the weekly standard

EUROPE'S MIGRANT CRISES
CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL
DOMINIC GREEN

THE MANAGERS VS. THE MANAGED

What would James Burnham make of our ruling class?

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

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Decline and Fall

"When I make a mistake," said Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York, "it's a beaut."

As a longtime fan of the *New York Times*'s Corrections column, The Scrapbook can attest that the *Times*, like any human institution, makes its share of mistakes—some of which are beauts, by any measure. But the error uncovered in the August 23 edition of the *New York Times Book Review* goes well beyond mere beaut status and rates some category of its own.

It begins with a review, by novelist Joshua Cohen, of Mario Vargas Llosa's latest book, *Notes on the Death of Culture: Essays on Spectacle and Society*. The 2010 Nobel laureate's volume may be summarized, very briefly, as an all-purpose gripe on the decline of cultural standards, most of which first appeared in a Spanish newspaper, *El País*. Cohen detects irony in this, since (in his words) "Vargas Llosa's cranky, hasty manifesto is made of the very stuff it criticizes: journalism."

Of course, Cohen is fully entitled to dislike Vargas Llosa's book—The Scrapbook has not yet read it—and is equally entitled to dislike Vargas Llosa, who is very much a public figure with strongly held political views. But the review ends on a curiously personal note, pointing out that the 79-year-old Vargas Llosa recently left his wife of 50 years for a 64-year-old woman named Isabel Preysler, who happens to be the mother of pop singer Enrique Iglesias.

All of which is true, but then Joshua Cohen piles on: "Vargas Llosa announced their relationship on his official Twitter account, and sold photos and the 'exclusive' story to *Hola!* magazine, reportedly for 850,000 euros."

Well, as it turns out, Vargas Llosa did no such thing—and as he pointed out in a letter to the *Times*, "I have never had a Twitter account, and I have never posted and never will post anything on any Twitter account. I have never sold a photo or story to *Hola!* magazine or any other outlet in connection with any relationship or personal matter." To which the *Times* responded, in its characteristic tone: "In reviewing this complaint, editors determined that the reviewer had based his account of these matters mostly on information from an article about Vargas Llosa in the *Daily Mail*, but neither the reviewer nor editors independently verified those statements."

The Scrapbook, aware of human frailty, will refrain from drawing any conclusions from this incident, except to make a few casual observations. First, as any reader of Evelyn Waugh's novels must know, it is never a smart idea to take stories in the *Daily Mail*, or any Fleet Street tabloid, strictly at face value. (Our complimentary paperback edition of *Scoop* is on its way to Joshua Cohen.) And second, while the *Times* editors don't mention it, the *Book Review*'s dereliction precisely represents what Vargas Llosa is complaining about. A sensational, and decidedly slanderous, assertion is made about a Nobel literature laureate—and no one at the *New York Times* can be stirred to verify it?

That's journalistic, if not cultural, decline. ♦

Media Mutters

Hillary Clinton is slipping in the polls and at the mercy of her growing email scandal. Fortunately for her, the Clintons' ever-loyal squadron of flying monkeys is spoiling to fight anyone who dares to criticize her. *Politico* last week revealed that David Brock has written a book attacking the *New York Times* for (can you believe it?) its unfair coverage of the Clintons.

The formerly scurrilous right-wing journalist turned presently scurrilous captain of Media Matters and the Clintonite rapid-response group Correct the Record isn't pulling any punches. According to Brock, there's "a special place in hell" for the *Times*. While The Scrapbook wouldn't be surprised if there's a monument to Walter Duranty somewhere in Abaddon, everything Brock says is suspect. According to Brock, Carolyn Ryan—who recently stepped down as the paper's Washington bureau chief—transformed the *Times* into a "megaphone for conservative propaganda."

We're still trying to work the stitch out of our sides from laughing at that one. After all, this is the same paper that endorsed Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama in 2008. Still, the reason Brock is busy working the refs is that the tactic works for liberal politicians. And they know it. The day after *Politico* noted Brock's forthcoming book, the *Times*'s public editor, Margaret Sullivan, ran her second column in two days pondering whether the *Times* had covered Bernie Sanders's campaign fairly. Sullivan quoted Ryan as saying that "one of the strategies of Sanders supporters is to relentlessly agitate for more favorable coverage from The Times." And why wouldn't they? They're just following the lead of the Hillary campaign. Call it coincidence, but Brock's prime target, Carolyn Ryan, is no longer the paper's bureau chief.

Of course, the paper denies Brock's crusade had any effect and points out that Ryan is still editing political coverage at the paper. We also have to give the *Times* credit for responding to Brock with well-deserved contempt: "David Brock is an opportunist and a partisan who

specializes in personal attacks," a *Times* spokesman told *Politico*. It must sting a bit that Brock claims he's done interviews with current *Times* employees who share his concern that the paper has been too hard on Clinton. There's generally no reason to believe Brock when it comes to the Clintons—especially unnamed sources saying such things as "[Ryan] has a hard-on for Hillary," and "she wants that coonskin nailed to the wall." Coonskin? Who at the *New York Times* talks like this?

Then again, it's hardly unthinkable that employees at the paper would be unhappy that the *Times* has, from time to time, engaged in aggressive coverage of Clinton. A spokesman for Brock's publisher told *Politico* he'd spoken to a "handful of people in [the *Times*'s] New York and Washington newsrooms" to confirm Brock's accusations. Meanwhile, even *Politico* is treading carefully now that Brock is threatening to say nasty things about liberal media organs that are insufficiently supportive of Queen Hillary.

"Clinton's use of a private email account—which may have been used to receive classified emails—prompted a Department of Justice investigation and raised new questions about her candor, transparency and trustworthiness," notes *Politico* in its report on Brock. *May have been*? At this point, what credible media organization is casting doubt on whether Clinton's private email was full of classified information?

We know hell's a crowded place these days, but by seriously indulging the grievances of a hack such as Brock, *Politico* is angling for its own prime piece of stygian real estate. ♦

The Coming of the Clones

Have you ever wondered what happened to cloning? Twenty years ago, when Dolly the sheep was still bleating, cloning was seen as the most important topic in bioethics. But over the last few years it dropped off the radar. One of our favorite journals, the *New Atlantis* (which is published by the Ethics and Public Policy Center), released an unsettling new report last week that sheds a great deal of light on where cloning has gone under the cover of night.

It turns out that cloning has not been put to bed as an ethical problem. If anything, the challenges it presents to human dignity have worsened dramatically:

> When the world learned in 1997 of Dolly the sheep, the first clone produced from an adult mammal, a broad public discussion about the ethics of human cloning ensued, largely focused on the nature, meaning, and future of human procreation. However, following the successful derivation of human embryonic stem cells in 1998, the debate over human cloning largely shifted to the question of whether it is acceptable for scientists to create human embryos only to destroy them. The subsequent discovery of promising alternative techniques for generating stem cells without creating or destroying embryos seemed to show that scientific progress would obviate the demand for cloning. But cloning research continued, and American scientists announced in 2013 that they had for the first time successfully obtained stem cells from cloned human embryos.

The *New Atlantis* report goes on to explain the dangers this macabre research holds for society:

[I]t turns human reproduction into a manufacturing process in the most literal sense: human embryos are created to serve as raw materials for the production of biomedical research supplies. This kind of cloning is today being performed at several scientific labs in the United States, despite the availability of alternative techniques that produce cells of nearly the same scientific and medical value but that require neither the creation nor destruction of human embryos. Cloning-for-biomedical-research also endangers the health and safety of the women called on to undergo dangerous hormone treatments to serve as egg donors. If research cloning is not stopped now, we face the prospect of the mass farming of human embryos and fetuses, and the transformation of the noble enterprise of biomedical research into a grotesque system of exploitation and death.

But if you can believe it, that's not the worst part of the report. It turns out that much of the new cloning technology is aimed at eventually using cloning for human reproduction:

Although the latest scientific work related to cloning has been focused on potential medical applications, much of that research is relevant to the creation of cloned children. Not only would cloning-to-produce-children be a dangerous experimental procedure, one that cannot be consented to by its subjects (the children created by it), it is also a profound distortion of the moral meaning of human procreation. Giving adults the opportunity to have what has been called the "ultimate 'single-parent child'" would contribute to the commodification of children, and would withhold from children the possibility of a relationship with both a genetic mother and father. Cloning-to-produce-children could also be used to attempt to control the physical and even psychological traits of children, extending the eugenic logic of those who would use reproductive biotechnology to have the perfect child. This form of genetic engineering would deny the children it produces an open future, burdening them with the expectation that they will be like the individuals from whom they were cloned. And cloning could make possible still more dramatic forms of genetic engineering.

This isn't science-fiction. It's horror. And it's time policymakers paid attention to cloning again. ♦

Put on Your Thinking Caps

Readers we hope will be pleased to learn that the Foundation for Constitutional Government—which produces the Conversations with Bill Kristol that The Scrapbook has been touting for a couple of years—has just launched a series of websites called Contemporary Thinkers. The aim is to make more easily accessible the works of pioneering thinkers of the 20th and 21st centuries. The series opens with 30 individuals whose writings on politics, society, and government profoundly influenced their contemporaries and continue to shape public debate today. They include many with whom you may be familiar—including Friedrich Hayek, John Maynard Keynes, Leon Kass, John Rawls, Leo Strauss, Irving Kristol, Allan Bloom, and Thomas Sowell—and others that you will want to familiarize yourself with. And there are additional sites and thinkers to come.

Presented in a catalogued, searchable format, the sites feature original essays on the ideas and influence of each thinker, curated bibliographies of their writing, video and audio content, and links to other online resources. The sites are user-friendly and provide portals to thinkers whose writings are very much worth reading. They can all be found via your tablets, mobile devices, and computers, at contemporarythinkers.org. ♦

Articles We Didn't Finish

"The following is a string of subtle and routine occurrences that make me feel less human and should take their rightful place among the larger narrative of sexism in contemporary America. . . . " ("The Struggle To Be Taken Seriously in the Age of Subtle Sexism," the Charlotte *News and Observer*, September 4). ♦

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Pearl of the Plains

I've always loved the sound of a serpent. Well, no, not really. The 16th-century musical instrument is breathy, buzzy, and inexact—consistently requiring the player to gesture at the note in what's called falset: using the tension of the lips in the mouthpiece to approximate a tone that the instrument's fingering and natural overtones don't want to produce. There was a reason the valved brass tuba swept the serpent out of modern orchestras in the 19th century. The tuba could, like, you know, actually sound the note. A clean, solid bass line, and if the price was a little brassiness instead of the woodwindy tones of the serpent, so be it. The bassoons could handle those, and the tubas would provide the solid floor, down in the orchestra's basement, for Western music.

No, what I've always loved is the *idea* of the serpent. Its shape, the odd way the throat sticks straight out from the players' faces while the giant S snakes down their chests. The dated instrument may not be much use for the precise performances of modern music, but it does look wonderful in a museum.

In the National Music Museum, for instance, where they've got an English serpent on display, with an aristocratic coat of arms painted on it—upheld by a lion and a horse. Of course. From the 16th century on, people seemed to think an instrument just wasn't special unless it was slathered with fleurs-de-lis and mottos. A violin that Andrea Amati made in Cremona around 1560, for example, has *Quo unico propugnaculo stat stabitq reli* painted along its sides—Latin for "By means of this defender, religion stands and will stand." Which ain't all that far, if you stop to think about it, from Woody Guthrie's mounting "This machine kills fascists" on his guitar in the 1940s.

As it happens, that violin is also on display at the National Music Museum. Along with Amati's King Henry IV violin from 1595 (a royal instrument with *Henricus IV Dei Grat Franc et Nav Rex*—"Henry IV, by the Grace of God, King of France and Navarre"—painted on it, naturally). And beside it is a set of other 17th- and 18th-century violins, from Maggini, Jacob Stainer, Antonio Stradivari, Ruggerius, Carcassi, the Brescian school, Meisel, and all the rest of the craftsmen pouring out instruments in the busy era of the newly perfected violin. An American parallel, in a much reduced time frame, can be found in the obsessed, half-mad woodcarvers, luthiers, and inventors who made the guitar the central instrument of popular music, from Orville Gibson to Les Paul.

An early-19th-century serpent from England

PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL MUSIC MUSEUM, VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

Examples of their work can be found in the guitar room at, ahem, the National Music Museum—a museum I've been visiting for some while now and recommending ever since my first trip through its displays of saxophones, early keyboards, harmonicas, and theremins. I promote it so relentlessly that this spring the museum put me on its board of trustees, possibly as the only way to get me to stop talking about it as an underappreciated treasure of an American museum—since, I gather their thinking went, everyone on the board already appreciates the place.

They're nearly alone. In Vermillion, South Dakota, in the restored rooms of an old Carnegie Library building, is what someone might call an underappreciated treasure of an American museum. The southeast corner of the state is not one of the nation's most popular tourist destinations, and Vermillion is a 60-mile drive off the main I-90 corridor that carries traffic through South Dakota toward the Black Hills. It's a 60-mile side-trip, however, that's worth taking time for, on one's way to Mount Rushmore.

Or worth visiting just for its own sake. There's always pressure on museums in America's smaller cities. Donors start out dubious about the distant place, and if a museum succeeds in building a world-class collection anyway, the pressure only increases: Why aren't we in New York or Washington? Chicago or Los Angeles? Somewhere the museum could attract the crowds it deserves?

The answer involves things that Tocqueville would have understood: the social health of the nation in the scattering of its cultural centers, the localism that needs encouraging, and the greater relative effect of something like a museum in a smaller city. But that's a thousand-page book on political theory, and the shorter answer is that the National Music Museum remains an underappreciated treasure. You should go to Vermillion, South Dakota, and see it.

Joseph Bottum

the weekly Standard

The Supporting Actors

Here are the judgments of several senators on the Obama administration's Iran deal:

Delaware senator Chris Coons: "Even if the Iranians comply with the letter and spirit of the agreement as negotiators for the United States understand it, a stronger, financially stable, and economically interconnected Iran will develop an expanded nuclear enrichment program after a decade, which—if it then chooses to violate the agreement—would allow it to quickly develop enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. This agreement—at best—freezes Iran's nuclear enrichment program—it does not dismantle or destroy it as I hoped it would. . . . I am troubled that the parties to this agreement—particularly Iran—have differing interpretations of key terms, and I remain deeply concerned about our ability to hold Iran to the terms of this agreement as we understand them."

Michigan senator Debbie Stabenow: "I do share concerns about parts of the agreement, including how Iran could use funds from sanctions relief to continue funding Hezbollah and other terrorists around the world. It is clear that they have been funding these activities despite the crippling sanctions. And we are right to be concerned that additional funds from sanctions relief, or any other sources from other countries if this agreement is not approved, could be used to continue these outrageous activities."

Michigan senator Gary Peters: "This deal allows Iran, under the same leadership that refers to the United States as the Great Satan and calls for the destruction of Israel, to enrich uranium on its own soil. This core concession is in many ways a stark departure from our country's past nonproliferation policies, and it concerns me that this agreement could set a dangerous precedent. . . . How can the United States say with moral authority that this deal is acceptable for Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, intent on regional hegemony, but deny it to others? . . . I am concerned that other nations will view this agreement with Iran as a change in U.S. policy and new precedent that may lead to increased global proliferation of nuclear enrichment and the potential for other nuclear threshold states to emerge."

New Jersey senator Cory Booker: "With this deal, we are legitimizing a vast and expanding nuclear program in Iran. We are in effect rewarding years of their deception, deceit, and wanton disregard for international law by allowing them to potentially have a domestic nuclear enrichment program at levels beyond what is necessary for a peaceful civil nuclear program. . . . Finally, this deal includes the termination of the United Nations embargo on Iran's conventional arms and ballistic missile technology after five and eight years, respectively. Even with increased vigilance by the United States and our allies, this will bolster Iran's conventional weapons threats in the region."

Oregon senator Ron Wyden: "This agreement with the duplicitous and untrustworthy Iranian regime falls short of what I had envisioned. . . . Critics are right that this agreement requires Iran's leaders to freeze many activities rather than completely destroy or dismantle their nuclear infrastructure, as I and others had called for."

These senatorial critics of the Iran deal are all Democrats. Yet they all *support* the deal they disdain. Why?

Because, they say, there's no alternative. But this is manifestly untrue. The alternative would be the status quo ante—the status quo of 2012, say, when these senators campaigned for Barack Obama, praised his Iran policy (as it was then) of sanctions and diplomatic pressure, of denying Iran a nuclear weapons infrastructure and a greater ability to fund terror and aggression.

It's pretty clear why they now support the deal. They're scared of the consequences within the Democratic party of opposing Obama, of crossing the left, of standing against "peace." And they think they can get the best of both worlds: They can unenthusiastically support the deal while expressing ineffectual and not-to-be-acted-on doubts, covering their bets, and then quickly moving on.

