the weekly standard

MOSES MALONE, 1955-2015
JOSEPH BOTTUM

OUR IRANIAN INTERLOCUTOR

ALI ALFONEH & REUEL MARC GERECHT
on Ali Khamenei's dark obsession with Jews and Israel

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COVER BY THOMAS FLUHARTY

Bernie Sanders at Liberty

Readers of The Scrapbook may have noticed that a "controversial" American political figure gave a much-publicized speech on a well-known college campus last week. And that while his views were not likely to find favor at that particular institution—indeed, are regarded as anathema by faculty and students alike—he was, nevertheless, received without incident, given a friendly hearing, and warmly applauded.

We are, of course, referring to the appearance by Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders—the Brooklyn-born, Vermont-based socialist firebrand—at the late Rev. Jerry Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

In The Scrapbook's opinion, in laying down the welcome mat for someone so (politically) inimical to its values, Liberty University did what colleges ought to do. And Bernie Sanders was shrewd to venture into the lion's den. Both came out looking impressive: Sanders gave a good speech and earned himself some political brownie points; Liberty's reception was gracious and—how shall we say it?—mature.

We say this, by the way, holding no particular brief either for Liberty University or for Sen. Bernie Sanders. But his successful, and comparatively uneventful, appearance stands in contrast to the curious, even frightening, atmosphere that seems to prevail in higher education at the moment.

So hostile is the American academy to the tenets of conservatism—or, put another way, to any departure from leftist orthodoxy—that texts

What diversity of opinion on campus looks like

and ideas, as well as individuals, are not just ignored or reviled on campuses but unwelcome altogether. How many titles have been scrapped from any syllabus? How many conservative scholars or public figures have been disinvited from campuses, or shouted down, even physically assaulted, when they sought to speak?

You need only consider the mirror image of Bernie Sanders at Liberty University to grasp the implications for higher learning. For in a world where America's first black female secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, is disinvited from Rutgers, and former New York police commissioner Raymond Kelly is shouted down at Brown, anything is possible. So startling is this rigid ideological regime, in a nation founded on freedom of conscience, that even President Obama has taken notice. Speaking in Iowa last week, he said,

> I have heard [of] some college campuses where they don't want to have a guest speaker who is too conservative, or they don't want to read a book if it has language that is offensive. . . . I've got to tell you, I don't agree with that either. I don't agree that . . . when you become students at colleges [you] have to be coddled and protected from different points of view. . . . Anybody who comes to speak to you, and you disagree with—you should have an argument with them. But you shouldn't silence them by saying, "You can't come because I'm too sensitive to hear what you have to say." That's not the way we learn.

No, it's not the way we learn. But one way to grasp the American ideal is to follow, and learn, by example. And what better example of intellectual debate, of civilized discourse, of democracy in action, than Bernie Sanders on his platform at Liberty University? ♦

Mysterious Headline Appears in Paper

According to the *New York Times*, rocks now throw themselves. Or at least that's what The Scrapbook was forced to conclude upon reading the paper's curious headline: "Jewish Man Dies as Rocks Pelt His Car in West Bank." The *Times* eventually "corrected" this headline, but only after it appeared in print. It now reads "Jewish Man Dies as Rocks Pelt His Car in East Jerusalem." So the *Times* obviously gave this some thought. The editors realized they had gotten the location wrong, but remained untroubled by the notion of self-propelled rocks.

The body of the article didn't do a lot to clarify what happened, either. The article began, "A Jewish man died early Monday morning after attackers pelted the road he was driving on with rocks." We fail to see how pelting the road killed the driver, and the article's slouching toward literacy did not much improve thereafter. At *National Review*, Kevin Williamson went so far as to "copy edit" the entire embarrassing piece, an exercise that amply demonstrated that the article was written with the intention of avoiding at all costs the primary fact that the attackers were Palestinians out for blood and that a "Jewish man was murdered for the crime of driving while Jewish."

Even acknowledging that the *Times* has set a low bar for itself with its shoddy Israel coverage, this article is particularly inexcusable. As the web-

NEWSCOM

site Israellycool notes, it was written by Diaa Hadid, who has been reporting for the *Times* since March and has racked up no shortage of well-justified complaints of anti-Israel bias. Hadid's pre-*Times* résumé includes a number of articles written for *Electronic Intifada* (*EI*), a publication "aimed at combating . . . pro-Israeli, pro-American spin," according to the *Jerusalem Post*.

That's fine and dandy, except for the fact that *Electronic Intifada*'s idea of combating pro-Israeli spin means publicly supporting the terrorist organization Hamas. NGO Monitor notes that *EI* "frequently compares Israeli policies with those of the Nazi regime." But that's not all. Hadid was also, per her bio, a "public advocacy officer at LAW—the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment." As Israellycool reminds us, this group was a major player in the conception of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement aimed at discrediting Israel. (And speaking of divestment, the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment no longer exists, thanks to embezzlement by its former executive director.)

We'd suggest complaining to the paper's public editor, Margaret Sullivan, about the *Times*'s appalling hiring decision. However, it turns out that Sullivan may be part of the problem, albeit somewhat inadvertently. Last fall, she addressed complaints about the paper's Israel coverage. She noted that pro-Israel readers were unhappy with the paper's coverage, yet for some reason also highlighted the discreditable opinions of "pro-Palestinian websites like The Electronic Intifada [that] have detailed the ways in which, as they see it, *Times* coverage fails to do justice to an outcast people." Sullivan suggested the paper's Jerusalem desk address the fact that the "*Times* has no native Arabic speakers in its bureau."

That's a sensible complaint in the abstract, but professionalism and objectivity require more—matter more, in fact—than language skills. The *Times* now has an Arabic-speaking reporter in its bureau, and it seems its coverage is worse than ever. ♦

The DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE.

Must Reading

The Scrapbook is delighted to commend to readers a wonderful new book by our friend and contributing editor Tod Lindberg. *The Heroic Heart: Greatness Ancient and Modern* explores a topic, Tod writes, that "I have been working on all my life, though not until recently with a view that the problems I was trying to figure out would turn into a book one day." It is an absorbing story he tells, at once entertaining and thought-provoking and wise. To oversimplify, one finds through history very different kinds of heroes and different kinds of greatness, not all of which we would now consider wholesome.

Heroism has been much in the news this week owing to the unhappy anniversary of 9/11. If the often-superficial discussions of the cable shows have left you wanting something more thoughtful, you need look no further than *Heroic Heart*. ♦

Journalistic Correctness

Sticklers will be relieved to know that the *New York Times* wasted no time in repudiating a gross error that appeared in its pages on September 12. A reporter described the "gaudy

décor" at the Beverly Hills Diner, a restaurant in Moscow, as including "human-size figures of Porky the Pig and Marilyn Monroe."

You see the problem, right? No? Well, here is the next day's correction: "An earlier version of this article misstated the name of a cartoon character. He is Porky Pig, not Porky the Pig."

The truth about corrections like this is that they are more maddening than amusing. They suggest a level of punctiliousness, even mania, for accuracy that the paper does not in fact deserve, witness the rock-pelting item on the previous page. Would that the paper's more serious blunders were as easily and readily undone. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Rob: We talked politics, which we both saw fairly eye to eye on.

"Jori: We actually ended up talking . . . about white privilege and how a lot of people aren't self-aware enough to really realize the privilege that they have. And we talked about the [church shootings] in Charleston. We had a lot of common thoughts, and I really respected his opinion.

"Rob: I really don't get to talk to that many people about that, especially on dates. She's a very smart girl.

"Jori: He was very intelligent, like . . . " ("Date Lab," *Washington Post Magazine*, September 10). ♦

Help Wanted

The Weekly Standard has a full-time position available for a talented individual with editorial skills, reporting and writing experience, and social media expertise. Duties will include assisting the online staff with editorial and production tasks across a variety of digital platforms. Candidates should send a cover letter and résumé to hr@weeklystandard.com. ♦

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BPA WORLDWIDE

LOONEY TUNES

Words Fail Me

Dear reader, don't take this personally, but sometimes I think of pursuing another line of work. It's not you, it's me. Writing is just so hard. The words don't seem apt, sentences come loose, a draft seems more deserving of the delete button than your readerly attention.

In my experience, nothing is so likely to rob a middle-aged writer of modest accomplishment of the feeling that he was meant to be a writer as the act of writing itself. Want to know what does make him feel like a writer? A tumbler of scotch, company, and a good story to tell about something already written. In the glow of former triumph I always feel like a writer; when writing is still going on, I feel like a schmuck.

I once met a novelist who told me that when her work is going well, she feels a great sense of wonder at what just came out of her. Sometimes, she added, it brings tears to her eyes. Oh, I said, I too sometimes cry when I write, when every word seems fatuous and even the slightest degree of truth and beauty seems utterly unattainable—or, say, half of the time.

When I try to think of a more desirable job, I start by asking myself, What am I really good at? Unfortunately, the things I am really good at correspond to no particular profession. For instance, I am very good at catching flies and killing bugs.

I do get a lot of practice at catching flies, because I have kids who always leave the front door open. See, I could not make it as a *professional* parent, having failed to teach my little ones such a basic skill.

What I do is stand in my kitchen—a wonderfully small kill zone—and wait. The mind is clear as my hands float in front of me. I note the speed and landing preferences of Mister Bug. Is he favoring the window or the back door? The countertop? The cabinets? I quickly determine whether this job calls for a magazine (of which there are many at my house, one side effect of spending so much time trying to be a writer) or the cold death slap of my bare hands.

DAVID CLARK

I just love this work. It calls forth my inner calm. I feel no inhibitions and, afterwards, great satisfaction.

I have other skills, too; for instance, I am really good at finding keys and other lost objects. Just this week, my wife Cynthia asked if I knew where the checkbook was, coating her words with the faintest suggestion that I was responsible for misplacing it. I took only mild offense, having a clear memory of returning the checkbook to her bag after paying dues to my Gaelic football club a few days earlier. But the gauntlet had been thrown.

Almost everything lost, I know from vast experience, is actually nearby. And there are very few places where anything is likely to be. Quickly, I examine Cynthia's bag, the home office, living room, etcetera, and am almost certain the checkbook has to be in the car, even though Cynthia says she has already searched the car.

I step outside and the air is thick with anticipation. My confidence swells as I open the car door. I work from obvious to less obvious: seats, door pockets, console, floor space, under the seat, deeper under the seat. It's almost as if I'd hid it there myself when my hand alights on an unseen baseball glove, and then I reach under the baseball glove. Eureka! What makes this especially gratifying is the fact that the only person to have driven the car in the last few days is a certain woman I know, who looks just a little embarrassed when I tell her where I found the checkbook.

Recently I read an article in the *New York Times* about a pair of writers who had found work congenial to their special skills. It was a shallow lifestyle piece, of which I would disapprove, except that shallow lifestyle pieces constitute a major reason I so regularly read the *Times*.

These two writers in Brooklyn (of course!) are making bread by writing toasts and other special-occasion speeches for fathers of the bride, wives of the birthday boy, and so on. I have actually lent writing help to a number of toast-makers of my acquaintance, and from attending many weddings it doesn't surprise me that there is a market for this kind of editorial service—not because your average wedding toast is so bad, but because some of them are so good. Several times while listening appreciatively I have thought a best man's speech just had to have been professionally written.

Now, I would go into this business myself, but I am actually a much better wedding reception dancer, especially if you like goofy, inebriated wedding reception dancing. But, of course, there's no money in that.

David Skinner

the weekly Standard

Obama's Intel Scandal

Earlier this summer, we learned the Pentagon's inspector general is investigating allegations that the intelligence on ISIS was manipulated. Analysts at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida, formally complained to the IG that analysis contradicting the Obama administration's narrative on ISIS was routinely challenged, rewritten, or disregarded. The administration was eager to sell the story that the campaign against ISIS was going well; much of the intelligence made clear it wasn't. That intelligence was buried, and the happy talk continued.

We're encouraged that the inspector general is taking seriously these reports of intelligence manipulation. To understand the problem, however, the IG will have to expand its investigation, because precisely the same thing happened before.

From 2011 through 2013, top Obama administration and intelligence officials downplayed and discarded intelligence on al Qaeda and its activities. As President Obama sought to convince the American public that al Qaeda was dying, analysts at CENTCOM were quietly providing assessments showing the opposite was true. In 2012, as administration officials made their public claims, the briefings they received from the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, included assessments that al Qaeda had doubled in strength over the preceding two years. A top DIA official was told directly to stop producing reports based on documents collected during the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound. And when a member of the House Intelligence Committee sought to investigate these allegations of manipulation, he was misled repeatedly.

So the intelligence manipulation now making headlines is not a new scandal, but a broadening of an earlier one—the systematic and willful effort to sell the American people a false narrative about the global jihadist movement and our efforts to defeat it.

On Friday, May 17, 2013, Rep. Devin Nunes flew to Tampa. In the months before, Nunes, now chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, had spoken to several officials with access to the documents captured during the bin Laden raid two years earlier. These officials were alarmed. What they were seeing in the files contradicted Obama administration claims about al Qaeda and its reach. In many cases, the documents were primary sources, received or authored by bin Laden himself.

So Nunes arranged a meeting at CENTCOM to learn more. He was told before his trip that analysts involved in the exploitation of the documents would brief him on their findings. And at CENTCOM, the analysts charged with briefing Nunes spent the better part of two days preparing for their meeting.

But when Nunes arrived at CENTCOM on Saturday morning, he was told the analysts were unavailable. Surprised and frustrated, Nunes threatened to hold a press conference in front of CENTCOM's main gate to share publicly what he'd been told about the intelligence and to accuse CENTCOM of playing games. Maj. Gen. Scott Berrier, the top intelligence officer at CENTCOM (the J2), apologized for any misunderstanding but told Nunes that the analysts who could brief him were unavailable.

"Informants came to me in late 2012 stating that they had information related to the bin Laden raid and the analysis of intelligence," Nunes told The Weekly Standard last week. "I set up a time to travel down to CENTCOM and requested to meet with the analysts involved. When I arrived, it was on a Saturday, and I was not allowed to meet with them. It wasn't until after I spent all day Saturday there with the J2 and leadership that I found out those analysts were actually in the building that day prepared to brief me."

Berrier, now the commanding general of the Army Intelligence Center of Excellence at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, declined to comment. But sources inside CENTCOM support Nunes's version of events.

"The analysts had prepared a detailed briefing on several aspects of the documents," says one intelligence official, adding that they had pulled an all-nighter to finish their preparations. The topics included: Iran's relationship with al Qaeda, bin Laden's involvement in the day-to-day operations of al Qaeda, and his operations guidance to offshoots, such as Boko Haram. The administration had portrayed bin Laden as a lonely, relatively powerless figurehead of a deteriorating terror network. Many of the documents made clear that this depiction was inaccurate.

CENTCOM sources say they don't know whether Berrier was asked—or directed—to block intelligence product that didn't fit the administration's public case. "When we showed things that were incongruent with the narrative, they were killed," says one intelligence officer. Berrier participated in weekly Tandberg calls—secure, desk-to-desk video teleconferences—with top intelligence and national security officials. "Berrier was in regular contact with them, talking to people at DNI once a week, at least, on this stuff," the officer says.

The director of national intelligence had originally signed off on CENTCOM's analytical team getting a copy of a server

with the whole bin Laden collection, despite the fact that the CIA retained "executive authority" over the documents. But the CENTCOM team found their access time-limited and, on occasion, restricted by subject matter. When the team requested translators to help, those requests were slow-walked and eventually denied. They were prohibited from turning their findings into finished products to be distributed throughout the intelligence community. The entire process came to an abrupt end after one of the leaders of the CENTCOM team was summoned to Washington and ordered, in a meeting with a senior DNI official, to stop the analysis of the bin Laden documents.

Nunes says he hasn't seen the specific allegations presented to the IG, but adds, "This does look like similar behavior to what I saw in 2013," he says. "We have an obligation to try to understand why important information about the war wasn't coming forward. They're the intel team responsible for providing intelligence to those fighting the war on terror. And someone prevented them from doing their job. It looks awfully familiar."

It looks familiar for a reason. The emerging picture makes this much clear: The Obama administration has repeatedly and systematically manipulated intelligence to further the president's ideological and political objective of ending our wars. And we are less safe as a result.

With the Pentagon investigation and the media attention it has garnered, Nunes is no longer alone in raising concerns about this growing scandal. It's important that Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell and House speaker John Boehner, with the relevant committee chairmen, move quickly to convene hearings and otherwise use the oversight powers of Congress to get answers.

—Stephen F. Hayes

Putin in Syria

Even now with the Russians on the verge of combat operations in Syria, the White House still says it believes that they're there to fight ISIS. John Kerry says that his Russian counterpart told him that the Russians are "only interested in fighting" the Islamic State. Other administration officials hold out hope for a grand U.S.-Russia coalition against ISIS. But that's nonsense: Vladimir Putin landed troops in order to protect his investment in Syrian strongman Bashar al-Assad.

The White House should know better, because no matter what U.S. officials say about fighting the Islamic State, Obama's underlying goal in Syria is the same as Putin's—to protect Assad. That aligns Washington with Moscow—and with Iran, as it happens—and pits all against Israel, which sees the Iranian axis as an existential threat. Well, as critics of the U.S.-Israel relationship are quick to note, Israeli and American interests often diverge. That's certainly the case here, with the Obama administration tying American interests to a confederacy of despots, terrorists, and mass murderers.

Senators were dismayed to learn from General Lloyd Austin's testimony on Capitol Hill last week that for all the administration's talk of arming Syrian rebels, there are only four or five trained by the United States now engaged in the fight against ISIS. The really shocking thing is that the White House managed to recruit anyone at all when it conditioned assistance on signing a document stating that their U.S.-supplied arms would not be used against Assad and his allies. How did the White House convince any Syrian, never mind four or five, to ignore the dictator responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of their friends, family members, and countrymen and instead turn their guns only on ISIS—a problem that the White House helped create?

It was when Obama balked at arming and funding moderate rebel units that extremist groups like ISIS filled the void. And when Obama tilted towards Iran and its allies around the region—e.g., providing air support for the operations of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) expeditionary unit, led by Qassem Suleimani, in Tikrit, flying drones on behalf of the Hezbollah-controlled Lebanese Armed Forces, promising Tehran that he would respect Iranian interests in Syria—the ranks of the region-wide Sunni rebellion swelled. The equation is straightforward: To defeat ISIS, first you have to topple Assad and ruin Iran's position in Syria.

But that's not what Obama wants, for fear that it will sour his dealings with Iran. Moreover, it's increasingly unlikely that any other power will manage the feat now that Putin has staked out his position in Syria. From Obama's perspective, that's not the worst thing in the world, since the Russians can be his boots on the ground while he continues to use Moscow as he has since the beginning of the conflict in March 2011—as the reason that it's impossible to do any of things he doesn't want to do anyway.

I'd like to dispose of the Syrian dictator as much as the next guy, Obama can say—*but we're going to have to go through the Russians first, and they don't see it that way. Setting up a no-fly zone was always going to be tricky,* he can argue, *but with Russian planes now in the area, we're not going to do stupid stuff and risk an incident that could lead to a Third World War.*

In fact, you could say that what Putin has just done is establish a no-fly zone of a different sort. The Russian presence has limited Israel's ability to interdict Iranian arms shipments from Syria destined for Hezbollah. Presumably that's why Benjamin Netanyahu is off to visit Putin this week—in order to discuss the new rules of the region.

