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The Prosecutor Strikes Out

Last week's big stories tended to drown out another big story that should not go unnoticed. For the third time in eight months, a Baltimore police officer who had been tried in the death of Freddie Gray was acquitted of all charges. (A fourth policeman's case ended last December in a hung jury, with one juror holding out for conviction.) Baltimore state's attorney Marilyn J. Mosby is now 0-4 on Freddie Gray prosecutions, with three more to go, including a scheduled retrial of the case that ended in a hung jury.

If Mosby were any ordinary prosecutor, she might be taking some time now to consider her options. She has lost three bench trials and very nearly lost the one jury proceeding that ended in a mistrial. There is no new evidence or theory to be introduced in any future tribunal, and the judge in these recent cases has made it clear that he believes the state has failed to make the case to support its charges.

But Mosby is no ordinary prosecutor. Readers will recall that when riots broke out in Baltimore last year, after Freddie Gray's death, Mosby indicted the six police officers involved in Gray's arrest with unprecedented speed. At the time, there had been no official investigation of Gray's death while in police custody; there was even

lingering uncertainty about the cause of death. But in her statement, Mosby made it clear that her decision to indict was essentially a political decision designed to end the rioting: "I heard your call for 'no justice, no peace,'"



Mosby after mistrial, December 16, 2015

she declared at a press conference, and "your peace is sincerely needed as I move to deliver justice on behalf of" Freddie Gray.

It was a smart move—politically. Overnight, Mosby became a media sensation ("Marilyn Mosby's Amazing Press Conference," the *Washington Post*), and her glamorized image appeared in such unlikely venues as *Vogue*. The rioting and widespread vandalism in Baltimore did end with the arrest and indictment of the police officers, but at a certain cost. For not only did Mosby rush to judgment in the cases, she committed a common

error of ambitious prosecutors: overkill. The circumstances of the death of Gray, who suffered spinal injuries while being transported in a police van, were (and remain) ambiguous. But Mosby charged the cops with a wide variety and abundance of charges—from reckless endangerment to misconduct in office, from involuntary manslaughter to "depraved-heart" murder—clearly designed to convict them by any means necessary.

Now, one year later, it is clear that, while Mosby may have correctly read the mood of Baltimore's rioters, she clearly misconstrued the purpose of law. Indeed, the Baltimore trial judge, the Hon. Barry G. Williams, has grown increasingly exasperated with each succeeding case, explaining to prosecutors that the evidence consistently fails to support their charges.

THE SCRAPBOOK is more than willing to stipulate that Freddie Gray may have been a victim of injustice: Police misconduct is not a fantasy, and too often, prosecutors join with cops to squash cases. But one kind of outrage doesn't justify another. Marilyn J. Mosby's unseemly haste and vindictive action has not only been rebuked in the courts of law, but shines an unflattering light on the power of unprincipled prosecutors to do harm. ♦

The Ghost's Regrets

Donald Trump has been nominated and, who knows, may even be elected. Leaving us a last, forlorn hope that—following General Sherman's immortal formulation—he might choose not to serve. So we might as well get started with the recriminations and guilt. Whose fault is it?

Well, Tony Schwartz has stepped up and says he's willing to take the rap. He is, Schwartz confesses, the man who made Donald Trump. And who, you ask, is Tony Schwartz? The answer is . . . Trump's Boswell, if you go by the title of a *New Yorker* article writ-

ten by Jane Mayer. But that seems a bit fancy for the actual deed in question. The better description is that Schwartz was, once upon a time, Trump's ghost.

This is to say, Schwartz helped Trump write a book. And "helped" is probably selling Schwartz's efforts a little cheap. He says he actually wrote the book in question, that Trump was sort of a distracted bystander, and there is no reason not to believe him. Does anyone think that Trump—whose inability to stay focused on anything for more than three minutes is abundantly evident—could actually sit still and put words on paper, one after another, until there were

enough of them to make a book?

So give Schwartz the credit/blame he desires. He wrote the book. And which book might that be? It is, in fact, the one that could fairly be said to have launched the Trump enterprise: the one called *The Art of the Deal*. The one the nominal author calls, in a phone interview with Mayer, "one of the best-selling business books of all time. Some say it was the best-selling business book ever."

This—surprise, surprise—is not true. But then with Trump, one tends to discount all statements of fact. Even those that can be easily checked. You wouldn't

believe him if he told you the time.

Trump, unsurprisingly, insists to Mayer that while Schwartz was “very good . . . he didn’t write the book. I wrote the book. I wrote the book. It was my book. And it was a No. 1 bestseller.” Yeah, yeah.

The Donald’s lies about the book are as nothing when compared with the heavy burden of guilt that Tony Schwartz feels for having been his accomplice.

“I put lipstick on a pig,” Schwartz tells Mayer. Which sounds, more or less, like what ghostwriters are paid to do. And Schwartz was paid very well. He split a half-million-dollar advance with Trump, and they went 50/50 on the royalties, as well. Which turned out to be substantial. As Mayer writes, “More than a million copies have been bought, generating several million dollars in royalties.”

Blood money, as Schwartz now sees it. “I feel a deep sense of remorse that I contributed to presenting Trump in a way that brought him wider attention and made him more appealing than he is. . . . I genuinely believe that if Trump wins and gets the nuclear codes there is an excellent possibility it will lead to the end of civilization.”

To think that a mere ghostwriter could, with a few months of exceedingly lucrative hack work, bring on Armageddon. Only in America.

No, actually, make that . . . only in Donald Trump’s America. ♦

Cruz’s Moment

There was a remarkable moment on CNN July 21, the morning after Senator Ted Cruz’s speech to the Republican National Convention. Representative Peter King, a Trump enthusiast, had called Cruz an “a—hole,” and when CNN hosts asked Republican National Committee spokesman Sean Spicer about King’s comments, Spicer doubled down, saying, “I’d probably use the same verbiage.”

THE SCRAPBOOK certainly understands that there are those who think political conventions are supposed to be about unity and pageantry, and



HILLARY 2016

RAMIREZ

that Cruz violated those modern-day norms when he stood up in front of a national TV audience and gave a speech declining to endorse his party’s nominee. But this is Donald Trump we’re talking about—tact and civility and norms matter to him only on occasions when they align with his self-interest.