After all, they can reason, President Obama is the one who will be blamed if things go wrong. It's his deal. We said we would have negotiated a better one. And anyway, who today blames the 390 members of Parliament

who supported Neville Chamberlain's government after Munich? Many of those supporting actors went on to successful political careers.

But we do not have a parliamentary system here. Here we hold individual senators and representatives accountable. And no dissenting member of the Democratic party is about to assume power, reverse course, and rescue the party's name from infamy, as Churchill did in Britain.

No. The Democrats have become the party of the Iran deal. They are the party that has embraced a deal that reeks of dishonor, strengthens our enemies, and increases the chances of war. Their statements demonstrate that they knew better. They were just afraid to do the right thing.

—William Kristol

Waves from the South

You could tell that the plan European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker announced on September 9 for distributing 160,000 refugees around the European Union was slapdash. You could tell by the number of times Juncker felt he had to browbeat his listeners about their Nazi past. "We Europeans should know and should never forget why giving refuge . . . is so important," he said. Of course giving refuge is important. So is democratic accountability. Right now Europe's politicians owe their citizens an explanation, not a scolding.

About half a million migrants—as best we can count—have arrived on European soil this year. No one has a clear idea of what to do with them. They are landing at the rate of 1,000 or 2,000 a day on the Greek island of Lesbos and rioting outside the Budapest train station. Hungary alone has stopped 172,000 of them. Last week Denmark sealed its border to trains from Germany, and Austria stopped rail traffic from the east. Broadly speaking, these migrants are of three types:

■ The first group are refugees fleeing the violence and destruction of the ISIS-controlled zones of Syria and Iraq, traveling overland on an artery that runs, generally, through Turkey, Greece, Serbia, and Hungary. They are mostly heading for three target countries: Germany, Sweden, and Britain. The first two have made public statements of welcome, German chancellor Angela Merkel even anticipating 800,000 migrants this year. Britain, meanwhile, has a reputation as a strong economy, and nearly all young people can speak at least a bit of its language.

■ The second group of migrants are Africans for whom the anarchy in Libya has suddenly opened a corridor from the most destitute and violent societies in the world to the (for now) richest and safest. These travelers tend to move by boat across the Mediterranean, making landfall in Italy or Greece and proceeding north, sometimes after having applied formally for asylum.

With regard to these first two groups, over three-quarters of asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, and Eritrea have their claims approved, and those whose claims are rejected are rarely sent back.

■ The third group in the present wave are opportunists from all over the world—Bangladesh, Southeast Asia, you name it—who are following a well-established migrant route.

And it is this third group of economic migrants that is key. There now exists a major smuggling route, an economy of people-moving that responds to forces of supply and demand, an efficient Ricardian trade system connecting countries that lack food to countries that lack both labor and political will. With guides and mafias charging somewhere around $2,000 a head, this is a billion-dollar business, and it could well run into the tens of billions if nothing is done to stop it.

Almost all European leaders hopelessly confuse the two phenomena—the humanitarian emergency in the ISIS "caliphate" and the huge economic migration. The former is the business of nuns and doctors, the latter of regulators and border guards. Yet the humanitarian emergency is being used to squelch any public misgivings about the economic migration. An atmosphere of propaganda prevails. Daimler's CEO, Dieter Zetsche, told London's *Financial Times* that young, well-educated refugees are "just the sort of people we're looking for." These are the wretched of the earth when it comes to their claims on the European conscience, but the cream of the crop when their advocates are describing their effect on the European economy. Of Western European governments, only David Cameron's appears to understand the distinction between refugees and migrants. Britain is welcoming 20,000 people from refugee camps in the Middle East—the truly needy, not those already on the European continent.

The present human wave is not primarily about the "lessons of history" or the moral grandeur of European statesmen like Mr. Juncker. Middle Easterners and Asians and Africans can exercise their reason, too, and when they do, this is what they see: Their lands are places of sickness, violence, penury, corruption, and early death. The per capita income of dozens of sub-Saharan African countries is still well below $1,000 a year. The lifetime value of the welfare benefits associated with Western citizenship (retirement, health insurance, etc.) reaches over $1 million per capita—and that citizenship is heritable! As long as the route to Europe is possible to anyone capable of borrowing a couple thousand bucks from the village elder or some relative in the West, no conceivable inconvenience, humiliation, or risk will deter whole families from

coming—not even the sight of drowned children in the Mediterranean. These migrants are not stupid or heartless. They are rational. Hard as it is to look at the photos of the body of poor, 3-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish beach, these migrants understand that their own children have a greater chance of dying from the bullets of ISIS or from diseases easily curable by Western medicine than they do on the riskiest northbound route.

After lecturing the world about human rights for the past several decades, Europeans are learning that you cannot behave the same way on a cultural and military frontier that you can in a sleepy suburb far from the border. Europe has judged, berated, ostracized, and sanctioned Serbia, Israel, and Russia as if the dangers those countries faced were no different from the ones faced in Luxembourg or Wales. Many of the European Union's visionaries seemed to believe that the continent owed its stability to its genius for neighborliness, to the project of building the EU itself. Of course, the postwar peace was brought by American arms, and the EU was a symptom of this peace, not a cause. It should now be clear to Europeans that the despotism of Arab regimes was the real buffer between them and the poor peoples of the Global South. Europe must now provide the force to defend its own borders. Europe does not need to indulge in brutality, only to show resolve.

It is surprising how hard Europeans find it to tell the two apart. As we went to press, Hungary's premier, Viktor Orbán, was warning that he would close and militarize Hungary's border on September 15. While there is no telling how it will work out in practice, it is a reasonable course of action, given the emergency with which his country is now faced. Complicating matters still further, the migrants are predominantly Muslim, at a time when Europe feels, with good reason, under threat from Islamic radicalism. It has outraged Juncker and other Brussels authorities that Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland have all expressed a preference for Christian over Muslim refugees. Hungary's premier Orbán expressed his feelings eloquently in a speech at a summer camp in July:

> Over the past 30 years several European countries have decided to welcome masses of people coming from places with different civilizational roots. I do not believe we should pass judgment on this experiment. . . . All we can say—but we have to say it firmly, having seen the results elsewhere—is that we do not want to repeat this experiment on our country.

Juncker, in laying out his Brussels plan for assigning 160,000 migrants to various countries, insisted this was only a small percentage of the continent's population. Nothing could be more disingenuous. The number is only a small fraction of the migrants who have already arrived in this year's "class." And Europe's inability to stop—or even to manage—this year's wave of migration will next year alter the calculations of Middle Easterners and Africans as they weigh whether to stay put or go for broke. Europe's politicians ain't seen nothing yet. They are trying to pass off a migration crisis as a humanitarian crisis. It may be on the verge of turning into a military crisis.

—Christopher Caldwell

The Kim Davis Matter

Kim Davis

NEWSCOM

In his powerful dissent from *Obergefell* v. *Hodges*, the case in which the Supreme Court redefined marriage to include same-sex marriage, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that "many good and decent people oppose same-sex marriage as a tenet of their faith" and that if they "exercise their religion in ways that may be seen to conflict with the new right," then "hard questions" may arise.

That has happened in Rowan County, Kentucky, where the elected county clerk is Kim Davis, whose job includes issuing marriage licenses to all legally eligible couples. In late June, when *Obergefell* was handed down, Davis refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. She did so citing religious reasons. Several couples unable to secure licenses in Rowan County sued, charging that Davis had violated their constitutional right to marriage. She lost. Defying court orders to comply with the decision, she was found in contempt and jailed for five days, during which time five of her six deputies issued licenses on terms consistent with *Obergefell*. That satisfied the judge in the case that the clerk's office was fulfilling its legal obligations, and Davis was released.

That, however, is hardly the end of the story. The judge warned Davis that she must not "interfere in any way" with the licensing work of her deputies and implied that were she to do so, she could land in jail again. Of course, were she to fail to "interfere," she could be violating her conscience, or so it would seem. Asked by reporters what she would do, her lawyer said, "Kim Davis cannot and will not violate her conscience."

Davis now has filed in federal court a complaint against Governor Steve Beshear seeking an accommodation of her religious belief under relevant federal and state laws. In

accord with Kentucky law predating *Obergefell*, the form couples fill out to obtain a license includes an "authorization statement of the county clerk issuing the license." Also, the form in two places requires the clerk's approval. Davis believes that in authorizing a same-sex marriage she would be "endorsing the proposed union and calling something 'marriage' that is not marriage," in violation of her religious beliefs. This is her core complaint.

It bears noting that Davis is not opposing marriage licenses for same-sex couples. What she seeks is accommodation of her religious objection to issuing same-sex marriage licenses that have her imprimatur. She would be satisfied if the marriage license form were edited to delete the multiple references to her name and office. That, she says, would eliminate the "personal nature of the authorization." She has proposed other accommodations to achieve the same end, among them relocating the marriage licensing function online or in a state office, such as the Office of Vital Statistics, and deputizing a neighboring county clerk (or some other official) to issue licenses in Rowan County. None of the accommodations Davis proposes seems likely to undermine an important governmental interest.

Davis's better option may lie not in federal but state court. Kentucky has a Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). Like other state RFRAs, Kentucky's is designed to accommodate where possible the exercise of religion. Eugene Volokh, the First Amendment authority (and founder of the *Volokh Conspiracy* blog), says that if Davis were to sue in state court, "seeking a declaration that she can issue licenses and certificates without her name, as a Kentucky RFRA-based exemption from [the state's] statutory requirements for what must go on her license, I think she'd have a good case."

It may take an RFRA case in state court to get the Kentucky governor's attention. When *Obergefell* was decided, Governor Beshear revised state law to reflect the redefinition of marriage accomplished by that decision. But he showed no interest in also accommodating religious belief. Note that the legislature had to override Beshear's veto of RFRA to secure its enactment.

Beshear has refused to call a legislative session where an appropriate accommodation could be passed—and almost certainly would be, given the conservative leanings of the legislature. Beshear says it would cost $300,000 to hold such a session. He would rather the legislature address the issue when it reconvenes in January. The calendar shows four months before January arrives. Is Kentucky going to be the site of more jailings of Kim Davis during that time? You would think that prospect would move the governor to do the right thing and issue an executive order that adequately protects religious liberty.

—Terry Eastland

The Art of the Donald

Why has Trump risen so far, so fast?

BY JAY COST

Donald Trump at a rally against the Iran deal in Washington, D.C., September 9, 2015

The Donald Trump candidacy has inspired a hundred writers to pen a thousand think pieces about the meaning of it all. Is Trump's surge the sign of a new breed of populism? Is it the Tea Party reborn? Is it the reemergence of the old Ross Perot-Pat Buchanan strand of protectionism? Does it signal a right-wing nativism similar to what is bubbling up in Europe?

Maybe what's going on is simpler: The Trump surge is, primarily if not entirely, about Donald Trump.

Most candidates run to advance ideas, principles, and positions on issues. But not Trump. His campaign is about Trump. Full stop.

Jay Cost is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard *and the author of* A Republic No More: Big Government and the Rise of American Political Corruption.

Trump's speeches are extemporaneous, so he talks about whatever comes into his mind. And more often than not, the subject he is most interested in is himself, particularly how well his campaign is doing. Trump can quote the latest polls in minute detail, whether by Gravis or Monmouth or Quinnipiac.

After that, Trump is most likely to talk about all the great things he has done and all his famous friends. Did you know that he went to the Wharton School of Business? Well, he did, which can only mean one thing: He is really smart. Also, did you know that he wrote the book *The Art of the Deal*? It is so good only the Bible is better. *The Art of the Deal* opens with an anecdote about all the important people Trump talked to on a Monday morning in the 1980s. Thirty years on, he is still talking to the movers and shakers, as he'll gladly explain to you. He knows a lot of smart people—and not just in business. He'll name-drop Carl Icahn just as quickly as Clint Black. Neither went to Wharton, but they are both terrific.

Trump, meanwhile, is arrayed against a bunch of wimps. Jeb Bush is a "low-energy person." Nobody else in the Republican field can win—as Trump does on a regular basis. For proof? He pulls out the polls.

Issues feature in this candidacy only indirectly. Even immigration plays a smaller part in the Trump campaign than one would expect, given the media attention his inflammatory statements have attracted. Often, immigration is just a foil to introduce the idea that the political class is a bunch of dummies who are getting outfoxed by the leaders of foreign countries, especially Mexico, and he will negotiate a much better deal. Or better yet, he'll send Carl Icahn to negotiate an unbelievable deal with Mexico. And China, too. (Carl Icahn is going to have a very large portfolio in a Trump administration.)

Trump seems to want to opine on the issues, but he never quite gets around to it, since all rhetorical roads lead back to him. For instance, at the National Federation of Republican Assemblies (NFRA) conference in Nashville last month, Trump began to explain how to deal with Ukraine, suggesting we get Germany to take on more of the burden because it is geographically closer. But in the blink of an eye, he was back to talking about *The Apprentice*. Did you know Trump hosted a hit show on NBC? Well, he did. And Trace Adkins was on it, whom Trump had never even heard of before the show, but it turns out he's a very nice guy, and . . .

About 50 years ago, political scientist Philip Converse argued that ideology could be understood as issue restraint. In other words, somebody who accepts conservative principles about free markets is *restrained* from endorsing the kind of redistributive tax scheme that Bernie Sanders is promoting. By this standard, Trump has little if any ideology. For instance, he avers that he is for "free trade," but also for making Mexico pay for a border

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wall, and he will slap a tariff on Mexico if it won't.

Issues are not the reason to support Trump. Instead, Trump wants you to send him to Washington to do great deals for America.

So, why is this working? Perhaps the better question is: Why shouldn't it be working? After all, Trump's pitch has worked for him for decades. Plenty of people made a mint during the Reagan boom, but only Trump turned his wealth into a personal brand—and he could do it because he is a character. He somehow manages to be simultaneously a man of the people and larger than life. He's funny, witty, and disarming. Best of all, he seems to be hosting a party to which everyone is invited.

This comes through in his public appearances: He never gives a dull interview or boring speech. One might think people would be put to sleep by an extended disquisition on the Federal Election Commission's disclosure forms that make Trump seem to be worth a lot less than he actually is, but the NFRA crowd seemed to love it. He supplemented his self-aggrandizement with zingers for nearly an hour. Easily his best of the night was: "Guys like Jeb Bush and Hillary, they hire pollsters and pay them hundreds of thousands of dollars. What do you have to do that for? Every week they come out with a new poll! . . . Why should I pay?"

Trump also has his finger on the pulse of the nation in a way that none of the other candidates except perhaps Bernie Sanders does. According to Gallup, the percentage of people who are "satisfied with the way things are going in the United States" has been below 50 percent since early 2004. That is a very long time. Or as Trump says, *We don't win anymore*. Moreover, Congress's ratings have been persistently under water since then, and neither George W. Bush nor Barack Obama has been especially popular. Or as Trump says, *Our politicians are losers*.

Of course, once Trump moves past these generalities and into specifics, he stops making sense. But tone, temperament, and wit count for a lot at this still very early stage of the campaign.

Republican politicians should be worried about Trump, but not for the reason most of them are. Trump is never going to be the nominee. Voters in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina care about the issues a lot more than Trump does. If he is still in first place by the new year, the candidates, their super-PACs, and outside groups will blanket the airwaves with attacks on his many deviations from conservative orthodoxy. That will surely be the end.

A Trump victory is not what should worry the GOP. Rather, the party should worry that, with the field of candidates full of professional politicians, only Donald Trump—the real-estate tycoon from Manhattan who gave money to Hillary Clinton—actually understands the mood of Republican voters in middle America. And Trump is the only one of the bunch who is having any fun. ♦

Crisis? Which Crisis?

European disunion.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

Migrants in the Hungarian town of Bicske rush a train bound for the border with Austria.

Europe's migrant crisis, the continent's greatest humanitarian disaster since the aftermath of World War II, continues to worsen. The summer began with mass drownings in the Mediterranean and bickering between the European Union and the governments of its member states over who should foot the bill for search and rescue patrols of Europe's southern coasts. The summer is ending with a series of appalling images that have galvanized public opinion, especially in the northern European states, and forced both national and supranational authorities to act.

On the Greek holiday island of Kos, migrants rioted when the police tried to corral them in a sports stadium. At Calais, migrants stormed a security fence and were repelled from the Channel Tunnel by tear gas. At Neusiedl in Austria, police discovered the bodies of 71 people, asphyxiated in the back of an abandoned truck. In Budapest, thousands of migrants, most of them Syrian, jammed the streets and tunnels around the Keleti train station. When the Hungarian government refused to let them travel onward, some fought their way onto trains, and a small army of desperate, exhausted, and hungry people set off on foot for the Austrian border.