Netanyahu knows that Putin isn't very ideological. Sure, he's an old-school Russian nationalist who dislikes Obama and means to replace the United States as Middle East powerbroker, but it's not like he cherishes the time he spends with Suleimani, Hassan Nasrallah, and other heroes of the resistance. He simply sees them as instruments to get what

he wants out of Syria: to project power and collect rent from everyone, from Iran as well as Israel.

The problem for Netanyahu is that no matter what Putin charges, it's going to be too high. Israel can't afford to let any other actor veto its self-defense. It's not enough to have Putin's permission to attack one shipment of Iranian missiles, if some other shipment is allowed to go through. Obama's nuclear deal with Iran means that Jerusalem must carry out a scrupulous campaign of deterrence against Iranian assets in its neighborhood. Both Hezbollah and the IRGC have to be kept on a tight leash. But Putin's idea of what it means to project power in the Levant is that everything will have to go through him, or there will be consequences.

For 70 years, the thrust of American foreign policy in the Middle East was to keep Moscow out—first as a Cold War adversary and later as a spoiler that profits from destabilizing the status quo. It was in this context that Israel clinched its place as an American ally of the first rank. In the June 1967 war, the 1973 Yom Kippur war, and again during the first Lebanon war, Jerusalem handily defeated Soviet clients and became America's aircraft carrier in the eastern Mediterranean.

Over four decades, the Israelis found that the American demands in return were easy to bear. Yes, Washington would have its peace process and sometimes threatened to make life harder on Jerusalem. But what more could Israel ask for than a relatively reliable friend—a superpower that shared its values and was home to as many Jews as there were in Israel? And now the Obama White House, through a combination of incompetence and hubris, is undoing all of that, restricting Israel's room to maneuver, and bringing the threat of war ever closer.

—Lee Smith

Uh-oh . . .

How big a problem is it that the two leading Republican candidates for president aren't actually qualified to be president?

"Oh, come on," you're inclined to respond. "It's not *that* much of a problem. After all, Donald Trump and Ben Carson aren't *really* the leading GOP presidential candidates, are they?"

Yes, they are. Donald Trump is averaging about 30 percent in national polls and has been rising steadily since announcing his candidacy. Ben Carson started to move into double digits a month ago and is now at 20 percent. No one else is above single digits. In fact, if you take a look at the *Real Clear Politics* averages, you'll find none of the others is above 7.8 percent. The ones who have briefly visited the land of double digits have since fallen back. No one has shown sustained momentum.

"Well," you're tempted to retort, "why should we believe that neither Trump nor Carson is qualified to be president?"

Did you watch the debate? Neither Trump nor Carson has much of a grasp of the issues. Neither has a demonstrated ability to govern. Trump is certainly the less qualified of the two, a self-regarding blowhard who's not much of a conservative to boot, who is not now and will never be qualified to be president.

Carson is a Christian gentleman and a genuine conservative. But he's not yet prepared to be president, and he'd have to show an awful lot of growth to be ready a year from now. What's more, for either Trump or Carson to win the general election, voters would have to conclude that he is so extraordinary a figure that for the first time in American history, they would send a man to the White House who had neither held elective office nor served as a general officer or cabinet officer.

"But, hey," you might say, "it's early. One of the other candidates might hit his stride. That much-heralded Republican 'deep bench' might yet produce one or two or three major-league starters."

It could happen. But ask yourself which of the candidates you're more impressed with today, after months of campaigning, than you were back when they were warming up in the bullpen. There is one: Carly Fiorina. It will be great if she continues to perform as well as she has so far. All the other potential rookies-of-the-year have been either disappointing or remain merely promising. Of course that could change. One or two of them may yet shine.

So one hopes for the best. But let's be honest. It's all a bit worrisome. It was conventional wisdom a year ago that this Republican field of 2016 was going to be infinitely superior to that of 2012, and for that matter to that of 2008. That now seems less certain. Is Jeb Bush really a stronger establishment-type candidate than Mitt Romney? Are the first-term senators as exciting when articulating their visions as one had anticipated? Are the second-term governors as compelling when describing their achievements in office as one had imagined?

And of course everyone agrees it's too late for someone else to enter the race. We suppose that's right. Or is it?

The good news is the Democrats are probably in worse shape than the Republicans. There's no good reason either Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders should be our next president, and it's very likely that belief is shared by a majority of Americans. The likeliest late entrants into the Democratic field—one or more of the septuagenarian group of Joe Biden, Jerry Brown, and John Kerry—don't exactly inspire either.

So it's not yet time to panic. On the other hand, if in another six weeks or so we still have a two-man race for the Republican nomination between two men neither of whom can win the presidency, panic won't be a bad idea. Halloween's a good time to get scared.

—William Kristol

Europe Gets Borders

Hungary's Orbán cancels Merkel's invitation.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

GARY LOCKE

Until mid-September, the half-million migrants who had been marching northwards into central Europe seemed like the Old World equivalent of Hurricane Sandy survivors. Families uprooted by the war in Syria were seeking safety, according to this view of things. It was sad to see little girls sleeping by the side of the road, but inspiring to see European volunteers, with their clipboards and their bags of snacks, their water bottles and Port-a-Potties, showing such compassion and logistical expertise.

German chancellor Angela Merkel never seemed prouder. Her announcement in mid-August that Germany could accept 800,000 refugees—vastly more than anyone had assumed possible—gave momentum to the mass migration. This was the new Europe, one not afraid of showing brotherly love to its Muslim neighbors. "To be honest," Merkel said, "if we reach the point where we need to apologize for lending a helping hand in time of need, well, that's not my country any more." Americans will recognize this rhetorical device as the Barack Obama who-we-are-as-a-people technique, which implicitly threatens anyone who disagrees with the leader with ostracism from the national family.

But on September 15, this picture changed. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary, the easternmost outpost of Europe's so-called Schengen zone, sought to restore order to his country's border checkpoints, which had been overrun. New laws required newcomers to file asylum applications, and introduced criminal penalties for those who entered the country unlawfully. Almost immediately, groups of migrants rioted outside the town of Röszke and were driven back only with the help of water cannons. Gone were the little girls—because, however photogenic little girls may be, the lion's share of the travelers are young men, and now they were heaving rocks at the authorities and showing up on YouTube videos shouting *Allahu Akbar*. Gone, too, were the stories of Syria—because only a fifth of those coming to Germany are from Syria in the first place. The rest are from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and other places, and they are following a route on which large-scale smuggling operations have carried all sorts of migrants for months and even years.

Two visions of Europe's place in the world are clashing. For Merkel, the migration looks like a charitable opportunity. For Orbán, it looks like a portable intifada. In mid-September, it was Orbán's assumptions that were being borne out.

Merkel's invitation to 800,000 of the Muslim world's tempest-tossed won her accolades around the Middle East. Arabic social media called her "the compassionate mother"—not an epithet often applied to her last winter, when she was wringing every last obol out of a Greek government that had been bamboozled into a draconian debt-servicing program by European officials. Germany seldom gets credit for its big heart on the world stage, and its citizens reveled in the adulation. The ZDF television chain held a "Germany Helps" telethon. Dieter Zetsche, CEO of Daimler, enthused that migrants who were ready to pull

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard *and the author of* Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West.

up stakes and leave behind everything familiar were "exactly the kind of people we're looking for at Mercedes and everywhere in our country." Although Merkel got 100 percent of the credit for this generosity, other countries would share the price for the immigrants she lured. Since the signing of the Schengen agreements in 1995, there has been free movement within most of the European Union. Orbán and the leaders of Poland and Slovakia announced themselves unwilling to take extra migrants, adding that they preferred that the ones they took be Christian.

European leaders have generally mocked Orbán for his provincialism, then denounced him for his immorality, and then pursued his policies to the letter:

■ In Austria, the Social Democratic premier Werner Faymann likened Orbán to the Nazis. Faymann leads a coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, who joined forces two years ago to keep the hardline anti-immigrant Freedom party (FPÖ) out of power. Now the FPÖ appears to have a shot at winning the municipal elections in Vienna in early October, and Faymann has imposed his own border controls.

■ In Croatia, a new EU country not yet in the Schengen zone, President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic has long professed herself shocked at certain of Orbán's policies. When Orbán introduced controls at the Hungarian-Serbian border, she offered to let the migrants pass on an alternative route leading through Slovenia. That idea lasted barely a day. As we went to press on September 17, her interior minister said Croatia had reached capacity and could accept no more refugees. Grabar-Kitarovic herself had put the army on alert. (Slovenia closed its own border with Hungary shortly thereafter.)

■ But the greatest reversal was in Germany. The Christian Social Union's leader (and Merkel's ally) Horst Seehofer had called her invitation a "mistake that will keep Germany busy for a long, long time." Even the left-wing government of Baden-Württemberg had been urging a three-month limit on asylum stays. Merkel carried on regardless. But on September 12 alone, 10,000 migrants walked out of the Munich train station, and the city was overwhelmed. Merkel's interior minister Thomas de Maizière announced that Germany was closing its border. (And here we should stress that the borders in question were not the EU's external borders but internal borders with other EU countries, which have been open for two decades.) As generally happens, Orbán's vindication only deepened his adversaries' resentment. Even after closing his own country's borders, de Maizière was threatening to cut off Hungary's EU funds should Orbán not agree to a larger refugee quota.

It was one of the bitterest episodes of German-Hungarian squabbling over human rights since 2002, when Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor Imre Kertész won the Nobel Prize for literature. Hungarians resented it when Germans boasted of Kertész's Berlin domicile as a sign of their country's moral progress. Hungarians took this bragging for an assertion that their own country had not made such progress. Kertész, though, has made an appearance in the latest migrant controversy, and now it is Hungarians who want to cite him. In *The Last Refuge*, Kertész's diaries of 2001-2009 (not translated into English), he wrote a few remarks on Muslim migration that have in recent weeks become staples of political websites, both moderate and extremist. "I would talk," Kertész wrote,

> about how the Muslims are invading, occupying—to put it bluntly, destroying—Europe, and about Europe's attitude towards that. I would speak, too, about suicidal liberalism and dumb democracy, the kind of democracy that envisions giving chimpanzees the right to vote. [*Note: Kertész is referring here to an actual proposal of animal-rights advocates, not likening any group of voters to animals.*] This story always ends the same way: Civilization reaches a stage of overripeness where it can no longer defend itself and doesn't even particularly care to, where, for reasons that are hard to understand, it comes to idolize its own enemies. And, which is worse, where none of this can be said openly.

Orbán's decision to enforce border controls changed everything, although one should note that Orbán has not acted in a rash or undemocratic way—the legal changes at the border were announced well in advance, and his changes to state of emergency laws were passed through parliament, not asserted by decree. One can, if one wishes, fault Orbán for irrealism, to the extent he believes Hungary's maintenance of its traditional culture and demography is consistent with EU membership. The EU aims to do away with such considerations.

But it was Merkel's rash invitation that forced Orbán's hand. Merkel may wind up a kind of twenty-first-century equivalent of Günter Schabowski, the East German functionary who, at a press conference in 1989, misread a list of instructions he had been given and incited the stampede of East Germans who broke through the Berlin Wall. One can blame Merkel for setting millions of migrants on the road to Europe to redeem promises that Europe cannot possibly keep.

The big danger ever since this migration got underway is that it would get stopped up somewhere. The day after Germany closed its border with Austria, there were 20,000 migrants stuck in the Austrian villages of Nickelsdorf and Heiligenkreuz. And the further south you go, the fewer resources residents have to give the travelers a welcome. The migrants are largely young men from rough, tough parts of the Muslim world. There is now a queue of them that stretches all the way east to Bangladesh and beyond, and deep down into sub-Saharan Africa. People have sold cattle, abandoned houses, robbed employers, left wives and children, and burned all sorts of bridges to come. There are now hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of them. Many are war-hardened. They are looking for money, food, and female companionship, and they are convinced that Europeans are gullible sissies. This is where Frau Merkel's *Willkommenskultur* has led: With the impending closure of the Croatian border, hundreds of thousands of young Muslim men are about to hit a brick wall in Serbia. Serbia! ♦

Ray Mabus Can't Handle the Truth

The secretary of the Navy attacks his own Marines over women in combat. BY AARON MACLEAN

Disputes between the political appointees who run the Pentagon and the military officers who serve there are not unheard of, but the nastiness and public nature of the fight over women in combat being waged between Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and the Marines who answer to him is unprecedented in recent memory.

It became apparent that something was up on September 1, when Mabus gave an interview to the press in which he said he saw no reason for an "exception" for the Marine Corps on women's integration into ground combat units. This was unusual for a number of reasons, not least the fact that the Marine Corps had not yet requested any such exception. On the schedule dictated by Gen. Martin Dempsey, the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all of the services owe requests to keep certain jobs closed to women to the chairman's office by this fall.

One might expect Marine Corps leaders to make their recommendations first, and the secretary of the Navy to weigh in second. But here was Mabus—who served as a junior naval officer for two years in the '70s before going on to be the Democratic governor of Mississippi—very publicly short-circuiting the process.

Things only got uglier from there. Following the Marine Corps's release last week of the executive summary of a multimillion-dollar trial they had wrapped up earlier in 2015—the results of which showed that mixed-gender units perform a large majority of critical battlefield tasks worse than male units—Mabus gave an extraordinary interview to NPR in which he implied that the Marines responsible for the study were dishonest sexists:

> It started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking this is not a good idea, and women will not be able to do this. When you start out with that mindset, you're almost presupposing the outcome.

They assumed wrongly. Or so I assumed.

Rather than merely disagree with the results of the study, Mabus was going one better: impugning the good faith of the men and women who had conducted it, the very men and women President Obama had appointed him to lead.

Mabus further implied that the Marine Corps had manipulated the results by stacking the trial with unqualified women: "I mean, in terms of the women that volunteered, probably should've been a higher bar to cross to get into the experiment." Mabus dismissed out of hand the fact that female Marines were injured at more than twice the rate of the males during the study, something that would threaten the long-term effectiveness of mixed units:

> And part of the study said we're afraid because women get injured more frequently, that over time, women will break down more, that you'll begin to lose your combat effectiveness over time. That was not shown in this study. That was an extrapolation based on injury rates.

Having accused the Marines of forcing their conclusions to match their prejudices, Mabus seemed to want to reject any evidence that did not conform to his own preferred outcomes.

Marines are famous for their discipline and obedience to orders, but having their integrity questioned was enough to push several involved in the study to respond publicly. Sergeant Major Justin LeHew, a Navy Cross recipient who had helped lead the experiment, wrote an angry Facebook post (since taken down): "The Secretary of the Navy is way off base on this and to say the things he is saying is . . . flat out counter to the interests of national security and is unfair to the women who participated in this study. . . . No one went into this with the mentality that we did not want this to succeed. No Marine, regardless of gender would do that."

Danielle Beck, a sergeant who had volunteered for the experiment, agreed, telling the *Washington Post*, "Our secretary of the Navy completely rolled the Marine Corps and the entire staff that was involved in putting this in place under the bus. . . . Everyone that was involved did the job and completed the mission to the best of their abilities." As for Mabus's comments about the quality of the women participating in the experiment, Beck understandably described that as a "slap in the face."

In the same article, the *Post* reported that it had obtained documents, presumably from the Marine Corps, indicating that the average physical fitness score for women in the study was *higher* than the men's average—283 out of a perfect score of 300, as opposed to 244 for the men. Scoring on Marine physical fitness tests is "gender normed," so this doesn't mean the women were faster or stronger than the men—but it does mean the

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Aaron MacLean, a former Marine Corps infantry officer, is managing editor of the Washington Free Beacon.

female subjects were well above average among female Marines.

That fact notwithstanding, the mixed-gender units did not fare well in the study, performing worse than all-male units in 93 of 134 evaluated tasks, and outperforming the all-male units on only 2. In fact, the Marine Corps's research contributed materially to the body of scientific knowledge on this issue by measuring unit performance, as opposed to comparing averages of individual abilities. The infantry fights in units, not as individuals, and while the data may make some uncomfortable, the best available research now shows that mixed-gender units are at a measurable disadvantage under simulated battlefield conditions—something that should surprise no one who plays or watches sports.

Far from apologizing for the implications of his remarks, a few days after the NPR interview, Mabus doubled down, saying at a speech in Ohio that he was "not going to ask for an exception for the Marines." It must have been embarrassing for Mabus then to hear Peter Cook, the Pentagon's press secretary, say on September 15 that Secretary of Defense Ash Carter would make a point of hearing from "the services themselves, the service chiefs" before making a decision, implicitly over any objections from service secretaries like Mabus.

This has been a low moment for the office of the secretary of the Navy. When Leon Panetta, then the secretary of defense, announced the effort to open ground combat to women in 2013, his order stated that requests for exceptions "must be narrowly tailored, and based on a rigorous analysis of factual data regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position." The leadership of the Marine Corps appears to have performed just such an analysis—only to have their integrity attacked in public by their own boss. ♦

Jebonomics

A winning tax reform.

BY FRED BARNES

Some Republican presidential candidate was sure to come along with a credible tax reform plan to erase tax loopholes, preferences, and special breaks, broaden the tax base, and lower rates. Now Jeb Bush has done it. This marks a departure point in the GOP race.

The departure is likely to be a breakthrough for Jeb. He has gained a political asset his rivals lack: a sweeping tax proposal modeled on President Reagan's 1986 reform, tested by history, and crafted to lift the economy out of the doldrums imposed by President Obama's wrongheaded policies.

That's a tall order. Indeed, there were significant doubts when the Reagan reforms were enacted. But the result was unequivocal. Along with Reagan's tax cuts of 1981, tax reform produced a generation of economic growth and prosperity for individuals and businesses. Even President Clinton's ill-advised tax hike in 1993 couldn't slow its momentum.

For Bush, tax reform can revive a desultory campaign. His support has dipped to single digits in national polls. Bush says tax reform and the faster growth it would spur will lift the spirits of the nation. For now, it will be enough if it boosts the spirits of Bush and his supporters.

A big idea can do that, but not automatically. Bush will have to promote his proposal passionately in speeches, TV ads, and debates. He told me he hoped to talk about tax reform in last week's candidate debate, but he merely alluded to it in his closing statement. He'll have to do better in the next four debates.

His performance last week was an improvement over the first debate. He was upbeat. He was combative (but not harsh) in dealing with Donald Trump, his chief nemesis. He got off a few good lines. Trump did not succeed in bullying him. On the contrary, Bush won more clashes with Trump than he lost.

As his chief talking point, Bush has relied on his record as Florida governor, insisting he would rejuvenate the nation as he did Florida. That pitch fell flat. So the sooner he elevates tax reform to the top spot, the better. Presidential campaigns are about the future. His eight years as governor ended on January 2, 2007. That's ancient history, politically speaking. Grassroots Republicans aren't interested. His tax proposal is the future.

The other Republican candidates have their own tax plans, and they won't sit still. Mike Huckabee favors the Fair Tax, a national sales tax. Marco Rubio has cosponsored with Senator Mike Lee of Utah a plan to cut the top tax rate to 35 percent on personal income and 25 percent on corporate profits. Both Ted Cruz and Rand Paul favor flat taxes. We're waiting to hear from Trump on taxes.

