank runs. But in the ensuing years, those banks did not roll over Greece's loans. It was the EU's national governments that put their taxpayers' savings on the line, and these include countries that are poorer than Greece—like Poland, Hungary, and Latvia. The IMF is involved, too, and the agreements were made enforceable under British, not Greek, law. In a sense this is a vindication of the leftist position: The Troika's "rescue" was a rescue not of Greece—look at the lowly estate of Greece now!—but of the big banks of the European core.

And this tells us something about how democratic the European Union is. Its leaders are more solicitous of markets than of voters. The Greeks are often told that the below-market interest rates at which they are borrowing are a sign of the good financial treatment they are receiving, but it is taxpayers, not capital markets, that are subsidizing those low rates. "The threat to a Syriza government will not come from the markets," Varoufakis has said. "Remember: Greece is bankrupt and is not borrowing from private investors. When you do not borrow, you do not care about the interest rate!"

The euro is an important symbol for Greek voters. Greece is a Christian country, but it is a Middle Eastern country, too. It has more in common with, say, Lebanon and Armenia than with Poland and Holland. Its citizens are wary of Turkey, the main reason why Greece perennially has one of the top 10 military budgets per capita in the world. While Greece is in NATO, the EU provides added security, and 74 percent of Greeks want to stay in it no matter what. "If we get out of the euro," one economist told me, "we go to Africa."

Greek politicians, knowing their voters, have been quick to compromise with the EU in the past. Antonis Samaras, the outgoing ND prime minister who spent the last four years administering the Memorandum, was among the most strident opponents of EU bailouts until he entered office. Andreas Papandreou, the Pasok founder who came to power on a radical leftist, anti-American platform in 1981, soon became a loyal member of the Western alliance. His son George was bullied out of holding a referendum on whether to accept EU tutelage in 2011. Pasok's inability to protect its empire of patronage led to its collapse. It fell from largest to seventh-largest party. But its government employees have gravitated to Syriza as their likeliest new patron. This means that around Syriza's core of university leftists has grown a mass movement of retrograde voters accustomed to extracting rents from the state. Greece has a long tradition of revolutionary parties winding up the equivalent of old ones, under changed names. A lot of people have said that Tsipras will happily submit to the Memorandum as long is it can be called something like the "Development Plan for Greece."

SYRIZA MEANS BUSINESS

The pooh-poohers of Syriza have been proved wrong so far. In its first days in power, Syriza has behaved like a radical party. Its key decision was to form a coalition with the Independent Greeks (Anel), a conservative formation that comes from the rightmost edge of ND and makes a fetish of national sovereignty in much the way the U.K. Independence Party does. The most foolish commentary in the wake of the elections has been that which describes Anel as an "unlikely ally" for Syriza, or a "strange bedfellow." The two parties are unlikely partners only if one is thinking in terms of Cold War categories and irrelevant issues. In today's Greece, in which the main issue is demands from Brussels, Anel is Syriza's natural ally. The Anel party leader Panos Kammenos will be Greece's defense minister.

A second mistake has been to describe Anel as a radical or extremist party. A much-blogged quotation, in which Kammenos is alleged to have fumed that Jews don't pay taxes, has probably been either misinterpreted or misquoted. What Kammenos said was in the context of criticism of Samaras's handling of the bailout: "His government took most of its decisions against the Church of Greece—cremation, civil partnerships for homosexuals and taxation just for the Orthodox religion. Buddhists, Jews, Muslims are not taxed. The Orthodox Church is taxed and in fact is at risk of losing its monastery assets." While I don't read Greek and don't know the context of these references to cremation, Kammenos seems to have faulted the former prime minister for having sought to achieve austerity by targeting the Greek Orthodox church, as opposed to taxing on more general principles.

Greece does have a xenophobic right-wing party, the thuggish Golden Dawn, concentrated in the declining working-class neighborhoods of Athens. Several of its members are awaiting trial for the murder of a leftist activist last year, and the party took 6 percent of the vote this time around. The Independent Greeks are not affiliated with it.

Ten days before the election, I had lunch beneath the Acropolis with Panagiotis Kouroumplis, a blind parliamentarian who was among the first to make the switch from Pasok to Syriza and will be the new government's minister of health. He started by talking about his relief that the left in Greece had got rid of many of its unproductive "obsessions." The two that bothered him most were the "demonization of entrepreneurship" and the

"internationalist outlook." Kouroumplis, who was blinded as a boy by a land mine left after World War II, describes himself as a "peaceful patriot." He is put off by the deindustrialization of Greece. "In the 1980s we had 10 electrical companies," he complains. "Today all the appliances in my house are German."

Nationalism and sovereignty have never been the bread-and-butter issues of those who come out of Trotskyism, but they are strangely important to Syriza. It is true, the party resists telling the public what it wants to hear on immigration. Greece has become a gateway for immigrants from the Middle East, and the EU policy of sending immigrants back to their country of first entry is a great burden to lands on the community's southern borders. Samaras traveled to the Turkish frontier, praised the border fence that protects the territory from immigration, and accused Syriza of wishing to tear it down.

But aside from keeping quiet about immigration, Tsipras waged a campaign striking for its appeals to nation and state. That Greek pride is a big draw first became apparent in last spring's European parliament elections, when 92-year-old leftist Manolis Glezos, a national hero since he removed a swastika from the Acropolis during World War II, won a seat for Syriza, getting more votes than any other candidate nationwide. Tsipras's supporters wave Greek flags at their rallies. He has milked this patriotism (and used the word, too), even at the risk of anti-German xenophobia. The party is constantly needling Germany over World War II (that some of Germany's own debts were forgiven by the United States, that Berlin imposed a "forced loan" on Greece during the occupation). On his first day in office, Tsipras paid tribute to the Greek victims of Nazism.

A Syriza supporter's message: 'Good Night Ms. Merkel'

In his early hours as prime minister, Tsipras also made it plain that Greece would assert itself in foreign policy. When the EU issued a statement, drafted in the office of Poland's Donald Tusk, that all 28 EU countries were considering "appropriate action" against Russia for recent pro-Russian rocket attacks in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, Greece issued its own communiqué that the statement had been made "without ensuring the consent of Greece," adding: "It is underlined that Greece does not consent to this statement."

Although Syriza is only two seats away from an absolute majority, it gets more out of its coalition with the Greek right than meets the eye. It is not just that opportunists among Greek nationalists are trying to capture some of the new magic on the left. It is also that Syriza is drawing from new strength on the right. This has led to sympathy for the election result among people who don't usually back Communists. Marine Le Pen applauded Greece's "monstrous democratic slap in the face" to the European Union. Charles Moore, the conservative *Telegraph* columnist and official biographer of Margaret Thatcher, wrote that he would have been tempted to pull the lever for Syriza if he lived in Greece.

THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE'S CREDIT RATING

Syriza's rise is a sign that many of our political attitudes will need to be rethought. They are left over from the 1960s, when political opinions about markets and self-rule aligned in a predictable way. In the West back then the interests of money and of conservatism were thought to be congruent. People who liked free markets tended to like national sovereignty. People who distrusted free markets tended to like "one world government." Almost no one perceived any conflict at all between, say, opposing communism and wishing for Polish independence.

These alignments are now less reliable. The biggest beneficiaries of today's market (Gates, Zuckerberg, Buffett) are most interested in a set of international rules that make countries more transparent to investors—by making those countries less answerable to voters. Today's titans of industry favor curtailing national sovereignty in the name of international agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which would go so far as to require nations to indemnify corporations against laws that contravene free trade agreements. It used to be that "free-market" policies of the sort that the IMF built its "Washington consensus" around were meant to promote the sort of dynamism we associate with small businesses and entrepreneurship. But in Greece the Troika agenda is to promote gigantism and large structures—of the sort we used to associate with corporatism and socialism—because small business is linked to tax avoidance.