On September 2, as Europeans returned to work after their August vacations, the media displayed the corpse of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach after drowning along with his mother and 5-year-old brother in an illegal crossing from the Turkish resort of Bodrum to Kos. Meanwhile, the Greek island of Lesbos (population 85,000) registered 14,000 migrants on September 8 alone. Coast guards and riot police fought with crowds of migrants who tried to storm a ferry. The government in Athens admitted that Lesbos was "on the verge of an explosion."

The European public responded to this saga of suffering and desperation with two outbreaks of sentiment. The picture of Alan Kurdi's tiny body was tweeted with a collective wringing of hands; this action speaks of prurience and vanity. At the same time, crowds of Germans gathered at train stations to greet asylum seekers with clothing, food, and money. This was a decent, humane response to an indecent, inhumane situation.

The same can be said of the official response, though it might be argued that government by sentiment is not always in the national interest. On September 9, Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, announced that the EU will take in a total of 160,000 Syrian refugees. The EU was driven to these gestures by German chancellor Angela Merkel. She was driven by public opinion, and that was driven by the media. For the media, August is the slow season and the silly season. The migrants, who happened to be thronging the Mediterranean beaches where politicians and journalists take their vacations, dominated the news.

The crisis, though, will not be solved by media outrage, popular sentiment, tinned goods, or even emulation of the pop star and antipoverty campaigner Bob Geldof, who has offered to house four Syrian families in his various properties. The Syrian civil war has forced more than 4 million Syrians from their homes. Roughly half are in camps in Turkey, where they can claim temporary protected status but cannot claim refugee status. This limbo ensures that, like the parents of Alan Kurdi, displaced Syrians will look beyond Turkey's borders, to the overland route to Western Europe through Greece and the Balkans. The EU's response is like sticking a band-aid over a hemorrhage.

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Dominic Green, the author of Three Empires on the Nile, *teaches political science at Boston College.*

Worse, the granting of special status to Syrian refugees is tantamount to giving an incentive to the human traffickers who bring them to Europe. The message will be understood in the ports of Libya and the border towns of Turkey: If the flow of migrants reaches sufficient mass, European governments will turn from the traffickers' enemies to their ally, and fast-track the lucky unfortunates along the otherwise difficult path to a new life in the EU. The smoother the reception in Europe, the higher the price of the ticket to get there, and the greater the profits of the criminals who run the smuggling networks. And the greater the number of immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, the greater the nationalist backlash. Juncker has said that Brussels will allocate the 160,000 Syrians among the EU states. Viktor Orban, prime minister of Hungary and leader of the ultranationalist Fidesz party, refuses to accept non-Christian immigrants.

Nor is Syria the only source of migrants. The Arab states ringing the Mediterranean basin are collapsing. Most of the states of sub-Saharan Africa already have collapsed. No Arab or African state has a serious plan for rectifying the catastrophes on its doorstep. Saudi Arabia, which shares a border with Syria, accepts only those with a family member already in the kingdom, and has given aid worth just over a quarter of a billion dollars; Britain, by contrast, has allocated more than $1.4 billion since 2012.

It is no longer clear who among the human wave washing into Europe is a "refugee," claiming sanctuary with a justified fear for his or her life, and who is an "economic migrant." Not all of the migrants are fleeing war or persecution. Many come in search of opportunity. Writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, Fraser Nelson, editor of the *Spectator*, described these migrants as a "side-effect of perhaps the greatest success of our times: the collapse in global poverty." Never before has the global population been so well fed and prosperous, yet never before have so many people risked all for a better life. Examining five decades of national censuses, the Center for Global Development found that emigration rates rise along with a country's wealth, and do not drop off until a country has become as wealthy as Albania or Armenia. Calling this trend the "Great Migration," Nelson advises Europe to abandon the 20th-century solutions of refugee camps and foreign aid, avoid cant and Merkel-style "panic" reactions, and "begin a new conversation."

That conversation must have two elements. At the national level, European states struggle to integrate their immigrants. The politicians argue that, without immigration, Europe's populations will age, the tax base will decline, and the welfare state run out of money. The voters are more concerned with the immediate effect of immigration, most of which is concentrated in the major cities: a squeeze on public schools, transport, hospitals, and housing, and simmering conflicts between indigenous and immigrant groups. This summer, the popular mood caused the admission of large numbers of migrants. The beneficiaries of a change in that mood will be Europe's ultranationalists.

Examining five decades of national censuses, the Center for Global Development found that emigration rates rise along with a country's wealth, and do not drop off until a country has become as wealthy as Albania or Armenia.

At the supranational level, the EU needs a new system for processing asylum applications. Under the current laws, known as the "Dublin Regulation," EU states must detain asylum seekers, establish which EU state they first entered, and return them there for fingerprinting and processing. The Dublin system was intended to prevent "asylum shopping" and "asylum orbit," where migrants initiate multiple applications. This is a serious problem: In a 2012 investigation, Irish police crosschecked 2,000 failed asylum applications with the fingerprint records of the U.K. Border Agency. Of the 2,000, 1,300 were already known to the U.K. agency under a different name, and 600 of them were already on a British list of known "asylum shoppers." Eighty were Somalis, using false Tanzanian passports.

The "Dublin transfer" deports migrants from Europe's wealthy northern and western states to their points of entry in the southeastern states. But these states are the least able to fund the detention and processing of migrants. The Greek and Italian economies have yet to recover from the crash of 2008, and their asylum systems have collapsed since the Arab Spring. This summer, the Dublin system stopped working. In June, Hungary, citing an influx of Syrians from the Serbian border, refused to accept any more Dublin transfers from other EU states. In August, Germany exempted Syrians from the Dublin rules. Next, the Czech Republic announced that it would either process Syrians coming from other EU states, or help them move to the state of their preference.

Reality has also undone the EU's policy towards its neighbors in the Mediterranean basin. In 1995, the EU initiated the Barcelona Process, an attempt to defuse tensions between Europe and its mostly poorer, mostly Muslim neighbors by the development of a free trade zone. The resulting union for the Mediterranean went on to ingest 15 non-EU states before the Arab Spring ended any hope of amity. In 2011, Ahmad Masadeh, the union's secretary, resigned; he has not been replaced. These days, only the people smugglers conduct free trade between north Africa and the EU.

This inertia, as much as popular outcries, emergency measures, and the promise of a revision of the Dublin system, indicates the scope of the challenge facing the EU, and the scale of the EU's failure to date. The migrant crisis is a human tragedy and a European problem. If Europe does not correct its course, the migrants will become an EU nightmare. ♦

The Putin Solution

What Russia is up to in Syria.

BY LEE SMITH

A photograph of a drowned 3-year-old boy washed up on a Turkish beach after his family failed to find refuge from the war in Syria seems to have finally gotten the world's attention. The conflict has been an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe for more than four years. A quarter of a million are dead, and millions have been driven from their homes, either displaced within Syria or moved to flee abroad, where they take their chances on reaching shelter. The Europeans don't want the refugees, but they also don't want images of more dead children washing up on their shores.

Still, there's no end in sight, and that's largely because the leader of the free world has sat on the sidelines since March 2011, when the Syrian opposition first took to the streets in peaceful protest and the regime hunted them like animals. Thus the Syrian conflict has also become a strategic catastrophe for the United States and its allies. It threatens to unravel the state system of the Middle East, jeopardizes America's half-century-old regional security architecture, and has put a terror-sponsoring soon-to-be nuclear Iran on the border of three longtime U.S. allies—Israel, Jordan, and Turkey.

And now Russia has thrown down its gauntlet. Last week, Obama administration officials expressed concerns about Russia's military build-up in Syria, comparing it to Vladimir Putin's incursion into Crimea. In recent weeks, Moscow has sent ships, planes, drones, and portable housing units for an expeditionary force of up to 3,000 men, including special forces units. The Russian president's immediate goal is to help Bashar al-Assad regain Idlib—a strategically vital city on the corridor connecting Damascus to the regime's stronghold on the Mediterranean coast. The presence of Russian troops may well attract more Sunni foreign fighters—especially Central Asians—but contrary to the assessments of many analysts, Russia's campaign has little to do with ISIS, which doesn't even have a presence in Idlib. Russia's long-term goal, as evidenced by the engineers dispatched to build, among other things, an air base in Lattakia, is a military presence in the Mediterranean, for the first time since the Soviet era.

Yo, Vlady, thanks for propping me up.

Even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Damascus stayed close to Moscow, which continued selling weapons to Hafez al-Assad, father of the current dictator. Putin has helped arm the Syrian regime since the uprising against it began, and had previously sent military advisers. This deployment, however, takes the Russian military presence to a much higher level and is a rebuke to the White House slogan that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict. Putin believes, to the contrary, that there can be no political solution without force. Put another way—there is no diplomatic entreaty not backed by force that will compel Putin to withdraw his troops from Syria. Accordingly, he has made himself the indispensable interlocutor on the Syrian conflict, which he will resolve only on the most favorable possible terms to him, regardless of how that affects American interests and allies or Syrian infants.

What we're watching emerge is novel—not Russian ambition, of course, but American indifference. Indeed, the entire thrust of America's Cold War policy in the region was to keep the Russians out and push them out when they were already in. But for Obama, well, it's not so bad.

Yes, the White House says it's worried about Putin's advances, but as deputy national security adviser and Obama confidant Ben Rhodes explained in 2012, "Our interest in Syria is not the end of any kind of Russian influence." Indeed, Russia has been helpful to the White House since the beginning of the Syrian uprising. Obama was able to use Russian intransigence at the U.N. Security Council as a reason to avoid actions against the Syrian regime that he didn't want to impose but also didn't want to reject openly for fear of appearing callous.

Specifically, Obama opposed any action against Damascus that might endanger his nuclear deal with Iran, the main backer of the Syrian regime. He worried that targeting Tehran's lone Arab ally might drive the Iranians away from the negotiating table. The Russians helped Obama save the nuclear deal when they offered him a way out of striking Assad in the summer of 2013 after Assad violated Obama's red line by using chemical weapons. Putin proposed that the

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Lee Smith is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Syrian regime destroy its unconventional arsenal under Russian and international supervision. Sure, Assad is still using chemical weapons, but the only thing that mattered to Obama was the nuclear deal, and Russia's fig-leaf was invaluable.

Just because the White House now has its deal with Iran virtually locked up hardly means that Obama intends to "push back" against the Iranian axis, as administration officials argue. In fact, Obama will be just as keen, if not more so, to protect Iranian, and Russian, assets, in Syria and throughout the region. That's because the deal isn't just about Tehran's nuclear weapons program. It's also an instrument through which Obama envisions a broader regional realignment, a "new geopolitical equilibrium," in which Tehran gets an upgrade, while America's traditional allies, Israel, Saudi Arabia, et al., get downgraded.

Putin is making his move in Syria now, says Tony Badran, research fellow at Foundation for Defense of Democracies, "because he understands not only that Obama would never intervene militarily in Syria, but also because the [deal with Iran] means that the White House wouldn't challenge Iranian, and by extension Russian, holdings in the region. Moreover, Putin saw that Obama continued to disregard the concerns of his traditional allies, both on the Iranian nuclear program and Syria, when they sought a more active policy to bring down Assad."

Regarding Syria, Obama ignored not only Saudi Arabia, but even more dramatically Turkey. Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a deeply problematic figure, but still a NATO ally, whom the White House has helped destabilize by aligning with the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK) in order to wage a half-hearted campaign against ISIS. The PKK may be anti-ISIS, but it's also a State Department designated terrorist group that in recent months has picked up the pace of its three-decades-long war against Turkey.

Putin read the tea leaves and apparently concluded that no matter how much he and Obama disliked each other, they were in agreement on one big thing: The Middle East's traditional security architecture is a problem. Putin doesn't like it because it's the legacy of an order in the region upheld by America. Obama sees it similarly—it costs the United States too much, and we need to minimize the American footprint in the region. As the White House has said, other stakeholders need to pitch in and do their share. So Moscow is stepping up. Pity all those poor Russian mothers whose boys are going to be going home in body bags, but if Putin wants the job of Syria foreman, Obama all but offered him the post. The way the White House sees it, Putin is now doing the heavy lifting in the "new geopolitical equilibrium."

Of course, Putin doesn't see it like that at all. Sure, Russia is proving again that it doesn't abandon its allies as the Americans do, but in the end Putin probably doesn't care that much about Assad, and he doesn't care that much about Syria either. It's a pressure point on the energy-rich eastern Mediterranean that gives him more leverage on Europe. And the Syrian war is a perfect marketing tool—if the Europeans want their natural gas they'd better pay up, or else they'll get more refugees instead. Beyond that, Syria is an audition for the real prize in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf. Yes, the Saudis would prefer the Americans to protect them and ensure their oil gets to market, but, well, the Americans are not here anymore.

What we've seen unfold in the Middle East during the course of the Obama presidency—turning against allies, aligning American interests with those of terror-sponsoring regimes—has less to do with the so-called war-weariness of the American public than with the willful decision-making of the president of the United States. It is Barack Obama who has singlehandedly jeopardized a security architecture built by generations of American policymakers. It will not be easy for the next president to restore it. ♦

Our Utilitarian Medical Elite

Bioethics and Planned Parenthood.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

Jeffrey Drazen, the editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, recently penned a scathing editorial about Planned Parenthood's harvesting of fetal tissues. No, Drazen and his two coauthors (one a volunteer for Planned Parenthood) didn't criticize the abortionists for killing fetuses in a "less crunchy manner" to obtain intact organs. Rather, deploying the highly emotive language of ideological pro-abortion activism, the doctor-advocates attacked the messengers as "radical anti-choice" and supposedly engaging in a "campaign of misinformation" by vividly revealing the cruel practices and attitudes of top Planned Parenthood executives.

The *NEJM* is supposed to be an evidence-based journal. But the editorialists didn't even try to grapple with the actual content of the videos released by the Center for Medical Progress. Instead, they resorted to the usual bromide that fetal tissue

Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute's Center on Human Exceptionalism. His revised and updated Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America *will be published next spring by Encounter Books.*

research could lead to cures, and they simply asserted that Planned Parenthood follows proper ethical guidelines—without offering any rebuttal of all the evidence to the contrary on the tapes. Their conclusion:

> We thank the women who made the choice to help improve the human condition through their tissue donation; we applaud the people who make this work possible and those who use these materials to advance human health. We are outraged by those who debase these women, this work, and Planned Parenthood by distorting the facts for political ends.

Technical point: The "tissue" isn't that of the woman: It is—was—the fetus's. Whatever one thinks of fetal tissue research, obtaining the specimens isn't the same as creating a cell line from an excised tumor. Moreover, utility doesn't justify all things. Good ethics and respect for the intrinsic value of human life are integral to a science sector supported widely by the public.

Drazen's editorial is one small example of how highly ideological our medical intelligentsia has become—and how increasingly enthusiastic about morally questionable practices. To understand why this might be—why venerable journals like the *NEJM* are supportive of controversial policy agendas such as assisted suicide and medical rationing—we have only to grasp the ideas that now animate bioethics, the field that presumes to determine what is right and wrong in medicine and public policy.

Most bioethicists are reluctant to define the boundaries that designate when human life becomes morally relevant. That leaves some of the most extreme voices in the driver's seat. Thus, the field's predominant view endorses a discriminatory approach to valuing life (human or animal) based on each individual's cognitive capacities. In this view, those who are demonstrably self-aware or able to value their own lives are deemed "persons." Those insufficiently mature—embryos, fetuses, infants—or who have lost their mental capacities owing to illness or injury (such as Terri Schiavo or Alzheimer's patients) are effectively "nonpersons," deemed to have lesser moral worth than the rest of us.

This isn't like arguing about heads of pins and the size of angels. Under the dominant strain of bioethics, nonpersons have no right to life. Access to abortion is not just about protecting a woman's right to do what she pleases with her own body, although that is part of it. Abortion is also morally acceptable because the fetus is not deemed to be a person. For many in the field, this means that infanticide should also be permitted—and for the same reasons as abortion.

'Slaughter of the Innocents' (detail), Vatican Museum

Princeton's Peter Singer is the foremost proponent of this view, but he is far from alone. A few years ago, an article published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* caused a public furor when it advocated "after-birth abortion." The authors inflate what is often blandly called the "right to choose" into a putative right not to be *personally inconvenienced* by an infant. Thus, since an abortion can be obtained for convenience purposes, and since newborns have no greater self-awareness than fetuses, babies should also be killable (and, one presumes, harvestable by Planned Parenthood), just as the unborn are abortable. The authors write:

> By showing that (1) both fetuses and newborns do not have the same moral status as actual persons, (2) the fact that both are potential persons is morally irrelevant and (3) adoption is not always in the best interest of actual people, the authors argue that what we call "after-birth abortion" (killing a newborn) should be permissible in all the cases where abortion is, including cases where the newborn is not disabled.