All those plans are dwarfed by Bush's. They aren't as serious in one important sense: Their prospects of gaining sufficient support to pass Congress are nil. The only one with a remote chance of passage is Rubio's. But the Bush plan is far more viable. It has Reagan written all over it. That means it's slightly radical but attractive to voters.

Reagan cut the top income tax rate to 28 percent for individuals. Bush would do the same, dropping it from 39.6 percent. He would slash the corporate rate, currently the highest in the developed world at 35 percent, to 20 percent. By repealing Obamacare, Bush would let the tax rate on capital gains fall to 20 percent, along with the tax rate on dividends.

That's not all for taxpayers. Tax brackets would be reduced from seven

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(10, 15, 25, 28, 33, 35, and 39.6 percent) to three (10, 25, and 28 percent). The standard deduction would increase by $10,000 for married filers and $5,000 for singles. Deductions would be capped at 2 percent of adjusted gross income.

While rewarding taxpayers, Bush is tough on wealthy investors. His proposal "seems to take a direct shot at the very people" who have donated millions to his super-PAC, wrote Andrew Ross Sorkin of the *New York Times*. Sorkin called this a "surprise."

Bush would close the loophole on "carried interest," which allows private equity and hedge funds to pay taxes at the lower capital gains rate, not the higher individual income rate. And in an effort to curb corporate borrowing, Bush would make interest costs nondeductible. "Mr. Bush is seeking to destroy an incentive for American companies to borrow money," according to Sorkin.

The Reform and Growth Act of 2017—the title of the Bush plan—was developed with help from policy experts at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Bush met with a group assembled at Hoover by former secretary of state George Shultz in July.

No effort was made to make the Bush plan revenue neutral, an elusive goal of past tax bills. The independent Tax Foundation found it would cut taxes by $3.6 trillion over 10 years. But with added growth in the economy of 10 percent over that decade, the cumulative loss to the federal government would be $1.6 trillion.

Later this month, Bush says he will announce a regulatory relief plan, again emulating Reagan. He also plans to cut spending, replace the current health care system, reform higher education, liberate energy policy, promote free trade, and reform immigration policy.

Four prominent conservative economists—John Cogan and Kevin Warsh of Hoover, Martin Feldstein of Harvard, and Glenn Hubbard, dean of Columbia Business School—assessed the Bush proposal. They were impressed. And they rejected the notion that 2 percent growth under Obama is the "new normal," the best the economy can do. They suggested Bush's goal of 4 percent annual growth, achieved under Reagan, is realistic today.

Reagan's reform measure in 1986 "illustrates well the benefits of reducing marginal tax rates on business and household income," the economists wrote. And Bush's plan "would be the most fundamental tax reform" since Reagan's. They concluded that it would raise the standard of living, create millions of jobs, and "lead to significantly higher wages during the next decade."

In 2012, Mitt Romney talked about aiding entrepreneurs and small businesses. But most people merely want jobs with rising wages. The Bush plan is designed to provide just that. And that's why it's a departure, both for Bush's campaign and, if he's elected, the nation. ♦

Desperately Seeking Consensus

Where is the Republicans' Goldilocks?

BY JAY COST

Judging by the number of House and Senate seats, governorships, and state legislative seats it holds, the Republican party is stronger than at any point since the 1920s. Yet, going by the presidential nomination battle alone, the party is a mess. There are too many candidates, a few of whom are distracting the public with their self-aggrandizing shenanigans, spurred on by ratings-hungry cable-news networks.

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This one is just right.

There are a lot of reasons for this problem, but a big one is the nomination process itself. The current rules of the game in both parties encourage distractions and hamper efforts to unite around shared values. Put simply, the system makes it needlessly hard for the party to reach consensus.

The modern nomination system is certainly more democratic than its 19th-century forebear. Now, people choose the nominee by direct election, rather than leaving the choice to delegates chosen by state party leaders. The current rules, however, do little to encourage consensus. Instead, the nomination battle is aptly captured by the tagline for the show *Survivor*—"Outwit, Outlast, Outplay." A would-be nominee does not need to garner the majority of his party's support. He just has to win a plurality and hang around until the other candidates drop out.

The media encourage fragmentation. Journalists love the internecine battle, regardless of the damage to the party. Worse, they declare candidates "winners" of primaries even if they barely squeaked by their opponents

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with less than half the vote. This creates inevitable pressure on the "losers" to drop out and turns the nomination into a war of attrition.

A better process would encourage what might be called a Goldilocks solution. It would produce a nominee who does not heavily favor one side of the party over others. An emphasis on balance is useful in our system. Because we have only two major parties, each is necessarily a broad and potentially contentious coalition of factions. A major job of the nominee is to unite these groups around shared principles, in preparation for the general election campaign. It is wonderful when some segments of the party adore the nominee, but it is more important that no substantial bloc be alienated by him.

Yet our process does not facilitate consensus, as the Democrats have amply demonstrated since 1972. Their candidates have often won the nomination with less than half the primary vote (George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Michael Dukakis, and Bill Clinton), while others managed to split the party merely in two (Barack Obama and Walter Mondale).

Historically, the GOP has been better at finding consensus despite rules that encourage factionalism, but not lately. John McCain won the nomination in 2008 with just 47 percent of the primary vote, and that number is inflated by the fact that he had no serious competition in the final primaries. Ditto Mitt Romney in 2012. He won 52 percent of the primary vote, but many of his victories came when he was unchallenged. He effectively wrapped up the nomination in Wisconsin—where almost 60 percent of voters supported somebody else.

Sixty years ago, the rules of the game mattered less because the Republican party was reasonably homogenous, mainly consisting of middle-class Protestants in the North and West. Though there were some discontents (who helped Barry Goldwater capture the nomination in 1964, for instance), most quarters of the party were committed to an internationalist foreign policy, grudging acceptance of the New Deal, and opposition to increased government activism. Richard Nixon and Dwight Eisenhower were roughly in the center of this tightknit coalition, and together they won the nomination five times in six cycles.

A number of postwar trends, however, have slowly transformed the GOP, making it much more diverse: the growth of the Sunbelt, the migration of the white working class from the Democratic party, the emergence of the culture wars and a mobilized Christian right, and most recently the Tea Party. When compared with the Democrats, the Republican party still seems homogenous; the former is split between whites and nonwhites, while the latter is mostly white. But race is just one way to understand politics. When you look beyond it, you see a large and growing number of Republican factions, which—though still united on broad principles—have important geographical, socioeconomic, and even ideological differences among them.

A Goldilocks solution is looking especially elusive this cycle. At the top of the polling heap right now are four candidates with the potential to appeal to a large swath of the party while simultaneously alienating another substantial bloc of it—Donald Trump, Ben Carson, Jeb Bush, and Ted Cruz. Meanwhile, the candidates that almost everybody in the party could at least like are struggling—because nobody is passionately in love with them. Indeed, Rick Perry was conscientiously trying to present himself as such a fusion candidate, yet his campaign imploded on the launch pad. Other potential compromise candidates are languishing in the low single digits.

Whether this will affect the party's chances for a general election victory, it is too soon to say. But there is more to worry about than winning in November. What about governing? If a candidate has secured his party's nomination primarily because some faction was extremely loyal to him, and then manages to win the general election, how does he go about building a governing coalition in Congress, where all quarters of the party are represented? Maybe he can capture the nomination with 40 percent of the vote, but can he govern if a large swath of his party is hesitant about him?

This is not idle speculation. If the Republican party is becoming more heterogeneous, like the Democrats, then the experience of two Democratic presidents, Carter and Clinton, should be worrisome. Carter came into office with huge Democratic majorities, but as a southern moderate he was out of sync with northern liberals, so virtually nothing got done. Clinton got along with his congressional party during the 103rd Congress, but the 1994 midterms swept in a new GOP majority, prompting Clinton to return to his "New Democrat" roots to build a governing coalition with Republicans on taxes, entitlements, and welfare.

It is good for the president to embody the party's consensus, rather than the wishes of one or two factions alone, because he will have to work with a congressional caucus that is as diverse as the party itself. If the president cannot do that, if he is too tied to particular subsets of the party, he will struggle to hold his legislative coalition together. That can lead to trouble. What happens if a President Ted Cruz cannot break the gridlock because he cannot get along with the Republicans in the Senate? What if a President John Kasich cuts deals with Nancy Pelosi because House conservatives want nothing to do with him?

Republicans can take comfort in the fact that the Democratic party is more distressed than the GOP right now. But there are good reasons to be frustrated by the nomination spectacle. The party stands on the precipice of what could be its biggest majority since 1928: a historically large congressional caucus, domination of the state governments, and a Republican president at the helm. But there is no guarantee that the party will pick a candidate who can make the most of this rare opportunity. In fact, the rules make it especially hard for such a candidate to succeed. What a shame it will be if the party blows its chances because of an ill-conceived and counterproductive nominating process. ♦

Isolation at the U.N.

It's also known as leadership.

BY CLAUDIA ROSETT

In defending the Iran nuclear deal to Congress, President Obama and his staff argued repeatedly that rejection would leave America in dire isolation at the United Nations. Obama can now relax. Having used slash-and-burn executive tactics to roll right over a dissenting majority in Congress and a disapproving American public, he can look forward to celebrating this deal with those more likely to applaud it, when he speaks September 28 at the 70th annual General Assembly in New York.

For the rest of us, Obama's horror of isolation at the U.N. should be cause not for comfort, but for growing alarm. We are seeing here an inversion of America's most vital role in global diplomacy, which in healthier times has been not to please and appease the despot-ridden and morally myopic U.N., but to provide it a functional compass and guide. There is a more accurate phrase for this "isolation" that Obama so fears. It used to be called "leadership of the free world."

Under President Obama, America has offered precious little in the way of such leadership. In Libya, in 2011, the United States led from behind via the U.N., and then abandoned the project, leaving Libya to collapse into terror-wracked chaos. In Syria, in 2013, Obama erased his red line in deference to Russia, which went on to annex Crimea the following year and is still chewing away at the rest of Ukraine, with an eye on the Baltics. Since Obama took office, the United States has borne passive witness to Iran's brutal crushing of massive protests in 2009 and done nothing of sufficient substance to deter North Korea's burgeoning nuclear weapons program—its three nuclear tests, two of which happened on Obama's watch, may soon be followed by a fourth.

About the only thing on which Obama has led has been the Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. This deal is a disaster, negotiated with Iran by six world powers, the five veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council (the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China) plus Germany. Two of

Power votes to appease Iran, July 20.

America's negotiating partners—Russia and China—have themselves served as major conduits of expertise and materiel to Iran's nuclear program and are run by nuclear-armed regimes so ruthless that they are likely the last countries Iran would dare threaten. The resulting JCPOA ignores Iran's state-sponsored terrorism, human rights abuses, and messianic ambitions to obliterate Israel and bring "Death to America." This deal comes laden with so many U.S.-led concessions—from hundreds of billions' worth of sanctions relief to secret side deals to sunset clauses—it effectively clears the way for Iran, sooner or later, to become a nuclear-armed state.

That's what's been troubling Congress. And as member states of the strategically rudderless U.N. began lining up to do business with oil-rich Iran, the Obama administration busied itself telling lawmakers not to spoil the fun. On August 5, Obama admonished that if Congress killed the deal, America would lose its credibility as "a leader of diplomacy" and "the anchor of the international system."

U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power elaborated on this theme in an August 26 piece for *Politico*, warning that if Congress were to spike the Iran deal, "we would instantly isolate ourselves from the countries that spent nearly two years working with American negotiators to hammer out its toughest provisions." Power added that congressional rejection would "project globally an America that is internally divided, unreliable and dismissive of the views of those with whom we built Iran's sanctions architecture in the first place." She wrote that America would lose leverage at the U.N., unable to muster coalitions on other fronts, perhaps even incapable of persuading the Security Council to notch up U.N. sanctions on North Korea following its next nuclear test.

This was beyond disingenuous. If U.N. players saw the Iran agreement as a done deal, the culprit was the Obama administration itself. It was the administration that tried to outflank Congress by rushing the deal to the Security Council less than a week after it was announced in Vienna, and just 1 day into the 60-day review period guaranteed to Congress by law. It was Ambassador Power herself who, without waiting for Congress, cast 1 of the 15 votes with which the Security Council on July 20 unanimously approved a resolution enshrining the deal at the U.N. It was the State Department's chief negotiator with Iran, undersecretary Wendy Sherman, who justified these tactics, even before the Security Council vote, in her comment to the press that it would have been "difficult" for America to tell its negotiating partners eager to go to the U.N., "Well, excuse me, the world, you should wait for the United States Congress."

Except that is exactly what a free and democratic superpower should have told "the world." If other Security

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Council members were really that desperate to rush the deal straight to the U.N., Obama could have slowed them down with a threat to veto any resolution introduced before Congress had finished its review. Instead of threatening the U.N. with a veto, he threatened Congress. And, as the congressional review went forward, we were treated to the bizarre scene of America's ambassador to the U.N. denouncing the U.S. process of democratic debate as an unruly insult to the Security Council and "countless" other U.N. members that had already endorsed the deal.

Not least, this augurs poorly for U.N. oversight of Iran's compliance with the JCPOA. Any allegations of cheating will be handled by a Joint Commission, operating in secrecy, and consisting of the original negotiating parties to the deal, including Iran. Under the "snapback" provisions of the JCPOA, any officially recognized case of cheating could trigger the collapse of the entire deal. This setup creates plenty of incentive for a conspiracy of silence, should Iran cheat. As is standard practice even in lesser matters at the U.N., the burden—or, if you will, the isolation—of imposing any real oversight will almost certainly fall to America. Or to no one. The U.N. has no power itself to enforce sanctions; that is left to individual member states. It's not just military might that gives the United States the most influence here. Because the dollar is a reserve currency, people doing business in dollars have to run transactions through the United States.

When Obama speaks at the U.N. later this month, in all his vaunted nonisolation, he will share that day's lineup with such despots—and partners in the Iran deal—as the presidents of Russia, China, and Iran itself. He will be addressing a General Assembly whose second-largest voting bloc, the 120-member Non-Aligned Movement, has been chaired since 2012 by none other than Iran.

That throng of thugs and their craven cohorts embodies a basic failing of the U.N., which despite its founding promises of peace and freedom is rarely devoted in practice to any of its charter ideals. The U.N. is not a guardian of the free world. It is a collective of the governments of 193 member states, the majority ranked by Washington-based Freedom House as either not free or only partly free. Nor is the trend encouraging. This January, Freedom House reported that 2014 had marked the ninth straight year of "a disturbing decline in global freedom."

Ambassador Power wrote that if the United States were to walk away from the deal, "We would go from a situation in which Iran is isolated to one in which the United States is isolated." Maybe in the diplomatic lounges of the U.N. that sounds clever. But there are worse things than isolation at the U.N. Among them are nuclear bombs in the wrong hands, which is where this popularity contest is going. ♦

An Ideological Relic

Labour elects an unelectable leader.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

The eighties, as the hipsters among us know, are undergoing a revival. The music and fashion of the decade have been disinterred, and its politics too. Where, the pundits of America ask, is our Reagan? Meanwhile in Britain, the Labour party has revived its eighties' follies by choosing an unelectable leader. Jeremy Corbyn is one of the hardest of the hard left, an ideological relic. His surprising success in Labour's leadership election represents an unsavory turn in European politics.

Jeremy Corbyn

If all this sounds as though Tony Blair never happened, then the Labour membership has achieved its first victory. In the early eighties, Thatcher's shock treatment gave Labour a nervous breakdown. The Trotskyite true believers of Militant subverted local branches. A faction of senior moderates left to form a centrist party of their own, which eventually folded into the Liberal Democrats. And an erudite, shabby bumbler named Michael Foot led the party. The public responded by electing Thatcher for a second time, and then a third.

Slowly, Labour's leaders accepted that times had changed. Neil Kinnock purged Militant, and then Tony Blair and the Clintonian triangulators of his New Labour faction led the party to the center. The backbench diehards never liked Blair, but could not argue with his electoral success. They became bolder as Blair's uncharismatic successors, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband, failed to retain Blair's popularity with the voters. Last May, Miliband resigned after Labour's defeat in the general election. The contest for control of the party began that night: an eighties-style schism between second-generation Blairites and the old, red guard, with Corbyn as the champion of the latter. Last week, in the first round of voting among Labour's membership, Corbyn won 59.5 percent, defeating three Blairite candidates, and obviating the need for a second round of voting.

Can Corbyn, a veteran of the "loony left," be the people's choice too? His supporters, the Old Labour of union bloc votes and Red Flag socialists, hope to capitalize on public discontent with David Cameron's austerity program. Asked if they have condemned

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

Labour to a repeat of its eighties wilderness years, they cite the success of Syriza, the Greek socialists. This claim of hope is really an admission of failure. Only a fifth of British voters favor Corbyn as their prime minister. And only a Greek-style collapse of the U.K. could propel a British Syriza into Downing Street.

Corbyn would be a joke in a national election, but then so would Bernie Sanders or Donald Trump. All three of them are running less for the public's votes than against their parties' leadership. They may be peddling quack medicine for a body politic that seems impervious to the usual treatments. But they could not gain an audience if nothing were wrong.

Corbyn's cure for "grotesque levels of inequality" is far more extreme than anything offered by the likes of Trump and Sanders, and hence even more likely to fail. He proposes to go back to the eighties, by renationalizing the railways and reopening the coal mines. Labourites of yore responded to the challenge of the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons by demanding the unilateral disarmament of Britain's nuclear weapons. Today, while Iran furtively proliferates, Corbyn advocates unilateral disarmament. His high taxation and even higher spending would make the palsied economy of Enver Hoxha's Albania look like a Singapore of socialism. But a protest candidate appeals to resentment, not reason. In this, Corbyn is something of an innovator.

Socialists, George Orwell wrote in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), come in two types. They are either a "youthful snob-Bolshevik" whose politics will mellow when he marries well; in our time, the overeducated and underemployed moralizers of Occupy. Or they are "a prim little man with a white collar job, usually a secret teetotaller and often with vegetarian leanings." Corbyn, the son of an engineer and a teacher, is white collar born and bred. The leader of the Labour party does not lead by example; the closest Corbyn has come to manual labor is shaking hands with a miner. He affects a Greek fisherman's cap, in the way that President Obama and Hillary Clinton affect a twang and talk about how "folks" aren't getting a fair shake. He is, inevitably, a teetotal vegetarian.

Orwell identified the great obstacle to the electoral success of socialism: the kind of people it attracts. In his day, it seemed that "every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist, and feminist in England" had signed up for the New Jerusalem. And lo, last week, Corbyn popped out to the shops in a daring ensemble of tatty tennis shirt, baggy shorts, brown sandals, high black socks, and calves the color of boiled veal. It is the ensemble of the socialist intellectual at rest. In the eighties, Michael Foot damaged his chances of election by attending the annual ceremony commemorating Britain's war dead in a "donkey jacket," a coat worn by municipal workers in bad weather. Last week, Corbyn attended the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in an unmatched jacket and pants, his top shirt button undone, and his tie loose. Like a truculent adolescent, he refused to sing the national anthem.