If anything, Cruz should be faulted for being too nice to Trump. Last fall, when Trump started to emerge as a political force, Cruz praised him repeatedly. While Cruz had his own interests in mind—along with everyone else, he likely expected Trump’s campaign to flame out and hoped to inherit his constituency—this no doubt helped to elevate Trump in the eyes of some voters.

However, that seems like eons ago. Once Cruz emerged as Trump’s major challenger, Trump christened him “Lyn’ Ted.” He didn’t just go after his rival, either. He called Cruz’s wife ugly and accused Cruz’s Cuban

refugee father of being in league with John F. Kennedy’s assassin. Many people were upset that Cruz decided to ignore his previous pledge to support the party’s nominee. Asked about it the morning after the speech, Cruz retorted that Trump abrogated any pledge of mutual support when he went after Cruz’s wife and father so viciously. Cruz has an excellent point, and it’s fair to say that a politician who won’t stand up for his own wife and father probably can’t be counted on to stand up for voters.

As for the speech itself, it’s worth looking at what precisely was so objectionable. What angered Trump supporters most, judging by the volume of boos, was not the lack of endorsement so much as Cruz’s plea for every Republican to “vote your conscience.” The full text of Cruz’s speech was released ahead of time, including that line, and no one thought it objectionable until people in the convention hall started booing.

Here's a handy rule of thumb: If someone says "vote your conscience" and you start booing, it's a good indication you should probably start searching yours.

There were credible reports that Trump functionaries actively whipped up the booing. Given that Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, previously specialized in lobbying for authoritarian thugs abroad, we have to consider the possibility that whipping up a hateful scene is something Manafort wanted to exploit. The problem is that once you loose that kind of hatred it proves hard to control.

We don't believe Cruz will necessarily derive political benefit from this episode. He has been fairly accused of excessive careerism in the past, but we have to credit the Texas senator for standing up for party and principle at a time when it seems to have gone out of fashion. ♦

There's No Business ...

The main tropes and mechanisms of "reality" television lend themselves awfully well to the world of politics. Just take *Survivor* (the groundbreaking series produced by Mark Burnett, who, tired of living in jungles while filming, would go on to create a New York-based show called *The Apprentice*). What is *Survivor* but an endless, ruthless game of badmouthing and backstabbing perpetrated by ever-shifting factions, with all that tiresome positioning punctuated by the occasional vote booting someone out of the game? In other words, politics. Given the similarities of the genres, it ought not come as a surprise that The Donald isn't the only reality TV performer to try to climb the greasy pole.

Ben Higgins made his name recently on one of the creepier reality shows, ABC's *The Bachelor*, where he whittled down the opening harem to now-fiancée Lauren Bushnell. (The scorned also-ran of that season, JoJo, is the current "Bachelorette," working her way through a herd of hunky suitors.) Higgins has another TV show in the works—he's said to

be filming, with his intended, a new series called *Ben and Lauren: Happily Ever After*, all about their life in Denver. It looks like that life will include Higgins on the campaign trail, as he has filed to run as a Republican for a seat in the Colorado house. He'll need all the celebrity he can muster, as northwest Denver's District 4 is solidly Democratic. Then again, he'll be running against an incumbent, Dan Pabon, who recently copped to driving under the influence. ("Is there any way we can avoid this possibility?" Pabon said, in best incumbent fashion, to the officer who stopped him back in March.) We'll see who Denver voters choose to give a rose to and who they send home.

Over in Oklahoma, Jet McCoy is running as a "Common Sense Conservative" for a seat in the state senate. McCoy and his brother appeared in three seasons of the CBS series *The Amazing Race*. (They were the rodeo-cowboy siblings with the cornpone propensity to say "Oh my gravy!")

Here's hoping he does better than Trump's frequent *Apprentice* hopeful, Omarosa, did when she tried her hand at politics. Two years ago she ran for a seat on the Los Angeles Unified School District board. The candidate who came out on top in the open primary won 44.3 percent of the vote. That wasn't Omarosa: She came in next to last with 5.3 percent. Though Trump repeatedly fired her on his TV show, Omarosa is now working for the Republican nominee as his director of African-American outreach.

Reality actors can make it. Way back in the 1990s, before reality TV had ossified into a string of predictable and excruciating conventions, Sean Duffy appeared on the MTV series *The Real World*. By 2002 he was appointed a district attorney in Wisconsin. And in 2010 he won election, as a Republican, to the House of Representatives. It's clear that he learned a skill on *The Real World* that he put to use recently: In declaring that Trump will "make America great again," he proved he has the ability to stand in front of a camera and say silly things without embarrassment. ♦

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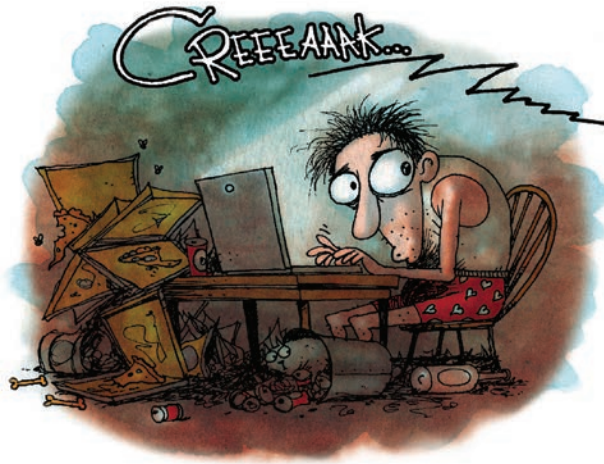
Home Alone

Each summer, my wife and children head up to Connecticut to spend a week with my in-laws. Believe me, I'd love to join them for a fun-filled week of swimming, cookouts, and cocktails—or as Jack Nicholson put it in *As Good As It Gets*, “good times, noodle salad.” Alas, I am stuck in our nation's capital (a lovely swamp this time of year) helping to put out this fine publication.

Now I know what you're thinking. A week without the wife and kids? No nagging, no hassling, no dishes to clean? I should be looking forward all year to this very moment—a return to bachelor bliss. And in many ways, I do. I'll happily fill out my social calendar with lunch and dinner engagements, catch up with old friends, and imbibe without the worries of inebriation interfering with parental duties. (On one *extremely rare* occasion, my wife asked me to do some bedtime reading with my son. A few minutes later she found him reading quietly to himself while I sat next to him, fast asleep. As one of my colleagues would say, “Father of the Year.”)