Greece is a particularly puzzling case. It has debts too large to pay. What usually keeps countries from welshing on their obligations is a concern for their reputation and their national honor. Yet Greece has incurred these debts as a way of staying in a union that aims, whether its promoters admit it or not, to do away with national feeling altogether. Greece, it would seem, is ephemeral. But Greece's debt payments are meant to echo through the ages. ♦

NEWSCOM

The Non-Candidate

Utah's Mike Lee is the most important Republican not running for president

By Michael Warren

There's an old saw in Washington that every senator looks in the mirror and sees a president. Utah's Mike Lee doesn't, though you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Over the past two years, Lee has been delivering speeches and introducing policy proposals at a pace that far outstrips his tenure and experience. On the whole, it looks like the beginnings of a domestic policy agenda for a future presidential candidate.

And Lee was among the speakers at the Iowa Freedom Summit in late January, the unofficial kickoff for the 2016 GOP presidential primary season. Speaking as well were such White House wannabes as Scott Walker, Chris Christie, Rick Perry, and Ted Cruz. Des Moines would have been the perfect place for Lee to launch a dark-horse candidacy. But the 43-year-old Republican cleared things up from the get-go. "My name is Mike Lee. I'm from Utah. And I'm not running for president," he said, by way of introduction. "I'm probably the only person up here today who can say that."

Mike Lee speaks during the Freedom Summit in Des Moines, Iowa, January 24.

AP / CHARLIE NEIBERGALL

He certainly had 2016 on his mind, though. "It seems to me conservatives should be looking for a candidate who is three things: principled, positive, and proven," he said. "If someone can offer the nation a positive, innovative, and unapologetically conservative agenda that re-expresses our timeless convictions to fit the challenges of our times, then that's a candidate who can earn our trust and support."

That candidate might very well be one of Lee's colleagues. "I don't know if you've heard, but we've got a few senators running," he grins during an interview in his office. "It seems I may be the only Republican not running for president."

Lee knows he isn't the presidential candidate conservatives are looking for, but he's got his eyes on that "positive, innovative, and unapologetically conservative agenda." He's not shy about the role he'd like to play. "I do want to influence that debate," Lee says. His slate of policy proposals isn't light fare. Since 2013, Lee has introduced bills to make the tax code more family friendly, take on cronyism in Washington, reform the college accreditation system, and change the way the federal government funds transportation infrastructure. But what Lee really wants is to change the way conservatives think about domestic policy, reorienting the Republican party toward a family-focused, constitutional populism to help the GOP win back the White House. If Lee succeeds, it will make him one of the most consequential conservatives of his generation.

Lee's touchstone is Ronald Reagan, but not in the rote way you might think. "It's important for us to remember that by the time 2016 rolls around, we will be about as far away from Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 as Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 was from D-Day, and it's important for us to update our agenda to make sure that it fits the times," says Lee. "We need to stop simply talking about Reagan and start acting like him." That doesn't mean slashing the marginal tax rate or getting rid of the Department of Education. Lee says acting like Reagan means applying principles of limited government, constitutionalism, and a healthy civil society to the issues of the day—namely, the rising cost of living and economic insecurity of the American middle class.

If the Republican party needs another Reagan, Lee wants to fill the role of Jack Kemp, who as a junior congressman took the lead in formulating the tax cuts that

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were central to Reagan's agenda once he took office. Like Kemp, Lee has made tax reform his signature issue, despite not having a seat on the tax-writing Finance Committee. The target of Lee's tax proposal is what he calls the "parent tax penalty." Parents, like everyone else, pay some combination of income and payroll taxes. The "penalty," Lee says, is that parents also bear the costs of raising children who will grow up to become taxpayers themselves. The current child tax credit isn't enough to offset these additional costs. Lee's plan looks a lot like other Republican tax reform ideas—simplifying the brackets, lowering rates, removing costly deductions—while adding an extra $2,500-per-child tax credit that can apply to any parent's combined tax liability. It's money that could pay for child-care costs or cover expensive dental work or even help one parent stay home to raise the kids.

"Some might worry that increasing the child credit would take more people off the income tax rolls altogether," Lee said when introducing the plan at the American Enterprise Institute in 2013. "And it would." This isn't a bad thing, he says, if it gives flexibility to middle-class parents raising the next generation of taxpayers (the credit applies to both married and single parents). It's what leads the senator to call parents, in a clever appropriation of pro-business language, America's "most important entrepreneurs." The plan got the attention of at least one presidential hopeful, Florida senator Marco Rubio, who cosponsored Lee's bill and wrote an op-ed with him for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Lee and his wife Sharon celebrate victory in the Utah Republican primary, June 22, 2010.

AP / GEORGE FREY

Lee's focus on the family infiltrates every policy proposal he touches. His transportation reform plan promises to lower the federal gas tax and give more flexibility to the states for financing infrastructure projects. Local- and state-level investment in roads is more efficient, he says, which means parents can spend less time commuting to and from work on outdated highways and more time at their kids' soccer games. On higher education, Lee wants to open up alternative accreditation systems that might allow students pursuing nontraditional education through specialization courses, apprenticeships, and certification programs to receive federal student aid. The idea is to make it easier for, say, a mother to further her education while staying home with her kids.

"I think we've failed as Republicans to fully appreciate the fact that the family's not only a social unit with economic implications, it's an economic unit with social implications," he says. The problem with government, he adds, isn't only that it's too large, but that it doesn't work, at least not for middle-class families. For Lee, government doesn't need to drown in a bathtub. It just needs to take a shower every once in a while.

"It's not enough to simply cut big government. We have to fix broken government," he tells me. "If you cut something that's big and bad down to size, you still need to attack bad policies that are causing problems."

Mike Lee's Capitol Hill office is a window into the man and his quirks. On the front desk, there's a stack of invitations to stop by every Wednesday afternoon for "Jell-O With the Senator." Most senators hold a regular, open house coffee hour for constituents visiting the nation's capital. But in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which Lee (and 60 percent of Utahns) is a member, coffee is forbidden. So the fruity treat fills the void. Next to the invitations is something a bit heavier: a collection of four of the senator's speeches, bound in a professional-looking, 70-page booklet. The speeches suggest a manifesto: "What Conservatives Are For"; "What's Next For Conservatives"; "Bring Them In"; "Opportunity, Cronyism, and Conservative Reform." So does the title of the collection: *An Agenda for Our Time*.

Down the hall in Lee's office suite, there's a conference room named for his father, Rex Lee, who was President Ronald Reagan's first solicitor general. The elder Lee was also the founding dean of Brigham Young University's law school and, in his final years, served as the university's president while Mike attended as an undergraduate. The Lees are part of a prominent Mormon political family. Rex's cousin Mo Udall was a longtime Democratic congressman, as was Mo's brother Stewart, who also served in the Kennedy administration. Three of Mike Lee's second cousins have served as U.S. senators, including Tom Udall of New Mexico, Mark Udall of Colorado, and Gordon Smith of Oregon.

Growing up in Northern Virginia while his father worked for Reagan, Lee was exposed to plenty of politics. His best friend in the sixth grade was Josh Reid, the son of a newly elected Democratic congressman from Nevada named Harry Reid. The future Senate majority leader was

also the Lees' home teacher, a sort of spiritual guide within a Mormon congregation. "They were some of the first real Democrats that I ever knew," Lee says. "I learned going to their house as a little kid that if I wanted to talk about how much I loved Ronald Reagan, the president at the time, I had to be prepared for a fight."

Despite the sparring with his future Senate colleague, Lee appeared to be preparing himself for a career in law, perhaps one similar to his father's. He graduated from BYU in 1994 with a degree in political science and remained in Provo for law school. He had a clerkship with a federal judge in Utah, followed by another with Samuel Alito, who was then a judge on the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Jersey. Lee moved to Washington to join Sidley Austin, the law firm where Rex had been employed, before heading back to Utah to become an assistant U.S. attorney. In 2005, Republican governor Jon Huntsman Jr. tapped Lee to be his general counsel.

Lee worked for Huntsman for a year and a half before an old boss came calling. Sam Alito was confirmed in early 2006 for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, and the justice asked his former law clerk to come back for another year of service. One former colleague said Lee is "loyal to a fault," so at age 35, he accepted the offer. He was older than the average just-out-of-law-school clerk, but his maturity and experience were valuable, even when it came to nonlegal issues.