In some respects, there is less to Corbyn than meets the eye. He is no sex maniac. We know this because last week Jane Chapman, his first wife, announced that, maritally speaking, he had been a disappointment. "He didn't take into account any other human interests besides politics," said Chapman, who met him at a Labour party meeting when he was working as a union organizer. She also complained that the workingman's tribune had been too busy to help with the housework. Like Bertolt Brecht, who held East German citizenship and a Swiss bank account, Corbyn talks feminism but does not practice it. The top five jobs in his shadow cabinet have gone to men. Extreme politics tend toward machismo; Corbyn is a "bro-socialist." Somehow, the Conservatives, the party of business and all-male private schools, have a more diverse leadership than Labour, the party that supported the suffragettes.

Corbyn is, though, a crank, and his crankiness inspires the single, dubious innovation in his platform. The British may go in for the kind of anti-Jewish innuendo that, as the Olympic athlete Harold Abrahams explains in that eighties classic *Chariots of Fire*, floats "on the edge of a remark." But not since the 1940s, when the trade union leader Ernest Bevin was foreign secretary, has a leading British politician so thoroughly alienated British Jews. Nor has any Leader of Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition before Corbyn courted Islamists with such enthusiasm, or seemed to enjoy the company of so many professed antisemites.

It is not just that Corbyn advocates an arms boycott on Israel, the boycotting of Israeli universities implicated in military research, and the effective dismantling of Israel by the so-called right of return. It is the sordid company he keeps. It was, Corbyn said, "an honor and a pleasure" to show "our friends" from Hamas and Hezbollah around the Parliament of Westminster. Raed Saleh, the sheikh who leads the Islamic Movement in northern Israel, has called Jews "germs" and "monkeys" and claimed that 9/11 was a Jewish conspiracy and that Jews use the blood of gentile infants to make matzah. Corbyn has said that Saleh "represents his people extremely well," and that he looks forward to taking tea with Saleh on the terrace of the House of Commons.

This is not the only time that Corbyn has appeared comfortable in the company of antisemitic conspiracy theorists. He has hosted a program on Press TV, the Iranian state channel whose propaganda regularly includes Holocaust denial. Earlier this year, when the Church of England suspended Reverend Stephen Sizer for "openly racist" Facebook postings publicizing the libel that Israel planned the 9/11 attacks, Corbyn wrote in Sizer's defense. He claimed that Sizer, who in 2014 spoke at a conference in Iran whose organizers promised to reveal "the dominance of the Zionist lobby over U.S. and British politics," was being "victimized" by unnamed "individuals" because he "had dared to speak out against Zionism."

For 15 years, Corbyn donated money to the pro-Palestinian group Deir

Yassin Remembered. Its founder, Paul Eisen, is a Holocaust denier who posts David Duke videos on his website. Eisen has described Corbyn as one of his earliest donors and claims that Corbyn attended "every single one" of the group's meetings. Although Eisen is so extreme that in 2007 the Palestine Solidarity Campaign disavowed any links with his group, a 2013 photograph on Eisen's website shows Corbyn at one of Eisen's meetings. "During the time when I felt so marginalized and isolated, when the movement with which he was associated so despised me, Jeremy always said hello," Eisen says.

But then, Jeremy always says hello. He has an inerrant ability to end up in a room with bigots, Jew-haters, and conspiracy theorists. If there is not one available in London, he is willing to travel. An investigation by the London *Telegraph* found that in February 2013, Corbyn and his wife visited Gaza through a $4,500 gift from Interpal, a British-based charity banned in the United States as "part of the funding network of Hamas." Corbyn has received at least two further free trips from the Palestine Return Centre, which Israeli officials have described as "Hamas' organizational branch in Europe," and whose head of media in the U.K., Sameh Habeeb, founded a "virulently anti-Semitic" website, featuring David Duke videos and conspiracy theories about Jewish control of the planet. The *Telegraph* also reported evidence from "security sources" that "at least one senior PRC leader has recruited individuals to Hamas."

Such is the company that Jeremy Corbyn keeps. And such is the novel and sour flavor of Jeremy Corbyn's radicalism. He is now the most prominent exemplar of Europe's trend towards "red-green" politics: the marriage of convenience between the old left and the young Islamists. The partners in this May-December romance share common resentments, but theirs cannot be a long-term union. Each sees the other as a collection of useful idiots. The left wants to revive its old socialist nostrums and return to power with the votes of Europe's growing Muslim population. The Islamists want to go back to an even more distant past, and are using the old left as their entree to party politics.

Meanwhile, Jeremy always says hello. So say hello to Jeremy Corbyn, the old-new face of Europe's red-green coalition: yesterday's failed politics for tomorrow's angry voters. ♦

Reaching the Promised Land

Moses Malone, 1955-2015.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

The man had tiny hands. Or, at least, hands that looked tiny on his huge frame. Six foot ten, 275 pounds, and Moses Malone had the hands of a 5′9″ grocery bagger. Embarrassing hands, he seemed to think, stubby and ill-proportioned, and when he was young he would often hide them—tucking them into the pockets of his warm-up jacket or slipping them under the arms folded across his chest, the way a man self-conscious about his teeth will cover his mouth when he smiles.

A fierce hatred of embarrassment ruled a surprising amount of the life of Moses Malone, the Hall of Fame basketball center who died on September 13 at the age of 60. People who are easily embarrassed—those who blush too often and too soon—usually end up retreating from excellence. But the key for Malone lay in that word *fierce*: his embarrassment born of a burning pride and a rage for dignity.

The child of a genuinely impoverished background, Malone was a basketball star who possessed nearly all the tools he needed for the game. Unfortunately, he lacked the tools he could have used for stardom—the social esteem that seemed to come so effortlessly to the peers he admired, from the elegance of Julius Erving to the infectious smile of Magic Johnson. He wasn't good-looking and he wasn't articulate, his natural intelligence rarely making its way past his thick, mumbled Southern accent and into words. He wasn't charming and he wasn't graceful. He wasn't quick at anything except basketball (if his hands were proportioned to his body, his teammate Rick Barry once joked, the league would have to outlaw him), and his greatest achievement may have been forming himself, willing himself, into a man of some real dignity and self-possession.

Yes, Moses Malone was probably the greatest offensive rebounder ever to play the game: three times the Most Valuable Player in the NBA, 12 years in a row an All-Star. But difficult as that was, his 21-year basketball career may have been the easy part. Growing up, that was the hard part, and he deserves to be remembered as much—no, *more*—for that success.

Born in 1955, Malone came out of Petersburg, Virginia, a rundown city of around 36,000 in those days, and even for Petersburg, his family was poor. Malone's mother had dropped out of grade school to help support her brothers and sisters, and she was working as a packer at the local Safeway when her son was born. His father disappeared, kicked out by his mother for his drinking when Malone was two. Their house had little plumbing, a hole in the wall where a window was supposed to be, and no space for the rapidly growing boy, who used to climb up to the roof at night just to breathe the air and avoid the college

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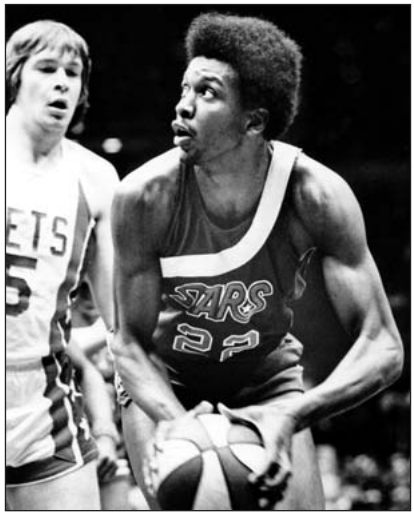
recruiters who began gathering as soon as he reached his teens.

The only book in the house was a battered copy of the Bible, and at age 14 Malone laboriously wrote out a note promising that he would work to become the best high school basketball player in the country, inserting it for mystical force into the pages of Isaiah 64: "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. . . . O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." By the end of his junior year, he had succeeded at his goal, and by the time he graduated in 1974, his Petersburg team had won 50 straight games and its second straight state championship.

It's then that the story begins to get twisted. The greatest recruiting coach of the era, Lefty Driesell, beat out all the other college coaches pursuing the boy and convinced Malone to sign a letter of intent to attend the University of Maryland. But the early 1970s were a wacky time in basketball, with the staid National Basketball Association challenged by a startup rival league, the American Basketball Association. Desperate for attention and fans, the ABA had introduced into the sport the three-point line, barber-pole colored balls, and a chance for cities too long ignored by the NBA to host their own professional teams. The new league flashed enough money to draw in Rick Barry, Connie Hawkins, and a few other established NBA figures—and outbid the older league for the rookie contracts of such college stars as Artis Gilmore, out of Jacksonville University, and Dan Issel from Kentucky. And then, in 1974, the ABA's team in Salt Lake City, the Utah Stars, jokingly wasted a third-round draft pick on Moses Malone, the nation's top high school player.

The thing is, it wasn't a joke to Malone. "I'd seen the pros on TV," he said. "I figured I was quicker." And it came to seem less and less of a joke to the Utah team. According to a first-rate 1979 profile by Frank Deford in *Sports Illustrated*, Malone showed the initial contract offer to Driesell, who was so offended by its loopholes that he brought in local D.C. power lawyers Donald Dell and Lee Fentress to act as "friends" to Malone. (NCAA rules at the time categorized as a professional, and thus ineligible for the college game, any player who consulted an agent.) They hammered out a deal, and in October 1974, at age 19, Malone played his first game as a professional in the Salt Palace arena for the Utah Stars.

It was there in Salt Lake that he first proved his extraordinary ability to reclaim his teammates' misses, leading the league in offensive rebounds in his first season. It's there, too, unfortunately, that he formed the reputation for being a slow-witted yokel that would trail him the rest of his career. Although Malone was widely reported at the time (and is still sometimes reported now) to be the first basketball player to skip college and jump straight to the pros, four high school players before him had managed at least a year in the NBA. But Malone was the first to make the transition with the eyes of the national press on him, and his protective shyness, fear of embarrassment, and ungrammatical mumble fed the narrative that he hadn't been smart enough to go to college. "I be alone and be happier than with a lot of peoples," he tried to tell the press. "You can't get in no trouble then."



Malone as a Utah Star, 1974

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Salt Lake, too, was where I met Moses Malone. My family had recently moved to Utah, and age 13, I'd gotten the father of a friend to help finagle me a job as a press assistant with the Stars. Apart from fetching stat sheets, soft drinks (it was a Mormon town, after all), and sandwiches for reporters, there wasn't much to do but sit in the empty stands and watch the team practice, or keep an eye on the press table during games.

The Stars were a steady contender in the league, winning the championship in 1971. But the finances of the team were shaky, and by 1974 the owner, cable-television entrepreneur Bill Daniels, was going broke after some bad investments and an expensive education in politics during his unsuccessful run for governor of Colorado. Despite Utah's steady fan base, the ABA canceled the team's charter in December 1975 for missing payroll payments, and the Stars were unable to make the jump into the NBA when the two leagues merged the next season.

But for a year and a half, I got to watch Malone grow from a wiry young player to the early stages of the bulky presence under the backboard that he became. And to watch his shyness harden into a suspicion that the press was trying to embarrass him, trying to find something to make him mockable. Away from the reporters he could be whimsical, with an odd but real sense of humor, murmuring jokes that his thick accent allowed few listeners to catch. But even in Salt Lake, which he loved, he learned not to speak to anyone who might use what he said against him.

The collapse of the Stars and merger of the leagues sent him wandering for two years: first to St. Louis, another failing ABA team, then to the New Orleans Jazz, who drafted but didn't want him, then re-drafted by the Portland Trail Blazers, who also didn't want him, before being traded to Buffalo, which he didn't want. Finally, he ended up in Houston, playing for the Rockets, where he proved in the 1978-1979 season that he was one of the game's great centers, scoring almost 25 points a game, grabbing over 17 rebounds, and winning his first MVP award.

In 1982 he reached his peak, both

professionally and emotionally, when he signed the biggest contract in the NBA and joined the Philadelphia 76ers. A tight-knit team, headlined by his fellow ABA alumnus Julius Erving, the 76ers took the NBA championship with a 12-1 romp through the playoffs. "Fo'-Fo'-Fo'," Malone was quoted as saying, predicting the team would sweep its three playoff series. They did lose one game, to the Milwaukee Bucks, but that was close enough, and the 76ers had "Fo'-Fi'-Fo'" inscribed on their championship rings.

Malone would play on for another 12 years, and play well, mentoring such power players as Charles Barkley and Hakeem Olajuwon as he moved from team to team. But he never quite reached the levels of personal satisfaction he had known in Philadelphia. Still, he was a professional, with a professional's pride: Basketball was where he had put in the hard work to make himself a dignified, serious man, and as long as he continued he knew who he was and what he was worth.

"The Lord gave me this talent," Malone once explained. "That's why I think I was named Moses." But the truth is that he wasn't innately gifted, a naturally athletic big man the way, say, Wilt Chamberlain was. The same medical anomaly that produced a 6′10″ child from a 5′2″ mother and 5′6″ father gave him his small hands and, probably, the overburdened heart that failed him at age 60. He had to work, to fight every moment, for the offensive rebounds that became his specialty—so much so that he would often send up toward the rim absurd tosses, in the confidence that he would be able to get the rebound and put the basketball back up again.

It's telling, I think, that Malone asked Julius Erving to introduce him when he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2001. They were teammates for only a few seasons in Philadelphia, but they had both ridden the rickety rollercoaster of the ABA when they were young, and, except perhaps for his rookie season in Salt Lake City, his years in Philadelphia were the only time he felt loyalty to a particular place. Besides, Erving was everything he knew he wasn't: a graceful, well-spoken man, respected by the press and loved by fans. Erving, he thought, could explain how Malone had played the game and why it mattered. Julius Erving, he knew, would not try to embarrass him.

But even Erving had trouble expressing what the combination of skill, hard work, and a great but inarticulate basketball intelligence had allowed the man to become. He might have put it this way: By the time he retired from play in 1995, Moses Malone seemed at last to have grown comfortable in the dignity he had insisted on claiming. He seemed at last to have grown into himself. ♦

China's Currency

Contrary to the complaints of some politicians, it's not undervalued.

BY CHARLES WOLF JR.

Last month, China devalued its currency, slightly lowering the bottom of the range within which market forces can determine the yuan's foreign exchange value. The central bank's announcement triggered severe repercussions in global financial markets—but it was inaccurate and incomplete.

The statement from the People's Bank of China (PBOC) hinted that the yuan—also known as the *renminbi* (RMB), literally "people's currency"—is likely to lose more value in the coming months. Strictly speaking, "devaluation" signifies movement from a higher pegged exchange rate to a lower, equally pegged rate. With the announcement foreshadowing gradual movement toward a lower foreign exchange value for the RMB, it's more accurate to characterize it as depreciation.

Even more indicative is what the disclosure left out. While acknowledging the underlying aims of offsetting GDP growth slowdown and boosting exports, the PBOC omitted any mention of other significant, if complicated, motives behind the depreciation.

Prominent among these goals is China's aspiration for the RMB to become an international reserve currency, along with the dollar and, to a lesser extent, the euro. With this aim comes the quintessential requirement that a reserve currency be freely convertible into other currencies—that is, freely "floating" in value relative to other currencies—rather than selectively convertible and partly blocked from conversion into other currencies, which is the RMB's present status. The RMB is readily convertible for companies, investors, and individuals that the PBOC and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange view as "approved" and "reliable." Examples include Alibaba, Hua Wei, ZTE, Lenovo, and other brand-name Chinese companies, plus China's state-owned enterprises, such as the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, the China Chemical Company, and the China Petrochemical Corporation. "Approved" and "reliable" individuals include Zhang Xin, China's billionaire real estate developer, and a few others in the field ("reliable" includes a presumption that those so characterized will earn and transmit back to China sufficient dollars to overcompensate for their prior dollar investments). For other holders of RMB currency deposits, convertibility is often delayed, time-consuming, and uncertain. This large-scale government-managed convertibility is inconsistent with

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the freely floating convertibility of a global reserve currency.

The bank hoped the depreciation would be seen as moving the RMB closer to its "true" (or "equilibrium") range in foreign exchange markets. China seemingly prefers that this appraisal be arrived at through a smoothly paced process in which market forces are "guided" by the PBOC rather than allowed to operate freely, which would make the currency prone to volatility. This preference is unrealistic and self-contradictory.

Another possible motive was countering the sharp downturn in the Shenzhen and Shanghai securities markets using the indirect instruments of monetary policy favored by the central bank, including expanding the money supply through gradual currency depreciation. But other members of the top leadership preferred and immediately invoked more direct and blunt instruments by suspending trading, disallowing short-sales, and making direct government purchases of vulnerable equities to counter the markets' precipitous fall.

Other salient aims of currency depreciation relate to key components of China's inflow and outflow of capital. On one hand, China's large (yet perhaps underestimated) GDP slowdown might be alleviated by foreign direct investment in China (capital inflow). On the other hand, GDP growth might be enhanced by Chinese companies' or individual investors' acquisition of higher-yielding foreign companies and equities (capital outflow). If and as gradual depreciation proceeds to a reasonably stable range, an appropriate balance between the two capital flows may ensue.

I conjecture that a "reasonably stable range" for the RMB's foreign exchange value is likely to lie between 7 and 8 RMB per U.S. dollar (1 RMB=13-14 U.S. cents), rather than 5-6 RMB per dollar (17-20 cents); today, its foreign exchange value is 6.4 per dollar (15.6 cents). Several congressional leaders and a few presidential candidates have argued—and sometimes continue to argue—that China's currency was undervalued, not overvalued. I'd opine instead that the RMB was and is overvalued, warranting depreciation, not appreciation.

Some of the factors contributing to a lower-valued RMB concern China's exports and its trade balance. Wages in China's manufacturing industry have been rising at or above 10 percent annually, while labor costs in other competitive Asian countries—notably, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia—have increased much less or are unchanged, and their nonlabor costs have been stable or have decreased. Consequently, China's competitive position in global markets has been weakened and exports curtailed, tending toward further currency depreciation.

A Chinese brokerage client watches stocks fall, August 5.

NEWSCOM

Other factors likely to contribute to a lower foreign exchange value for the RMB relate to China's capital account, rather than its trade account. While some capital movements may boost the RMB's value, others will lower it, and the balance between them likely will move the currency's value downward. On one hand, and notwithstanding China's sharp economic downturn, foreign investment in China and its accompanying technology and marketing benefits may be stimulated by a lower RMB foreign exchange value. On the other hand, capital outflow from China has markedly accelerated as a result of both the slowdown in GDP growth and the appeal of reducing risks by diversification of asset holdings.

For example, officially reported capital outflow in the first quarter of 2015 exceeded outflow for the entire preceding year. These official estimates of outflows, moreover, are assuredly less than actual outflows. Some of this outflow is so-called hot money, representing capital flight that might return to China if and when the economy stabilizes at what has been termed a "new normal" GDP growth rate of 5-6 percent, down from the near-double-digit growth trajectory in prior decades. But most of the outflow is "cool" money in the sense of purposeful acquisition of foreign assets (including foreign real estate) whose yields are expected to be higher than those of assets in China.