It's not just fetuses and babies that are viewed broadly in bioethics as killable and harvestable. There is increasing advocacy—although it is important to emphasize that this isn't yet happening—for killing those with profound cognitive impairments for their organs. Here is one typical example—published, as it happens, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*:

> Many will object that transplantation surgeons cannot legally or ethically remove vital organs from patients before death, since doing so will cause their death. . . . Whether death occurs as the result of ventilator withdrawal or organ procurement, the ethically relevant precondition is valid consent by the patient or surrogate. With such consent, there is no harm or wrong done in retrieving vital organs before death, provided that anesthesia is administered.

Now we can see why those who presume to possess the greatest ethical expertise in the biomedical fields are not leading the charge against Planned Parenthood's crass attitudes toward the dismemberment of fetuses to obtain sellable parts. It is a very short journey from considering babies—whether unborn or born—to be an inferior stage of human life to believing they have no rights that fully developed persons are bound to respect. ♦

Discouraging Marriage

The hidden cost of means-tested government benefits. BY DOUGLAS BESHAROV & NEIL GILBERT

Traditional marriage is in big trouble in the United States. Between 1960 and 2011, the share of white adults 18 and older who were married declined by 25 percent, while the declines for Hispanic and black adults were 35 percent and 50 percent respectively.

This trend has profoundly negative consequences for adults, children, and society as a whole. Because a stable marriage is one of the best means of avoiding poverty, many children born and/or raised out of wedlock are economically disadvantaged. In addition, single parents tend to have less time, energy, and other resources for fostering their children's development. And they are more likely to work at low-wage jobs with irregular hours. The negative effects run in both directions: The psychological stress of caring for a child alone can create barriers to professional success.

Some blame the decline in marriage on decaying moral values and loosening social norms abetted by the media. They yearn for a return to what they remember as the moral foundations of marriage. Programs designed to move us in this direction during the administration of George W. Bush had disappointing results.

Others, looking at the same data, see the unfortunate byproduct of a welcome increase in social tolerance and sexual freedom. Still others see the failure to marry as chiefly an economic decision. The decline in male employment and wages has reduced the number of "marriageable males." Hence proposals to increase the earnings of low- and middle-income workers through expanded job training, a stronger role for labor unions, a higher minimum wage, more career-oriented high schools, and more effective public schooling generally. But translating these proposals, too, into effective programs has proven problematic.

What can be done?

There is one step that can be taken to make marriage more attractive to low- and moderate-income families that seems to be working in other countries with extensive social welfare benefits and high levels of cohabitation: reduce the marriage penalties embedded in our means-tested welfare programs. The growth in these programs has been dramatic: Federal spending on the nine largest means-tested programs (adjusted for inflation) climbed almost 750 percent between 1968 and 2011, while the U.S. population grew by only 56 percent. Ending the marriage penalty in these programs, then, could have far-reaching effects.

MARRIAGE & THE WELFARE STATE

As far back as 1997, a Congressional Budget Office report noted that a disincentive to marry is created by the potential loss of means-tested benefits received by low-income mothers—food stamps, housing assistance, Medicaid. If marriage to an employed man would increase the family income enough to make the mother and children ineligible for these benefits, she might choose to remain unmarried. Gene Steuerle of the Urban Institute notes wryly, "Cohabiting or not getting married has become the tax shelter of the poor."

Eligibility for the major means-tested benefits is determined by the income of either the "family unit" (individuals living together related by blood, marriage, or adoption) or the "economic unit" (individuals living together who share resources, for example, to purchase food). The family unit is used to calculate eligibility for child-care vouchers, housing-choice vouchers, Medicaid, and, in all but a few states, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). For these programs, the income of a cohabiting adult who is not the children's biological parent is disregarded. Eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, school meals, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is based on the economic unit.

For cohabiting couples, the incentives are clear: The way to maximize benefits is to avoid getting married or to fail to disclose parental status and financial sharing to authorities.

MEASURING MARRIAGE PENALTIES

Most safety-net benefits have steep phase-out rates or even "cliffs" as income rises. The recent expansion of safety-net programs to more middle-income households has extended marriage penalties to more Americans. Depending on the state where they live, a family of four making as much as $92,150 may be eligible for Medicaid; a similar family making $71,436 may qualify for child care assistance; a family earning $53,267 may claim the Earned Income Tax Credit; and a family making up to $31,008 may receive SNAP.

Tracking all the marriage penalties is difficult, as they are usually inadvertent and can appear in the most unexpected places. For example, the Affordable Care Act subsidizes health-insurance premiums for households making between 133 percent and 400 percent

Douglas Besharov is the Norman & Florence Brody professor at the University of Maryland. Neil Gilbert is the Milton and Gertrude Chernin professor of social welfare at the University of California, Berkeley. Both are associate fellows of the R Street Institute.

of the poverty line. For each additional dollar earned, households are required to contribute a higher percentage of their income.

For a family of three earning between $59,370 and $79,160, the ACA subsidy is a flat 9.5 percent of household income. If the couple is unmarried, each partner qualifies separately for the subsidy, even if they live together. But if they are married, their combined income reduces their subsidy and may disqualify them altogether. If one spouse earns a lot more than the other, they may lose as much as $3,486 in subsidies.

We used the Urban Institute's newly updated Net Income Change Calculator database of national and state tax and social-welfare rules for all 50 states and the District of Columbia to estimate the effects of marriage on the incomes of seven hypothetical couples with two children. Our couples had earnings of $10,000, $20,000, $40,000, or $50,000, with several variations in the division of earnings between the partners; and we placed each scenario in states at the 10th, 50th, and 90th percentile of the distribution in marriage penalties and bonuses under current law. For each, we first ran the numbers with the couple cohabiting, one partner not a biological parent of the children present, and reportedly not sharing resources. We then ran the numbers for the same couple, only this time married and sharing resources, and compared the results to see whether marriage produced an increase (bonus) or decrease (penalty) in the couple's income. Overall, we found that:

- Marriage penalties for those earning $10,000 range between $1,824 and $5,016.
- Marriage penalties for those earning $20,000 range between $1,784 and $8,902.
- Marriage penalties for those earning $40,000 range between $5,544 and $13,248.
- Marriage penalties for those earning $50,000 range between $6,960 and $14,148.

ENDING MARRIAGE PENALTIES

The simplest way to end marriage penalties in the welfare system would be to treat all cohabiting couples—whether or not they are biological parents—as economic units for all means-tested benefits. The default rule could be adopted that all couples who cohabit for longer than a year are automatically treated as economic units. Those who live together without sharing expenses could apply for an exemption and submit evidence demonstrating their separate finances. This would reduce the marriage penalty for cohabiters—but raise the cost of cohabitation and perhaps discourage even more biological parents from trying to form a family.

A homeless single mother with her 10-month-old son and a friend's son begging in Washington, D.C.

In Europe, where as many as a quarter of couples are unmarried cohabiters, benefits frequently are based on the household unit, rather than the family or economic unit. But there is also a recognition that not all cohabitation is marriage-like. Consequently, European agencies often impose further requirements on cohabiters seeking to qualify for benefits, such as joint bank accounts or shared mortgage loans. The French look for evidence that a couple is living a "common life."

To enforce these rules, some countries, such as the Netherlands, use home visits. That sounds a lot like the discredited "man-in-the-house" rules of pre-1965 welfare programs and could enmesh U.S. social agencies in endless arguments about household economics. We think this approach is unlikely to gain widespread support in the United States.

Less politically contentious, but much more expensive, would be to minimize marriage penalties by extending to means-tested welfare programs the tax code's approach to marital income. Married couples may file their taxes jointly, and the tax code rewards many of them for doing so—or at least softens the impact of the code's progressively higher rates for higher incomes. Upon marriage, means-tested social-welfare benefits could be phased out gradually to reflect society's interest in stable family arrangements.

This is not a novel idea. Marriage penalties under the old pre-welfare-reform Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were enough of a concern that, before the enactment of TANF, at least three states obtained AFDC waivers designed to reduce the loss of welfare benefits due to marriage. These reforms were termed "wedfare" or "bridefare." Nothing much came of these initial attempts to soften the marriage penalty because, with the enactment of the 1996 federal welfare reform, caseloads fell across the country and the issue became moot.

With the expansion of means-tested programs, it's time to reconsider such efforts. It's impossible to predict precisely how much more a marriage-neutral or marriage-friendly system would cost, but strengthening marriage would, over the long run, lift many families out of poverty. ♦

NEWSCOM

The Managers vs. the Managed

What would James Burnham make of our ruling class?

By Matthew Continetti

What is happening in the world? When one looks at recent news, one can't help feeling a sense of bewilderment. A storied Olympian announces his new gender on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, the Supreme Court declares same-sex marriage a constitutional right, racial violence returns to St. Louis and Baltimore, police are ambushed and murdered in New York City and Houston, murder is on the rise, Democratic candidates apologize for saying all lives matter, "trigger warnings" precede the teaching of Ovid at university, the president unilaterally amnesties millions of illegal immigrants, politically correct mobs use social media to silence dissent and intimidate heretics, hundreds of thousands of migrants flood into Europe, a slowing Chinese economy causes volatility in the U.S. stock market, more than 70 percent of Americans say they are unhappy with the direction of the country, and the frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination is a billionaire television star who promises to deport illegal aliens, oppose free trade, raise taxes on hedge funds, and establish a national health plan where "you can get everything in Obamacare, but much more."

James Burnham

This rush of unexpected, unprecedented, indeed shocking events is enough to induce dizziness. The accompanying confusion is widespread and mounting. Our national consensus has been "shattered," writes James Piereson. "Something is going on," says Peggy Noonan. But neither she nor anyone else seems to know what that something is.

It is James Burnham we might turn to for guidance. Born in 1905 to a wealthy Chicago family, the now largely forgotten social theorist attended Princeton and Oxford, taught philosophy at New York University, contributed to the New York intellectual journal *Partisan Review*, served in the CIA, and was, in the words of William F. Buckley Jr., the "dominant intellectual influence" at *National Review* from 1955 to his retirement as senior editor in 1978.

"Burnham," wrote Gertrude Himmelfarb in 1950, "restored to conservatism some of the hard-headedness it had lost in an effete age of liberal democracy." In books and essays and columns, Burnham wrote prolifically and controversially on foreign policy, the Cold War, Communist subversion, the separation of powers, congressional supremacy, and the ideology and consequences of liberalism. "He devoted," Buckley said of Burnham in 1980, "over a period of 23 years, more time and thought to more problems, major and minor, than would seem possible for an editor resident in Kent, Connecticut, who came to New York only two days every week."

What makes Burnham worth studying now are two books he wrote during the Second World War. These controversial, long-out-of-print texts were the result of the intellectual tumult Burnham experienced as he abandoned the radical Trotskyism of his 30s for the idiosyncratic conservatism of his maturity. *The Managerial Revolution* (1941) is a commentary on the state of the world at the time of writing. *The Machiavellians* (1943) is a study of the Italian sociological school of elite theory. Together, they promise to explain nothing less than, as the subtitle of *Revolution* puts it, "What is happening in the world."

"Burnham has probably been more right than wrong about the present and the immediate past," wrote George Orwell in 1946, despite his criticisms of Burnham's conclusions and vision of the future. And there was plenty to criticize. Burnham's style is detached, technical, cold, empirical, dense, somber, and often boring. His attitudes on race, too, would today exile him from polite company.

In his attempts to approach politics as scientifically

Matthew Continetti, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard*, is editor in chief of the* Washington Free Beacon.

as a physicist approaches physics, Burnham is sometimes guilty of reductionism, determinism, historicism, materialism, and pessimism. Many of his predictions were incorrect. He is often read not as a serious thinker whose ideas remain vivid and enthralling, but as an exemplar of those Communists who abandoned the faith for militant opposition to all political religions—a prototypical neocon. Burnham is neglected, or treated as a fossil.

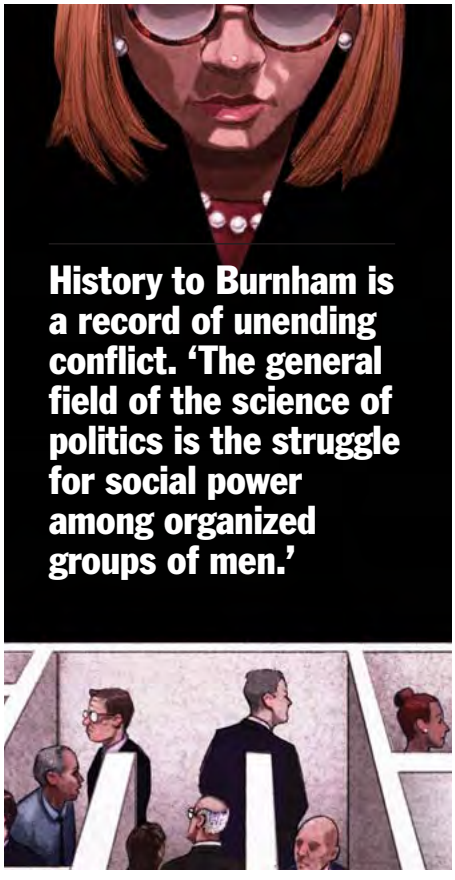
He shouldn't be. The war writings of James Burnham not only are a powerful antidote to wishful thinking about politics and society. They also propose a method for the study of cultural, economic, social, diplomatic, and political phenomena. By drawing attention to the actions and beliefs of elites, by describing a transformation in the nature of American democracy, Burnham helps illuminate the world of the caliph, El Chapo, Xi Jinping, Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and Caitlyn Jenner.

Burnham's first book may have described what he called the managerial revolution. But students of his teaching are likely to conclude that the world is currently experiencing a kind of managerial *devolution*—a widespread degeneration of the capacities of elites, from Beijing to Brussels to Washington, even as they attempt to exert more control over global and domestic affairs, over individual freedom and thought.

This combination of institutional hubris and decay has occasioned a populist reaction. Nationalist parties and grassroots movements critical of the establishment have arisen in Europe and the United States. Outsider politicians generate enthusiasm in both the Republican and Democratic parties. And making things more complicated are changes in the composition of the managerial elite itself, as it broadens to include new ethnicities and sexual identities while deepening its ideological commitment to equality and diversity.

It is this struggle for dominance that has generated all sorts of social turbulence, as the silent majority reappears to oppose a cultural transformation over which it feels it has no control. In today's world, it is the managers versus the managed. And ultimately, Burnham predicts, the managers will win.

CAM COTTRILL



History to Burnham is a record of unending conflict. 'The general field of the science of politics is the struggle for social power among organized groups of men.'

A NEW SCIENCE OF POLITICS

Burnham did not consider himself an advocate but a diagnostician. "I do not accept any theory of class, national, ethnic, partisan, or sectarian truth," he wrote in a 1978 column. "If conclusions I reach are true, they are just as true for Russians as for Americans, for pagans as for Christians, and for blacks as for whites." Both *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians* are filled with warnings that the author does not ethically or politically endorse the situation he describes. Burnham asks us to view politics as a morally neutral science that obeys certain laws of human nature, power, and history. "The aim of propaganda is to persuade people to accept certain ideas or feelings or attitudes," he wrote. "The aim of science is to discover the truth about the world."

To discover this truth, Burnham states a problem, proposes a theory, offers evidence that supports it, and attempts to disprove the alternatives. "I am not concerned," he writes in *The Managerial Revolution*, "with whether the facts indicated by this theory are 'good' or 'bad,' just or unjust, desirable or undesirable—but simply with whether the theory is true or false on the basis of the evidence now at our disposal."

Though he may have repudiated Marxist doctrine, Marx nonetheless remains a spectral presence in Burnham's thought. He references the "historical law, with no apparent exceptions so far known, that all social and economic groups of any size strive to improve their relative position with respect to power and privilege in society." He places great importance on economics. He frequently uses Marxist terminology. "The instruments of economic production," he writes, "are, simply, the means whereby men live. In any society, the group of persons controlling these means is by that very fact socially dominant."

History to Burnham is a record of unending conflict. "The general field of the science of politics is the struggle for social power among organized groups of men." From this struggle, in all societies, in every epoch, one group wins control of what Lenin called the "commanding heights" of economics and politics. This group is the "ruling class." And it is not difficult to identify: "The easiest

way to discover what the ruling group is in any society is usually to see what group gets the biggest incomes."