During Lee's clerkship, several offices in the Supreme Court building were under renovation, forcing Alito's clerks to set up shop in an office suite usually reserved for retired justices. One morning, some of the clerks decided to warm up the office with the suite's fireplace. These bright young legal minds had neglected to open the flue, and when Lee entered, the suite was rapidly filling up with smoke. Calmly and without skipping a beat, he opened a window, doused the flame with a pitcher of water, and reached into the hot fireplace to open the flue. He had saved the room from smoke damage, and his colleagues from having to fess up to Justice Alito.

Returning to Utah in 2007, Lee practiced law and remained active in conservative legal circles. He started speaking to small, informal Tea Party groups about the proper role and function of the federal government and, around 2009, began to consider challenging Bob Bennett, the sitting Republican senator, in the primary. Encouraged by Tea Party activist Connie Smith and Republican congressman Jason Chaffetz, Lee jumped into the race, along with businessman Tim Bridgewater. Bennett didn't see it coming. At the Utah Republican convention in 2010, the three-term senator came in third place behind Bridgewater and Lee, shutting Bennett out of the Republican primary. On *Meet the Press* David Brooks called Bennett's ouster a "damn outrage," but the Tea Party was counting it its first coup. Lee edged out Bridgewater in the GOP primary and won the general election easily.

All that makes Lee a rock star to the conservative grassroots. After joining the Senate in 2011, he became a frequent (and frequently lonely) constitutionalist voice in the Republican conference, and he's got the voting record to prove it. He received 100 percent ratings from the Club for Growth, the American Conservative Union, and the Family Research Council (FRC Action), along with a 98 percent lifetime rating from Heritage Action for America, the best for any member in either house. Not as well-known as Ted Cruz or Rand Paul, Lee is nonetheless a fundraising draw for fly-by-night conservative PACs looking to capitalize on his name and reputation. "Mike Lee Is Fighting For Conservative Principles In The U.S. Senate! Help Keep Him There!" read one recent email from the obscure Patriots for Economic Freedom.

Perhaps unique for antiestablishment Tea Party types in Congress, though, Lee also has a loyal following among the conservative intellectual class. He's a favorite at the two most influential think tanks on the right, the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. Lee has spoken at Heritage seven times since 2013. "Mike Lee embodies that which is right about public service," said Heritage Action's Mike Needham. "There's no one better positioned to lay out the outlines of a real opportunity agenda that doesn't pick favorites."

Lee has street cred elsewhere in the right-leaning intellectual world, too. The conservative legal community considers Lee one of their own, and they revere his father. Yuval Levin, the brainy editor of *National Affairs* and the unofficial leader of reform-minded conservatives in Washington, calls Lee the "indispensable senator."

"I don't think of any senator as being more productive than Mike Lee," Levin said. "He's very constructive. He wants to move things."

National Review's Ramesh Ponnuru, another reform conservative, praises Lee's "openness to a kind of rethinking" of conservative assumptions. "Instead of just talking about how we need new ideas, as so many Republicans do, Lee goes out and advocates specific new ideas," Ponnuru said. "On a lot of issues, he's been the first guy to stick his head up."

The praise for Lee isn't universal, and critics come chiefly from two camps. The first is the GOP establishment in Utah, which hasn't entirely gotten over his defeat of Bennett. Senior Utah senator Orrin Hatch maintains cordial relations with Lee publicly, but the two aren't particularly close. One rumor in Utah is that Lee was

advocating behind the scenes to find a primary challenger to Hatch in 2012, but a credible opponent never arose. Other Utah Republicans are seeking a primary challenger to Lee when he's up for reelection in 2016. A December article in *Politico* quoted Jon Huntsman Sr., the father of the former governor and a GOP power player in Utah, calling Lee an "extremist" with "extremely radical" positions.

"All I can say is Mike Lee is an embarrassment to the state of Utah," Huntsman Sr. told *Politico*. "He's been a tremendous embarrassment to our family, to our state, to our country to have him as a U.S. senator."

To his fellow Republican senators, Lee is seen as more of a pest, particularly since the arrival in 2013 of Texas senator Ted Cruz. Cruz and Lee have been allied on some of the biggest tests of conservative principle, all of which seem to end up being big tactical mistakes and even bigger headaches for Mitch McConnell, now the majority leader. The 2013 government shutdown over defunding Obamacare was hatched by Cruz and Lee. In a Senate Conservatives Fund TV ad that aired frequently in the run-up to the shutdown, Lee said, "Republicans in Congress can stop Obamacare if they simply refuse to fund it." They couldn't, and they didn't.

Mike Lee and Ted Cruz on their way to the Senate floor for a vote on the government shutdown, October 16, 2013

The same went for a recent Senate floor dust-up over immigration funding in the big, year-end spending bill. Cruz and Lee attempted to use a procedural move to delay the Senate's vote on the bill. Outgoing Democratic majority leader Harry Reid outmaneuvered them, however. He used the delay to keep the Senate in session over the weekend and approve a number of Obama judicial appointees—while passing the spending bill anyway a few days later. One minor consequence of the ploy was that New Hampshire Republican Kelly Ayotte was forced to stay in Washington and miss seeing a ballet with her daughter. Ayotte and her GOP colleagues lit into Lee and Cruz for ruining their weekend plans. Lee was reportedly shaken by that, and later apologized to the entire GOP conference.

Those who know him say Lee's commitment to principle can cut against him in the Senate. As one associate put it, "He doesn't have a tactical bone in his body." Senate Republican aides characterize a "guileless" Lee as being easily led astray in these fits of ideological righteousness by Cruz. Lee is sensitive about this perception. When I ask him about the 2013 shutdown, he adjusts himself in his chair and leans forward, hands clasped together as if he's praying.

"Look, the shutdown was horrible," he says. "The shutdown was an unfortunate thing. When a shutdown happens, a number of things have gone terribly, terribly wrong." The blame goes to the president and congressional leaders for not heading off a spending showdown until it was too late. To Lee, it was a last-ditch effort to do the right thing.

"There are some times when the president overreaches, and when I have responded in a matter that I feel was warranted under the circumstances," he says, judiciously. "That doesn't make it easy. That doesn't mean everyone is going to agree with you. Sometimes you have to do difficult things when you feel you have an obligation to stand up."

Still, Lee hasn't been completely shut out by his colleagues for his past transgressions. He chairs the GOP Senate steering committee, and McConnell brought in the Utah senator as his counsel on GOP leadership meetings—a gesture of goodwill, perhaps, or McConnell's attempt to keep Lee on a short leash. The benefit for Lee is that he's now in the room where the real decisions are made. Senate Republicans seem to recognize Lee as more thoughtful and less self-interested than Cruz. "What I've seen is two Mike Lees," said one GOP aide. "The guy who's frequently allied himself with Cruz on some of the more idiotic tactical plays. But you've also got this guy who is, without question, doing authentically important stuff on the policy side."

Yuval Levin is convinced the real Lee is the latter one. "I don't think the way to understand Mike Lee is through Ted Cruz," he said.

How best to understand Lee? I ask about his ability to convince his party on his "opportunity agenda," given his reputation among his colleagues in the Senate.

"This isn't about me. I'm not that powerful. I'm just a junior senator from a state in the Rocky Mountains, and I'm one of the younger senators," he says. "I'm not that powerful, but these ideas are, and it's the ideas that will carry the day." ♦

NEWSCOM

'America Today: Coal' (1930-31)

Only Yesterday

Thomas Hart Benton's masterwork finds a home at the Met.

BY JAMES GARDNER

Are we allowed, in 2015, to like Thomas Hart Benton? And if so, are we allowed to admit in public that we like him?

Such are the questions that tax the conscience of the *bien-pensant* critic who stands before Benton's sequence of 10 murals, *America Today*, which has just found a new and permanent home at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. More than 80 years after its completion, and more than 30 years after it began a nomadic existence, this acquisition is one of the most noteworthy additions ever made to the museum's extensive collection of 20th-century American art.