In a perfect world, I'd use the week to get work done. I would catch up on reading and write up a storm since I spend most of the year complaining I don't have enough time for either. But unsupervised, I might just as easily devour an entire pizza all by myself. (I'm reminded of the time, just after college, when my housemate Jose and I ordered the Kentucky Fried Chicken family meal deal—and split it between us.) I might lie on the couch and watch something awful, like the remake of *I Spit On Your Grave*. Worse, I might play a video game on the computer

and not notice I've been sitting in the same position for four hours, only to look up and discover I'm surrounded by darkness except for the glow of the screen. Having a family keeps these impulses in check—there's nothing more guilt-inducing than hearing your daughter say, “You're playing Civilization *again?*” I correct her mispronunciation of Civilization, but the embarrassment lingers.



Because I work in an office during the day, my wife oversees all domestic operations. Not only does she take care of the kids, cook, clean, and run the laundry, but she also tends the yard and schedules repairs and maintenance. (She was the first to notice the ceiling in our living room was on the verge of collapse. I, on the other hand, thought it simply needed a paint job.) She spends more time in the furnace area—what I think is technically known as “the scary part of the basement”—than I ever will. She changes the air filter and is able to notice, based on certain noises, if something is amiss with the hot-water heater or air-conditioning unit. I, on the other hand, will pretend not to hear those noises.

Except those noises seem to be amplified when I'm alone in the

house. And have you ever noticed those bangs and creaks sound 10 times louder at night?

A couple of years ago, as my family departed for their week in New England, I was left to deal with an unpleasant domestic task. I was informed by my wife that a snap-trap had been set up behind our garbage can and to be on the lookout for a dead mouse. Sure enough, I came home and found one. But it wasn't a clean snap. There were bloodstains on the tile floor. Then, as I made my approach, the mouse jolted. I jumped back and, with little time to waste, grabbed my nine-iron and proceeded to club the poor fella as if he were Joe Pesci at the end of *Casino*.

The next morning, while getting a haircut, I consulted my barber, Habib. “You must be merciful, my friend. You must do *this* to it!” he said, slamming his foot on the ground. “In Morocco, my father, he killed a rat as big as this” (he pointed to his forearm). “He trapped it in bathroom and killed it with chair. It screamed like baby.” He assured me I did the right thing, considering the circumstances. (Of course, Habib also knows how to slaughter his own lamb.)

By the middle of my bachelor week, I am eagerly awaiting the return of my family—and not just because the laundry is piling up. For me, the solitude is great for a day or two, but then I start to get anxious.

At church, there are petitions said for “the sick, the elderly, and shut-ins.” I'm pretty sure if I lived alone, I'd fall into that last category—like the old neighbor who stares out his window, terrified of the outside world. I'd be asking myself, “What was that noise? Is someone at the door? Did I really eat an entire pizza by myself again?”

VICTORINO MATUS

Who Lost NATO?

The American foreign policy community is up in arms because Donald Trump told the *New York Times* he is disdainful of NATO. They're right to be upset, but where were they when Barack Obama helped put Russia on NATO's Turkish border with his Syria policy?

The split looks partisan—Democrats criticize Trump on NATO and give the sitting Democratic president a pass—but just last week members of the foreign policy establishment on the left and right were giddy with excitement that the president of Turkey might be toppled in a coup, thereby throwing a NATO country into chaos.

So the NATO issue isn't about partisanship. Rather, it's evidence of the foreign policy community as a whole, right and left, coming unmoored.

For those who cheered the coup attempt, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is such a nasty piece of work (and make no mistake, he is) that anything is better than him in his palace in Ankara. It doesn't matter if the military overthrows a U.S.-allied government elected by the people; it doesn't matter how many of those

people die in the streets during a coup attempt; it doesn't even matter how the coup and the policies that follow might affect American interests—just hang Erdogan from a lamp-post and let the streets run with blood.

Some among the chattering classes here in the American capital even think it was a phony coup, that Erdogan himself engineered it to augment his power. In other words, Washington has become like a Middle East coffeehouse where overheated intellectuals rehearse conspiracy theories about how the world *really* works and to *whose* benefit it works.

The coup was real. It comprised a quarter of Turkey's military and very nearly succeeded. Erdogan's escape had more to do with luck than anything else. In the immediate aftermath, Secretary of State John Kerry opined that the coup plotters hadn't done a very good job, which further fueled a counter-conspiracy theory holding that the United States was behind the coup. It's nonsense, but the optics still aren't good. The man Ankara holds responsible for the coup, Fethullah Gulen, lives in the United States, where he has influence with lawmakers and helps shape American thinking about Turkish politics. The Turkish pilot who bombed the parliament building has reportedly found asylum in

Syria with the Democratic Union party, the Kurdish outfit that the White House sees as its main ally in the campaign against the Islamic State.

Kerry hinted that Ankara might be risking its NATO member status, but even if he were able to make good on his threats (he's not), it's hard to see why that would frighten Erdogan. NATO is a U.S.-led institution created during the Cold War to contain Soviet expansionism. But the way Ankara sees it, NATO is the means through which the Obama administration bullied Turkey to ignore its national interests in the Syrian conflict, which has destabilized the country and, as we saw last week, put his government at risk.

When the anti-Assad rebellion began in 2011, the White House contracted its Syria policy out to Erdogan, who tried to talk sense to his former friend the Syrian dictator. When Assad only amped up his war on peaceful protesters, Erdogan called for his ouster. As the war became bloodier and the refugee crisis created by Assad's campaign of sectarian cleansing worsened, the Turks wanted their NATO partner in Washington to

take the lead. In early 2012, then-foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu proposed a number of measures, including a buffer zone, a humanitarian corridor, and a reorganization of the Free Syrian Army. His American counterpart, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, told Davutoglu the Americans weren't "there yet."

In time, it became clear that the White House was not interested in forcing Assad from power no matter how strongly NATO partner Turkey made its case. Instead of worrying about Turkey's stability, the White House, as Obama later explained, had to respect Iranian interests in Syria. Since Assad was an Iranian client, the United States wouldn't touch him, lest it compel the Iranians to walk away from the nuclear negotiating table. The Syrian rebel fighters backed by the Pentagon were forced to sign a document promising they wouldn't use their arms to fight Assad, only Sunni jihadist groups.