There is more than one way to determine who holds power, however. Whom the media hold in esteem, whom they greet with fanfare, celebrate, defer to, apologize for—these are the members of the elite, of the ruling class. And it is this class, Burnham says in *The Machiavellians*, that determines the winners and losers of a given society, that reaps wealth and power, bestows offices and honors, propagates the values, ideas, beliefs, myths, and taboos consumed by the public:

> A society is the society of its ruling class. A nation's strength or weakness, its culture, its powers of endurance, its prosperity, its decadence, depend in the first instance upon the nature of its ruling class. More particularly, the way in which we study a nation, to understand it, to predict what will happen to it, requires first of all and primarily an analysis of the ruling class. Political history and political science are thus predominantly the history and science of ruling classes, their origin, development, composition, structure, and changes. The theory of the ruling class in this way provides a principle with the help of which the innumerable and otherwise amorphous and meaningless facts of political life can be systematically assembled and made intelligible.

The members of the ruling class, and elites more generally, are of two types. There are those whom Machiavelli called foxes:

> They live by their wits; they put their reliance on fraud, deceit, and shrewdness. They do not have strong attachment to family, church, nation, and traditions (though they may exploit these attachments in others). They live in the present, taking little thought of the future, and are always ready for change, novelty, and adventure. In economic affairs, they incline toward speculation, promotion, innovation. They are not adept, as a rule, in the use of force. They are inventive and chance-taking.

And there are those whom Machiavelli called lions:

> They are able and ready to use force, relying on it rather than brains to solve their problems. They are conservative, patriotic, loyal to tradition, and solidly tied to supra-individual groups like family or church or nation. They are concerned for posterity and the future. In economic affairs they are cautious, saving, and orthodox. They distrust the new, and praise "character" and "duty" rather than wits.

Rulers govern through force, through control of political and juridical institutions, above all through public philosophies or ideologies or myths that capture the imaginations of men and inspire or compel them to action. Much of Burnham's political science was devoted, therefore, to unmasking these ideologies, of seeing through them to the power relations they obscured.

This demolition of the superstructure above the social base was also, of course, a preoccupation of the Marxists. What made Burnham different, however, was that he applied this method of analysis to Marxism itself—showing it to be a ruling-class ideology like any other.

Ideology, the "verbal cement" sustaining "the fabric of any given type of society," was Burnham's true target. The value of ideologies for him was not in their empirical validity, but in their social utility.

"The theory of evolution or of relativity or of the electronic composition of matter are scientific theories," Burnham wrote—theories of the sort he attempted to formulate about society. But "the doctrines of the preambles to the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States, the Nazi racial doctrines, Marxian dialectical materialism, St. Anselm's doctrine of the meaning of world history"—these were merely "the expression of hopes, wishes, fears, ideals." A political scientist in the tradition of Machiavelli burrows through an ideology to find the truth about a social order. This was Burnham's task as he studied global events at the beginning of World War II.

CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM, AND TECHNOCRACY

"The problem," wrote Burnham in *The Managerial Revolution*, "is to discover, if possible, what type (if indeed it is to be a different type) of social organization is on the immediate historical horizon." That a different type of society was indeed coming into being was a key assumption of his theory.

It was also a safe assumption. The decades following the First World War had seen a Bolshevist state emerge from the ruins of an impoverished empire, an explosion in mass production, a global boom and bust, widespread unemployment, the rise of fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, a change in the relation of the individual to his government in the United States, a surprising and horrifying alliance between the Nazis and their Soviet enemies, and, finally, the return of war.

It was Burnham's contention that the West had entered a third great era in its history, the "managerial revolution" of his title. First had come feudalism, then capitalism. Each social order, and the elite it privileged, arose, flourished, and was eventually replaced. "To the social dominance of feudal lords, with their vassals and fiefs, succeeds the social dominance of industrialists and bankers, with their monetary wealth, their factories and wage-workers." The capitalists would be succeeded as well.

"What were the chief characteristics of the 'modern world,'" Burnham asked, "the type of society usually referred to as 'capitalist' or 'bourgeois,' which was dominant from the end of the Middle Ages until, let us say in order to fix a date, 1914, the beginning of the First World War?"

In his fashion, Burnham itemized the salient features of this bourgeois or capitalist world, separating them into four groups:

Economic: commodity production; the importance and universality of money used not only as a medium of exchange but also as the mechanism of capital investment and personal and business credit; an emphasis on profit; periodic crises known as panics or depressions or recessions; extended and unregulated markets. "The market decides, independently of the wills of human beings."

Social: class division between, on the one hand, the bourgeoisie, the capitalists who own the means of production—"factories, mines, land, railroads, machines, whatever they may be"—and, on the other hand, the proletariat or workers.

Political: the existence of nation-states participating in a global system of commerce; parliamentary governments with limited powers; and the idea of citizenship.

Ideological: individualism; natural rights; belief in the idea of progress; "the stress placed by capitalist society on the notion of 'private initiative.'"

Burnham receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Ronald Reagan, February 23, 1983.

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"That all of these features, and many others along with them, will disappear—and disappear in a matter of years, or decades at the most, not generations—is the negative half of the theory of the managerial revolution."

One is struck immediately by the fact that Burnham was wrong: The features he outlined have not disappeared, at least not entirely. They have been modified, diminished, superseded, suppressed. Elements of the capitalist world persist in the new world of the managers. But they exist in a state of conflict with the opposing elements of managerial economy, society, politics, and ideology, a conflict written about in our newspapers and websites and presented nightly on the television news.

Burnham's argument was that neither the theory of capitalism's permanence nor the claim of revolutionary socialism was correct. Capitalism was only a few hundred years old, limited in its geographic extent, and it was not foolish to believe that a few hundred years hence it would no longer condition human reality.

Nor was capitalism all that "natural" to human beings. "It is enough to observe that human nature has been able to adapt itself to dozens of types of society, many of which have been studied by anthropologists and historians and a number of which have lasted far longer than capitalism," he wrote.

Capitalism did not seem to have much longer to last. It was emerging from the Depression into total war, and the central fact of existence in capitalist societies was not mass affluence but mass unemployment. The word "crisis" was used every day. Nor was this crisis limited to the economic and political system. "The ideologies of capitalism, the bourgeois ideologies, have become impotent."

Individual liberty, natural rights, parliamentary government no longer seemed to galvanize the public. "When the bourgeois ideologies were challenged in the Saar and the Sudetenland by the ideology of Nazism, it was Nazism that won the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the people." So too in France, which in the spring of 1940 fell before the German Army in a matter of weeks. "What was Munich and the whole policy of appeasement," Burnham asked, "but a recognition of bourgeois impotence?"

Capitalism might be doomed, but socialism was not destined to replace it. The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism, which prophesied socialist triumph, was bunk. "No deduction from any metaphysical theory can ever tell us what is going to happen in the actual world of space and time." Nor was socialism the only alternative to capitalism. History and the present day are full of different modes of production.

A classless society would not follow the destruction of private property. "Effective class domination and privilege does, it is true, require control over the instruments of production; but this need not be exercised through individual private property rights." If merchants did not rule, then priests would—as had happened in ancient Egypt and in medieval Europe, and was happening, in secular guise, in the Soviet Union. "With respect to the three decisive characteristics of socialist society—classlessness, freedom, and internationalism—Russia is immeasurably further away today than during the first years of the revolution."

Marxist and socialist parties had also failed. The Marxist ideology was no stronger than the capitalist one. "The only branch of the Marxist ideology which still retains considerable attractive power is the Stalinist variant of

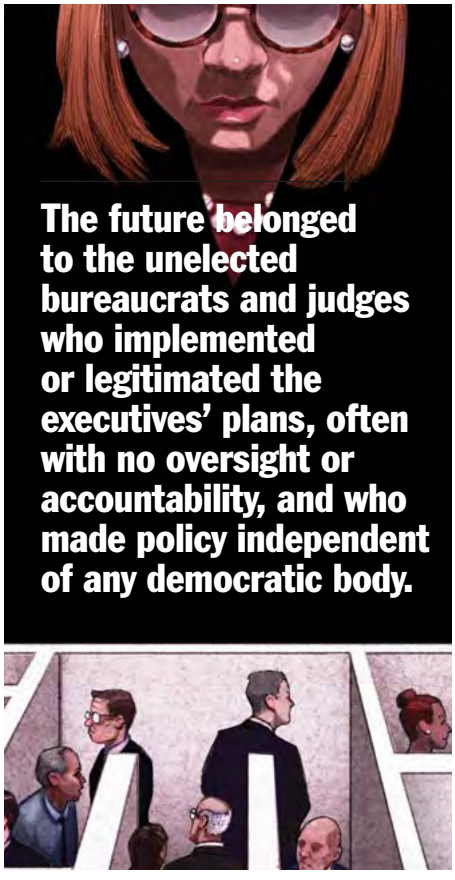
Leninism," Burnham wrote. "But Stalinism is no longer genuinely socialist."

The future was left to neither capitalism nor socialism but to managerialism—rule by technical administrators overseeing massive and complex bureaucracies and corporations. What had given rise to the managers, Burnham said, was the increasing complexity of modern technology and the global economy. As mechanical processes became more specialized, the supply chain more intricate, knowledge became more valuable—and powerful.

"In the earlier days of capitalism," Burnham wrote, "the typical capitalist, the ideal of the ideologists before and after Adam Smith, was himself his own manager so far as there were managerial functions other than those assigned to some reliable skilled worker in the shop." Those days were ending.

The capitalist had been an *entrepreneur*, a self-made man, a believer in private initiative and a strong work ethic. "But, as is well known, the growth of large-scale public corporations along with the technological development of modern industry have virtually wiped such types of enterprise out of the important sections of the economy; with a few exceptions, they remain only among the 'small businesses' which are trivial in their historic influence."

The growth of the state restricted the sphere of capitalist activity. "No matter who runs the government or for what, every new incursion of government into the economy means that one more section of the economy is wholly or partially removed from the reign of capitalist economic relations"—and handed over to the reign of managerial ones.



Managers, whether they are in the "public" sector or the "private," derive power from government. They wield or influence the apparatus of the state to reward themselves and their allies, to punish enemies, to divert resources to favored enterprises, to push their class interests, to propagate their ideology, to extend, in every direction, their ability to manipulate the economic, political, social, and cultural environment.

"The managers," Burnham wrote, "will exercise their control over the instruments of production and gain preference in the distribution of the products, not directly, through property rights vested in them as individuals, but indirectly, through their control of the state which in turn will own and control the instruments of production." The capitalists and socialists could fight—did fight—were fighting—the managers. But it was a losing battle.

Even as the managers exerted their class interests worldwide, the ideology by which they justified their rule was still unformed. There were, according to Burnham, three alternative managerial ideologies, each set against the others: "Leninism-Stalinism; fascism-Nazism; and, at a more primitive level, . . . New Dealism and such less influential American ideologies as 'technocracy.'"

It was Burnham's view in *The Managerial Revolution* that the German fascists were most likely to win the war and emerge victorious in the ideological battle. This was another of his predictions that turned out to be false. Neither Nazism nor Stalinism became the dominant managerial ideology. Neither Nazism nor Stalinism shaped the future in the way Burnham foresaw.

The New Deal did.

MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR THE MANAGERS

One of Burnham's errors was the assumption that Machiavelli's lions—forceful, nationalist, warlike despots such as Hitler and Stalin—would lead the managerial society. They would not. The future belonged instead to the foxes, to democratic leaders in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who periodically asked the public to endorse their vision of government activism and economic management. The future belonged to the unelected bureaucrats and judges who implemented or legitimated the executives' plans, often with no oversight or accountability, and who made policy independent of any democratic body.

What Burnham saw in the New Deal was a tentative, halting, piecemeal attempt to overlay a managerial society atop the capitalist and individualist traditions of the United States. The New Deal was neither the beginning nor the end of this process. But it was surely the hinge point. The progressives of the late 19th and early 20th

centuries, epitomized by the writings and presidency of Wilson, had been the first to suggest that society had become so complicated, so unequal, so specialized that only a group of experts could administer it to the benefit and the satisfaction of the public. The New Deal was both a continuation and an intensification of the Wilsonian vision.

"The fact of the matter," Burnham wrote, "is that the New Deal's liberalism and progressivism are *not* liberalism and progressivism in the historical meaning of these terms; not, that is to say, *capitalist* liberalism and progressivism. Its progressivism, if we wish to call it that, consists of the steps it takes toward managerial society." A society ruled by a technocratic elite.

Americans persisted in thinking that theirs was a polity of limited government, an economy of free enterprise. Burnham argued that this belief was false—and it is even more false today.

> What must be stressed is how much greater the area of government enterprise already is, even in the United States, than we commonly wish to recognize. It doesn't make any difference if we call WPA and CCC "relief," or biological and agricultural and meteorological surveys "research," or food stamp plans "distribution of surplus," or ash and garbage removal "municipal services"; they are all, in the contemporary world, part of the total economic process.

The accelerating pace of the managerial revolution was manifest in the growth of the executive branch of government. "'Laws' today in the United States, in fact most laws, are not being made any longer by Congress," Burnham wrote, "but by the NLRB, SEC, ICC, AAA, TVA, FTC, FCC, the Office of Production Management (what a revealing title!), and the other leading 'executive agencies.' How well lawyers know this to be the case!"

Congress had dominated much of U.S. history. Many of the post-founding statesmen had been members of the House or Senate. But with FDR the presidency and the executive bureaucracy assumed a prestige they have yet to relinquish.

"Indeed," Burnham observed, "most of the important laws passed by Congress in recent years have been laws to give up some more of its sovereign powers to one or another agency largely outside of its control." What are Obamacare and Dodd-Frank, after all, but multi-thousand-page instruction manuals to government managers—legislative permission slips for the bureaucrats to decide arbitrarily and irrevocably matters affecting the health industry and financial sector?

The managers were on the advance. But their position was also tenuous. Not only were they fighting among themselves in the war, they were also fighting, in each of their respective nations, "the masses" as well as the representatives of the old capitalist order. From the standpoint of the managerial revolution, the outcome of the Second World War was irrelevant—all of the powers vying for supremacy were managerial ones.

So too the masses could be coopted into or made dependent on the managerial regime through jobs and entitlements. The most recalcitrant adversaries of the managers, then, were the capitalists, the businessmen and ideologues of laissez faire and natural right, who in America in particular, because of its decentralized political system, remained strong and enjoyed support from the middle and working classes.

Indeed, the bourgeoisie controlled one of this country's two great political parties, which deployed the rhetoric of freedom to criticize the managerial New Deal. "There is nothing sham or hypocritical about the Republican-Tory defense of 'liberty,'" Burnham wrote of the 1940 election. "The liberty in question means, in reality, *capitalist* liberty."

He went on:

> Historically and today the Republican Party is the authentic representative of capitalist liberty and capitalist progressivism. These it is trying to defend, without success, against the New Deal onslaught. The Republican Party, let us remember, was born in the social crisis that culminated in the Civil War. It is not the Republicans but the world that has changed.

And how.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

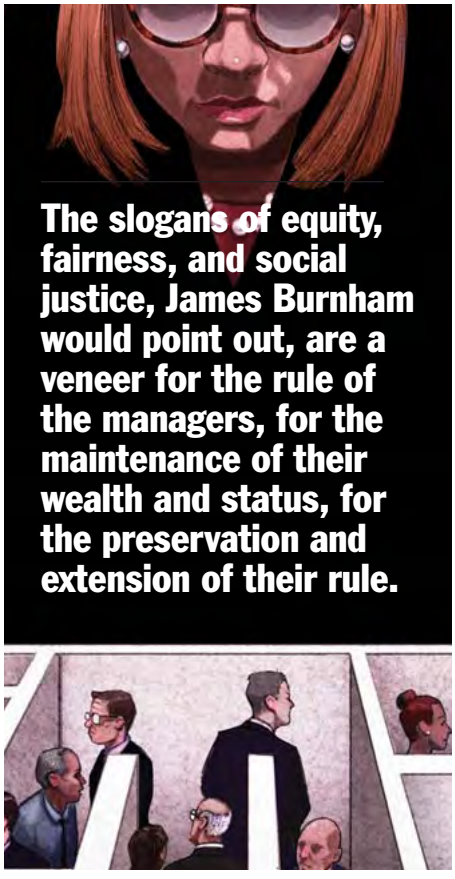
It would be wrong to judge *The Managerial Revolution* solely by its prognostications. Nazi Germany was crushed less than five years after the book was published. The Soviet empire collapsed in 1991. The business cycle, property rights, individualism—they are still here.

If Burnham's work failed as predictive science, however, it nonetheless succeeded in its description of the new elite. The New Deal persisted, flourished, and was expanded by, among others, LBJ and George W. Bush and Barack Obama. When one refers to managers, or the New Class, or the cognitive elite, or knowledge workers, or symbolic analysts, or the creative class, one is implicitly acknowledging the privileges enjoyed by those with knowledge and education and technical expertise. One recognizes the decisive role played in our society by technocrats and scientists, programmers and consultants, teachers and administrators, social workers and other members of the helping professions.