Another important (and neglected) reason for expecting large capital outflows relates to a point mentioned earlier in connection with the RMB's full convertibility. China's banking system has a huge volume of demand and time deposits, approaching 94 trillion RMB (nearly $15 trillion), about 150 percent of China's GDP. The deposits are held by companies, individuals, cooperatives, and other entities. The corresponding total amount of demand and time deposits in the United States is 50 percent of U.S. GDP. Although there are plausible reasons deposits would be relatively larger in China than in the United States—for example, the abundance of nonbank repositories for liquid assets in the United States—the magnitude of the difference is striking. At least in part, it is explained by the hitherto and still prevalent restrictions on capital convertibility in China. If and as RMB convertibility is realized, a nonnegligible part of China's deposits will seek to hedge risks by diversifying into foreign assets. The result will be increased demand for dollars, promoting further RMB depreciation.

What therefore impends is likely to be the RMB's valuation in foreign exchange markets in a depreciated range of 7-8 per dollar, accompanied by recurring volatility along the way. Much of the worry in the United States and elsewhere about China's currency "manipulation" is overblown because a less restricted RMB would more likely be overvalued than undervalued, thereby adversely affecting Chinese trade and exports. ♦

Our Iranian Interlocutor

Ali Khamenei's dark obsession with Jews and Israel

By Ali Alfoneh & Reuel Marc Gerecht

Antisemitism has never been an easy subject for America's foreign-policy establishment. Read through State Department telegrams and Central Intelligence Agency operational and intelligence cables on the Middle East and you will seldom find it discussed, even though Jew-hatred—not just anti-Zionism—has been a significant aspect, if not a core component, of modern Arab nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism, and what usually passes for critical thought among sophisticated Arab elites.

Western scholars, too, generally avoid the subject. The Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio is an omnipresent and divisive issue in the academy, and academics who might be inclined to explore antisemitism among Muslims could risk their reputation among colleagues who view such study as tendentious, even bigoted. And those with the languages to appreciate this distemper are often inclined to downplay its importance precisely because of its commonness. The threshold for what constitutes shocking Jew-hatred, as opposed to routine hostility, has gotten pretty high in the Middle East in part because Western leftist sympathy for Israel has been declining. Middle Eastern intellectuals are still influenced by the preferences and vicissitudes of the European left. However, former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's exuberant, Holocaust-denying antisemitism crossed the line. He played a not insignificant part in changing the atmospherics about Iran within Europe by amplifying elite European fear that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu might strike Tehran's atomic program. The European oil embargo, designed to punish the clerical regime for its nuclear aspirations—the single most forceful diplomatic action ever by the European Union—rose up in the summer of 2012 in Ahmadinejad's antisemitic wake.

Khamenei in 1981

However, his Jew-hatred was no uglier or less menacing than that of the supreme leader, who has far greater power and influence than an Iranian president. Yet Ali Khamenei's obsession has received far less attention, especially after President Barack Obama's nuclear diplomacy kicked into high gear with the presidential election of Hassan Rouhani in June 2013. With the notable exceptions of the *Atlantic*'s Jeffrey Goldberg and the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen, who both support the president's nuclear accord, prominent left-leaning journalists have downplayed Khamenei's rampaging antisemitism, usually by balancing it with more optimistic assessments of Persian culture, Rouhani, and the American-educated foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif. (Such optimists inevitably cite the irenic Jewish holiday tweets of Rouhani, who once remarked to CNN's Christiane Amanpour that Holocaust denial was a subject best left to historians to debate.)

The president and senior administration officials, except when they are answering Goldberg's questions, have preferred to talk about other things, like the utility of "snapback" sanctions, Israel's nuclear deterrent, or the possibility of future Iranian moderation. Seriously discussing the ruling elite's antisemitism could lend too much credence to the deal's critics. However fierce Khamenei's Jew-hatred may be, it is more abstract for many than the fear of American preemption against Iran's nuclear sites. Commentary that could reinforce an argument for military action isn't commentary worth making.

Yet it is a good idea to revisit the antisemitic mainspring of Khamenei's thought. Unless he soon drops dead from cancer, he will determine Iran's atomic future. He has assiduously backed the growing power of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which oversees the country's nuclear and long-range ballistic missile programs, serves as the regime's expeditionary force in Syria and Iraq, and has primary responsibility for liaison work with foreign Islamic militants. This organization's incessant antisemitic

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rhetoric mirrors the supreme leader's conspiratorial rants. Given that Khamenei controls the Assembly of Experts, the body designated to choose his successor, there's no reason to believe the Islamic Republic will become less antisemitic in the coming decade.

President Obama wants to believe that the supreme leader's economic and strategic "rationalism," and by extension the ratiocination of the Revolutionary Guards and other senior revolutionary mullahs who have a thing about "global Jewry," sufficiently mitigates the irrational mentality that embraces antisemitism as an explanation for the evils of this world. Irrespective of the details of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a nuclear agreement with clerical Iran can thus make sense even if Holocaust-denying mullahs and guards firmly believe that the "Islam-destroying" Jewish-led West is trying to hamstring the mullahs' four-decade-old nuclear project. The whole point of acquiring nuclear weapons for Iran is to protect the most important Muslim country from Western conspiracies.

However logically strained, the president's gamble is not without some historical comfort: The clerical regime has long possessed chemical and biological weapons, and it has so far chosen not to release these arms to its favorite terrorist offspring, the Lebanese Hezbollah, or to Sunni radical outfits, like Hamas and al Qaeda, which Tehran has abetted. If these groups had these weapons, they would likely use them against Israel (and in the case of al Qaeda, against the United States). Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards—or Rouhani—haven't yet revealed any ethics that would discourage jihadists from killing Israelis; it's reasonable to conclude that the Iranian regime has not delivered such lethal weaponry to these holy warriors because they don't wish to risk Israeli reprisal. At a minimum, the regime's antisemitism hasn't switched off the kind of self-interest that fears nuclear retaliation.

And yet antisemitism is a derangement with a history. Westerners in the Middle East, especially those on a goodwill mission, are unwise to glide over and excuse its constant eruptions, which among Islamic fundamentalists certainly won't be solved by a Zionist state with its capital restricted to West Jerusalem. One needs to be attentive to the disease's genesis and metastasis. European history tells us how antisemitism can mutate rapidly, even within countries considered open and tolerant towards Jews. As Richard Cohen pointed out, antisemitism can grow savage in fundamentally decent societies through the machinations of wicked elites. Historically, the Islamic lands—unlike Christendom, where antipathy towards Jews often arrived at the baptismal font—didn't have "bottom-up" Jew-hatred. Muslim antisemitism has always been nastiest among the better educated, among those most absorptive of and reactive to the ideological maelstrom of the West. Those who see the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab clash as part of a great collision between two civilizations have been the most likely to embrace antisemitism with conviction. Throughout the Middle East, fundamentalists have been on the cutting edge of this titanic struggle. Looking more closely at the evolution of Khamenei's Jew-hatred allows us a window not just into how the most anti-American ruler in the Muslim Middle East thinks, but how militant Muslims in general see Western power.

THE RISE OF AN ANTISEMITIC MULLAH

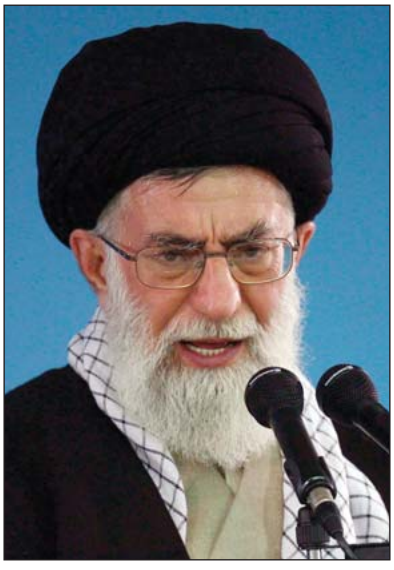
References to Jews and Israel in Khamenei's speeches demonstrate a near-pathological obsession. Two important Persian-language sources for such references, as well as for Khamenei's actions toward Jews, are Hedayatollah Behboodi's biography of Khamenei, *Sharh-e Esm* (*The Elucidation of the Name*), and Saeed Solh-Mirzaei's *Felestin Az Manzar-e Hazrat-e Ayatollah al-Ozma Khamenehi* (*Palestine from His Holiness Grand Ayatollah Khamenei's Perspective*), a compilation of mentions of Israel in Khamenei's speeches from 1979 to 2011.

Every Christmas, Iranian state television shows Henry King's 1943 movie *The Song of Bernadette*, the story of a young French girl (later Saint Bernadette) who kept seeing the Virgin Mary in Lourdes. Also obligatory at Christmas is a filmed encounter of Khamenei visiting the parents of Vahik Baghdasarian, an Armenian Christian draftee killed in 1984 in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). The supreme leader thanks the parents for their son's "martyrdom." The regime is always eager to depict the tolerance and magnanimity of mullahs. But Khamenei has yet to visit families of Jewish martyrs of the war. Presidents Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Mohammad Khatami, and even Ahmadinejad all took pains to embrace representatives of Iran's ever-shrinking Jewish community (now approximately 10,000 people). Ahmadinejad also made a highly publicized point of visiting the anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian rabbis from Neturei Karta International in New York. The Neturei Karta has accepted Iranian invitations to attend Holocaust-denial gatherings in Tehran. Khamenei has never met them.

Khamenei appears to avoid any personal contact with Jews, treating them in practice as if they were a rung or two up from the untouchables, the Baha'is. These last commit the worst religious crime in Islam by recognizing prophets after Muhammad, notably, Bahá'u'lláh, the 19th-century founder of the Baha'i faith. By contrast, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Sabians (a mysterious people who have disappeared since the 7th century) are the Koran's *ahl alkitab*, or possessors of divine books, and therefore "clean." On his official website, Khamenei condemns the Baha'is as "enemies of

your religion and faith." They are *najis*, religiously impure. Muslims should always avoid physical contact with them and seek ritual purification in case of accidental touching. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians may not be sought out by devout Shiites, but they are not untouchables.

Khamenei is different. He thrived on Western literature in his youth, only to become a devoted admirer of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the Egyptian theorist of jihad, in his adulthood. The roots of his antipathy for Jews and Israel lie in the crisscrossing religious and political currents in his hometown, Mashhad, in the 1950s and '60s. In the literary salons that Khamenei frequented, Marxist and nationalist currents depicting Israel as an instrument of Western imperialism were common; concurrently, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a rising star among the religiously militant, attacked "Jewish influence" in the royal court. Khomeini also railed against Western imperialism, Israel, and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's ambitious reform program, "the White Revolution," which, among other things, nationalized the lands of religious endowments and gave voting rights to women. The young Khamenei was not a member of the close circle around Khomeini, but he claims that in May 1963 he carried a handwritten letter from Khomeini to religious authorities in Mashhad. The message read: "Prepare for the fight against Zionism. . . . Israel is in control of the country's economic and political affairs."



Khamenei in Tehran, January 8, 2007

Little is known about Khamenei's personal views at that time, but fragments of the sermons the young cleric delivered in small religious gatherings were reported by informers of the SAVAK, Iran's prerevolution intelligence service, and are reproduced in Behboodi's book. Reflecting on the Six-Day War in his sermon at the Al-Javad Mosque in Tehran in March 1969, Khamenei attacked the shah's regime for not aiding Arabs in the wars against Israel and concluded his sermon with the call: "Gentlemen! Jihad is needed in Iran. . . . May God plant the rebellion of Hussein in our body," referring to the third imam of the Shiites, who chose martyrdom rather than pledging allegiance to an Umayyad caliph in Damascus.

By March 1973, Khamenei was a frequent lecturer at the Imam Hassan Mosque in Mashhad. There he presented his interpretation of Al-Baqara (The Cow), the second and longest surah of the Koran, in which the Prophet Muhammad among other things discusses the relationship between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in a Muslim polity. According to reports compiled by SAVAK informers, Khamenei discussed "the characteristics of the Jewish tribe" and praised "the Jews who helped His Holiness Moses," who according to Islamic theology was a *hanif*, a Muslim prophet before the coming of Muhammad; but he condemned "some present day Jews who are like the lackeys of the Pharaoh." In the same lecture series, Khamenei also discussed "the nature of the opposition of the Jews to the prophet [Muhammad]," "the greed of the Jews," and "the black arts of the rabbis," which finally led SAVAK to dissolve the class. The SAVAK's closure of the class must have made a deep impression on Khamenei, who after the revolution referred to the incident as among the "hardships" he endured under the shah: "From a political point of view, life was hard. . . . I used to talk a bit about Judaism and the Israelites. During the interrogations, they accused me of having spoken against Israel and the Jews. This is how the political situation was back then!"

THE FREEDOM AND POWER TO HATE

Both anti-Jewish and philo-Jewish sentiments were common in prerevolutionary Pahlavi Iran, and they often centered on a similar assessment: Jews were well educated and commercially successful. Religious suspicion of Jews, always present in Muslim society, could be counterbalanced even among the devout with an appreciation for Jewish antiquity and for the intimate integration of Jewish life into Persian culture. The revolution of 1979 changed all that, just as it put an end to Khamenei's "hardships." Antisemitism, once an underground political current, was elevated into a state ideology. What Khamenei had preached at the modest Imam Hassan Mosque in Mashhad, he now declaimed from the pulpit of Friday prayers at Tehran University.

Khamenei's August 5, 1980, Quds [Jerusalem] Day sermon, which is quoted in its entirety in Solh-Mirzaei's book, clearly builds upon the mullah's 1973 lectures. This sermon set the tone and has defined the vocabulary of his commentary on Jews and Israel until today. "The Iranian nation is the vanguard of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine," Khamenei said. "Iran's revolution reached victory within the borders, but we should not be content thinking we have achieved final victory. As long as an infectious sore, a filthy tumor called the usurping Israeli

CORBIS

state in the heart of Arab and Islamic lands exists, we can't feel victory and can't tolerate the presence of our enemy in the usurped and occupied lands."

Khamenei recited "The Night Journey," or the Bani Isra'il surah, of the Koran, as proof of divine promise of "the second defeat of the Israelites." "And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Book: Ye verily will work corruption in the earth twice, and ye will become great tyrants. So when the time for the first of the two came, We roused against you slaves of Ours of great might who ravaged (your) country, and it was a threat performed." He then turned to the plight of Palestinian refugees and "the crimes of the Fascist government" of Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, whom Khamenei accused of "imprisoning Muslim youth, subjecting them to torture, and even tapping their blood with syringes to save in their blood banks for mercenary Israeli elements." According to Khamenei, it was "the imperialists" who "planted this filthy cancerous tumor . . . in our Islamic and Arabic fatherland" who created "division amongst Islamic states."

Khamenei distinguished Zionism from Judaism—"We do not consider Zionism a part of a religion and do not consider it a part of Judaism"—but simultaneously claimed Israel was a place where "a bunch of antihuman criminals have gathered and engage in nothing but conspiring against revolutionary nations and states." Like most Islamic militants, Khamenei has a difficult time locating a time and place when Jews have not been a threat to the Muslim body politic. Iran's Jews—few, subject to Islamic law, and extremely careful not to give offense to the authorities—are tolerated. On his website, Khamenei the jurisprudent finds commercial dealings with Iran's Jews to be permissible. Synagogues while not thriving, are open. But, following his heroes Ayatollah Khomeini and Sayyid Qutb, Khamenei connects the Jewish enemies in the Koran with Israel. As Princeton's Michael Cook has put it:

> Fundamentalism also assists with the . . . demonization of enemies. Generally, it can work to erode the legitimacy of later accommodations between Muslim and non-Muslim populations by invoking the values of an earlier age in which Islamic dominance was clear-cut. Specifically, it highlights confrontation with Christians and Jews. . . . The Jewish case is more dramatic. The Jews were intimate enemies at the beginning of Islam by virtue of their opposition to Muhammad in Medina, and through a remarkable turn of modern history they are once again intimate enemies by virtue of their establishment of the State of Israel.

Who is to blame? According to Khamenei, "Arab regimes that are satisfied chanting the slogan of supporting

Palestine" and "imperialist powers" which they alleged had "planted Israel" in the midst of the Islamic world. What was to be done? The "liberation of Palestine" and "annihilation of Israel." How? By the ways of "sacrifice," "martyrdom," and "miracles." Quoting Khomeini, Khamenei counseled that "if each member of the one-billion-large Islamic community of believers throws a bucket of water at Israel," Israel will be drowned by the flood, and should each one throw a stone at it, "Israel will be buried."

The themes, and even exact words, of this sermon are reflected in Khamenei's later commentary on Jews and Israel, but there are also antisemitic innovations reflecting the times. In the wake of the Iran-contra affair, in February 1990, Khamenei went to great lengths to dismiss rumors of Iran importing Israeli arms. "In order to reduce the Islamic Republic's influence among the nations, they whisper a rumor about a deal, claiming someone has procured something from someone and has sold something in return," the mullah affirmed. "These rumors are spread by those who themselves have secret liaisons with Israel."

A cleric passes an anti-Israel banner in Tehran, October 28, 2005.

In June 1991, Khamenei started attacking Jewish migration to Israel from the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, and India. In December 1994, he attacked Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat and denounced Arab states negotiating peace with Israel as "traitors." In March 1999, in a Persian New Year's address, he endorsed, it appears for the first time, the Holocaust denial of Roger Garaudy, the French Communist convert to Islam. In an April 2001 speech, however, Khamenei moved away from total denial, saying, "Zionist propaganda exaggerates the number of Jewish victims," and dwelling upon "the proof of Jews cooperating with the Nazis." In April 2001, he described the conflict in Palestine as a "continuation of the Crusades," either unaware or not acknowledging that the Holy Land's Jews, like some Jews in Europe, also fell victim to Latin Christendom's effort to reconquer the Near East for Christ. Occasionally, Khamenei offers practical guidance on how to achieve his goal of annihilating Israel. In an April 2001 address, he touted "reverse migration from Israel because of sustained Arab resistance." In May 2002, he praised the use of suicide bombers as a means to provoke Jewish emigration.

Contradictions do abound in Khamenei's statements about Jews and Israel. At times Khamenei claims the United States is controlled by Israel, in particular "Zionist capitalists." But the cleric simultaneously asserts that Israelis "are instruments in the hands of the United States" and the "poisonous dagger in the side of the Muslims," which helps the United States "gain a foothold from the Nile to the Euphrates." Khamenei calls Israel "the chained dog of America" and "a microbe, which grows well protected by the United States." Khamenei does not see any peaceful solution to the Israel problem—only a "military solution" is possible—and claims "Iranians are ready to fight Israel on Palestinian soil." He does not find current circumstances, however, "expedient" for Iranians directly to enter the fray. "The Palestinians should do the fighting," Khamenei advises. The cleric emphasizes that Iran can't send arms or soldiers, but should send money. He insists that it is the duty of all Islamic states to arm the Palestinians, but at the same time says Iran can't do so at the moment. Khamenei is certain that the United States and Israel will go the way of the Soviet Union. He claims that Palestinian resistance has nothing to do with Iran, but simultaneously claims supporting Lebanon and Palestine is the Islamic duty of Iranians and has been Tehran's strategy since the Islamic revolution.