Nonetheless, this hodgepodge of farmers, carpenters, and engineers—as Obama contemptuously referred to the rebel fighters—gained ground against Assad until Moscow escalated its presence in Syria last September to defend Assad. Russia thereby gained a base close to the



NATO headquarters, in 2004

Turkish border, where it flies missions in support of Syrian Kurds whose Turkish affiliate, the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), has been making war on Turkey for more than 30 years. That is, even before the White House proposed an intelligence-sharing program with Russia earlier this month, the White House has been partnering with Russia and the PKK, two Turkish adversaries, to the detriment of Ankara's interests. In August, Erdogan will become the second leader of an American ally, after Benjamin Netanyahu, forced to visit Moscow and petition Vladimir Putin for relief on its borders with Syria, because his NATO partner has left him no choice except to accommodate the interests of the country NATO was designed to contain.

The split between Erdogan and the White House is about Syria policy and nothing else. Obama now says he's worried about Erdogan's authoritarian tendencies, but when he first entered the White House and the Turkish leader was using rigged trials to send journalists and military officers to jail with fake evidence, Obama said nothing about Erdogan's creeping dictatorship. If Obama is unhappy with Erdogan these days, it's more likely because, on Syria, the Turkish leader was prescient and Obama was dead wrong. Indeed, should the next administration want to challenge Iran's position in Syria, it will be the NATO alliance with Turkey that has preserved options for the United States to protect and advance its regional interests.

So Trump has an alarming disdain for NATO? Well, then, he has learned at the feet of a master. Obama has made disdain for allies his trademark. It was Obama who tore up what he disparagingly calls the "Washington playbook" for foreign policy. When he decided not to make good on his promise to punish Assad for using chemical weapons—in violation of Obama's own red line—the president felt liberated. "There's a playbook in Washington that presidents are supposed to follow," Obama told the *Atlantic*. "And the playbook prescribes responses to different events, and these responses tend to be militarized responses."

What he meant by "playbook" is the foreign policy consensus built by the leaders of both parties, many of whom had witnessed the horrors of World War II firsthand and decided it would be best to avoid repeating them. As we are now coming to understand, that consensus was an achievement that nearly rivals our country's founding documents in its understanding of human nature, the American character, and the disposition of democracies.

Our foreign policy is best guided by simple principles not because Americans are simple-minded, but because we elect a new president every four years, and we need some measure of consistency. Washington's mandarin wannabes typically evince disdain for the supposed naïveté of U.S. foreign policy by complaining that we play checkers while our adversaries play chess. That's true, and it's how it was designed. George Kennan is known as America's premier Cold War strategist

for authoring a very long checker tutorial: Containment is played by moving this piece to that square, blocking another square, taking this piece of your opponent here, and ignoring those there. It doesn't matter if your opponent has a three-dimensional chessboard in his mind, if you have a nuclear arsenal, a blue-water navy, and the biggest economy in world history. If you don't win, it means either you really screwed up or you turned the board over.

Obama did the latter. And his "revolution" in American foreign policy was underway well before he let Assad off the hook. When the administration began its negotiations with Iran over its nuclear weapons program, it was effectively undoing the very substance of the American foreign policy consensus—the alliance system.

Lord Palmerston famously said that nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests. What else would you expect from a 19th-century British statesman whose neighbors on the continent were frequently at daggers drawn and within a century would destroy themselves in two wars? The same principle works for the Middle East, where states are pressed up against each other and riven by a host of rivalries. It doesn't work in the same way for America. Our neighbors are two friendly nation-states and lots of fish. It is through our allies that we keep the world relatively safe and sane, and the various arrangements and treaties, like NATO, that we make with them secure their place and ours in the world.

Our elders, our betters, understood that allies are not perfect, and sometimes worse. Obama complains that France, Britain, Germany, and Japan aren't pulling their weight on self-defense and military matters? One of the main points of the postwar consensus was to keep them in check and their militaries pointed at Russia rather than at us or at each other.

The Saudis have to share their region, says Obama. But Riyadh never wanted to run the Middle East—they're proudly a U.S. client state and have paid for the privilege with huge arms purchases and oil, which keep production lines open and Americans at work. So Obama calls them "free riders." Saudi Arabia *wants* Washington to dictate the order of the Persian Gulf, to protect its interests, which it at one time believed were in line with American interests.

But that's not how Obama sees it. The Iran deal is Obama's signature foreign policy initiative, and traditional American allies in the Middle East—Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, among others—have paid a high price for it. Europe is paying a high price for it in the unchecked flow of refugees and a freer hand for Russia to make mischief. So will America; it already has. What happens when you turn over the checkerboard? Pandemonium. That's why there's a fight over NATO. And that's why the foreign policy establishment has lost its mind. Its rage at Trump's dangerous NATO speculations would be easier to stomach if it had ever managed even a peep of criticism at the chaos unleashed by Obama.

—Lee Smith

Remember Freedom?

‘A vote for anyone other than Donald Trump in November is a vote for Hillary,’ the governor of Wisconsin has spent the week of the Republican convention robotically repeating. “It’s a binary choice,” the speaker of the House keeps on telling us, in his less colloquial, more game-theoretical language.

This is all nonsense—rationalization masquerading as realism, sophism disguised as sophistication. “A vote for anyone other than Donald Trump” is . . . a vote for anyone other than Donald Trump. And our choice need not be, and is not in truth, a binary one; that we must choose between the two nominees of the major parties is required neither by the Constitution nor the laws of the land, nor is it the truth of what we will see on our ballots this November. Indeed, there is no legal requirement, there is no moral obligation, there is no civic duty to vote for every office on the ballot or to vote at all. Nor should there be. This is a free country.

Not that you would know this from the Republican convention, and not that you will learn it from the Democratic convention. What happened to freedom? Freedom—heretofore thought a rather central component of the American dream—is barely visible in the visions of both parties.

Yes, we know: It’s too simple to say that America is only about freedom. It’s important to understand that there are other good and important things besides freedom. We know freedom isn’t everything. But it’s an awfully important thing.

Neither of the major parties’ 2016 presidential nominees is much of a votary of freedom. One is an old-fashioned authoritarian demagogue. The other is a modern nanny statist. The Republican nominee cares about the art of the deal, not the arts of free government. The Democratic nominee believes it takes a village to secure our rights, not that it takes free men and women assuming responsibility for their fate.