If James Burnham returned to the United States today, what would he see? He would no doubt home in on Silicon Valley and Wall Street, and the connections,

institutional and personal, between both sectors of the economy and the federal government. He would note that the global economy is affected, for good or ill, by the decisions of the managers of central banks. That since the end of the Second World War, European managers have tried to sublimate nationalism by constructing a supranational political and legal entity, the European Union, which is impervious to public opinion. That the military and diplomatic bureaucracy of the United States, where the presidential National Security Council alone employs some 400 workers, has pursued a policy, in fits and starts, of global economic and political integration under the aegis of American military power and the banner of international human rights.

Burnham would see that the state continues to grow in size and influence. The public assesses a president by how well he "manages" the economy. The instruments of fiscal and monetary policy are manipulated, not always successfully, to stimulate economic demand, job creation, trade, and credit. Government subsidizes the cost of homeownership, education, health care, and retirement—even car purchases. Managers determine the correct ethnic composition of housing developments, issue rules affecting thousands of fast-food franchises, order the release of illegal immigrants from detention, use the military as a laboratory for social engineering, and rewrite statutes to achieve their desired outcomes.



The slogans of equity, fairness, and social justice, James Burnham would point out, are a veneer for the rule of the managers, for the maintenance of their wealth and status, for the preservation and extension of their rule.

The ideology of the managers is well developed, supple, regnant, and on the offensive. It is apparent in talks at the Aspen Ideas Festival, at plenary sessions at Davos, amid the cocktail parties at the Clinton Global Initiative. The natural rights of capitalist society have been reconfigured into human rights—above all, the right of the monistic, autonomous human being to flout the prescriptions of tradition, family, and religion in pursuit of self-actualization.

The theories of multiculturalism and egalitarianism justify the exertion of tremendous effort and resources to lessen racial, ethnic, sexual, and economic inequalities. The ethic of environmentalism requires the enlargement of managerial power over the economy in pursuit of far-off and minuscule reductions in carbon emissions. The imperatives of economic development, cosmopolitanism, and humanitarianism drive the ruling class to pursue a de facto policy of open borders and mass immigration, which provides a flow of cheap labor to the corporate managers, as well as the plastic material on which the social managers can ply their trade of cultural and economic manipulation.

This ideology of autonomy, diversity, equality, innovation, growth, progress, and internationalism has adherents in government and corporations, in Washington and Wall Street, in the higher and secondary and elementary school systems, in the ruling class and the general public, in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Its more radical variants are on the march, in street protests, classrooms, and boardrooms, bakeries and floral shops, stamping out opposing views and bullying dissenters.

Meanwhile, the remnants of the capitalist regime fight a rearguard action, struggling to preserve their inheritance. The unrepentant libertarian Koch brothers, the traditional religious believers, the "leave-us-alone coalition" of taxpayers and gun-owners and homeschoolers, and other believers in the bourgeois ideology are demonized, caricatured, mocked, investigated, castigated, demeaned, and subverted.

What we are witnessing now, Burnham would say, is a crisis in the managerial system, and a reaction to elite cloddishness and overreach. "Managerial crises will, it would seem, be technical and political in character," he wrote. "They will result from breakdowns in bureaucratized administration when faced with, say, the complicated problems of sudden shifts to war or peace or abrupt technical changes; or from mass movements of dissatisfaction and revolt which, with the state and economy fused, would be automatically at once political and economic in character and effect."

Such a breakdown is readily apparent. The economic ministrations of the Federal Reserve, of the Chinese authorities, of the Eurocrats have not produced the sustained and potent growth necessary for true recovery and social peace. Managerial boorishness, from the IRS targeting of taxpayer groups, to the failure of HealthCare.gov,

to a dithering and inconclusive war against ISIS, to the Snowden NSA breach, to the horrific scandal in the VA hospital system, to the massive OPM hack of personal data, to the recent EPA fouling of the Animas River in Colorado has soured the managed on the managers.

In the midst of these follies, however, our elites continue to publicize and promote and impose an agenda that is alluring and persuasive only to them: climate change, gun control, free trade, criminal justice reform, transgenderism, and, year after year, election cycle after election cycle, "comprehensive immigration reform."

Governments around the world cannot control their borders, they cannot sustain economic prosperity, they cannot operate within budget, and yet every day they announce new initiatives to close the educational achievement gap, end gun violence, travel to Mars, establish universal health care, and reduce the inequalities between Elon Musk and the latest refugee to arrive at Dulles airport.

The slogans of equity, fairness, and social justice, James Burnham would point out, are a veneer for the rule of the managers, for the maintenance of their wealth and status, for the preservation and extension of their rule. Is it any wonder, then, as so much of our political culture and business culture, liberal and conservative, Democratic and Republican, has fallen under the control of the managers, that the electorates left unnoticed or unaddressed by them would revolt?

It is these radicalized middle Americans, incensed at what they see as out-of-control immigration, rising crime, national transformation, and a corrupted and aloof Republican and Democratic leadership, that have so quickly rushed to embrace such unlikely tribunes of the people as Donald Trump, Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, and Bernie Sanders. Trump's message, for instance, is little more than a withering critique of the managers and a call for better "management."

"Just as we seldom realize that we are growing old until we are already old," wrote Burnham, "so do the contemporary actors in a major social change seldom realize that society is changing until the change has already come." What might sound like a dissonant and jarring cacophony may actually be the siren that announces the latest development in the evolution of the managerial regime.

The activist base of the Republican party is clinging to pre-managerial beliefs of individual and national sovereignty, of independence, family, property, liberty, citizenship, and nationhood, in the face of its own leadership, practically the entire Democratic party, and the media and cultural establishment. And this struggle to preserve their traditions will outlast the latest hiccup in managerial rule—even if the tribunes of bourgeois capitalism are destined ultimately to lose the struggle.

MACHIAVELLIANS AND MORALISTS

Reading *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians* is like stumbling upon a desolate moonscape. The expanse is vast, dark, chilling, hypnotic. But is this vision real—or a mirage? Burnham was the first to admit that many of his predictions were wrong. Is the rest of his approach just as mistaken?

It is worth returning to James Burnham for this reason: He, unlike most commentators of his time and ours, was thoroughly uninterested in and unenthusiastic about all the available political alternatives. What value he holds is in the clear-sightedness and detachment of his approach, his willingness to follow a line of inquiry to its sometimes uncomfortable conclusion, his recognition that conflict boils beneath genteel surfaces.

What makes one reluctant to embrace Burnham fully is the knowledge that reality is far too manifold and varied to be reduced to any one scheme. Invisible qualities like faith, hope, virtue, honor, charity, and affection are powerful motivators of human action that Burnham is too ready to dismiss. There are no laws of history, class is a simplifying and amorphous concept, and there are plenty of men and women who do not want to hear, who could not bear to hear, who should not have to hear that the beliefs that sustain them from day to day are nothing more than myths.

The rejection of ideology threatens to become an ideology in itself—a narrow view of human life that excludes unquantifiable yet very real characteristics of humanity. Missing from both of these books, for example, is any lengthy and serious treatment of religion, which Burnham dismisses out of hand. But he clearly did not anticipate the resurgence of orthodoxy that has been gripping the world for decades, pulling religious believers into politics, and fostering extremist movements in all faiths, most prominently in Islam.

Indeed, perhaps the greatest challenge to managerial rule is that posed by political Islam, in all its variants, which offers a holistic critique of modern society, and is clearly able to inspire men to action. Or perhaps political Islam is just another outburst from Machiavelli's lions, one that will be cleverly squashed by the managerial foxes.

This durability of religious faith suggests that Burnham's outlook is incomplete. The reader intrigued by his icy vision must nonetheless remember that human beings are not all evil, that society is not always in conflict, that there are many for whom the ideas of human freedom and dignity are something more than formulas of power. Clearly some ideologies are nobler than others. Indeed, the perseverance of the bourgeois idea into the 21st century is something of a rebuke to Burnham's approach. The managers have not won entirely—at least not yet. ♦

The 1908 Washington Senators

Bases Are Loaded

Life could be worse in modern baseball. BY MICHAEL NELSON

"Baseball is great," a friend said years ago as we pushed away from the kitchen table and grabbed our mitts. "It's the only game you can play right after lunch."

And what a lunch it is if you're a major league ballplayer. "Three chefs worked on the Nationals' pregame meal," records Barry Svrluga, who covered the team for the *Washington Post*. "Healthy options—a chicken and a fish, sandwiches, cereal, salad—are offered every day." Not to mention the services of "a team nutritionist, a massage therapist, a barber, and a car washer available at least once a home stand." The moment a player just up from the minors—the equivalent of Tom the Chauffeur's sudden ascent from downstairs to upstairs on *Downton Abbey*—was foolish enough to "fiddle with a handheld steamer in hopes of smoothing out his plaid shirt," a clubhouse assistant rushed over to do the job for him.

"When players bring their luggage to spring training," Svrluga observes, "they shouldn't have to pick it up again until the fall, after the last game."

Svrluga's short account of the

The Grind
Inside Baseball's Endless Season
by Barry Svrluga
Blue Rider Press, 192 pp., $23.95

The Game
Inside the Secret World of Major League Baseball's Power Brokers
by Jon Pessah
Little, Brown and Company, 656 pp., $30

Michael Nelson, Fulmer professor of political science at Rhodes College, is the author of Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government, *which won the American Political Science Association's Richard E. Neustadt award for best book on the presidency and executive politics published in 2014.*

Nationals' 2014 season is called *The Grind* and features a desperately weary ballplayer on the cover. But as former Yale first baseman George H.W. Bush might say, "Don't cry for me, Argentina." To be sure, baseball is seriously hard work for many of the characters Svrluga features: the player's wife and children who are uprooted every time he is traded; the scout who drives from one small town to another in the unlikely hope that a relief pitcher he wants to evaluate will actually get into the game; the minor leaguer "doing exactly what he wanted to do far from where he wanted to be"; and the travel and clubhouse guys who have "got to deal with twenty-five prima donnas that get paid a lot of money that want everything they want." (That last quote from 1 of the 25, Ryan Zimmerman.)

But life for the ballplayers themselves? "[Jayson] Werth needs a microwave in his hotel room? Check . . . Someone needs a button sewn on the shirt he intends to wear on the road trip? . . . Done." In fairness, Svrluga rightly points out that, during the long season, major leaguers seldom get two days off in a row. Their careers are perpetually at risk from injury, poor play, or being judged old at an age most people consider young.

Still, "grind"? I don't think so.

Svrluga implies that because baseball schedules twice as many games as hockey and basketball it's twice as hard on the players. Really? Don't try playing hockey or basketball after lunch. He also suggests that working out with a trainer during the winter is part of the ordeal, even as he's honest enough to note that, until recently, players had to spend the offseason laboring "in mines and on ranches . . . Yogi Berra worked at a Sears, Roebuck"—just to keep food on the table.

The main reason fans should withhold their tears is that modern players make so much money, a development that is thoroughly documented in former *ESPN the Magazine* editor Jon Pessah's *The Game*. But just as Svrluga overstates the strenuousness of the major league ballplayer's existence, so does Pessah miss a different point in his own book.

Pessah's theme is that, during his long tenure as baseball commissioner, Bud Selig generally outmaneuvered Players Association executive director Donald Fehr on issues such as the "luxury tax," which is imposed on teams whose payroll rises above a certain level (yes, I'm mostly talking about you, Yankees and Dodgers, but the Nationals' payroll currently ranks sixth among the 30 big league franchises). Now, granted, that would be awful for the players if the ceiling on team salaries were low. But it isn't. It's

My favorite story from The Game *begins with Washington's deputy mayor telling Major League Baseball that his city was ready to pay two-thirds of the estimated $300 million cost of a new stadium if the Montreal Expos agreed to move to the District of Columbia. Baseball's answer: 'We were thinking of three-thirds.'*

$189 million, up from $117 million in 2003, when the luxury tax—formally the "competitive balance tax"—was first implemented.

During the past three decades—roughly the era covered by *The Game*—the average salary for an individual major league player rose from $371,000 in 1985 to $1.2 million in 1994 to $2.4 million in 2002 and more than $4 million in the current season. The *minimum* player salary increased from $60,000 in 1985 to $300,000 in 2002 and $508,000 today. Free agency for players after six years in the league as well as their right to salary arbitration after three years have survived every effort to curb them.

In all, Selig and the owners prospered, but so did Fehr and the players. And although Selig won the public relations war over who deserves credit for steroid testing of players, the truth is that he was only a little less reluctant than Fehr to get serious about juicing, a matter that both the union (which didn't want its members caught) and the owners (who loved the home-run-sparked increase in attendance and television revenue) wished would just go away.

It's odd that the title of Svrluga's book about the game makes it sound like a business and that Pessah's book about the business is called *The Game*. My favorite story from *The Game* begins with Washington's deputy mayor telling Major League Baseball that his city was ready to pay two-thirds of the estimated $300 million cost of a new stadium if the Montreal Expos agreed to move to the District of Columbia. Baseball's answer: "We were thinking of three-thirds." In the end, Nationals Park cost $701 million, of which the financially strapped city government paid $670 million.

All that money flowing to players' salaries and owners' profits comes from somewhere—namely from us, in our capacity as fans, cable subscribers, and taxpayers.

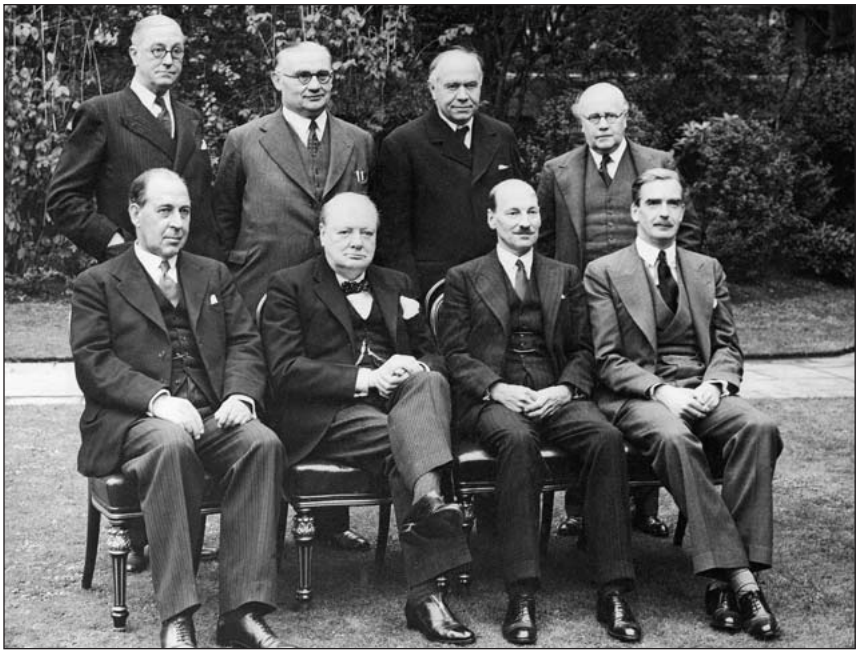
Criticisms aside, these books' outstanding virtue, really, is the absence of a vice endemic to much baseball writing: All too often, academics, poets, and writerly writers feel compelled to wax rhapsodic when the subject is baseball. "Baseball is about going home," wheezed the late literary scholar and, for five months, commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti, the worst offender. "Its wisdom says you can go home again but that you cannot stay." More blather—"wilderness and garden . . . Elysium . . . Platonic ideas . . . preexistent inevitabilities"—follows. Happily for the reader, neither Svrluga nor Pessah succumbs to this bloviating tendency in the course of telling his imperfect, but always plain-spoken and interesting, stories. ♦

B&A

The Inner Circle

Winston Churchill as political operator.

BY CITA STELZER



The war cabinet in the garden at 10 Downing Street (1941)

In this tale of Winston Churchill and his war cabinet, the answer to the perennial question—Do we really need another book about Churchill?—is a definite Yes. Unlike many other studies, Jonathan Schneer focuses on Churchill the wily and astute politician, a man who managed domestic politics so cannily that he was asked to form a government in Britain's moment of deepest peril, who cobbled together a coalition cabinet to wage war on Nazi Germany while managing the home front, and who held that sometimes-fractious group of politicians together through difficult times, until victory in Europe was secured.

At which point, this skill deserted him.

Cita Stelzer is the author of Dinner with Churchill: Policy-Making at the Dinner Table.