America Today was painted between 1930 and 1931 for the boardroom of the New School for Social Research, located on West 12th Street in Manhattan. There it remained until 1982, when the New School, having decided that the mural was too costly to maintain, sold it to Equitable Life (now AXA Equitable). For 30 years, it hung in the lobby of Equitable's corporate headquarters on Seventh Avenue. When

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

James Gardner is the translator, most recently, of Girolamo Fracastoro's Latin Poetry *for the I Tatti Renaissance Library (Harvard).*

the company reconceived its lobby in 2012, it donated the work in its entirety to the Met.

Thus, although the work was on public view for much of the last three decades, something about its entering the collection of the Met suggests that, finally, Benton has been accepted, with full rights and honors, into the canon of American art.

A leader of the so-called regionalist school, Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975) was born and died in Missouri. Accordingly, he was admired—or reviled, depending on one's point of view—as both a voice of the nativist heartland and a staunch critic of mainstream modernism. But the truth, as always, was a little more complicated. After attending the Art Institute of Chicago, he spent several years in Paris, studying Cézanne and the Old Masters in the Louvre. However, from 1913 until 1935, he lived in the belly of the beast, New York City, where he was a well-regarded teacher at the Art Students League. During this time, he won considerable acclaim through his painting, and, in 1934, his self-portrait even graced the cover of *Time*.

One year later, Benton left all of that behind and returned home to Kansas City, where he had received a commission to paint a mural for the Missouri state capitol at Jefferson City. He also began to teach at the Kansas City Art Institute. For the next 40 years he lived (and eventually died) in that city, and, as he grew older, he became ever more bitter toward the East Coast art establishment.

The reasons for the acrimony between Benton and the modernists were numerous. His paintings remained resolutely representational at a time when most ambitious art was becoming abstract. He also said some ill-considered things about abstract expressionism that caused the guardians of advanced taste to launch an energetic counterattack against him. It did not help that Benton's art was so easy to understand and admire: From the Eastern seaboard to the hamlets of the heartland, even the most untutored viewer could immediately identify Benton's grain silos and riverboats and take pleasure in the mastery, the drama, the chromatic dazzle with which this artist filled a wall. It was that legibility and charm, that rejection of any and all rites of initiation, that struck modernists as a provocation, as an attack from the heartland on the advanced taste of the coast.

Today, of course, the modernist era is long past, as are most of the critics for whom Benton was once anathema. And so, finally, it is possible to view Benton's *America Today* with fresh and disinterested eyes. And when we do, we are apt to see that, indeed, Benton did not paint very well—at least not in the sense of being able to draw energetic life from the medium of paint, from the pure pigment itself. His tone and handling tend to feel flat and tired. To put this matter in perspective, when Norman Rockwell, also the object of a recent revival of interest, set his mind to it, he could generate far more interesting paint textures than Benton ever did.

But if criticism must duly note such weaknesses, it must also appreciate that Benton's strengths always lay elsewhere, and that he attained what he was after with considerable success. He was no more interested in the materiality of paint than were the Mexican muralists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, who were in some sense his closest colleagues. When art of this sort succeeds, its power derives less from the skillful handling of the brush than from the artist's imaginative faculty and compositional power.

And indeed, *America Today* is an unrelenting tour de force that assaults the sensibilities of the viewer with the subtlety of a jackhammer, a speeding locomotive, and an internal combustion engine, all of which figure somewhere in these 10 panels. Benton's ambition is nothing less than to unite every aspect of American life in his all-embracing patriotic empathy. We can only marvel at the multitudinous results: the abrupt illogic of juxtaposed rice threshers and riverboats, Model Ts, chain gangs, and grain elevators, radio towers and prizefighters, oil derricks and dancing floozies.

Benton accepted the New School commission without pay, presumably because he saw it as the culmination and full implementation of what had occupied him for the previous six years. Since the mid-1920s, he had been buzzing around the country in an old car, seeing everything from the coasts to the heartland. Along the way, he created hundreds of drawings of everything he encountered, and many of these drawings were incorporated into the symphonic aggregate of people, places, and things that is *America Today*.

"Every detail of every picture is a thing I myself have seen and known," he wrote. "Every head is a real person drawn from life."

America Today was completed a year before the election of Franklin Roosevelt and four years before the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided employment to a generation of artists, writers, and dancers during the Depression. For this reason, Benton's masterpiece stands revealed at the Met as a strikingly seminal work, one of the progenitors of the style and rhetoric of many of those WPA commissions. Like them, it is resolutely focused on contemporary reality, with its economic and racial hardships. But it views those realities through a scrim of myth, transforming the harshness of the Depression into something consolingly timeless, something that has been sweetened and beautified by the balm of a golden age.

The contemporaneous movement of surrealism played a part in the genesis of Benton's style and, by extension, that of many WPA projects. Rooted in dreams, illogic, and radical inwardness, surrealism taught Benton how best to depict the reality of his time, through forms that were slightly schematic and willfully idealized. Though the similarities may be mere coincidence, I strongly suspect that the palette and vivid chiaroscuro of the stooping, elongated coal miner in the fifth panel owes a great deal to the early work of Salvador Dalí.

But another source of inspiration, one that Benton openly avowed, was Jacopo Tintoretto, the most mannerist of the great 16th-century Venetian masters. Benton would speak of Tintoretto's "total influence" over

him. In rejecting the preciousness and refinement mannerism tended to favor, Tintoretto showed Benton how that movement's highly temperamental revision of reality could be turned into power, and, above all, how it made possible certain compositional liberties that could never have worked so well in a more naturalistic depiction of the world.

For it is *America Today*'s composition, with its triumphant rightness and skill at turning an unruly reality into a harmonious whole, that represents Benton's foremost achievement. But if *America Today* derives a great deal of its power from Tintoretto, it is equally inspired by the instant legibility and chromatic freedom of the great illustrators of Benton's day, among them Maxfield Parrish and Winsor McCay. It was their example that gave Benton the palette that, together with his compositional skill, makes *America Today* such an unanticipated delight. ♦

B&A

Florida Key

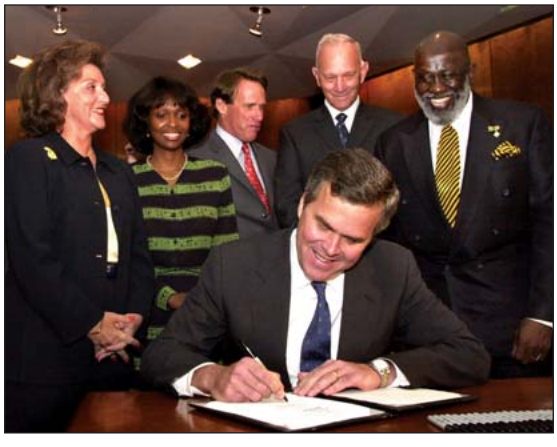
A clear-eyed view of Jeb Bush as governor.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

Conservative Hurricane
How Jeb Bush Remade Florida
by Matthew T. Corrigan
Florida, 248 pp., $26.95

Our first national government—the one established by the Articles of Confederation—was notoriously weak. Congress wasn't much good at administering the laws it passed or at conducting foreign affairs. The government lacked what the Framers of the Constitution said it sorely needed: energy. As James Madison explained in *Federalist* 37, "[E]nergy in government is essential to that security against external and internal danger and to that prompt and salutary execution of the laws which enter into the very definition of good government."

At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the Framers sought to remedy that critical defect. They did so by creating the presidency, which, because of its structure and powers, would provide the necessary energy. Thus, Alexander Hamilton's famous pronouncement: "Energy in the executive is a leading character of good government."



Signing the education reorganization act (2001)

The "conservative hurricane" referred to in the title of this book is, of course, the governor who "remade Florida," Jeb Bush. Florida, which entered the Union in 1845, has had a long tradition of weak executives; Bush, who served two terms from 1999 to 2007, was not one of them. Moreover, he is proud of his repudiation of that tradition—proud, if you will, of his energetic tenure. "I believe a weak form of governorship is not appropriate for a dynamic state like Florida," he observed shortly before leaving office. "My gift perhaps is that with this office now, we've shown that governors can be activist, they can be reformers if they want to."