Neither has much sympathy with Tocqueville’s sentiment, expressed near the end of *Democracy in America*: “I would, I think, have loved freedom in all times; but I feel myself inclined to adore it in the time we are in.” Neither Trump nor Clinton adores freedom. Neither loves it. Neither much respects it.

Perhaps we shouldn’t be too surprised. A lasting dedication to the cause of freedom is rare on the part of nations. An elevated taste for the exercise of freedom is rare on the

part of individuals. And so, in America in 2016, we have two non-freedom-loving nominees supported by two relatively indifferent-to-freedom political parties.

But we needn’t support either of them. We are free to ignore the rationalizations and the sophisms of the politicians. We are free to make the case for freedom and to advance its cause. For if we owe allegiance to any party, surely it is the party of freedom.

—William Kristol

Al Qaeda in Iran

Last week, President Barack Obama’s administration dismissed reports of Iranian support for al Qaeda as the product of fevered minds. Claims of collaboration between the Islamic regime and the terrorist organization are little more than “baseless conspiracy theories,” an Obama administration official told *THE WEEKLY STANDARD*. “Anyone who thinks Iran was or is in bed with al Qaeda doesn’t know much about either.”

That group of ignoramuses apparently includes the Obama administration’s top official on terror financing. Adam J. Szubin, the Treasury Department’s acting under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, this week designated three senior al Qaeda officials operating in Iran. A statement explaining the designations says Treasury “took action to disrupt the operations, fundraising, and support networks that help al-Qaida move money and operatives from South Asia and across the Middle East by imposing sanctions on three al-Qaida senior members located in Iran.”

One of the three operatives is part of a “new generation” of al Qaeda leaders, replenishing the ranks of those who have been killed by the United States and its allies. Treasury identifies that man, Faisal Jassim Mohammed al-Amri al-Khalidi, as the chief of al Qaeda’s Military Commission and a key operative in al Qaeda’s global network, responsible for weapons acquisition and a liaison between al Qaeda leaders and associated groups.

This is not the first time the Obama administration has targeted the Iran-al Qaeda relationship. The Treasury and State Departments publicly accused the Iranian regime of allowing al Qaeda to operate inside Iran at least 10 times between July 2011 and August 2014. Testifying before Congress in February 2012, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper described the relationship as a “marriage of convenience.”

There is considerably more evidence of Iran’s support for al Qaeda in the collection of documents captured during the raid of Osama bin Laden’s compound on Abbottabad, Pakistan, in 2011. Senior U.S. intelligence officials

have told THE WEEKLY STANDARD that the document collection includes letters describing the nature of the relationship between Iran and al Qaeda and specific ways in which Iran has aided al Qaeda's network and operations. The Obama administration has refused to release the documents to the public and fought to keep them hidden during the negotiations over the Iran nuclear deal.

THE WEEKLY STANDARD contacted the Obama administration official who last week dismissed Iran-al Qaeda cooperation to see if the new designations changed his view that claims of Iranian support for al Qaeda are "baseless conspiracy theories." He replied: "Al Qaeda has long used Iran as a transit and facilitation point between South Asia and the Middle East, sometimes with the knowledge of some Iranian authorities. At the same time, the Iranian government has imprisoned some al Qaeda operatives, and we believe today's action provides another opportunity for Iran to take action against al Qaeda."

Think about that for a moment. The Obama administration accuses Iran of harboring senior al Qaeda operatives and sanctions those operatives in an effort to prevent them from hurting America and its interests. But rather than scold Iran for continuing to provide safe haven to terrorists devoted to killing Americans, the administration spins the move as an "opportunity" for Iran.

An opportunity? Why would the Iranian regime need

the U.S. government to provide an "opportunity" to take action against the very terrorists it has been supporting for more than a decade? This is illogical, insulting, and dangerous. But it is consistent with the kind of irresponsible whitewashing of the radical regime that has become a trademark of the Obama administration's approach to Iran.

The Obama administration provided Iran with billions of dollars through the nuclear deal despite having evidence in its possession that the country was providing safe haven to senior al Qaeda terrorists and despite acknowledging, publicly, that some of those funds would be used for terror. The administration kept secret crucial details of the agreement from Congress, concessions that the Iranians are now citing, convincingly, as evidence that they fleeced the United States and its partners. The administration withheld from the public and from Congress documents from the bin Laden raid that make clear the extent of the support Iran has provided al Qaeda over the years.

And now the Obama administration pretends that another public accusation of Iran's complicity in al Qaeda's terror is just an "opportunity" for the terror-sponsoring regime to stop doing what it is committed to doing?

Iran's support for al Qaeda is not a "baseless conspiracy theory." It's a dangerous reality.

—Stephen F. Hayes & Thomas Foscelyn

Both Parties Must Focus on Economic Growth

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In many ways, the national parties' conventions are splashy affairs, featuring headline-grabbing speeches by a who's who of national leaders and the presidential nominees. A less glamorous but often more enduring function of the conventions is formalizing the parties' platforms. Though these ideas are not binding, and they are sometimes ignored by the candidates, they telegraph the parties' priorities and vision for the future of our country.

Unfortunately, neither platform—Democratic or Republican—puts a strong enough emphasis on helping Main Street and accelerating economic growth.

The Democrats' platform includes a predictable grab bag of the kind of government-directed economic policies that have kept our economy stuck in second gear. The party wants to expand Social Security and proposes a tax increase on our most

productive citizens to pay for it. It supports a financial transaction tax—which was President Hoover's failed "solution" to the Great Depression. It renews calls for a national \$15 minimum wage, even though history shows that mandatory wage hikes price many low-skilled workers out of the job market.

The Democrats also want to double-down on two of the most dramatic and flawed Washington power-grabs to come out of the current administration: Obamacare and the Dodd-Frank financial reform law. Most troubling, there's hardly any mention of the dire need for greater economic growth in the entire draft document.

There are big problems with the Republican platform too. It calls for revival of the Glass-Steagall Act, another Depression-era policy to break up banks that would undermine diversity in the U.S. financial system. The platform opposes congressional votes to advance free trade agreements during the lame duck session, posing a threat to the sweeping new deal with the Asia-Pacific. And the platform moves the

party away from its historic vigorous support for sensible trade and immigration policies.