Ministers at War
Winston Churchill and His War Cabinet
by Jonathan Schneer
Basic Books, 352 pp., $29.99

Much of what we know about Churchill relates to his wartime leadership, chronicled as part of the late Sir Martin Gilbert's magisterial biography. Schneer does not repeat the oft-told tales of the prime minister who wooed Franklin Roosevelt, kept Joseph Stalin informed and reasonably content as a new ally, and did so much to hold the Allied coalition together. Instead, *Ministers at War* deals with his success with a different coalition: his wartime cabinet. Here is a riveting account of how Churchill—working behind the scenes as skillfully as he worked in public to rally the nation, using the same gifts of tenacity and charm—contended with strong-minded men from different parties and backgrounds, with differing ambitions, and competing against each other, both at cabinet meetings and in Parliament.

This is Churchill as domestic politician, the man we seldom see.

After a decade in the wilderness, mistrusted by his own Conservative party, Winston Churchill was grudgingly reappointed first lord of the Admiralty by Neville Chamberlain, who badly needed his expertise and support when war broke out. Churchill, sensing that Chamberlain was losing the confidence of the House of Commons, and that his own time was near, played a long game, placating cabinet colleagues and keeping contact with supporters in the House. Still, even when a national coalition was needed, and Labour members ensured the fall of Chamberlain by refusing to serve under him, it was not at all clear that Churchill would be the one summoned by King George VI to form a government. Not everyone flocked to Winston Churchill as the obvious choice, with many preferring the foreign secretary, Lord Halifax, and others supporting Anthony Eden—or even David Lloyd George, "the old lion," then 77 years old.

Schneer's tale of just how Churchill bested his rivals is the stuff of which novels are made. The first lord listened to his closest advisers, took the pulse of friends at lunches and dinners, but kept his plan to himself. When, on May 9, 1940, Chamberlain, who knew he could not go on, summoned Churchill and Halifax to a meeting to decide who would succeed him, Churchill did something uncharacteristic: He kept silent. Asked whether a peer such as Lord Halifax, who could not attend the House of Commons, might run the war, Churchill said nothing. Thus, says Schneer, he avoided "being dismissed as a self-promoter." Churchill later wrote that "a long pause ensued. It certainly seemed longer than the two minutes which one observes in the commemoration of Armistice Day." In the event, Halifax demurred and told Chamberlain that he thought

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"Winston was the better choice." Nothing final was said at the meeting, but the decision had been taken and, as Schneer writes: "What would proper Englishmen do in such circumstances? Churchill and Halifax went into the garden behind No. 10 and had a cup of tea in the afternoon spring sunshine."

At dawn on May 10, Hitler's armies broke through Belgium and overran Holland and Luxembourg. At 5:30 that morning, Churchill awoke to hear the news of the advance, which Chamberlain saw as a "reprieve"—and decided not to resign. So Churchill went about his urgent duties as first lord of the Admiralty. But by tea-time, the king had sent for Churchill, who promised to form a national government to include both Liberal and Labour members, with himself as minister of defense as well as the head of a separate, five-member war cabinet.

Churchill induced key Labour parliamentarians to serve under him in the cabinet, among the most important of whom was Ernest Bevin, cofounder and head of Britain's largest union. Bevin was asked to manage the nation's labor supply to keep the mines and factories operating at full tilt, and to keep strikes at a minimum, which he did effectively. Churchill also made the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, deputy prime minister. But Churchill's position was still precarious: "Chamberlain loyalists regarded the man who had replaced him as a usurper," writes Schneer. Churchill was "loathed" by many for reasons ranging from the Gallipoli disaster of World War I to the belief on the left that he was a reactionary. Only Neville Chamberlain was cheered as Churchill entered the House of Commons to give his first speech as prime minister. Schneer describes, in wonderful detail, how the new leader found a "balance between his critics on both sides of the spectrum" and maintained that delicate balance through the next five years—all the while leading the fight on the Axis.

We don't often see Churchill depicted as a domestic political genius, but that is the picture that Schneer paints, taking us through each step by which Churchill transformed a group of "ill-assorted colleagues" into an efficient wartime government. But what about those in his cabinet who had personal ambitions, waiting for Churchill to fail so that they could step into his place? "Parliament is given over to intrigue," noted one Labour member. Schneer describes how Churchill disposed of his rivals—not in the manner of his ally Stalin, but more like his other cunning ally, FDR. Stafford Cripps, Anthony Eden, even his close but unpredictable friend Lord Beaverbrook harbored hopes of succeeding Churchill. But "Churchill was lucky that the critics did not coalesce behind a single leader," notes Schneer, and his handling of the situation "reveals his mastery of the political game."

Churchill took care of Beaverbrook by taking him into the cabinet and putting him in charge of aircraft production, where he performed brilliantly—but was treated with sufficient cunning, patience, and insight to stymie his behind-the-scenes maneuverings and ambition. Then there was Cripps. Schneer writes that Stafford Cripps seriously "underestimate[d] the tenacity and cunning of a man who had immense reserves of both," and who was a "master of political maneuver." Churchill neutralized Cripps by making him leader of the House of Commons, where he antagonized his own party, and then sent him to India to promise eventual independence, serving the dual purpose of rallying "South Asians to England's cause" and "getting his most dangerous rival" out of the country and "out of the public eye."

Yet even Churchill's skills could not make his management of the war smooth sailing. There were, after all, times when the British effort was not going well: After the 1942 fall of Tobruk to Rommel's Afrika Korps, for example, MPs from all three parties, seeking reforms in the cabinet structure, placed before the House a motion of "no confidence in the central direction of the war." Had they succeeded, Churchill would have been forced to call a general election that, given a succession of British military defeats, it was not at all certain he would win. But Churchill's response in the House to his critics persuaded many Tories (initially inclined to abstain) to vote against the no-confidence motion. Who but a shrewd parliamentarian would have ended his precise and detailed defense exactly at 5 P.M., leaving no time for debate before the vote, which Churchill won?

Schneer dates the beginning of Churchill's failure in the management of postwar expectations for domestic policy to the Beveridge Report. Published in late 1942, the report proposed what has since become Britain's welfare state—many features of which, by the way, Lord Beveridge himself would not have approved. But in the darkest hour of the war, the fracas caused by the report set off alarms even among Labour ministers and MPs, who supported Beveridge while Conservatives expressed "reservations." So it was temporarily shelved. But the report, when published, was a sensation: "The left . . . which had never ceased calling for Labour ministers to demand further reforms and government interventions . . . sensed the tide of history flowing with it."

Unfortunately, Churchill paid little attention to the Beveridge Report, leaving Britain to meet with Roosevelt in Casablanca, and then on to Cairo, Turkey, Cyprus, and Algiers. For him, fighting and winning the war took precedence over everything else—and if he thought about it at all, he believed that Britain could not afford "airy visions of Utopia and Eldorado." Churchill's reluctance to commit to social legislation that would determine the future of postwar Britain meant that he was unprepared for the "growing movement for far-reaching postwar reconstruction," a failure that would mean his tenure in office would be shortened by inattention to domestic affairs.

Here, Churchill's famous prescience failed him. Throughout the 1930s he had foreseen the coming war with Germany but he had not the foresight to envision a postwar Britain more in keeping with liberal ideals, many of

which he had fought for as a young Liberal. Churchill, in his own estimation, had a war to fight and was largely uninterested in domestic policies. He failed, writes Schneer, "to understand the power of the building wave of leftist sentiment in the country [and] would not remember that Labour had been the decisive factor in Chamberlain's downfall, and that it had held the whip hand even if it did not know it. And it never occurred to [Churchill] that Labour's role in 1940 might in some ways presage its part in the unmaking of his own administration in 1945." ♦

B&A

Tone Poet

The musical universe of Béla Bartók.

BY GEORGE B. STAUFFER

Béla Bartók
by David Cooper
Yale University Press, 456 pp., $40

The concept of "The Three Bs" in classical music has been with us since 1854, when the writer Peter Cornelius coined the phrase while suggesting that Hector Berlioz should join Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven in the highest realm of composers. Berlioz fell from this pinnacle later in the century, however, when conductor Hans von Bülow proposed a different set of Bs, a musical Trinity consisting of Bach, the Father; Beethoven, the Son; and Brahms, the Holy Ghost. This sacred triumvirate stuck, as every student of classical music knows, despite the fact that Wagner, disturbed by the veneration of his conservative archrival Brahms, proposed replacing him with Anton Bruckner—a suggestion that no one other than brass players has ever taken seriously.

(For the record, one should also note that a set of three Bs was put forth in the mid-18th century for German organ playing: Bach, Dieterich Buxtehude, and Johann "Bachelbel"—the last meaning Pachelbel, but spelled with a B instead of a P, a slip caused by the similarity of pronunciation in Saxon dialect.)

All of this came to mind several years ago when the music critic Anthony Tommasini of the *New York Times* proposed a fourth B. Tommasini asked readers to help him create a list of "The Greatest," the top ten composers of all time. The discussion was carried forth in a democratic way through two weeks of articles, online videos, and blog posts. More than 1,500 readers weighed in with comments. To no one's surprise, Bach won the top prize. And the next eight spots went to the "usual suspects" of Western music: Mozart, Schubert, Debussy, Stravinsky, Verdi, Wagner, and, of course, the other two Bs, Beethoven and Brahms. But with apologies to Haydn, Mahler, Puccini, and Monteverdi, Tommasini rounded out the group with an unanticipated newcomer to the pantheon of greats: Béla Bartók (1881-1945), "an ethnomusicologist whose work has empowered generations of subsequent composers to incorporate folk music and classical traditions from whatever culture into their works."

That Bartók should achieve this recognition is long overdue. A Hungarian pianist, composer, and scholar of folk music, Bartók appeared at the height of the music crisis precipitated by Wagner and successfully forged a new path for fellow composers to follow. Wagner's music had pushed tonality to its limits, with deeply expressive, chromatic passages that filled in the cracks of the keyboard and willfully disrupted the normal harmonic stabilities that had characterized Western music since its earliest polyphonic days. The decisive piece was the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), which portrayed desire and unfulfilled love by a seemingly endless chain of unresolved melodies and harmonic progressions. The conservative Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick likened the Prelude to "the old Italian painting of a martyr whose intestines are slowly unwound from his body on a reel." Where could composers go after Wagner's "evisceration" of traditional harmony?

They set out in different directions, taking roads that often turned out to be musical cul de sacs. One route was pseudo-chromaticism, pursued by Max Reger, César Franck, and Richard Strauss, who continued the Wagnerian tradition but in a derivative way. Another avenue was impressionism, advocated by Claude Debussy, which introduced Eastern scales and shimmering, understated atmospheric backgrounds. Though short-lived, neoclassicism represented an attractive alternative for Igor Stravinsky and Darius Milhaud, who created jazzy pieces using polytonalities and Baroque-like chamber forces. Still another approach was atonality, the full abandonment of traditional harmonic schemes in favor of abstract organizational principles developed by the Second Viennese School of Arnold Schoenberg and his disciples Alban Berg and Anton Webern. And finally there was nationalism, the use of native tunes and traditions, espoused by Edward Elgar, Jean Sibelius, Carl Nielsen, and here in the United States, Charles Ives.

One of the prime reasons for Bartók's admission into Tommasini's Top Ten was his achievement of finding yet another path, creating a unique international musical language that was "an amalgam of tonality, unorthodox scales, and atonal wanderings."

Just how Bartók managed to accomplish this is the topic of this

George B. Stauffer is dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts, and distinguished professor of music history, at Rutgers.

new biography, which traces in fine detail the composer's life and musical development. David Cooper tracks Bartók's life against the political and cultural currents in Hungary and Central Europe at the time, analyzes his principal works in considerable depth, and follows his seminal studies as one of the world's first systematic ethnomusicologists, collecting, transcribing, and publishing vast amounts of traditional music that was soon to be lost to the industrial and technological onslaught of the 20th century. Dean of the faculty of performance, visual arts, and communications at the University of Leeds, Cooper is well equipped to carry out this task, having authored a notable volume on Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* as well as numerous book chapters and articles on the composer.

Bartók began his life in music in a rather conventional manner. Born in 1881 in the small town of Nagyszentmiklós in Hungary to middle-class parents—his father was a school headmaster, his mother a competent pianist—he showed musical talent early, studying piano first with his mother and presenting his first public concert at age 11. He then studied with László Erkel, son of the famous Hungarian opera composer Ferenc Erkel, and eventually with Istvan Thomán at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest, graduating in 1903. While at the academy he also studied composition with Hans Koessler, writing pieces that displayed the strong influence of Liszt, Brahms, and Richard Strauss. All this pointed to a traditional career as a pianist-composer solidly trained in the German-Austrian manner.

But soon Bartók began to pursue Hungarian causes and stopped speaking German, the language of his mother. In 1904, the first performance of *Kossuth*, his symphonic poem tracing the life and death of the Hungarian hero Lajos Kossuth and containing a satirical distortion of the Austrian national anthem, thrust Bartók to the fore as a patriotic Hungarian composer. As Cooper points out, at the immensely successful premiere, Bartók took his bow not in Western dress but in a traditional Hungarian Attila jacket. He soon professed to his mother that he had but one life goal: "The good of Hungary and the Hungarian nation."

Béla Bartók (ca. 1940)

POPPERFOTO / GETTY

The pursuit of this goal led to periods of intense folksong research that took him beyond the stereotypical gypsy music of the Magyar people to unknown native music of the rural peasantry. This Bartók considered to be the true music of the people, and the source of inspiration for his own evolving compositional style. His encounter with his fellow Hungarian Zoltan Kodály in the winter of 1904-05 was a life-changing experience: Kodály introduced him to the art of collecting native music, and in 1906, the two published *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs for Voice and Piano*, a seminal collection of folksong arrangements, 10 by Bartók, 10 by Kodály. This was the prelude to a lifetime of recording, transcribing, and classifying folk music, chiefly of Hungary, Romania, and the Slovak nations, but also of North Africa and the United States. During World War I, Bartók recorded folksongs of the soldiers; during a trip to the northwestern United States, he studied the music of American Indians. The grand collection *Magyar Népdal* of 1924 (later published in English as *Hungarian Folk Music*) contained 7,814 tunes collected by Bartók, Kodály, and five others.

This research—indeed, this total immersion—provided the raw material for Bartók's compositional style, which remained tonal but with a greatly expanded idiom that embraced the modal scales and unorthodox harmonies derived from folk music. Although his rich melodic lines flirt with atonality, sometimes using all 12 tones of the scale, and the harmonies contain spicy dissonant chords, Bartók retained the use of tonal centers as a stabilizing element, commonly balancing them in symmetrical ways. In an effort to expand traditional idioms, Bartók introduced novel sounds derived from folk practices. In the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) he used the xylophone as the soprano voice and the timpani as the bass voice in a duo pitted against two pianos. In the Allegretto Pizzicato of the Fourth String Quartet (1928) Bartók required the players to set aside their bows for the entire movement, plucking the strings like native citera players and snapping the strings against the fingerboard at climactic moments. In *Out of Doors*, written during the "piano year" of 1926, he used tone clusters to simulate the pitchless drumbeats of folk music.

These bold innovations did not please everyone. One American critic described Bartók's percussive piano idiom as "unmeaning bunches of notes, apparently representing the composer promenading the keyboard in his boots." But in early works, such

as the symbolist opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) and the pantomime ballet *The Wooden Prince* (1914-16), and in late pieces such as the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936) and the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943, commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky for the Boston Symphony Orchestra), he found a perfect balance of old and new by combining readily perceivable classical forms and Brahms-like continuing variation with shimmering impressionistic textures and unique modal and pentatonic scales and harmonies. This synthesis had nothing to do with Wagner; it was a new way.

One suspects that, for Bartók, Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovakian folk music was the equivalent of the Lutheran chorale for Bach: a catalyst for composition, a pedagogical resource, and a means of "refreshing the spirit"—a phrase used in Bach's printed works. It formed the foundation of his melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic vocabulary and served as a stimulus for piano, instrumental, and vocal works. But it also provided material for his teaching, in collections such as the *Ten Easy Pieces* (1908) and the *Mikrokosmos* (1926-39), a set of 153 progressive études, many written in a folk-derived idiom.

More fundamentally, folk song sustained him in times of tribulation. In ill health during the last two years of his life, he turned to the completion of *Serbo-Croatian Folk Music* as well as the introduction to a volume of Romanian song texts. Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovakian folksong was unsullied music, in his view, an artistic source untainted by the corruption of modern city life: "Peasant music of this kind actually is nothing but the outcome of changes wrought by a natural force whose operation is unconscious in men who are not influenced by urban culture."