The Islamic Republic has certainly produced some dissent from Khomeini and Khamenei's vision of Iran as a vanguard against the Jewish state. A strong supporter of the Lebanese Hezbollah's war against Israel, Khatami, the former reformist president, nevertheless remarked that "we can't be more Palestinian than the Palestinians." The pro-democracy Green Movement's taunt against the regime—"Neither Gaza nor Lebanon, let my life be sacrificed for Iran!"—cut to the heart of an imperial Islamist-Iranian vision, which still holds sway with the inner circle around President Rouhani. Rouhani has ardently backed Islamic militants in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iraq, as well as the barrel-bombing Assad regime in Syria. But the regime's real dissidents who wanted to break from Khamenei's fierce antisemitism and anti-Zionism have all been pummeled: The students and disillusioned revolutionaries who drove serious critiques of theocracy under President Khatami and powered the even more convulsive Green Movement have gone quiet, gone into exile, or are languishing in prison.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action hasn't moderated Khamenei's views on Jews and Israel. It appears to have provoked a new wave of speeches against Israel. This ought to serve as a reminder and litmus test for those assessing 36 years of religious revolution: An Islamic Republic that does not take its antisemitism seriously seems more than ever an oxymoron. ♦

NEWSCOM

Goodbye to the Shade Tree Mechanic

Cars are, like, so yesterday

By Geoffrey Norman

Though I am an Apple user—phone and laptop—and happy with both, the tepid response to the latest Apple dog and pony show left me feeling a bit of *schadenfreude*. The digital revolution is pushing other technologies into the grave, and like a lot of people, I mourn that—in the way, probably, that an ardent lover of the old clipper ships resented the arrival of coal and steam. Something was being lost. Something beyond the mere ships.

From a recent *Washington Post* article, one learns that

> Americans drive fewer miles per year—down about 9 percent over the past two decades. The percentage of 19-year-olds with driver's licenses has dropped from 87 percent two decades ago to 70 percent last year. Most teens now do not get licensed within a year of becoming eligible.

As a police officer and driving instructor, interviewed for the story, says, "I don't see kids who know what's under the hood anymore. A lot of them don't even know how to open the hood."

The *Post* article attempts to explain why this should be so, and the explanation comes down, as it so often does these days, to Facebook:

> "The automobile just isn't that important to people's lives anymore," says Mike Berger, a historian who studies the social effect of the car. "The automobile provided the means for teenagers to live their own lives. Social media blows any limits out of the water. You don't need the car to go find friends."

An old friend of mine, now dead, spent nearly six years in North Vietnamese prison camps after his A-4 was hit by a missile over Haiphong. He was tortured and locked in solitary, and when I got to know him, it was still painful for him to talk about that part of his ordeal. But in the late stages of his captivity, the brutality slacked off and he had cellmates. He didn't mind so much telling me about that part of the experience. In some ways, in fact, he relished it.

The big challenge, he told me, was coping with the boredom, and one way of doing that was for a man who had some sort of expertise to share it. There were "classes" in all sorts of things. Men taught each other foreign languages, history, even such exotics as opera, cooking, and wine tasting.

The class my friend remembered and wanted to tell me about was in auto-mechanics.

One of his cellmates was a gearhead before he became a fighter jock, and he knew everything you needed to know about cars and pickups and how to fix them and get them running right when something went wrong. There was nothing about an internal combustion engine that intimidated him.

So my friend asked if he could study and learn under him and have the mysteries revealed. He dreamed, he said, of how when he was, at last, back in the United States, he would buy an old step-sider pickup and take it completely apart, rebuild it, and then keep it running like a sewing machine, using hand tools and his own know-how.

The man who knew cars drew diagrams and schematics—as close as he could get, anyway—on the floor of the cell and set out to identify the components of the sort of engine that is now extinct. The kind, that is, that had a carburetor and distributor. He identified each part and explained its function and how to fix it when it was broken. My friend made mental notes and invented rhyme schemes to help him remember what he needed to know. There was a lot to remember, but then they had plenty of time.

Eventually, the Paris Peace Accords were signed and the POWs came home and my friend went out and found the step-sider he had been dreaming of. He bought it and had it delivered to a garage he had rented. And there, he went to work.

"I took it all the way down to the bare block," he told me. "One slow step at a time. And when I had all the parts laid out on canvas, on the garage floor, I inspected them to see which ones I'd need to replace. And when I got them, I started cleaning everything up and then putting the engine back together."

Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard.

When he got stuck, he would call his former cellmate, who would talk him through the steps.

"It was easier than I thought it would be," he said. "I suppose I didn't realize how much I'd actually learned in the Hanoi Hilton."

After a few months he had his rebuilt truck ready for the road.

"Best drive of my life," he said.

The rebuilding of that truck had, I suppose, been therapeutic for him, though I doubt he would have used the word. The way he explained it, he had been reaching back to a time when he was young, in high school, and while boys he knew were learning about cars, he had been playing sports.

"I always felt like I was missing something fundamental. Like there was a serious gap in my education."

Knowing cars—at least the fundamentals—was once commonplace among a certain kind of American, mostly men and mostly rural or small-town types. It was considered a virtue to be "capable" or "handy" and know how to use tools and your own skills and ingenuity to keep a truck or car running. It was the equivalent, perhaps, of the ability to hit something at long range with a rifle, back in the frontier days. Like my aviator friend, you felt slightly inadequate if you couldn't do a brake job on your own car and had to take it to the garage and pay someone else to do it.

The cars back then were user-friendly in this regard. They needed a certain amount of maintenance and TLC to keep them running, but once you had the basics, you could do it yourself. It was as nothing to slide under the engine, find the drain plug, and set about changing the oil and the filter.

That was the most basic sort of maintenance. From there, you graduated to the stuff that went on under the hood. You learned how to pull the air filter off and then use a screwdriver to adjust the carburetor. You got to where you could hit the sweet spot by the sound the engine made. The mysteries of how to gap a spark plug were revealed to you by a father or uncle or older brother. And then you could use a timing light to adjust the ignition so it was firing in perfect sequence. The sound of a properly tuned engine was like orchestra music, all the instruments playing perfectly together.

There was a culture not just of cars but of car repair and maintenance. Also an economy: There were salvage yards where you could go and find the parts you needed on what was left of some vehicle that had been totaled. The ones that had been rear-ended or T-boned were best, because the engine might not be damaged at all. What you couldn't find on the scrap heap could be bought from stores or mail-order

DAVE MALAN

catalogues. And this economy made for opportunity. It was possible to rise from amateur auto mechanic to professional without going off to a school somewhere for years of expensive training. You could learn on your own, or apprentice by getting a job in a garage where you started out doing the fetch and dump jobs and learned by holding tools, watching, and asking questions.

In any town worth the name there would be at least one mechanic who could "fix any car known to man." People traded his name like they recommend dentists today. And even if he had risen from his own side yard to a one- or two-bay garage, he would still be called a "shade tree mechanic."

So there was a large and well-defined segment of the

economy organized around the aging automobile and the things—both material and human—that it took to keep it on the road. And there was a culture of automobile repair and mechanics that was complete with a kind of status hierarchy. The kid in North Carolina who tinkered with engines would imagine himself at Daytona one day, working under the hood of a car driven by, say, Lee Petty. Why not, after all, dream big?

NASCAR, it should be remembered, began as "stock car racing." In the very early days, those stock cars might double as the actual family car. The people who worked on them and tuned them to turn the absolute maximum rpms were, often as not, self-taught, and Lord did they know cars.

This culture even produced, in its waning years, a cult that grew up around a radio show that aired from Boston, one of the least car-friendly environments in the United States. After starting out on local FM, *Car Talk* was ultimately broadcast on National Public Radio, of all things. The team of Tom and Ray Magliozzi, aka "Click and Clack, the Tappet Brothers," would take calls from people who were baffled by some trouble they were having with a car, usually an older model. They would make jokes around the car and then, in a wonderfully self-deprecating fashion, go on to diagnose the problem and prescribe the repair. Most of their callers were clueless about automobile mechanics. A few were as knowledgeable as the brothers. The show ran from 1977 until 2012 and you can still listen to reruns. For some of us, listening to one of those broadcasts is far more satisfying than watching any Apple rollout.

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While *Car Talk* is in reruns and the young, these days, may not even bother to get a driver's license, much less buy a car, there are still automobiles out there. Millions of them. And a lot of them are old. The average age of the vehicles out on the American highway is 11 and a half years. Do the required maintenance, such as oil changes, and replace the parts that wear out, like brake pads and water pumps, and you can drive a car or pickup for 200,000 miles. As millions, obviously, do.

But they don't necessarily do those oil changes themselves. And the days of doing your own carburetor adjustments and using a timing light to get the ignition sequence right . . . well, that went away with fuel injection and electronic ignition, which became pretty much standard by the '90s. If you wanted to experience some kind of connection with your car, you could still change the oil yourself. If, that is, you could get yourself underneath the thing and then get a wrench on the drain plug and a filter wrench around the old filter. On most models nowadays, these things are located in such tight spaces that you will almost inevitably skin your knuckles, a sort of honorable wound among mechanics and one which inclines the amateur to say, "Once is enough," and head for Jiffy Lube.

And now, on some models, my friend (and mechanic) Kevin told me not long ago, "you need software to make an oil change." It has something to do, he explained, with sensors. He might, or might not, have the software. The owner of the car almost certainly would not.

Kevin is one of the breed. He grew up fooling around with engines. He got some training but mostly taught—and teaches—himself. He and his wife Julie own their own business and the two-bay garage where he practices his craft. He keeps people, like me, who drive their vehicles for 200,000 miles on the road and happy. He isn't worried about the looming extinction of the shade tree mechanic. Not as long as people hold on to their cars.

The government, of course, attempted to "disincentivize" this a few years back with something called the "Cash for Clunkers" program. The idea was to jumpstart new car sales by giving cash bonuses to people who brought in old cars and replaced them with a new model, thus generously discounted. But it was not a traditional trade-in. The old car was not put out on the lot for sale. Instead, the crank case was drained of oil, which was replaced with sodium silicate. The engine was started and after a few minutes of idling, every moving part permanently seized up and the vehicle was beyond salvage. Perfectly serviceable cars, that could have been reliable transportation for people who couldn't afford something brand new, were purposely rendered worthless. And a lot of work for people like Kevin was lost when those engines seized up. But, then, unintended consequences of big government programs are not a new story. And in this case the consequences were intended: Washington was concerned about Detroit and the union jobs there, not so much about the small, entrepreneurial shade tree mechanic out in the country.

Kevin survived cash for clunkers and, judging by the lot in front of his garage, he is doing just fine. People who

are driving those 11-and-a-half-year-old vehicles bring them in to him.

As long as people drive cars for 200,000 miles, he says, "I'll be okay. And I've got some coming in here that have 300,000. Even have one that has gone half a mil. People don't want to go out and spend the money on a new car. There are some who don't like all the digital stuff. They don't understand it and it makes them nervous."

But in the very long run . . .

The most ominous development is occurring in farm machinery, where some companies, including John Deere, are trying to make it illegal for unlicensed people to work on their own tractors. A recent article in *Wired* brings this news:

> In a particularly spectacular display of corporate delusion, John Deere—the world's largest agricultural machinery maker—told the Copyright Office that farmers don't own their tractors. Because computer code snakes through the DNA of modern tractors, farmers receive "an implied license for the life of the vehicle to operate the vehicle."

Kevin has heard the stories and knows of one farmer who changed one of the fluids in his new tractor and could not restart it since he was not "authorized" to service the machine. "He had to have it towed in to the dealer. He paid for the tow job on top of the service to get the tractor running again. It was all about the software."

And soon, maybe, in a brave new world, that will be the rule on new cars. You won't be allowed to work on them yourself, even if you know how. Shade tree car repair will be the equivalent of hacking. The glorious end, we're told, toward which all this is headed is the hands-free car. Not only are you not allowed to work on it; you are not allowed to drive it.

A utopian vehicular world to some, maybe, but others of us see this as a bleak world of soulless machines and their docile subjects. The technology is supposed to be "liberating," but from what?

A man I know was recently made a gift of a 1954 Ford pickup truck. It had been sitting in a garage in Las Vegas for years. The man lives in North Carolina so he made plans to fly out, with his wife, take possession of the truck, and drive it back across the country, traveling some of the backroads and taking in the pleasures of the American heartland. Ribs in Memphis. Bourbon in Kentucky.

The truck lacked all the amenities, to include air-conditioning. My friend drained all the fluids and replaced them, installed new belts and hoses, put in new plugs, and did the standard tune-up.

"Fun to use a timing light again," he told me. "Hadn't done that for years."

When he had done all this, he and his wife pointed the truck east and started out. The only thing lacking was a banner with the word "Excelsior."

His wife said she couldn't remember ever seeing a man any happier. And his morale did not suffer, one hundred miles or so down the road, when there was a problem. Strange noises came from the engine, which seemed to be starved for fuel.

They made it into the nearest town and found, with ease, a local mechanic.

"We pulled into his lot," she said, "and when the mechanic came out, he spent five minutes just looking at the truck and talking about how long it had been since he'd seen one like it and what a great truck it was and how they didn't make them like that any more. I believe we could have sold it to him and gotten a good price.

"But we finally got around to talking about the problem and he said, 'Well, let's open her up and take a look.' The hood went up and they looked in and started talking about how much room there was. How much easier it was to work on something with all that room than it was on the junk they were building today.

"I don't know where he came from, but after a couple of minutes, there was another man, looking under the hood at that engine. And then another. Pretty soon there were five men, looking down at that engine and talking about all that space you had for working on it."

They did the usual dialogue.

"Getting fire?"

"Getting fuel?"

Eventually they got the truck running and back on the highway. But there were other, similar stops for repairs, and the man's wife was struck by how, every time, when the hood went up, interested men gathered and looked down at the engine and started talking about how much space there was in there and then trying to figure out how to fix the problem.

"It happened every time," she said.

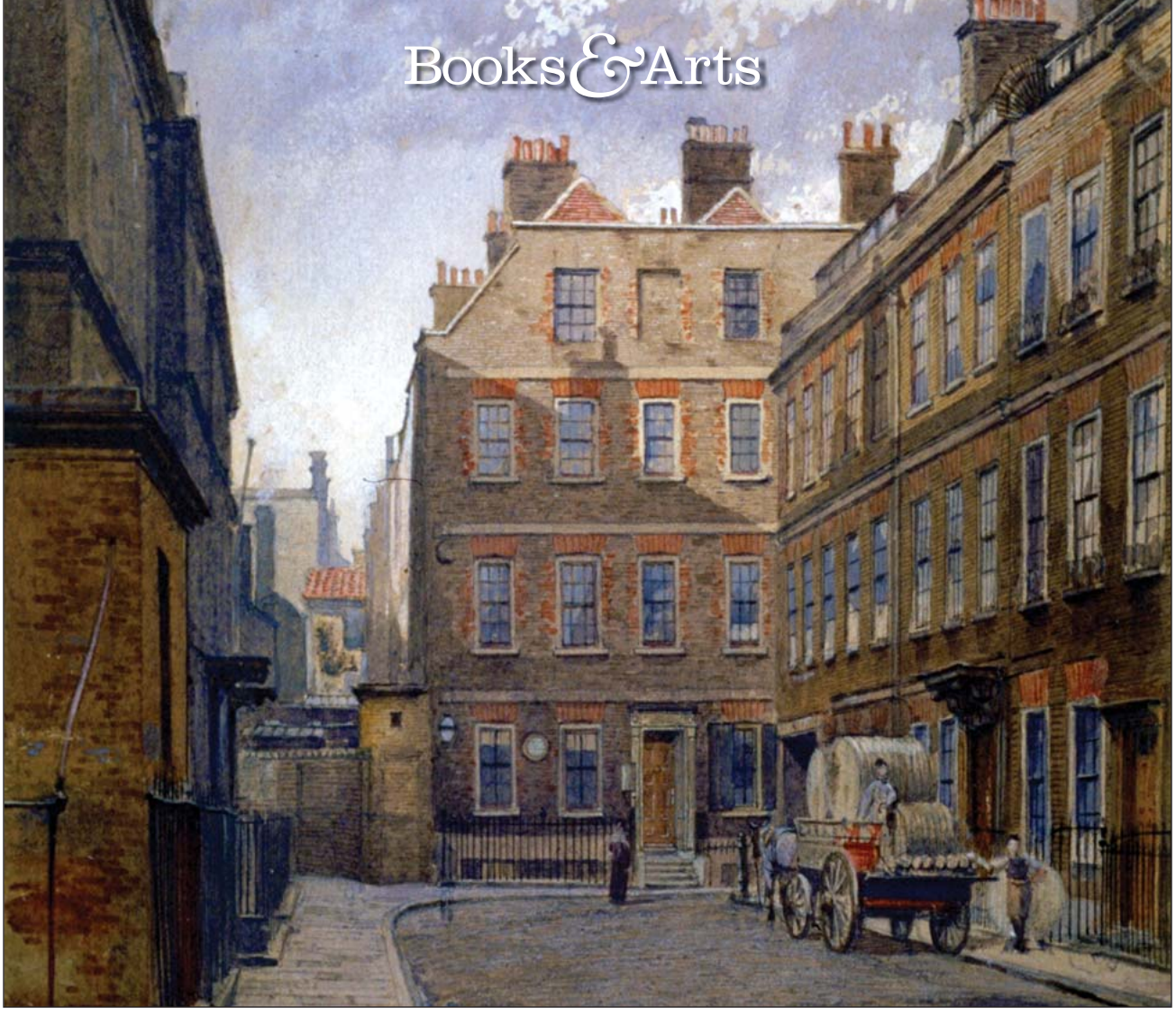
They didn't make it all the way back to North Carolina. The old engine had been sitting idle for too long, and on a long stretch of empty highway, it threw a rod.

When they got it towed into town, the mechanic admired it and said the usual things about how much room there was under the hood. Then he made them a generous offer.

My friend thanked him and turned him down and said he would get the truck shipped back to North Carolina, where he would put in a new engine.

"He raised the offer, but no way I was getting rid of that truck."

He didn't say it, but the truck is what he has instead of Facebook. And the mechanic understood completely. ♦



Samuel Johnson's House, Gough Square, London

Dr. Johnson's Friend

Francis Barber and the Great Cham. BY EDWARD SHORT

In his memorable poem "At the Grave of Henry James," W.H. Auden apostrophized the novelist to make a useful point:

Master of nuance and scruple,
Pray for me and for all writers living
or dead;
Because there are many whose works
Are in better taste than their lives, because
there is no end
To the vanity of our calling: make inter-
cession
For the treason of all clerks.

Edward Short is the author, most recently, of Newman and his Family.

The Fortunes of Francis Barber
The True Story of the Jamaican Slave Who Became Samuel Johnson's Heir
by Michael Bundock
Yale University Press, 296 pp., $35

Since there are, indeed, many writers "whose works are in better taste than their lives," when we happen upon those about whom this is not the case, we naturally welcome biographies that confirm why they elude Auden's otherwise just reproof. And since no one fits that bill better than Samuel Johnson, all readers interested in the exemplary virtues of the great lexicographer, poet, editor, and critic will delight in *The Fortunes of Francis Barber*.

Director of the Dr. Johnson's House Trust, Bundock has produced a finely researched, admirably written, and altogether fascinating life, which shows how the boy who grew up in slavery on a Jamaican sugar plantation deeply enriched Johnson's moral and spiritual life. In addition to being a brilliant account of a relationship that might have begun as one of master and servant, but ended as one of father and son,

GUILDHALL LIBRARY & ART GALLERY / HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY

Bundock describes the full horror of the Jamaican sugar plantations, where slaves worked from dawn to dusk six days a week under the broiling Caribbean sun, and where planters presided over a system of manifold iniquity.