The U.S. Chamber doesn't weigh in on presidential politics—meaning we won't endorse one candidate over the other. But we do engage in the presidential policies that affect employers and entrepreneurs creating opportunities across the nation. And we have a clear message to both parties and their candidates: If you want to succeed, you must focus on growth.

Policies that perpetuate 2% or lower growth are bad for the country and will make it harder for our leaders to do their jobs. But being focused on growth will help them accomplish other priorities such as infrastructure investment, education reform, and wage growth. And, by the way, a robust economy might put American voters in a better mood—which could come in handy when the next election rolls around!



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Village Idiocy

Hillary Clinton's opus reconsidered.

BY ABBY W. SCHACHTER



Hillary on tour in Los Angeles, February 7, 1996

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hillary Clinton's *It Takes a Village*, and given what's written there, Clinton must be sorry she isn't running for president of Scotland. After all, the Scots have been rolling out a law that implements much of her argument, namely that government—or “the village,” as she quaintly keeps calling it—has to do more of the job of helping to raise “our” children.

Scotland's “named person” law empowers the government to designate someone as the nonfamily representative of every child from birth to 18 years of age, in order to ensure their proper growth and development. And yet even without such extreme legislation here, reading through Clinton's laundry list of social reforms for the

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betterment of all children, you have to be impressed at how much of what she recommended in 1996 has actually happened since then.

“Studies confirm the importance of breast-feeding infants,” Clinton wrote. And lo, two decades later, hospitals have practically banned swag bags of baby formula, and some only dispense formula reluctantly, as if it were the narcotic Percocet, while simultaneously showing lactation consultants at every mother who gives birth. The federal government has changed the rules for recipients of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Infants (WIC) to extend much more comprehensive food benefits, with greater quantity and variety, for those who breastfeed, and Obamacare mandates employers set aside a space for breastfeeding employees.

“The case for quality early childhood education and programs like Head Start is stronger than ever, and we should be expanding them,” Clinton wrote. And expand they have.

When the book was written, Head Start was reaching 750,000 children on a budget of \$3.5 billion. Last year it served one million kids with a total budget of \$7.8 billion. Early childhood education has become such a dogma among the “village” elders that President Obama suggested there be a universal system for 3- and 4-year-olds in his last State of the Union.

Of course, there's less talk from Clinton—then and now—about whether we would feel a need for such early childhood enrichment and school readiness programs if the public school system were doing a better job of educating kids. The other fact that Clinton hasn't discussed recently is how the families for whom she professes her greatest love—the children of the poor and working class—are often priced out of licensed day care thanks to two decades of steady government pressure to “enrich” programming, professionalize early childhood education, and regulate providers—especially when it comes to health, hygiene, and safety—which have sent costs skyrocketing.

Health care has got to be the biggest accomplishment Clinton can claim, since many of her recommendations for prenatal and preventive care, her argument in favor of insurance companies accepting preexisting conditions, her insistence that the system be redesigned to keep costs down while expanding coverage to the uninsured were indeed the promise of Obamacare. Of course, the reality is quite different as a majority of Americans dislike the new system, many have lost their coverage, insurance companies are backing out of the marketplaces, and there is even greater pressure from the left to just do what “should” have been done in the first place: single-payer. Funny how Clinton never used the collapse of Vermont's single-payer state system against Bernie Sanders.

Not everything Clinton advocated has gone her way. “A decade of new research confirms that heavy exposure to violent and sexually explicit media triggers unhealthy responses from boys and girls alike, but we don't yet know the full effects of all this technology on

AP / FRED SAXON

our kids,” she wrote for the tenth anniversary edition of the book in 2006, when she was senator from New York. Her proposed legislative solution—the Children and Media Research Advancement Act—“would coordinate and fund new research into the effects of viewing and using electronic media, including television, computers, video games, and the Internet on children’s cognitive, social, physical, and psychological development.”

The legislation never made it past the Senate, and yet it typifies Clinton’s mode of argument throughout much of *It Takes a Village*. She takes a serious subject—in this case the potential harm to kids from popular culture and media—and, based on a selective understanding of scholarly research, she insists that there can be a solution and, as is so often the case for her, that the government should impose the remedy.

Her uncritical reliance on supposedly scientific discoveries about child development, psychology, and neuroscience is all the more shocking when you realize that there are already abundant examples of failure by policymakers attempting to convert the latest “science” into action. When legislators and regulators try to take a discovery and turn it into a uniform policy for the betterment of us all, the mistakes, inefficiencies, and costs can be astronomical. And often the solutions create more problems than they solve. For 30 years, the U.S. government went on a crusade against the use of butter, owing to the supposed “dangers” of saturated fats. But they were wrong about the dangers, and the heavy-handed nutritional guidance that resulted was arguably worse for our health than traditional ways of eating.

On the other hand, can we really object to her premise? “We all depend on other adults whom we know—from teachers to doctors to neighbors to pastors—and on those whom we may not—from police to firefighters to employers to media producers to political leaders—to help us inform, support, or protect our children.”

I’m a mother of four kids and of course I want to protect my children

and of course I want them to grow and thrive. Of course I want the surrounding community and the nation as a whole to support my values and my efforts. Every other parent I know feels the same, regardless of our differences over how to achieve those aims. What makes Clinton’s vision so distasteful is how unrealistic and overbearing she is. For Clinton, the outcomes of not agreeing with *her* and not doing what *she* recommends are dire indeed. She warns,

The consequences are there for any of us to see: children’s potential lost to spirit-crushing poverty, children’s health lost to unaffordable care, children’s hearts lost in divorce and custody fights, children’s futures lost in an overburdened foster care system, children’s lives lost to abuse and violence, our society lost to itself as we fail our children.

The other failure of Clinton’s vision is that while she takes care to say that parental authority should be respected, she then goes on at great length to detail the many ways in which the “village” should help mom and dad raise their kids. But of course, she isn’t really talking about a village, in which people are more or less equals, able to pitch in together but also, just as important, to ignore the nosy neighbor with the crackpot ideas.

Her “village” is government, which does not involve itself in families as a helpful equal but as an authority figure with coercive power at its disposal. She can never bring herself to admit that parents often know far better than government what their children need to thrive and that what parents most need from government is that it leave them alone. ♦

Cruising for a Bruising

The perils of dropping off the team.

BY FRED BARNES

Politics is a team sport. Ronald Reagan understood that. Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell treat politics as a team effort. Ted Cruz isn’t a team player.