In moments of depression and anxiety, even the thought of folk music had restorative powers. Cooper reports Diana Brodie saying of her fatigued houseguest in Glasgow in 1933:

He told us something of his experience in searching for and collecting the folk songs of his country. Normally his face looked rather stern and taut, but his whole face lit up and his eyes became pools of liquid fire when recounting what was obviously the most vital facet of his life.

Despite his success as a composer, Bartók remained dependent on income from teaching, lecturing, and piano-playing throughout his life. He appeared in solo recitals and as soloist with orchestras in almost all the major cities in Europe, and he played extensively in the United States during a three-month tour in the 1927-28 season. He returned to America in 1940 as a Hungarian refugee, remaining until his death in 1945 from leukemia. At the end he was working on the Third Piano Concerto, finished except for the scoring of the final 17 measures, and the Viola Concerto, handed down in sketch form only.

"What I most regret," he said to a friend, "is having to leave with a full trunk."

Socially Bartók often appeared to be cold and aloof, and Cooper discusses the recent speculation that the composer may have had Asperger's syndrome. This might help to explain his impaired social skills as a child. There is no doubt that Bartók never felt fully comfortable in front of large groups, but he was also a great communicator, explaining his music and folksong research in pre-concert talks as well as lectures and published essays. How many artists are socially awkward? The creative process itself seems to call for intense concentration, and part of the requisite skill set for a composer appears to be the ability to step out of the present when communing with the musical muse. That Bartók had little problem summoning the muse is evident from his large output. If he had Asperger's, he certainly used it to great advantage.

Cooper presents a highly nuanced reading of Bartók's life. Yes, he touches on the odd aspects of the composer's personality: his infatuation with pubescent girls (the age of consent in some areas of Eastern Europe was 14), his flirtations with female students, and his stay at the Lichtluftheim nudist camp, where he composed substantial portions of *Bluebeard's Castle* wearing nothing but dark glasses. But he appropriately focuses most strongly on the works, the collecting expeditions, and the concert tours.

The principal compositions are analyzed in an intense manner that will exceed the understanding and endurance of many readers, and the titles that accompany the 12 chapters ("Sweet was my mother's milk," "Stars, stars, brightly shine," "I see the beautiful sky") seem to trivialize rather than encapsulate the contents, even if they are drawn from Bartók's writings or song texts (the origin is not explained). Also, while this volume presents more than 50 music examples, it contains no photographs, leaving unfulfilled any reader's desire to see what Bartók's first great love, the violinist Stefi Geyer, his young wives Márta Ziegler and Ditta Pásztory, and his Hungarian colleagues looked like. But these are peccadilloes in an otherwise thorough and thoughtfully considered biography. Cooper is to be applauded for balancing the many facets of Bartók's life to give us a well-rounded account.

In the end, one must ask why Béla Bartók's Hungarian-oriented music has prevailed over that of Elgar, Sibelius, Nielsen, and other nationalists. One suspects that its universality stems not just from its folksong-inspired idiom, or its use of comprehensible forms, or its earthy, forceful rhythms. Its broad appeal seems rooted, rather, in Bartók's belief that "every true art is produced through the influence of impressions we gather within ourselves from the outer world of 'experiences.'" That is, his conviction that music must reflect life itself. His use of uncontaminated raw material mined from Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak folksong, and his ability to write accessibly when necessary, provide a strong antidote to the disillusionment of the industrial era, two world wars, and ongoing global turmoil.

Much like the compositions of his fellow B, Johann Sebastian Bach, Béla Bartók's works stand as life-affirming markers in an age of anxiety. ♦

B&A

Towering Infernal

The trouble with Two World Trade Center.

BY JUSTIN SHUBOW

A rendering of Two World Trade Center

SILVERSTEIN PROPERTIES

New York

In June, *Wired* unveiled the plans for the most important building to be constructed in New York since the Freedom Tower: Two World Trade Center. The design is by the rising Danish star Bjarke Ingels, who ousted the previously selected eminent architect Sir Norman Foster.

The real estate magnate Larry Silverstein has ownership of the colossal project, and the main tenants will be 21st Century Fox and News Corp. James Murdoch, incoming CEO of Fox, is responsible for choosing Ingels, saying that he thought Foster's design, a glass office building with a sloped diamond top, was too staid and corporate. Murdoch sought something more fitting for a modern media company. He knew that Ingels's designs have a reputation for being avant-garde and flashy, a wild sketch on a napkin made real.

Two World Trade Center will be the fourth and final building at the former World Trade Center site, which, as the location of Ground Zero, may arguably be the most sacred 16 acres in America. Not only will the skyscraper be of great symbolic and civic importance, it will, at 1,340 feet, irrevocably shape Manhattan's skyline as the third tallest building in the city. Its top is nearly as tall as the Freedom Tower's roof. From certain vantage points on the ground, the two buildings will appear to be twin towers.

The well-known design of Freedom Tower (officially One WTC) by David Childs is that of a glass skyscraper that narrows as it ascends, each of its chamfered sides sloping inward. It tops out, anticlimactically, in a flat roof pierced by a scrawny radio pole. The work is reminiscent of a syringe, and is just as inspiring. The other buildings on the site are Three WTC by Sir Richard Rogers and Four WTC by Fumihiko Maki. Both are snoozeworthy generic glass office buildings.

Directly adjacent to the Freedom Tower, Two WTC is an asymmetrical series of slick glass boxes stacked like steps. The seven giant boxes, each as large as an office building, decrease in size as the building ascends. At each setback there is a rooftop garden: Hanging gardens of Babylon in the sky (never mind the high winds). In the interior of each terrace level there is a large atrium intended to contain a café.

The most striking aspect of the design is that the piled boxes are cantilevered toward the Freedom Tower: each box overhangs the one beneath it. The effect is to tilt the new building toward the skyscraper. The angle of the tilt is precisely the same as that of the latter's sloped façade; the parallelism thus accentuates the appearance of a leaning tower.

It is appropriate that the man behind the huge 2.8-million-square-foot tower

Justin Shubow is president of the National Civic Art Society.

is Bjarke Ingels since he is the Next Big Thing in architecture. Supremely confident and ambitious, he named his firm BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) and chose the cocky web address big.dk. Despite being only 40—a spring chicken in architectural years—he has already achieved tremendous success around the world.

Ingels has been winning more and more important and immense commissions, such as Google's glass-canopied headquarters; VIA, an 860,000-square-foot pyramidal apartment building on West 57th Street at the Hudson River; a $335 million section of the Dryline, a 10-mile-long flood barrier on the East River; and the $2 billion expansion of the Smithsonian Institution. He is also building a waste-to-energy plant in Copenhagen that doubles as a ski slope.

Ingels, who lives in Tribeca, is also a journalist's dream: tousled hair, three-day stubble, and rock-star good looks; cool sneakers and black T-shirts with deep V-necks; a vintage Porsche; eminently quotable. He casually curses in interviews and in public talks. The press cannot find enough superlatives for the charismatic charmer: whiz kid, *Wunderkind*, It Boy, enfant terrible. He is likely the first architect to accept (self-knowingly) the once-derogatory appellation "starchitect." But he is more than that; he sees himself as a superhero coming to save the day. His self-promotional manifesto *Yes Is More* is in the form of a comic book.

This self-described futurist speaks like a nonstop TED talk, combining neologisms ("pragmatic utopianism," "hedonistic sustainability") with up-to-date pop culture references to *Game of Thrones*, the movie *Inception*, the computer game Minecraft. A master of self-promotion, Ingels released a gripping video advertisement for Two WTC with stunning computer graphics. A savvy user of Instagram, Twitter, and other social media, he is the progenitor of starchitecture 2.0.

In choosing the maximalist motto "Yes is more," Ingels positions himself as surpassing two famous architectural slogans: Mies van der Rohe's "Less is more" and Robert Venturi's "Less is a bore." Ingels says he is inspired by science fiction, especially the novels of Philip K. Dick. He says that he aims "to turn surreal dreams into inhabitable space" and to "gently alter the course of history." His favorite philosopher is Nietzsche; and like the Übermensch, he is a joyful creator of new values.

Indeed, Ingels intends to overcome what he believes to be the total failure of contemporary architecture. He explains that starchitecture has been innovative but dysfunctional, whereas responsible, rational design has been typified by banal boxes. He claims to be offering a third way, combining the best of both worlds.

Bjarke Ingels

Whether or not Ingels is the Superman savior of architecture, however, Two WTC is a failure. An alleged hybrid of office building, garden, and Tribeca vernacular, it is a generic structure that could belong as easily in Dubai or Hong Kong. But for its reference to the wedding cake setbacks of 1920s and 1930s New York skyscrapers, there is nothing about the design that relates to the city. Ironically, given his disdain for banal boxes, his building is merely an assemblage of them: Boring in concept, it shows as much creativity as a child's stack of Legos.

But Two WTC is a failure for a more important, and simple, reason: It looks like it is about to topple over. It doesn't take an expert eye to see this; it doesn't even require conscious judgment. When we see something off-kilter, our intuitive understanding of the forces of physics causes us to worry about its stability. We also know, subconsciously, that cantilevers are sites of mechanical stress, with millions of pounds of weight challenging a building's structural integrity. That the tower appears to be tilted is not my imagination: Ingels admits that it "feels like it's a completely straightforward tower, but then there's something weird going on, that it seems to lean with One World Trade Center."

To build a weird tower seemingly on the verge of collapse at the site of the former World Trade Center goes beyond bad taste; it constitutes gross negligence. Two World Trade Center, like the three nearby towers at the site, ought to look as permanent and stable as possible: impregnable buildings that could survive a strike from an airliner. But Ingels's tower appears to need only a breeze or tremor to send it crashing down—bringing the Freedom Tower with it.

Although Ingels has said that his dream is to design Barack Obama's presidential library—Yes Is More meets Yes We Can—and that he supports the nationalization of banks, it is unfair to impute subversive intent in his project for the News Corp. media empire. Ingels calls himself a capitalist and eagerly sought to build a state library for the dictatorial regime in Kazakhstan. But like many architects practicing today, Ingels does not care whether buildings evince the traditional architectural values of order and stability, and he is oblivious to what ought to be obvious mental associations in design. This should come as no surprise, since a recent empirical study has shown that contemporary architects' evaluations of buildings are not only vastly different from those of non-architects, architects are unable even to *predict* ordinary people's responses to new buildings.

Bjarke Ingels, alas, is not the only oblivious party. Blame for the negligence must be also placed on the tenants, who have been bamboozled by an exuberant showman. It is imperative that the leaders of Fox and News Corp. open their eyes and trust their feelings. Ingels's stairway to nowhere is not a *fait accompli*. There is still time to replace his plan with something morally and tectonically upright. ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS

B&A

The AARP Rocker

Breathing new life into a very old story.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Ricki and the Flash
Directed by Jonathan Demme

Meryl Streep is so extraordinary she can do anything—anything, that is, except play an ordinary person. She's only tried to do so twice in her 35-year career as a leading lady, and in both cases she was called upon to embody an unsatisfied suburban wife, first in 1984's *Falling in Love* and almost three decades later in *Hope Springs* (2012). The understatement both parts required simply did not become her; you could see one of the screen's most ebullient performers deliberately dimming her inner light and turning the burners down to low. It was as though she could not tell the difference between reserve and dullness.

In *Ricki and the Flash*, a quirky little movie released in the dog days of August, Streep again takes on the suburban housewife part, but this time with a twist. We meet Streep's character only after she has fled her life as an Indianapolis wife and mother to make a new life in Los Angeles—25 years after. She abandoned three small children and a loving husband and transformed herself from Linda Brummell into a would-be female Jon Bon Jovi named Ricki Rendazzo. Linda/Ricki is forced back into her old life, at least temporarily, when her adult daughter Julie attempts suicide.

What happens in *Ricki and the Flash* is exactly what you think will happen.

Rick Springfield, Meryl Streep

It's a standard-issue runaway-parent-comes-home story. Her children bitterly upbraid her; one of her sons can't believe she doesn't know he's gay and the other doesn't want to invite her to his wedding. Her husband's second wife criticizes her. Her ex-husband cannot help himself from yearning for the love of his youth.

It's watchable, but it's pretty clichéd and rather timid. That is somewhat surprising given that the director is the ur-1980s hipster Jonathan Demme and the screenwriter is former-stripper-turned-Oscar-winner-for-*Juno* Diablo Cody. Every other character on screen is basically a chess piece to be moved around to give Ricki obstacles to overcome or challenges to face. The only interesting person here is this deluded AARP rocker, whose leather jacket and tattoos are not meant for a Hoosier mother-of-three-grown-kids but a low-rent Valley Girl 20 years her junior.

She makes a living working as a cashier at a Whole Foods-type establishment, but has a steady gig playing at a strictly-for-locals bar in Tarzana. She has a dreamy age-appropriate boyfriend whom she holds at arm's length. All this just might make her seem even more tiresome, except for one key thing: She's really, really talented.

Indeed, the very first thing we see is Ricki performing a knockout version of Tom Petty's "American Girl." We learn as the movie progresses that she actually recorded a solo album, which obviously didn't sell. If Ricki had maybe had a break or two, she might have ended up performing in arenas, not bars. Which means she's not crazy. Selfish and self-absorbed and foolish and even a little monstrous, certainly. But it's clear that she left her family for a reason more interesting than just boredom, or fear, or a fantasy romance.

She doesn't suffer much guilt over what she's done. In part, that's because she knows her ex-husband married a strong woman who has taken care of the children—even though she both despises and fears her replacement. Ricki is a narcissist, there's no two ways about it; but she's only really alive when she's singing and playing guitar. In some ways, she's ruined her own life due to the choice she made. But it's not clear she really had any other choice.

All this adds an interesting layer to an otherwise uninspired story. And it gives Meryl Streep a chance not only to live out the fantasy of being a mini-rockstar herself onscreen—she performs no fewer than 12 numbers in *Ricki and the Flash*—but allows her to breathe exuberant and vivid life into this big-personality character as no other actress can, not now and not ever. ♦

SONY PICTURES

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

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Postcard from Vienna (Virginia)

By Howard Johns, Abby Kaufman, and Shannon Clark, CNN
Updated 12:41 P.M. ET. Thursday, September 17, 2015

A lost GOP donor emerges at a refugee camp outside Washington, D.C.

They arrive in groups of ten or twenty, looking haggard and road-weary, to collapse on the nearest cot or take a cup of hot soup from one of the volunteers manning this makeshift shelter for the dispossessed. Some seem relieved to have found a place to stay, if only temporarily. Others appear preoccupied with thoughts of the home they left behind.

It has been three months since the Republican crisis began, yet world leaders are still at a loss about what to do with those who have fled the conflict in the GOP, and how to stem the tide of refugees. "No one thought the war between Trump's forces and the establishment would last," says one aid worker who declines to give his name as he hands out blankets in the ballroom of the Marriott hotel here, just a few miles from the Washington border. "Who would have guessed the insurgency would go on more than a couple of news cycles?" He gestures toward the sea of alienation that fills the room. "Now look."

Outside, more Republicans have taken up residence on the grassy sward by the hotel entrance. Ashton Bromley, a 48-year-old systems analyst for Northrop Grumman who quotes Edmund Burke with ease, smiles ruefully as he wrings out a pair of socks he has been rinsing in a discarded Big Gulp cup. He is aghast at what he sees as a movement that privileges personality and braggadocio above philosophical coherence.

"I've voted Republican in every election since I turned 18," he says. "I was president of my Young Americans for Freedom chapter at Clemson. We handed out buttons that said 'Strom's da bomb.' And now apparently I'm some kind of RINO because I don't support a guy who likes single-payer and wants to raise taxes. Jesus wept."

Nearby, Hunter "Trey" Abernathy, 37, is leafing through a tattered copy of the *Wall Street Journal*. A balled-up Brooks Brothers blazer serves as a pillow, but his bow tie remains neatly knotted despite the early-autumn heat. He tells a harrowing tale of escaping through Metro tunnels from the sectarian violence that has riven a once proud and unified party.

Like others at the Marriott, Abernathy has considered going to New York to join the Conservative party. But with little money and no friends in that strange and distant land, he faces slim odds. The doors of the Democratic party are closed to him—nor does he evince much interest in seeking refuge there.

Libertarians have made it known they are eager to accept as many GOP refugees as their small party can hold, in keeping with their open-borders philosophy. But Libertarians and Republicans have a long and fraught history. Despite a shared affinity for laissez-faire economics, the two parties have often feuded over social issues, from drug legalization to gay marriage to immigration.

Regarding the last, Abernathy concedes, tensions still simmer—even now, despite his current plight.

"Ironic, isn't it?" he asks. "I don't want to let all the immigrants in, so I'm too tough for the Libertarians. And I don't want to shoot them all on sight, so I'm not tough enough for Trump's crowd. Go figure."

Then he shuffles off, a man without a country—or, at least, a political party.