Francis was given as a gift to Johnson in 1752 by his friend Richard Bathurst, the son of a ruined planter who styled himself Colonel Richard Bathurst. The titles planters gave themselves caused great mirth in England, one wit noting how "they are all *Colonels, Majors, Captains, Lieutenants*, and *Ensigns*." When Frank arrived at Johnson's house in Gough Square, he was 10 years old and Johnson 42. For the beleaguered lexicographer, the very presence of the young boy must have been a welcome distraction from the slow progress he was making on his *Dictionary*. He was also mourning the death of his wife. Then again, he was happy that Francis had been freed.

Fettered in a melancholy he could never entirely escape, he empathized with Frank. No one can read Johnson's works without seeing how abhorrent slavery was to him. His opposition to the American colonists was rooted in his detestation of their slave owning, impelling him to ask, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?" And as for his friend Bathurst, he was happy that giving Francis away freed him of the sin that had ruined his father. As he told James Boswell, "My dear friend Dr. Bathurst declared that he was glad that his father had left his affairs in total ruin, because having no estate, he was not under the temptation of keeping slaves."

Drawing on the voluminous papers of the planter Thomas Thistlewood, Bundock shows the extent to which plantations doubled as brothels. "Thistlewood's diary," he writes, "reveals that in 37 years in Jamaica, he had sex 3,852 times with 138 women . . . There was simply no question of resistance, as the women knew the consequences only too well." Those who refused were whipped. Whether Francis Barber was sired by the elder Bathurst is a lively question. No proof has surfaced.

John Hawkins, Johnson's first biographer, notes the merriment that Frank's arrival inspired in Johnson's friends, especially since "the uses for which Barber was intended to serve . . . were not very apparent." After all, "Diogenes himself never wanted a servant less than Johnson seemed to do." Hawkins cited Johnson's "great bushy wig," which was "really as impenetrable by a comb as a thick-set hedge," and the dust on his outer garments, which was never "known to have been disturbed by a brush." Fortunately, Frank's duties did not include seeing to it that his master was smartly turned out. Instead, he was

Francis Barber by Joshua Reynolds

responsible for running errands, carrying messages, greeting Johnson's guests at the door, waiting at table, and joining Johnson on his occasional rambles outside London.

Since Johnson's household included lodgers that Johnson had taken in out of charity—particularly, the bibulous doctor John Levett and the blind poet Anna Williams—Frank found himself in combustible company. Levett, Johnson admitted, was "a brutal fellow," though he enjoyed his company, "for his brutality [was] in his manners, not his mind." And Williams, although a learned woman, was equally unrefined, always losing her temper and eating her meals with her fingers. The fights between Francis Barber and Anna Williams were fierce, Frank complaining of Williams's bossiness and Williams complaining of Frank's laziness. Indeed, Williams's rages became so unbearable that Johnson often had to flee the household. No wonder he told Hawkins that "a tavern-chair was the throne of human felicity."

If Samuel Johnson enjoyed "the conflict of opinions and sentiments" in taverns, the conflicts at home were seldom jolly. In fact, Frank left Johnson's household in 1756 to join an apothecary in Cheapside. Two years later, he ran away to join the Royal Navy. Since Frank always treated Johnson as a paterfamilias, his decision might have been an act of rebellion, particularly as he knew how contemptuous Johnson was of the seafaring life. (As Johnson told Boswell, "No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned.")

The letter to the radical MP John Wilkes that the great comic novelist Tobias Smollett wrote at Johnson's behest gave Johnson one of his most famous epithets.

> Sir, I am again your petitioner, in behalf of that great CHAM of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is Francis Barber, has been pressed on board the *Stag* Frigate . . . and our Lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy is a sickly lad, of a delicate frame, and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his majesty's service. You know what manner of animosity the said Johnson has against you; and I dare say you desire no other opportunity of resenting it than that of laying him under an obligation. He was humble enough to desire my assistance on this occasion, though he and I were never cater-cousins; and I gave him to understand that I would make application to my friend Mr. Wilkes, who, perhaps, by his interest . . . might be able to procure the discharge of his lacquey.

As it happened, although Wilkes made appeals to the Admiralty, Frank was only discharged after Johnson wrote an appeal himself, saying that "it would be a great pleasure, and some convenience to me, if the Lords of the Admiralty would be pleased to discharge [Barber], which, as he is no seaman, may be done with little injury to the King's service."

From 1760 until Johnson's death in 1784, Frank returned to the employ

of his paternal master, who prized his company and sought to help him however he could. Starting in 1767, Johnson paid Frank's fees to attend grammar school in Hertfordshire, where he studied Latin and Greek, as well as music and dancing. Johnson also shared with Frank his deep Anglican faith: "I prayed with Francis," he wrote in one diary entry, "which I now do commonly, and explained to him the Lord's Prayer." That Johnson took a keen interest in Frank's education is clear from his letters, in one of which he counseled him, "You can never be wise unless you love reading."

Michael Bundock draws a richly sympathetic portrait of Frank. In addition to having a certain wanderlust, he was personable and handsome. "Frank has carried the empire of Cupid farther than many men," Johnson wrote after they visited Lincolnshire, where the boy so enamored the local girls that one of them followed him back to London. In 1773, Frank married Elizabeth Ball (a pretty young white woman), with whom he had three children, all of whom came to live with Johnson in Bolt Court. Mrs. Thrale recalled inviting Frank and his wife to a servant's ball at her home at Streatham, at which "Frank took offense at some attentions paid his Desdemona, and walked away next morning to London in wrath." Presumably a white servant had flirted with his wife. At any rate, Frank was never altogether comfortable in the white world for which he had exchanged the black world of his captivity.

In his will, Johnson made Francis Barber his legatee, settling an annuity on him of £70 (a tidy sum in 18th-century England). At his master's suggestion, Frank left London for Lichfield, Johnson's birthplace, and set up a school in the nearby village of Brantwood—a mile away from Edial, where, 60 years earlier, Johnson had established his own school. Nevertheless, Frank, like so many of Johnson's friends, was bad with money, and to keep the wolves from the door, he was forced to sell the personal mementoes that Johnson had given him.

"O how will Boswell envy me," the Canon of Lichfield Cathedral wrote John Hawkins. "No less than Dr. Johnson's watch is now in my possession! … I purchased it from Francis Barber, his black servant." This galled Hawkins because he had wanted the watch for himself. In all events, Frank died in 1801 in Stafford Infirmary—which was run, curiously enough, by the grandfather of Charles Darwin, who founded the hospital to take in dying paupers.

"The highest panegyrick therefore that private virtue can receive," Johnson wrote in one of his *Rambler* essays, "is the praise of servants … it very seldom happens that they commend or blame without justice." That Francis Barber named not one but two of his sons Samuel shows the affectionate esteem in which he held his kind and loving master. ♦

B&A

Free to Be...

Or, how to make a contemporary case for libertarianism.

BY ROBERT WARGAS

The Libertarian Mind
A Manifesto for Freedom
by David Boaz
Simon & Schuster, 432 pp., $27.95

Any book about libertarianism is bound to be a book about the United States. The American-born David Boaz admits that his origins will confine *The Libertarian Mind*, an updated version of his 1997 primer on the philosophy of individual freedom, to this country's political system. But even if Boaz were, say, a Swede, he'd be forced to talk quite a bit about the United States if he wanted to promote libertarian ideas. In most European countries, what passes for a free market political party is a socialist party with a crucifix attached to it. It is beautifully ironic that libertarianism, so profoundly influenced by European thought, found its most potent expression outside the continent—in a country that European intellectuals tend to deride as embarrassing and immoral.

"You learn the essence of libertarianism in kindergarten," Boaz writes. "Don't hit other people, don't take their stuff, and keep your promises." Elsewhere, he gives this definition: "Libertarianism is the view that each person has the right to live his life any way he chooses so long as he respects the equal rights of others."

I don't know of any group that wouldn't describe its political views in this way. I also don't know of any that truly mean it besides the libertarians. The philosophy, so its proponents claim, is neither left nor right; it is, one might say, on the Z-axis of politics. To the libertarian, capitalism is not an economic system; it is a model for all human interaction. Government's only role is to act as the custodian of what Isaiah Berlin called negative liberty: freedom from coercion and external force. Government is the protector, not the granter, of this liberty.

That's the theory; practice is rather different. Boaz recites the ledger of state folly in the United States, apart from the eternal deficits of Medicare and Social Security. One sees the extent of the American federal juggernaut in its ever-expanding rulebook. "The Congressional Research Service identified 4,500 federal crimes," he writes, "but said it didn't have the resources to complete its count." An attendant problem is the power of unelected bureaucracies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA's regulations are so baroque it once set

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up a telephone hotline to answer questions about one of them. The caveat, Boaz notes, was that it couldn't guarantee the correctness of its own answers and that this was no excuse for not following the law.

This is the most accessible book on libertarianism likely to be written—the best since Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* (1980). Boaz does not browbeat his readers. He avoids dudgeon. He writes brilliantly about American law, natural rights philosophy, and the history of freedom—so well, in fact, that his work ought to replace the ridiculous civics textbooks in American secondary schools.

But there are problems with libertarianism that even those who support its aims mustn't ignore. While reading *The Libertarian Mind*, I turned to the back pages and took the political quiz in the appendix. You are asked to give numerical answers to 22 questions about whether the government or the individual should decide certain matters—who should say whether you "hire a worker of another race," for example—and then plot your score on a graph that supposedly measures your political position. My score indicates that I am a pure libertarian. But I'm not, so when I returned to reading the main text, I did so with the suspicion that I was being subtly, if unintentionally, misled.

The problem is that Boaz makes libertarianism sound too moderate. It isn't. This is no criticism of the philosophy itself: Something that's extreme is not necessarily false, but it's also not necessarily true. And there is a tendency among libertarians to believe that the more radical you are, the more pure and principled you are—and thus, the more correct you are. Libertarians can be as hostile to their own as they are to any social democrat or neoconservative. All political ideologies have moderate and hard line wings, but as a former orthodox libertarian, I can attest to the overwhelming purity policing within this movement. It can be nearly as rigorous as that of the hard left.

For instance, Boaz writes admiringly of our Constitution. He does not mention that there are plenty of libertarians, most notably the anarchist followers of the late economist Murray Rothbard, who believe that it is a document of oppressive statism. There are also plenty of libertarians who think that the Cato Institute, the think tank of which Boaz is executive vice president, is too soft on the issues. How does a libertarian decide whether Milton Friedman, who advocated a state-provided minimum income, is a "true" lover of liberty? Can a libertarian believe that some measure of tax-funded welfare is acceptable, as Friedrich Hayek did, without being a "statist"? How does one decide where to draw the line? Boaz does not equip his readers to handle these essential intra-libertarian conflicts.

It is their tendency toward radicalism that prevents libertarians from achieving the influence they desire. Even those who agree that the United States is overcommitted abroad are often allergic to the Blowback Theory of Islamic Terrorism, to which many libertarians subscribe. Boaz writes, for instance, that American "meddling in [the Middle East] from the coup against Iranian prime minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 . . . inflamed Islamic fundamentalists."

This tiresome invocation of Mossadegh must be challenged. The globalized jihad is primarily a Sunni Muslim enterprise. Someone really needs to ask why Sunni religious fanatics care that a secularist such as Mohammad Mossadegh was deposed in a country full of Shiites—whom they loathe and kill at every opportunity. It can't possibly be that Mossadegh, who called for the separation of mosque and state, is a symbol of affection for the Wahhabi movement. Nor can it be that Iranian Shiite radicals care much for Mossadegh's political legacy. One high-profile target of the Khomeini regime after the 1979 revolution was Mehdi Bazargan, a democrat who had run the National Iranian Oil Company under Mossadegh's premiership and who was briefly the country's prime minister after the shah's deposition.

Nor can it be that Islamic fundamentalists object to interventionist foreign policy, since they are never so comfortable as when they are fighting in foreign civil wars, from Afghanistan to the Balkans to Algeria to Syria. Nor can the problem be that the shah was a brutal dictator, since his Islamist successors have been even more disposed to tyranny and torture, as have their Sunni counterparts.

For a philosophy of individualism, libertarianism indulges in collective guilt on the international stage. If you believe that the state is the root of most problems, you will likely downplay individual agency as a factor in terrorism and extremism. Islamic terrorists, for instance, recently beheaded a Japanese journalist, whose nation's constitution, adopted after World War II, renounces war as part of its sovereign power. Can we really attribute this violence to "foreign policy"?

The desire for one neat answer can also mean sloppiness with details. Consider Boaz's:

> The huge diplomatic and military establishment that grew up during World War II and the Cold War refused to declare victory and return to peacetime status. Instead, the American military remained large and expensive.

This is true inasmuch as the American defense budget did not shrink to pre-1940s levels, but it is misleading in its evasion of the particulars. According to critics of the "military-industrial complex," crony business interests lead to the threat of inflation, which leads to ever-increasing defense budgets and contracts. But after the Soviet Union collapsed, American defense spending followed suit. Grumman, one of the leading aerospace contractors during the Cold War, had to cut thousands of jobs. The Central Intelligence Agency downsized. There was even talk of a "peace dividend" from which all sorts of beautiful things were supposed to happen now that Western budgets had been freed from Cold War exigencies.

Immigration is the libertarians' other weak selling point with the public. This is perhaps one reason Boaz doesn't mention it, not even in the

chapter called "Contemporary Issues." Most libertarians are open-borders fundamentalists, a stance that the average person does not assume without significant peer pressure. The more radical factions among libertarians don't think there should be borders at all, much less any that should be controlled or monitored. If, say, there existed a notional Country X, whose entire population believed in destroying individual liberty, and millions of citizens of Country X decided to emigrate to America, what would libertarians do? This is not as hypothetical a question as it appears.

Arguing that libertarianism has become increasingly popular, Boaz cites the declining support for central economic planning. He does not acknowledge (or, perhaps, does not realize) that socialism has pivoted from economics to culture. Most radical leftists these days don't care about nationalizing heavy industry; they are concerned mainly with putting traditional Western culture through a kind of Maoist struggle session. Since the libertarian theory of freedom is highly rationalist, based on axioms and syllogisms, its proponents are at a disadvantage against such irrational and illogical attacks.

That's why culture, often deftly avoided by free market thinkers, is so important to sustaining political liberty. Libertarians ignore just how much their philosophy derives from (and depends on) Western culture; thus they ignore how shifts in that culture affect the reception and survival of libertarian ideas. They tend to think that since libertarianism is logical and internally consistent, everyone will eventually accept it—a very Whiggish, and very dangerous, belief.

In his chapter on civil society, Boaz writes that the free market helps disparate cultures coexist peacefully through commerce. But the essential question remains: What if these cultures don't agree to have a free market? I don't doubt that what libertarians call the "nonaggression principle" is the best guide for our politics. But life is not mathematics, and no person or country can survive based solely on an abstract principle. ♦

B&A

Out of Louisville

An American flapper's transatlantic saga.

BY AMY HENDERSON

Emily Bingham begins the biography of her outrageous great-aunt by explaining, "The surest way to make a child curious about an ancestor is never to discuss her." Born in 1901 into the powerful Louisville family that owned the *Courier-Journal*, Henrietta Bingham rejected the genteel life of a Southern belle and embraced the new century's wild and crazy possibilities, spending her twenties and thirties "ripping through the Jazz Age like a character in an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel."

Henrietta Bingham and sculptor Stephen Tomlin (1928)

DORA CARRINGTON / FRANCIS PARTRIDGE / GETTY

Her great-niece found this "charming, tantalizing, maddening, and self-destructive force" an irresistible subject, and embarked upon serious biographical research when she discovered two steamer trunks of memorabilia and love letters tucked away in a Bingham attic. Carefully wrapped in ribbon, the love letters were from a remarkable array of 20th-century figures, exactly the fodder Emily Bingham needed to undertake an exploration of Henrietta Bingham's "irrepressible" life.

Irrepressible
The Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham
by Emily Bingham
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 384 pp., $28

A post-suffrage blithe spirit, Henrietta gleefully embraced Cole Porter's idea that "Anything Goes." She also had the money to pursue her ever-changing passions on both sides of the Atlantic. She was part of the Bloomsbury Group and had love affairs with several of them, including Dora Carrington and Clive Bell. In New York, she was entranced by the Harlem Renaissance and spent marathon evenings dancing, listening to jazz, and attending Broadway plays. In the mid-'20s she was often accompanied by John Houseman—at the time a struggling young English grain trader, later an iconic figure of the American stage and screen.

Houseman was overwhelmed by Henrietta, who seemed to know everyone, from jazz musicians and poets, to such theatrical stars as Katharine Cornell and Beatrice Lillie. He wrote that "we lived in a whirling state of conspicuous extravagance." When his family business was demolished by the 1929 crash, Houseman turned to the theatrical world he had been introduced to by Henrietta.

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In the thirties he became especially famous for his work with Orson Welles on radio's *Mercury Theatre* and then, in Hollywood, with *Citizen Kane*.

When they were dating, Henrietta once brought Houseman home to spend Christmas with her family—surely a sign, the Binghams whispered with relief, that she was going to settle down. Houseman felt drawn to, but daunted by, the family's enormous wealth: "I was living a dream . . . of riches, glamour, and unlimited opportunity." Henrietta was clearly her father's favorite, and as such, "the heiress-apparent to so much splendor."

What Houseman could not have known was how drastically Henrietta's father, Robert Worth Bingham, would react to his daughter's apparently serious intentions toward him. In 1925, her father offered her a deal: If she stayed in Louisville rather than return to New York, he would groom her to succeed him as publisher of the *Courier-Journal*. But Henrietta was incapable of making long-term personal or professional commitments. She seemed unable to shake the sense of impermanence fostered by an accident she experienced when she was 12, riding with her mother when their car collided with a train. Her mother was killed; Henrietta survived.

In his grief, Robert Worth Bingham came to depend on her as "the precocious companion whose reactivity roused him from grief." He remarried—this time a Standard Oil heiress—but his dependence on Henrietta's companionship never ceased. The father-daughter relationship "became a spinning merry-go-round . . . that sustained such a potent centrifugal force that Henrietta never stopped feeling its pull."

Between an abiding sense of loss over her mother's tragic death and the unrelenting pressure of her father's "pull," Henrietta resorted to constant movement—traveling and partying to break away. By the late 1920s she had turned away from both the Bloomsbury Group and Houseman and taken up with the tennis star Helen Jacobs. But the tide was turning against behavior that roared, and overt same-sex affairs were headlined as scandalous behavior. The 1930 Motion Picture Production Code reflected this cultural shift: Its first section announced that a movie had to depict "the correct standards of life" and traditional values. There were various prohibitions against licentious behavior, "sex perversion or any inference to it," and "lustful kissing." The proscription against homosexual behavior was beyond question.

For the Bingham family at large, Henrietta's life became increasingly troublesome as she continued her Jazz Age escapades long after everyone else had put their party hats away. She at least acceded to their wishes that she undergo psychoanalysis, and immersed herself in psychiatric treatment for decades. Her biographer writes that analysis provided a "safe place to explore these conundrums and a framework for understanding her drives and conflicts, but it did not banish the anxiety and depression that stalked her." Alcohol abuse and (prescribed) drugs compounded her downward spiral. Her difficult later life, punctuated by serious mental breakdowns, fostered the family's reticence about her very existence.