Bush was elected to an office that, in the preceding decades, had been formally strengthened, with the most recent change (by constitutional amendment approved by the voters in 1998) downsizing the cabinet form of government that had been in place since the end of Reconstruction. As this treatment of Bush's two terms shows, the governor used his structurally more powerful office in ways the Framers would have understood.

The Federalist describes the presidential office as one from which a president may undertake "extensive and arduous enterprises" for the country's benefit, the efficacy of which (assuming their constitutionality) the people may judge at the ballot box. Likewise, a governor sufficiently empowered should be in a position to pursue such enterprises for the good of his state. In Bush's case, the most ambitious of several major undertakings concerned education. As Matthew T. Corrigan observes, Bush sought not only to reform various policies but also to change the entire educational system, which assumed (falsely, in his view) that socioeconomic background determines school performance.

The Federalist also identifies how the energetic president should act for the sake of good government: with "dispatch," "vigor," "expedition," "decision," "promptitude of decision," and "firmness." Those are behavioral characteristics. It stands to reason that they would be evident in an energetic governor: From the information assembled here, Governor Bush often showed vigor, expedition, firmness, and more.

Of course, to act with vigor or firmness does not mean that a given action is correct or will succeed. Consider the

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Terry Eastland, an executive editor at The Weekly Standard, *is the author of* Energy in the Executive: The Case for the Strong Presidency.

heart-wrenching case of Terri Schiavo. In no matter was Bush as firm as he was in his effort to keep Schiavo alive by seeking to prevent the removal of her feeding tube. Yet with all options exhausted, not just at the state level but also the federal, Bush concluded that he could not disobey a court order permitting the removal—and thus, Terri Schiavo's death.

As governor, Jeb Bush had a political compass, and it was definitely a conservative one, says Corrigan. That's not surprising, given the influence of the modern conservative movement on Bush, which Corrigan chronicles in some detail. Against the perception offered by "some national commentators" (as well as some Tea Partiers) that Bush is really a "moderate," Corrigan says that Bush's record as governor of Florida is "a direct refutation of that description."

It's hard to argue with his assessment. As Corrigan shows, Bush secured record tax cuts, eliminated thousands of public-sector jobs while expanding private contracting of state services, broadened the rights of gun owners (he "methodically and completely changed gun regulation"), reduced the number of abortion "providers," and ended racial preferences in admissions to institutions of higher education (standing firm when the liberal civil rights lobby protested). As for education reform, his most important undertaking, Bush initiated massive changes in K-12 education premised on testing and accountability.

Corrigan judges Bush not in terms of whether he was Florida's best or most important governor, but in terms of power, which the author defines as "having clear policy preferences and being able to pass and implement" those policies. Corrigan does identify "some serious problems with" Bush's implementation of his preferences, including weak oversight of privatization efforts and difficulty in maintaining student achievement through high school—a common problem throughout the nation. Even so, writes Corrigan, none of Florida's modern (post-1950) governors—all Democrats but two until Bush—"managed to get his policy preferences enacted and implemented to the extent" that Jeb Bush did. Hence Corrigan's assessment of Bush as "the most powerful governor in Florida history."

As Corrigan concedes, it helped that the legislature was Republican, too, thus allowing Bush to dominate policy-making for most of his two terms. Less friendly to Bush's exercise of power were Florida's liberal courts, with which Bush clashed on numerous occasions, especially on social issues such as abortion.

Bush believes that his greatest accomplishment was to introduce a strong governor to a weak-governor state. Corrigan finds some irony in this, for while Bush "talked repeatedly about limiting the power of government, he did not believe in limiting the power of the executive." Corrigan would seem to be offering a negative judgment here: that it is hypocritical for an energetic executive to pursue limited government; that executive power may be exercised only on behalf of liberal ends and larger and more invasive and costly government. But Jeb Bush would beg to differ, as would current conservative governors, some of whom regard Bush as a model, because energetic, governor.

Corrigan doesn't address how Florida's most powerful governor might execute the highest office should he run, as seems likely, and be elected. Left for another day, as well, are questions about how Bush might regard various exercises of executive power taken in recent years—not only by President Obama but also by his older brother, George W. Bush. What this timely and insightful book does suggest, however, is that if Jeb Bush were to be elected president, he would be a force to be reckoned with, whether you like his agenda or not. ♦

B&A

Peculiarly German

Romantics, Romanticism, and history.

BY THOMAS A. KOHUT

In his foreword, this book's excellent translator, Robert E. Goodwin, describes the author, Rüdiger Safranski, as a "raconteur." This is an apt characterization: Highly intelligent and extraordinarily well-read, Safranski brims with intellectual self-confidence. He is firm in his convictions and in his judgments. He relishes his erudition and delights in conveying it to his readers, which he does with imagination and panache. Indeed, one might even say that Safranski loves the sound of his own voice. It is generally a very enjoyable voice to listen to.

Thomas A. Kohut, the Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III professor of history at Williams, is the author, most recently, of A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century.

Romanticism
A German Affair
by Rüdiger Safranski
translated by Robert E. Goodwin
Northwestern, 376 pp., $35

The author distinguishes between "Romanticism" and "Romantics." The former was a circumscribed historical period beginning (in Safranski's account) in 1769 with Johann Gottfried von Herder's voyage from Riga and ending in the 1820s with E. T. A. Hoffmann and Joseph von Eichendorff. The Romantic era is the subject of the first half of the book. The "Romantics," then, are the individual thinkers who carried on the tradition of Romanticism after the Romantic

era was over: Romantics—down to the student rebels of the late 1960s—are the subject of the book's second half. According to Safranski, the idea animating Romanticism from 1770 until the 1820s, and Romantics to the present day, is "that the beam of our awareness does not illuminate the entirety of our experience, that our consciousness cannot grasp our whole Being, that we have a more intimate connection with the life process than our reason would like to believe."

Although Romanticism responds to the sense that there is more to the world and to our lives than meets the eye, to the universal human need for meaning and fulfillment, it emerged in specific response to the triumph of Enlightenment rationality and, consequently, the decline of religion in the late 18th century. The Enlightenment's vision of a rationally functioning, lawful universe created by a deistic God seemed a "monstrous mill" or a "perpetual motion machine" to the Romantics, and they pushed back against the sterility of such a world. In response to the "disenchantment of the world" through secularization and the triumph of empiricism, the Romantics sought to satisfy the "appetite for mystery and wonder" that religion traditionally had satisfied.

Romanticism also reacted against the emergence, in the 19th century, of the modern rationalistic society, with its efficiency, its specialization, its emphasis on economic utility—and its monotony. A world mastered by human reason seemed conventional, prosaic, *boring*. In sum, the Romantics sought to "banish the wasteland of disenchantment" produced by Enlightenment rationalism and capitalism and, like traditional religions, respond to a yearning for the mysterious, the sublime, the transcendent. In contrast to religion, however, Romanticism discovered these experiences not in the afterlife but in the here and now, within individual human beings. And these experiences were to be recovered not through the institutions or the rituals of the church but through art. As Goodwin neatly puts it in his foreword, Romanticism for Rüdiger Safranski "is essentially the recuperation and reinvigoration of the religious imagination in a secular age by aesthetic means."

The author is sympathetic to Romanticism, when it remains in the aesthetic realm, as having the potential to enrich and fulfill a life and a world that would otherwise be sterile and superficial, a *literal* life and a *literal* world. The problem comes when Romanticism enters the political realm. Whereas the Romantic craves adventure, intense experiences, and extremes, successful politics depends on compromise, rational discourse, consensus, and achievement that is mostly partial and prosaic.

> If we fail to realize that the reason of politics and the passions of Romanticism are two separate spheres, which we must know how to keep separate . . . we risk the danger of looking to politics for an adventure that we would better find in the sphere of culture—or, vice versa, of demanding from the sphere of culture the same social utility we expect from politics. Neither an adventurous politics nor a politically correct cultural sphere is desirable. [Only misfortune and suffering result when] we seek in politics what we can never find there: redemption, true Being, the answer to the ultimate questions, the realization of dreams, the utopia of the successful life, the God of history, apocalypse, and eschatology.