The difference between Cruz and most Republican leaders is important. Cruz’s speech at the GOP convention in which he declined to endorse Donald Trump is an example of his approach to politics. He explained his refusal by saying he wouldn’t be a “servile puppy dog” for Trump.

But he wasn’t being pressured to be craven or fawning, much less servile. Ryan and McConnell have endorsed Trump despite disagreements on

policy and probably a good bit more. They didn’t grovel. Nor did Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin or scores of other elected Republicans. Many of them have qualms about Trump’s readiness to be president.

An endorsement is a party obligation, not a blessing. It generates unity, which a political party needs to be successful. Divided parties are vulnerable. And Cruz’s dissent is bound to have a disuniting effect, one that could have consequences on November 8.

The reason is simple. The better Trump does as the Republican presidential nominee, the better GOP candidates are likely to do in down-ticket races. And if Trump defeats Hillary Clinton, other Republican candidates are likely to win too. Widespread

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ticket splitting, once common, is a thing of the past.

Should Trump lose, he'll bring some GOP candidates down with him. What's worse, if he is crushed in a landslide, Republicans will lose control of the Senate, perhaps the House, at least a handful of governorships, and numerous state and local offices. It would be a disaster as big as the Republican collapse in 1964, when presidential nominee Barry Goldwater lost to LBJ, 61 to 39 percent.

A landslide wouldn't be Cruz's fault, but he might be blamed for a narrow Trump loss. True, he hasn't ruled out endorsing Trump at some point. But if he does, it will lack the dramatic impact his refusal had on the convention crowd and a national TV audience.

Trump had invited Cruz to speak at the convention, guessing the Texas senator would provide an endorsement in one form or another. He didn't come close. He congratulated Trump for winning the nomination, then failed to mention him again.

Instead, Cruz said this near the end of his speech: "To those listening, please, don't stay home in November. Stand up and speak, and vote your conscience, vote for candidates up and down the ticket who you trust to defend our freedom."

In his speech, Cruz denounced President Obama and Hillary Clinton and their policies. "There is a better vision for our future," he said, "a return to freedom." At some length, he outlined his views—as if he, rather than Trump, had won his party's presidential nomination. It was presumptuous and self-indulgent.

House Speaker Ryan had spoken the day before Cruz. "Democracy is a series of choices," he said. "We Republicans have made our choice. Have we had our arguments this year? Sure we have and you know what I call those? Signs of life. . . . Next time that there's a State of the Union address . . . you'll find me right there on

the rostrum with Vice President Mike Pence and President Donald Trump."

Ryan didn't have the prerogative of dismissing Trump. Ryan is responsible for the political lives of 247 Republicans in the House, at least those running for reelection. This

Cruz denounced President Obama and Hillary Clinton and their policies. 'There is a better vision for our future,' he said, 'a return to freedom.' At some length, he outlined his views—as if he, rather than Trump, had won his party's presidential nomination. It was presumptuous and self-indulgent.



Even if it isn't true, it looks that way.

makes him the leader of the Republican team in Congress. Their survival as a Republican majority is his principal mission.

Months before Trump locked up the nomination, Ryan and House GOP leaders decided to create a conservative agenda that Republican candidates could run on—regardless of who won the nomination. This creates the option of pursuing a parallel campaign that has turned out to be a godsend to candidates in districts—the suburbs, for instance—where Trump, his style, and his ideas are unpopular.

This agenda is focused on six issues: health care, tax reform, poverty, national security, the Constitution, and the economy. Legislation is being developed on all six.

Ryan delayed for weeks, but felt as speaker he had to back his party's nominee. Cruz had no such limitation. Whatever his calculation, it was mistaken. Charles Krauthammer declared his speech "the most public suicide note in American history." Indeed, it may have been.

If Trump loses to Clinton, it's not likely to elevate Cruz to the frontrunner for the 2020 Republican nomination. He will have too many enemies. Trump and his followers will still be around. They'll be angry at Cruz. And Trump will continue to be a fixture on TV, commenting on everything. He'll find time to attack Cruz. His fans will be active online. They'll tweet furiously. It will never stop.

Fair or not, Cruz will be seen by the Trump constituency as a spoiler. Yes, he had been provoked by Trump during the primaries. Trump criticized his wife and linked his father to the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas—inexcusable insults. But politically speaking, Cruz would be better off having been less public with his non-endorsement. He could have disclosed it in a venue other than a convention filled with Trump's most fervent supporters. Or he could have said nothing.

There's a loose historical precedent for Cruz's defiance of his party's nominee. In 1964, New York governor Nelson Rockefeller shunned Barry Goldwater, the GOP nominee. Richard Nixon, who'd lost to JFK in the 1960 race, endorsed Goldwater and campaigned for him.

Both Rockefeller and Nixon wanted to be president. Nixon was elected in 1968. Rockefeller became Gerald Ford's vice president in 1974, by appointment. Knowing a lot of Republicans didn't want him on the ticket, he withdrew from consideration before Ford ran for reelection. ♦

The End of the Beginning

Now comes the hard part for Brexiteers.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD



It was the mayhem that made Theresa May. Britain's unexpected vote to leave the EU crushed financial markets and plunged some Remainers into angry, unhinged, and tellingly snobbish mourning: It was, one author explained, "the revenge of the Brownshirts, a dictatorship of the illiterate and the opportunistic." The political class went into shock. Prime Minister David Cameron decided to quit, as, confusingly, did the leader of the Euroskeptic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). The Labour party resumed its civil war, and the Tory contest to succeed David Cameron veered wildly

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off course, culminating in the defeat of a lightweight Leaver by May, Cameron's long-serving home secretary. May was a Remainer but widely credited with the safe pair of hands a nervous nation craved.

Dour and quiet, a gradualist, Theresa May shouldn't be underestimated. An effective bureaucratic in-fighter, she celebrated her appointment as prime minister with the most brutal ministerial reshuffle in recent British political history. Scores were settled, and not without—Britain being Britain—a hint of class warfare. Most important, May signaled this was *her* government, not Cameron 2.0.

She won't be Maggie 2.0 either. Mrs. Thatcher was more pragmatic than the legend goes, but at her core she was a classical liberal wrapped in

patriotic, traditionalist guise. May's views are hard to pin down, but they are possibly rather closer to continental Christian Democracy. Her response to enthusiasm for Brexit amongst Britain's blue-collar "left behinds" included talk of an "industrial strategy," hardly the language of *laissez-faire*.