Luckily, Emily Bingham's curiosity has rescued this complicated creature from further entombment in the attic dust. She has crafted a narrative that wings along with the same kind of verve that catapulted her great-aunt through life, and while she admits that the "whole Henrietta remains out of reach," that is as it should be. Henrietta Bingham would not want to be pinned down, but "now she is without question extant. The trunk is open." ♦

B&A

A Friendly Society

Rescuing the Puritans from popular misperception.

BY MICAH MATTIX

It is often accepted without question that the New England Puritans were hardhearted religious fanatics who took pleasure in publicly humiliating each other and calling down damnation on the heads of heathens. In 1917, H.L. Mencken wrote famously that the Puritan was characterized by his "utter lack of aesthetic sense, his distrust of all romantic emotion, his unmatchable intolerance of opposition, his unbreakable belief in his own bleak and narrow views, his savage cruelty of attack, [and] his lust for relentless and barbarous persecution." In *The Crucible* (1953), Arthur Miller writes that the Puritans were a "sect of fanatics" who led a "strict and somber way of life" marked by "parochial snobbery" and "hard-handed justice." Margaret Atwood once remarked that her 1985 novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*—in which a ruthless theocratic government enslaves young women and forces them to have sex with its childless party elite—was her "take on American Puritanism."

Sympathetic Puritans
Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England
by Abram Van Engen
Oxford, 328 pp., $74

These caricatures have been regularly debunked by scholars. In his groundbreaking two-volume *New England Mind*, Perry Miller showed how the Puritans' fears and hopes shaped their "errand into the wilderness," and Charles Lloyd Cohen and Charles Hambrick-Stowe have argued that feelings were central to the Puritans' understanding of salvation and piety. Now, Abram Van Engen turns to the role of sympathy. Sympathy, or "fellow feeling," he argues, was central to the Puritan way of life. Not only was a spontaneous affection for fellow Christians viewed as a sign of salvation, but sympathy was also understood as the defining characteristic of a godly

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society. At the heart of John Winthrop's "city upon a hill," Van Engen writes, is "a vision for society in which reciprocal affections become fundamental to communal well-being."

Borrowing from both Erasmus and Calvin, Puritan sermons and commentaries argued again and again that sympathy—or an innate love of fellow Christians demonstrated, in particular, by a sensitivity to their suffering—"resulted from membership" in God's covenant community alone. Arthur Hildersham wrote that the "fruit" of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life was "sympathizing with the fellow-members of Christ's mysticall body." Likewise, the absence of such sympathy, John Preston warned, indicated spiritual death: "A living member, if the body be in danger, will have a sympathizing and feeling of the danger." But if not, "it is a certaine signe we are dead men." Paradoxically, such sympathy was also commanded. While sympathy did not extend to those outside God's community—"whosoever is Gods enemie, must also be ours," Richard Greenham wrote—God's children were regularly exhorted to love each other. Preaching on 1 Peter 3:8, Nicholas Byfield remarked, "The doctrine is cleer. That we ought to have a sympathie one towards another." Robert Bolton urged his readers to "make conscience" their sympathy. Puritan sermons often aimed at stirring the holy affections of congregants, and Van Engen writes,

> The imaginative work of sympathy, furthermore, constituted its own distinct practice. Puritan ministers instructed their parishioners to pray for others and provide physical aid, but before they acted, they had to be moved.

This helps explain why the Puritans, contrary to popular belief, were so expressive. When his wife was dying, John Winthrop was "weeping so bitterly," Van Engen writes, "she asked him to stop" because (in her words) "you breake mine heart with your grievings." When the Puritans fled England, and British soldiers separated children from their parents, William Bradford wrote that there was "weeping and crying on every side." Anne Bradstreet regularly refers to her "troubled heart," "sorrows," "cares," "fears," and "joy" in her poetry. One of the most popular poems of the early colony was Michael Wigglesworth's "The Day of Doom" (1662), in which he imagines the "weeping" and wailing of sinners but also the singing and "great joy" of God's elect at Christ's second coming. Van Engen writes that each instance of "tears and grieving, melting and weeping, pity and sympathy" in Puritan texts fits within "a broad tradition of Puritan fellow feeling."

'The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth' by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)

Read in this context, he argues, John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity* is very much a text of its time. Most people are familiar with this sermon only for Winthrop's use of the "City on a Hill" metaphor. What's often missed or ignored is that the defining characteristic of this new Promised Land, Van Engen writes, is not only its "careful obedience of covenantal laws," but also "and even more so through a charity enabled by the grace of Christ and lived out in the mutual affections of every member." Like other Puritans, in other words, John Winthrop was preoccupied with sympathy, which shapes "his vision for a new community."

Van Engen also reads the Antinomian Controversy and the Salem witch trials through the lens of sympathy. While the former crisis in the young colony is sometimes presented as dividing religious legalists and intuitive spiritualists like Anne Hutchinson, Van Engen argues that it was a debate about "the meaning and value of sympathy itself" and "what kinds of love could count as evidence of salvation." For Thomas Shepherd, John Winthrop, and the majority of Puritans, affection for fellow Christians was both a duty and a sign of salvation. The Antinomians that opposed them, Van Engen writes, "discounted such love and declared that only a personal experience of Christ's love could assure one of salvation."

This may sound like Van Engen is putting too fine a point on this early controversy: After all, the church leaders did regularly call on members to obey the Ten Commandments and follow the various New Testament exhortations. Yet, as Van Engen notes, for Puritans these "works" were meaningless if divorced from "proper affection."

Van Engen's overall argument here is that, contrary to the dominant narrative, the religious establishment did *not* defend a merely "outward moral duty," or define sanctification as "the moral behavior of the individual," as one scholar puts it. Rather, it defended a less "demanding" sign of salvation—that of love of neighbor rather than (as John Cotton insisted) some overpowering mystical experience of Christ's presence.

The importance of mutual affection, however, could be demanding in its own right, and tragically so. In Van Engen's account of the Salem witch

trials, which took place a little less than 60 years after the Antinomian Controversy, he highlights the role that sympathy played in convicting the supposed witches and in the willingness of the judges and townspeople to condemn their fellow citizens based solely on girls' testimonies that women in the community were supernaturally tormenting them. Because fellow feeling was an indicator of belonging to God's community, the women on trial were watched closely for how they responded to the girls' testimonies. Van Engen writes that the cool responses of Rebecca Nurse to the girls' sufferings were seen as damning: "If Rebecca Nurse could not weep with afflicted saints," he writes, "some Puritans could conclude, she must be rejoicing with the devil." She was eventually sentenced to hang. Conversely, with indifference being so costly, the townspeople had reason to show clearly that they were on the girls' side.

In many ways, the witch trials became the final word on the Puritans. Motivated, in part, by guilt for an ancestor's role in the trial, Nathaniel Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) presents them as a hard hearted, legalistic group. In a key scene at the beginning of the novel, the townspeople watch Hester Prynne step out of prison onto a scaffold with a 3-month-old child in her arms and a scarlet "A" on her chest. Her punishment for adultery is three hours on the scaffold and a lifetime wearing the letter; but a "hard-featured dame of fifty," standing with her friends in the crowd, complains that it's too light: "If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I trow not."

Other anti-Calvinists, in order to defeat original sin and predestination, Van Engen writes, "began to caricature Calvinism as rigorous, gloomy, heady, and heartless." Women writers such as Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Harriet Beecher Stowe rejected Calvinism as "immoral" because they believed, ironically, that it lacked "the sympathy . . . essential to forming ethical bonds." And so Calvinism "became characterized as an intellectual love of law and doctrine enforced through the fear of God and a terror of hell."

Like all societies at the time, the 17th-century Massachusetts Bay Colony enforced its laws—some of which concerned speech and religious belief—strictly. Heterodox Christians were expelled, and pagan natives were treated as enemies. But the colony also instituted the Massachusetts Body of Liberties, a distinctly modern code of law that protected many of the same individual rights later protected in the Bill of Rights. In short, the Puritans were not fanatics who had an unquenchable lust for punishment. And they were not hardhearted, either, as this fascinating, scholarly account of sympathy shows. ♦

B&A

Mom's the Word

How Whistler's portrait went from radical to iconic.

BY DANIEL ROSS GOODMAN

Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1' (1871)

Williamstown, Mass.

In 1851, a new novel by an American author was met with mixed reviews and a smattering of scorn. Its unconventional, digressive narrative style, perplexing subject matter, and backstory-less narrator baffled many contemporary critics and readers. Except for prescient reviewers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, the book—the long, meandering, heavily allusive work, which was scarcely thought to be a "novel"—was largely

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neglected. Its lack of popular success made the author despondent; his subsequent novels were likewise not warmly received, and he was compelled to support himself by working as a customs inspector.

He died in 1891, thinking of *Moby-Dick: or, The Whale* as a failure. But in the early 1920s, Herman Melville's monumental magnum opus was rediscovered and appreciated for what it was: nothing less than one of the first truly "modern" novels, and one of the greatest works of literature of all time. The same attributes that, in the 19th century, smeared the novel with the dyes of failure, coalesced in the 20th century—thanks to the flowering of modernism—to elevate *Moby-Dick* to the canon.

It is thus fitting that James Abbott McNeill Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1* (1871)—or *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, and better known as "Whistler's Mother"—spent this summer in the same western Massachusetts where Melville wrote *Moby-Dick*. Whistler's painting, accompanied by a small, exceptional exhibit about the artistic influences that contributed to its creation, was on view at Clark Art Institute in Williamstown—a short car ride away from Pittsfield, where Melville completed *Moby-Dick*.

"Whistler's Mother" is often thought of as a traditional painting—a Rothko or Pollock it is not—which makes it hard for us, in the 21st century, to imagine that "Whistler's Mother" was once regarded as a nontraditional, radically unconventional, work of art. Like *Moby-Dick*, its perplexing subject matter, unconventional pose, and general mysteriousness baffled many 19th-century critics and viewers. The seated posture of the mother—Whistler intended to paint her standing, but she became tired—disturbed purists; its virtually monochromatic palette disappointed viewers accustomed to the vivid colors of classical art. The unconventional geometric arrangement of the composition unsettled art connoisseurs. Critics bemoaned the "severity" of the composition and stated that the painting gives "offense."

"Whistler's Mother," and his other commercially unsuccessful paintings, did not allow the artist to escape his financial difficulties; he was forced to sell the painting, and he later declared bankruptcy. Whistler died in London in 1903, and never lived to see how his modest portrait came to be regarded as a quintessential example of early modern art.

"Whistler's Mother" was visiting us in New England from her home at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, where she has been since 1986. She has been in France since the early 1900s—"Whistler's Mother" was the first American painting to enter the Louvre—but seeing her surrounded by the green mountains and verdant valleys of northwestern Massachusetts made it seem as if this artistically historic region were her true home.

The unconventional geometric arrangement of the composition unsettled art connoisseurs. Critics bemoaned the 'severity' of the composition and stated that 'Whistler's Mother' gives 'offense.'

Her son James was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1834, and even though his mother Anna Matilda sat for her portrait in England, the spirit of the painting is inextricably linked to literary New England. Anna's austerity embodies the sternness of Starkfield, the setting for *Ethan Fromme*, which Edith Wharton created in nearby Lee. Anna's indomitable spirit harks back to Hester Prynne of *The Scarlet Letter*, which Hawthorne wrote in nearby Salem. And Anna's impenetrable mysteriousness evokes Emily Dickinson, whose aura still radiates outwards from nearby Amherst. Even the framed etching hanging on the wall behind the seated Anna evokes literary New England: The print, entitled *Black Lion Wharf*, depicts a bearded man in a boat on a busy dock, conjuring the whaling wharf of New Bedford that Melville immortalized in *Moby-Dick*.

There are few paintings more recognizable than "Whistler's Mother." Indeed, if any painting merits the term "iconic," this is it, for "Whistler's Mother" was literally used as a symbol in early-20th-century America. During the Depression, it was reproduced on postage stamps, and she came to symbolize American resilience, strength, and stability. "Whistler's Mother" became such an enduring source of national pride that one wonders how it came to be in France.

Arrangement in Grey and Black is not entirely in gray and black: Whistler's mother sits on a brown chair, the ring on her left pinky is golden, her left cheek bears a distinctly pinkish hue. Nonetheless, the title indicates that Whistler was more concerned with the painting's aesthetic qualities than its subject: The musical-themed titles that Whistler gave to this and other paintings ("nocturne," for example) reflect his attempts to endow his art with a musical sense of harmony and balance: "As music is the poetry of sound," he said, "so is painting the poetry of sight."

Stanley Kubrick, another American expatriate artist from the Northeast (New York) who lived the latter part of his life in England and died in London, conjured Whistler by creating *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) which, according to his biographer, would "succeed not on the level of cinema, but on the level of music." Like Kubrick's films, Whistler's paintings are essentially musical. To see "Whistler's Mother," to read *Moby-Dick*, to see Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)—another work of art that was baffling when first released but will one day come to be regarded as one of the greatest films of our time—is to see how the stones the builders reject become our cultural cornerstones. ♦

B&A

What Do *You* Know?

The implications of disrespecting Marilyn Manson.

BY JOE QUEENAN

It is often said that a little knowledge can go a long way, but I have not found this to be true.

In many cases, a little knowledge won't go anywhere. Frequently, when conversing with people who know a lot more about a subject than I do—whether the subject is jai-alai, exchange-traded funds, or contemporary Estonian choral music—I find that it is better to keep any knowledge I have under wraps. Because whenever I exhibit even a slight familiarity with the topic being discussed, the experts slap me down. In the presence of a Keeper of the Flame, it is better to pretend that I know nothing. Otherwise, I get treated like an idiot.

Last year, at a screening of a very fine film about Alice Cooper, I got into a conversation with one of the filmmakers on the subject of fame. I said admiringly that Alice Cooper had managed to remain a household name for around 40 years—"household name" meaning someone everyone had heard of—while fleetingly ubiquitous stars like Marilyn Manson and Paris Hilton and Boy George and Miley Cyrus commanded the spotlight for a couple of years, then vanished from the general public's consciousness.

It did not mean that they disappeared. It only meant that, unlike Elvis or Madonna or Michael Jackson or Frank Sinatra, who kept a stranglehold on the public's attention for their entire careers, these second-tier superstars eventually ceased to command center stage. Once the media lost interest in them, they went back to being renowned and revered inside their chosen fields of endeavor, but not outside it. Head bangers still talked about Marilyn Manson, sure; but the guy who takes care of my car didn't. My kids didn't. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as *Vanilla Icing*.

The director said that my take on Marilyn Manson's career was hopelessly wrong; his status as a colossus lasted for years. He added: "You should stick to being a sportswriter, because you can't get your facts straight." Neither could he; I am not a sportswriter. In my defense, I denied saying that Manson's career had flamed out after a couple of years; I merely said that his status as an object of global media fascination only lasted around that long. Unlike Mick Jagger or the Beatles—or, for that matter, Alice Cooper—Marilyn Manson never got to the point where my mother had heard of him. Manson strutted and fretted his hour upon the stage and then started appearing in *Sons of Anarchy*.

A lot of people reading this have never heard of Marilyn Manson. There is no shame in that. We are not talking about Marilyn Monroe here, much less Charles Manson. Still, I would have thought that my being 63 years old, and even vaguely aware of the arc of the macabre rock star's career, should have won me a few points with my heavy-metal filmmaker interlocutor. But it did not. The fact that I knew *something* about Marilyn Manson, but not *everything* about Marilyn Manson, made me seem like a clueless hick, a buffoon, a clown—a sportswriter.

Cognoscente condescension is a phenomenon I have encountered again and again in my life. This is the situation that obtains when a person who knows an enormous amount about a subject will go out of his way to make a person who knows a little bit about the subject feel poorly informed, perhaps even stupid.

You would think specialists in an area that is not universally appreciated—like contemporary Estonian choral music—or universally respected—like heavy metal—would welcome a kindred spirit who knows a reasonable amount about the art form they adore. But usually the opposite is true: Athletes treat the media with contempt; artists think the public is stupid; jazz musicians look down their noses at everybody.

Cultists are the worst. I once attended a Dave Davies concert in a small club where virtually the entire audience was made up of people who had come to see Davies not because he was the lead guitarist in the Kinks, but because they were hardcore *Dave-Davies-in-his-own-right* fans. As soon as it became clear to the people sitting around me that I did not own all of Dave's solo LPs, that I had not read his autobiography, that I had not attended his legendary July 22, 1995, concert at the Oakdale Theatre in Wallingford, Connecticut, they sneered at me. In their view, I knew nothing about Dave, nothing about music. I was a dolt, a nitwit, a rank amateur, a parvenu, a poser. I might as well have been wearing a Billy Joel T-shirt. That I even dared attend a Dave Davies concert displayed an arrogance beyond belief.

Once I was visiting Charles Baudelaire's tomb in Paris when a man came up and said: "That's not his tomb. It's his cenotaph. He's actually buried on the other side of the cemetery." And he led me off to inspect the great poet's final resting place.

The fact that I knew who Baudelaire was, and that I had sought out his tomb, and that I knew what fellow cemetery dwellers Guy de Maupassant and Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were famous for—not to mention Vincent d'Indy and Tristan Tzara and William-Adolphe Bouguereau—cut no ice with him. I was a rube. I was an unlettered moron. I was like the guy who didn't even know how long Marilyn Manson's incredible career lasted. I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

I should have been a sportswriter. ♦

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Chaos reigns in latest GOP undercard debate

EVENT RELOCATED TO NEARBY ARBY'S

Graham: 'I specifically asked for curly fries'

BY DAN HANSON AND LORIE BRYER

BROOMFIELD, COLO. — Because of a scheduling conflict inside the Coors Events Center in Boulder yesterday, the third GOP undercard debate was forced to move to an Arby's restaurant 12 miles away. Not all the candidates were immediately informed of the change, which led to a lengthy delay and a considerable lack of media coverage, although footage of the event can be seen on C-SPAN4. (According to officials at the events center, the space and time slot had been previously reserved for Pizza Expo 2015.)

But while Donald Trump, Carly Fiorina, and the rest of the first-tier candidates sparred before millions of viewers on CNBC, Lindsey Graham, Rick Santorum, Bobby Jindal, and George Pataki hashed out the issues in a corner booth crammed with trays of food. Former Virginia governor Jim Gilmore again did not qualify, despite offering to pick up the tab. (Gilmore live-tweeted the debate from a neighboring table.)

Lindsey Graham reacts with disappointment upon hearing from George Pataki that the Orange Cream Shake machine is broken.

"Let me guess," said George Pataki to Lindsey Graham. "You'd put your sister on the $10 bill." Sen. Graham laughed off the comment before noticing an error in his food order. "I specifically asked for curly fries—why else would you come here?" complained the senator before rising to fix his order. "I insist on my fries being straight," said Rick Santorum. "I don't think they were meant to be cut any other way." Gov. Gilmore chimed in, "I like the milkshakes," though no one seemed to acknowledge this.

Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal demanded consolidation. "We have more trays than we have space. Someone should give up their tray or maybe we can stack them." No one budged. (And no one seemed to notice there wasn't a moderator, which led to further incoherence.) "I'd like my Secret Service code name to be Nelson Rockefeller," said George Pataki.

"Are you folks done?" an Arby's employee soon asked the group. "Because we have a no-loitering

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the weekly Standard

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