The contamination of the political sphere with the Romantic impulse has had fateful—indeed, fatal—consequences, particularly in Germany, according to Safranski. Beginning with the French Revolution, Romanticism and politics came together, as "questions of meaning that were formerly the precinct of religion are now aligned with politics. There is a secularizing impulse that transforms the so-called *ultimate* questions into sociopolitical ones." Initially inspired by the French Revolution and then opposing it, especially during the period of the wars against Napoleon, Romanticism became politicized in Germany. Already, with Fichte in the early 19th century, Romanticism's individualism and cosmopolitanism had begun to give way to a demand for national and political renewal: "The Romantic metaphysics of the infinite turns into a metaphysics of history and society, *Volksgeist*, and nation, and it becomes ever more difficult for the individual to resist the suggestion of the We."

The fragmented political condition and relative social backwardness of Germany during the first half of the 19th century produced a particularly naïve view of politics, according to Safranski. Because politics in the multitude of small German states appeared to matter so little, Romantics moved away from the real toward the ideal in their political attitudes. They developed an apolitical politics that eschewed the give-and-take, the moderation, of quotidian political engagement, leaving those influenced by Romanticism susceptible, ultimately, to the utopian appeals of the totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century.

Surprisingly—and, in my view, mistakenly—Safranski concludes that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were not political Romantics. They were too activist, too modernist, too populist for that: "Certainly, Hitler's ideas were not in the least bit Romantic. They come out of a vulgarized and morally dissolute conversion of the natural sciences into an ideology: biologism, racism, and anti-Semitism," he writes. Safranski overlooks the obviously Romantic features of National Socialism, such as its vision of the "community of the people," as well as the Romanticism underlying Hitler's racialized Darwinism, with life presented as a dramatic struggle for survival or extinction.

Although he claims the Nazis cannot be described as political Romantics, Safranski traces the susceptibility of the German people to Nazism back to the influence of Romanticism. As a result of that influence, Germans lacked a grounded "political mentality" and proper "political judgment," and held practical politics in contempt. To the extent they were Romantics, Germans sought "profound meanings," the "suprapolitical," even the "sacral" in the political arena, and were

attracted to politics "that seemed to promise what religion otherwise offered: an answer to ultimate questions, that is, redemption, apocalypse, eschatology." This was precisely the sort of "non-political politics" that Hitler seemed to offer.

Although Safranski sees the impact of the 1968 generation in Germany as having been ephemeral, more reflecting than producing social and cultural change, he paints the student rebels, with their desire to transcend the "capitalistic work-and-consumption society" of West Germany through the creation of a counterculture, as political Romantics of a sort.

Thus, the example of the 1968ers makes clear that while Romanticism, as "a brilliant epoch in the history of the German mind . . . has passed away . . . the Romantic as an attitude" remains very much alive: "It almost always comes into play whenever discontent with reality and convention seeks escape, change, or the possibility of transcendence," according to Safranski. He believes that we need both Romanticism and a knowledge of its limitations, particularly its incompatibility with political life:

> The tension between politics and the Romantic impulse belongs to the larger tension between what can be imagined and what can be lived. The attempt to resolve this tension into a unity that is free of contradictions can lead to the impoverishment or to the devastation of life. Life is impoverished when people no longer dare to imagine anything beyond what they think they can live. And it is devastated when people insist on living an idea at any cost, including destruction and self-destruction, simply because they have imagined it.

From a political perspective, Safranski's position here would seem to exclude the possibility of any sort of radical politics where people seek to overthrow or transform the political system under which they live. This is fine, perhaps, in relation to functioning, representative, Western democracies. It seems more problematic, though, when applied to dictatorships, or other oppressive, authoritarian, or totalitarian regimes. Would it really have been wrong for people living in the German Democratic Republic (to take one recent German example) to imagine a wholly different polity and society, and for them to attempt to make what they had imagined a political and social reality?

'Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog' (1818) by Caspar David Friedrich

Romanticism: A German Affair can be described as an old-fashioned work of cultural history, with its sweep, its focus on a relatively small number of literati who are seen as changing the course of history, its treatment of ideas largely divorced from their social, political, and wider cultural contexts, and its effort to expose the roots of "the German catastrophe" that was National Socialism. In 376 pages, the author presents, analyzes, and assesses the canonical philosophical and literary ideas of 200 years of German cultural history. He draws succinct thumbnail sketches of the thought (and, frequently, the personalities) of Germany's cultural luminaries from 1769 to 1969.

Obviously, such a sweeping account runs the risk of superficiality. There were moments when I had the sense that I was being taken on a fast-moving tour of the history of German culture, with Rüdiger Safranski serving as tour guide. Perhaps because I am an American knowledgeable about, but not steeped in, the literary and philosophical classics of modern Germany, I occasionally found myself confused, lost—or harboring the suspicion that there was more that could be said about the ideas being presented and that the author's presentation of those ideas was somewhat idiosyncratic. As a historian, I had the sense that the philosopher Safranski sometimes underestimated the cultural gap separating readers and author from the thinkers of the past he considers, that he lacked sufficient appreciation of the difficulty in understanding those thinkers on *their* terms—not ours.

The past seems very much present in this work, with that reduced cultural distance jarringly conveyed by the author's use of the present tense. Safranski brings these thinkers and writers to life here, both for good and for less good, as he may occasionally make alien ideas seem more familiar than they should be, and he overlooks changes in Romanticism over the course of the 200 years covered in his book. The Romantics of the past, including those of the Romantic era, remain "our contemporaries" for Safranski in that we, like them, feel ourselves bereft of metaphysical support "in our confrontation with infinity. We no longer have the conviction of being borne along

by a cosmos that is self-evidently saturated with meaning." We, like them, have lost the ground under our feet that religion once provided. We, like them, suffer from the boredom of everyday life. Romanticism since the 18th century responds to the contemporary condition captured for Safranski by Rainer Maria Rilke: "We don't feel very securely at home within our interpreted world."

Finally, I found myself wondering whether it is possible to distinguish so neatly between the aesthetic (the proper sphere for Romantic ideas) and the political (a realm from which Romantic ideas must be excluded) as Safranski seems to assume. All art has a political dimension, even if it is not overtly political. And all politics have an aesthetic dimension, not least the ways that political ideas are articulated and conveyed. Although one might wish to keep the aesthetic and the political separate from one another, it is important to recognize their inevitable, and often subtle, interpenetration: the political influences exerted by art and the aesthetic attractions exerted by politics. Indeed, even if we could imagine that the aesthetic and the political could be kept separate from one another, an art without politics would be an art divorced from life, and a politics without art would be a politics without appeal.

But these are predictable reservations coming from an academic reviewer. The strength of the book, and much of the pleasure derived from reading it, comes from the fact that Safranski puts scholarly inhibitions aside and effectively "goes for it." In fact, most of my reservations could be said to come from the very empirical, rationalist perspective that Romanticism reacted against. Indeed, despite the author's critical distance from Romanticism, this book, with its sweep and its ambition, its desire to go beneath the surface and to present unities of thought across place and time, and its ability to bring people and ideas to life, is, in some essential way, an expression of the Romantic sensibility it so engagingly describes. ♦

B&A

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More subject, less author would taste better.

BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

The Brewer's Tale
A History of the World According to Beer
by William Bostwick
Norton, 304 pp., $26.95

The world of beer, like the parallel worlds of wine and spirits, has become more crowded and interesting in recent years. In 2010, for example, the District of Columbia had three brew pubs, all part of larger chains. Five years later, there are five brew pubs and five breweries, rapidly growing enterprises brimming with entrepreneurial energy. Other large cities in America have found that the rise in good bars and interesting local breweries has been exponential.

Craft brewing has also been entering popular culture. A recent *New Yorker* cover by Peter de Sève features a grungy server at a hip restaurant offering a 750-milliliter bottle of beer for inspection in the same way that *maître d*'s have been holding wine for inspection for decades. That cover was the subject of intense debate in the beer world, with people arguing about whether or not beer drinkers had become as snooty as the *New Yorker* made them out to be.

Well, as the number of breweries and beer bars rises, so, too, does the number of writers trying to explain the increasingly crowded beer landscape. Here, William Bostwick, beer reviewer for the *Wall Street Journal*, provides an introduction to the beer world of today. You'll get a good sense of who the leading beer personalities are and a lesser sense of the current debates in the craft brewing industry. But Bostwick's infatuation with himself turns what could have been an excellent book into an average one.

Although it is billed as "a history of the world," *The Brewer's Tale* is a discussion of seven beer styles, beginning with historical examples and ending with some personal anecdotes. Bostwick is a diligent researcher, and he presents the most familiar stories of beer history. For example, in discussing the history of porter, Bostwick mentions the notorious 1814 accident at London's Horse Shoe Brewery, where a brewing vessel burst and flooded the streets with hundreds of tons of porter, killing eight women and children who didn't have time to escape from their basements.

Jim Koch, Sam Calagione (2010)

AP IMAGES FOR DOGFISH HEAD AND SAMUEL ADAMS

But where Bostwick differs from more diligent beer historians is in his decision to brew a beer for each of the ales he talks about. (He avoids making lagers, which are more complicated to

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make at home.) If Bostwick were an expert home brewer, like Ray Daniels, Randy Mosher, or Stan Hieronymus, he'd be worth paying attention to; but reading about the author in his kitchen screwing up recipes is about as fascinating as listening to your neighbor complain about why her cakes keep getting burned.

Bostwick wants to offer his personal experiences because he's in love with the sound of his own voice—like far too many writers today, he thinks he's more interesting than his subject—and this continuous self-love leads to such digressions as two pages on the wonders of persimmons on sale in San Francisco farmer's markets.

The deeper problem, however, is that Bostwick is a poor reporter. He traveled a great many miles for this book, visiting much of the United States, England, and even Egypt; but although he met many eminences of the beer world, he gives little sense of what they are like. For example, Sam Calagione, founder of Delaware's Dogfish Head Brewery, is so quirky, interesting, and driven that he is the only American craft brewer to be the subject of a *New Yorker* profile. Bostwick visited Calagione and even traveled with him to Egypt for an episode of *Brew Masters*, which ran briefly on the Discovery Channel. But Calagione comes across here as colorless and bland. You learn more in *The Brewer's Tale* about the flies swarming Calagione's camera crew than you do about Calagione.

Similarly, Bostwick goes to Boston and interviews Jim Koch, the personable founder of Boston Beer, which sells under the Samuel Adams brand. Koch takes Bostwick to lunch at a nearby Irish bar and regales him with stories of the growth of his brewery, including an infamous failure called WTF that was one of the lowest-rated beers in the history of beer rating. But as presented here, the Koch interview only leads to a single money quote:

> Quality isn't a metaphysical thing—it's a manufacturing question. Conformance to specifications and intentions. Did you make what you were supposed to make? So yeah, Budweiser is a quality product.

Koch is correct: Anheuser-Busch does employ some of America's best brewers. It is very hard to make a product like Budweiser with as little change from batch to batch as Anheuser-Busch does. It is a technically excellent product. But having solicited praise for Anheuser-Busch, Bostwick concludes by bashing America's second-largest brewer, MillerCoors. After taking the Miller tour in Milwaukee (so popular that you need a reservation!), Bostwick decides that Miller is a "faceless factory" and Miller drinkers are so crass they dump hot dog wrappers in the company parking lot. Yet Bostwick doesn't mention that MillerCoors employs equally creative brewers, such as Keith Villa, creator of MillerCoors's Blue Moon brand. Nor does he tell readers that you need to make reservations to take the Boston Beer and Dogfish Head tours. ♦

B&A

A Baghdad Quartet

Translating the Iraq war into fiction.

BY ANN MARLOWE

The Kills
'Sutler,' 'The Massive,' 'The Kill,' and 'The Hit'
by Richard House
Picador, 1,024 pp., $35

When I finished *The Kills*, it was not with the sense of the world made right, or understood rightly, that the traditional novel aspires to, nor with the contemporary recognition that the author and I—ironists both!—share a cynical disillusionment. It was with a profound sense of loss, even anger, at Richard House, as though he'd invited me to watch him cook an elaborate dinner and then thrown it in the trash unconsumed. This feeling made more sense when I learned that House also works in visual art and film, disciplines in which frustrating the expectations of the viewer has long been part of the sophisticated practitioner's repertoire, in which it would be a perfectly reasonable piece of performance art to make an elaborate dinner and then throw it in the trash.

This sense of disappointment takes a long time to build. For hundreds of pages, the length of a couple of novels, it's easy to be impressed by House's technique and thick descriptions. The first sections—which follow the oddly soulless main character, Stephen Sutler (also known as John Jacob Ford), as he flees from a remote contracting camp in Iraq to Istanbul—have most of the elements of a first-rate thriller yet suggest depths few thrillers plumb. (Much later, we learn that the tight third-person narration conceals some crucial plot points.) This portion also felt utterly convincing: Every detail, whether of a contracting office in Iraq, a truck stop on the Turkish border, or a travel agency in Istanbul, rings true. I found myself Googling the names of towns that turned out to be imaginary. House can write bravura descriptions:

> They followed a man bearing flowers into the hotel lobby. The bouquet, a generous spread of cream-coloured lilies and green ferns, swayed a little obscenely as the man scampered up the steps.

Or evoke the places in between:

> The road steepened as it turned, flanked on one side by a scrappy rock face, and on the other by a scattered line of garage-like workshops.

Ann Marlowe is a writer in New York.

> Ford walked without hurry. Four children followed behind, loosely curious. A man squatted at a doorway, shirtless, skinny, and smoking while he tapped a design into an aluminium bowl held between his feet.

But soon, *The Kills* began to remind me of something a shrink I know says about borderline patients: "You never accumulate any emotional credit with them. Every day you start from the beginning." That is, House never gives you any more access to his characters on the hundredth page than he did on the first. He is fearless in drawing characters from every walk of life, every ethnicity, and both genders. (For what it's worth, House is gay.) But as soon as we begin to see things through someone's eyes—and there are a dozen significant players—we are pulled away to another point of view. When we come back, we haven't gotten any closer. The characters, unlike the contracting office, don't feel as though they're waiting for us to find them in real life.

Oddly enough, both Sutler and his boss/frenemy, the villainous Paul Geezler, are elusive and barely sketched in. We get much more biographical detail about Rem, a building contractor, and Lila, a teenaged prostitute; but even after a hundred pages in their company, they seem to have minds but not sensibilities. Yet some minor and unedifying characters in Cyprus have surprising heft. So does a doomed Iraqi translator.

I'm certain some of this is deliberate. House may be serving us notice that classic novel-reading depends on an unearned complicity with any character with whom we spend time, a literary Stockholm syndrome. It's what visual artists have been doing for a century or so, rubbing our noses in our determination to find depth in a two-dimensional canvas. The question is how this strategy translates to fiction.

In another move reminiscent of the visual art world, House uses embedded, repeated stories within *The Kills*. One plot is prefigured several times, with a character called Eric Powell reading the book that we will later see another young American, Finn Cullman, writing. The villainous contractor-boss Geezler's end is echoed in that of another, more sympathetic, character. These repetitions lessen suspense and distance us from the characters in ways that mark a limitation, rather than a mastery, of technique. When Beethoven repeats a motif, it deepens; Richard House seems to be using repetition not to probe deeper into reality but to organize a stupendously complex narrative. Or, perhaps, to suggest that much of human behavior is patterned.

This isn't to imply that House is a trendy nihilist of the Bret Easton Ellis school. He has a moral compass—so much so that he cannot give the three arch-villains (Geezler and two French brothers) even the narrow reality of the other characters. They remain enigmatic to the end, cartoonishly evil. Even the merely flawed characters engage in moral deliberation to an unlikely degree. One ignorant young contractor takes the moral high ground—"We're all adults," says Santo, "and there are consequences to every action that we take"—but it's hard to know how to parse this. On the one hand, Santo is justifying his murder of his former boss; on the other, that boss is a thoroughly bad guy.

Richard House

House also tosses out, for our consideration, the idea that narrative has a moral value in itself. Rike, a German teacher, says, "Stories are how we connect. Evolution isn't seriously about thumbs but about how we use language—that's what raises us above dumb animals, right?" But Rike fails to understand the story she is caught in until it is too late, and that story is about a repetition compulsion, not about connecting. Like *The Kills*.

There is politics, too, though not where you would think. The core of *The Kills* is set in Iraq, yet there is nothing here about the rightness or wrongness of the war. House's focus is on the damage to the health of American contractors working at the burn pits of an imaginary company.

In a novel of a thousand pages, it isn't surprising that crucial plot points seem obscure—Sutler takes a brief visit to Grenoble, yet just one sentence points to his fate in the aftermath; Eric Powell seems to be dying in remote eastern Turkey, only to die again, this time for real, in Naples—but there are odd infelicities as well. Though House used to live in Chicago, his Midwestern characters speak of someone being "in hospital." When Rem gets off a train in Kansas City to visit a former colleague named Samuels, we are told that "Samuels lived in a town called Topeka several hours away" with "an unremarkable main street of coffee houses and closed-down stores." Topeka, the state capital of Kansas, has an abundance of tall buildings, and no one who grew up in America would think of it as "a town called Topeka." Whenever House describes somebody going online, it feels like 1995, with a blow-by-blow account of entering a chat room or doing a Google search.

After an immersion of several weeks—sometimes wondering if it would ever end—and a couple of weeks' reflection, this reader's feelings about *The Kills* remain unresolved. It's a complex, brilliant, flawed, ultimately unsatisfying trip halfway around the world that takes an inordinate amount of time to complete. But portions of the trip are rivetingly suspenseful, portions take us where few have gone before, and House takes the novelist's mission as a deadly serious one. ♦

GUILLEM LOPEZ / ZUMA PRESS / NEWSCOM

B&A

Crime of Punishment

A grim, epic allegory of Putin's Russia.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The director of the new Russian movie *Leviathan* now lives in Canada. This was a wise decision on Andrey Zvyagintsev's part—because even though *Leviathan* received grants from the Russian government and was officially selected to represent the country in this year's Oscar race, at some point in the near future, Zvyagintsev's career and maybe his life won't be worth a plugged kopek in his homeland.

Russia's devolution into a self-dealing tinpot dictatorship with pretensions to grandeur that barely mask a frightening capacity to cause suffering in the pursuit of power is the subject of *Leviathan*, and everybody there knows it. The film, which has yet to be shown widely in Russia, was celebrated at the Cannes Film Festival last summer. In its wake, Russia's Ministry of Culture has announced rules banning the release of films "defiling the national culture, posing a threat to national unity, and undermining the foundations of the constitutional order."

The culture minister, a historian named Vladimir Medinsky, is a nationalist reactionary who intends to exercise his authority to "consolidate the state and society on the basis of values instilled by our history." According to the *Moscow Times*, Medinsky has "urged the creation of a 'patriotic' Internet and the spread of like-minded films, radio, and television content." *Leviathan* is becoming his test case. And with good reason. It's as subversive of the ambitions of Vladimir Putin and his repugnant lackeys as Medinsky and other budding nationalist totalitarians in the Putin ambit fear it is.

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

Leviathan
Directed by Andrey Zvyagintsev

Aleksey Serebryakov, Elena Lyadova

Leviathan tells a small-scale tale about a working-class mechanic named Kolya (Aleksey Serebryakov) trying to keep his family home from being seized by the town's charmless and ruthless mayor. Kolya's troubles do not end there. He has a depressed wife and a teenaged son who seems to be teetering on the edge of delinquency. Kolya's hopes rest on the shoulders of a slick old army buddy who is now a lawyer in Moscow and who comes to defend him. This leads to an unexpected domestic crisis.

So it's a small-town melodrama. But it isn't. If it were, Zvyagintsev wouldn't have filmed it with the scale of a David Lean epic. The town is on the shores of the Barents Sea, just south of the Arctic Ocean, and in the waters near Kolya's house lie the shell of a massive shipwreck and the skeleton of a great sea creature. This tells you two things: First, *Leviathan* is a work that aims for biblical grandeur, with Kolya cast in the role of a present-day Job; and second, that Zvyagintsev is not a subtle filmmaker.

He wants us to understand that what we're seeing is all of Russia miniaturized. The country's intractable sociological and political problems are all on display. The casual alcoholism that afflicts all the characters is not incidental, nor is the corruption, both on a grand scale—the mayor's illicit seizure of Kolya's property, for example—and a petty one. Kolya's close buddies in the local constabulary supplement their incomes and flex their muscles at everyone's expense, including Kolya's. He may be a close friend of the police chief, but he is also expected to repair the man's car at a moment's notice without compensation.

For his part, the mayor justifies his selfish pursuits by hiding behind the heavy black robes of the region's leading Russian Orthodox priest. When it appears Kolya's friend from Moscow has come up with evidence strong enough to land the mayor in jail, the mayor expresses his terror to the priest—who tells him that he is an instrument of God and that he must bring his might to bear to defeat his enemies. In a brilliant final scene, we discover, finally, why Kolya's property is so important to both the mayor and the priest.

Kolya is a classic Russian character, straight out of Gogol's incomparable story "The Overcoat." He is an innocent, none too bright, who is incapable of maneuvering around the corruption everyone else takes for granted and tries to take advantage of for personal gain. But unlike the hapless protagonist of "The Overcoat," Kolya is not even bleakly comic. What happens to him is chilling and unexpected, but it's perfectly in keeping with Zvyagintsev's perception that, in Putin's Russia, injustice is as ever-present as air—and disguises itself when necessary in pompous nationalistic garb.

Leviathan begins verrrry slowly, as Zvyagintsev establishes its mournful and deliberate pace. But as the gears of the plot begin to mesh, it grips, moves, and finally breaks your heart—an experience similar to that of contemplating the descent of Russia from the glorious optimism that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union to the self-aggrandizing and defensive nihilism that now seem to have swallowed it whole. ♦

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

"President Barack Obama will shorten his trip to India and divert to Saudi Arabia, paying respects after the death of King Abdullah and meeting with the oil-rich nation's new monarch, the White House said Saturday."
—Associated Press, January 24, 2015

PARODY

TODAY'S WEATHER: **117°F & SUNNY** TONIGHT: **SAND**

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'JE SUIS ABDULLAH'

ama pays homage to His Superior Holy dulaziz Al Saud (at right) after arterday. *(Photo: Newscom)*

Repeat Female Driver Finally Apprehended

By Ibrahim Ibrahim-Ibrahim

Relief spread through Riyadh today upon news that police had, at long last, put a stop to a woman suspected of driving more than a dozen times. "The suspect has been detained and raped by police, and we are proud to announce that her reign of terror is over," declared Detective Muhammad Al-Zahrani of the Riyadh Metropolitan Police Department.

The suspect, known as Myriam Al-Ghamdi, had been sought in a spate of horrific drivings throughout the city in recent weeks, but it now appears that the city finally can rest easy.

"Ms. Ghamdi will no longer be able to terrorize our city," Mayor Abdulla Al-Mogbel announced to a cheering throng. "With this arrest and rape, the RMPD has restored order to the city, and Ms. Ghamdi will be held without bond for further questioning and rap-

See **GUILTY,** page 4

NewKingIsAwesome.com Ranked Most Popular

TOPS LIST OF KINGDOM'S THREE WEBSITES

By Yusuf Islam

According to a recent poll conducted by the kingdom's chief technology officer, NewKingIsAwesome.com has taken over as the most popular of the country's sites online.

Eighty-three percent of respondents named NewKingIsAwesome.com as their favorite website, with Kingisawesome.com taking second place at 11 percent. Of those,

In third place, with 6 percent of the vote, was the popular search engine AltaVista.com.

Launched early last week, NewKingIsAwesome.com is the Internet's third website. The site offers users the opportunity to learn about the many ways in which new King Salman is awesome, displays four color photographs of King Salman, and even offers users the opportunity to share ways they think King Salman is awesome.