More generally, May is less fussed with the sovereign individual or, for that matter, the sovereign nation. She struck a blow against both when she corralled the U.K. into the EU's notorious arrest warrant regime. But she's no Eurofundamentalist: Her (understated) role in the Remain campaign owed more to political calculation and risk aversion than any embrace of the European ideal.

If May resembles any prominent female leader in method, ideology, and personality, it's Angela Merkel, another undemonstrative and authoritarian clergyman's daughter with no great fondness for boys' club politics. That *might* help Britain cut a decent deal with the EU, the decent deal on which the success of the May premiership will depend, the decent deal that has yet to be defined.

A Remainer needing to reassure Leavers, May has promised that "Brexit means Brexit," whatever that means. Forced into the referendum's crude binary, Britons chose to quit the EU, nothing more, nothing less. Their vote said nothing about how. The best way out, if it's available (and in the end, it probably would be), is some variant of the much-misunderstood status known as the "Norway option." This would allow continued participation in the EU's "single market," via membership (like that enjoyed by Norway) in the European Free Trade Association. As a reminder, the EU takes over 40 percent of the U.K.'s exports in goods and services, including those of Britain's vital financial sector.

Such access would come at a price, including, critically, the U.K.'s commitment to the EU's rules on free movement of people within the European Economic Area (EEA), the territory in which the single market applies. That's a highly sensitive

THOMAS FLUHARTY

topic, given the degree to which alarm over immigration boosted the Brexit cause. The Norway option does, however, provide for an “emergency brake” on inflows of people from elsewhere in the EEA, which might, properly sold and properly applied, soothe voter concern.

It’s a solution, polling suggests, that would win the support of a plurality of Brits, if not most Brexiteers. It would play well in restless Scotland (where 62 percent voted to stick with the EU). As a package deal, “Norway” is reasonably straightforward and, crucially, can be implemented relatively quickly, minimizing any Brexit-related hit to investment in the U.K. It could be either a final destination or a convenient way-station along the route to a more definitive break with the EU.

But when May’s team talks about winning access to the single market, it does so in a way implying a tougher line on immigration. That will be a difficult deal to secure. To be sure, mutual self-interest argues for a compromise (the U.K. is a large market for the EU), but, as the Swiss (who have their own separate arrangement with the EU) are learning, the EU is reluctant to give ground on free movement, a principle central to its sense of itself. There are also fears that too gentle a divorce might tempt other less enthusiastic EU member-states to follow Britannia’s lead.

There are other alternatives, such as a bespoke “customs union” with the EU, and one better surely than Turkey’s, if still far short of the single market. David Davis, May’s Brexit minister, seems remarkably sanguine. He has even argued that “in the improbable event of the EU taking a dog in the manger attitude” to British access to the single market, he could live with a “hard Brexit”—trade with the EU under World Trade Organization rules. I’ll spare you the technicalities, but let’s just say that those rules are less favorable for exporters than usually understood. Even then, it will not be as easy for Britain, which currently dwells in the WTO under the EU umbrella,

to take advantage of WTO rules as many Brexiteers believe.

It’s true that, once out of the EU, Britain will be able to conclude its own trade deals with the rest of the world, but such agreements typically take years to finalize. And the U.K. has to quit the EU before it can sign (or, strictly speaking, even talk about signing) anything. So far it hasn’t even initiated the exit procedure. That involves giving notice under Article 50 of the EU treaty. The U.K. and EU will then have two years to agree on the technical details of their separation. If it intends to avoid the hardest of hard Brexits, Britain will also have to agree on its new trading arrangements with the EU *at the same time*, a tall order, and one not provided for in Article 50—something else that points to Norway, at least as an interim measure.

Keen to end the uncertainty and, doubtless, to exploit the edge that a fixed timetable brings, the EU wants to start the clock. It won’t agree to formal discussions beforehand. Britain, however, insists that it has to decide what it wants from Brexit first. This stalemate could quickly turn nasty. Nevertheless, London won’t trigger Article 50 before 2017. Elections in France and Germany that year won’t make matters any easier.

No one really knows what comes next, but May’s team has begun to take soundings abroad and, I assume, is calling in the experts (to the extent that they exist) at home. The need for the former is obvious; the need for the latter is pressing. The Cameron government blocked the civil service from considering any serious contingency plans for Brexit, and, with some notable exceptions in think-tank land and, yes, the blogosphere, most leading Brexiteers, including Davis, have been just about as cavalier. There is no plan. To pull a Melania on Otto von Bismarck, putting one together will be a matter of “the art of the possible . . . the art of the next best.” Discovering the possible may be a rude awakening for some Brexiteers. The “next best” might even turn out to

be located somewhere near Oslo, particularly if there are signs of sustained economic weakness.

The domestic politics of Brexit should be easier to navigate for now, despite May’s narrow parliamentary majority. The next general election is not due until 2020. Helpfully for May, Labour is still preoccupied with a probably doomed attempt to unseat its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, a man almost certainly too left-wing and too strange to make it to 10 Downing Street. Meanwhile, with Brexit underway, the Conservatives need fret less about UKIP, their bugbear of the last decade: Busily reinventing itself as the party of the “left behinds,” UKIP is increasingly focusing on Labour.

Wisely, May is courting the independence-minded Scots, though it’s far from a given that Brexit means Scexit. To start with, Spain (worried about secessionist Catalonia) will block Edinburgh’s path to Brussels. And even if it didn’t, the EU would be a less attractive safe haven for mutinous Scots than is often imagined, involving as it would the prospect of austerity (low oil prices haven’t helped Scotland’s shaky finances), the euro, and tariff barriers with the rest of the U.K. But Scotland is not the only place where the U.K.’s Celtic fringe may be fraying. In Northern Ireland, somewhere that no British prime minister can comfortably ignore, nearly 56 percent voted for Remain.

British voters rejected Brussels for any number of reasons but, above all, they wanted their country back. The difficulties (many more than I have mentioned) associated with Brexit are the result of over 40 years of entanglement in an “ever closer union,” an entanglement that was only going to get worse. They are confirmation that Britain is leaving not a moment too soon. But that will be cold comfort if the consequences drag the economy down for any length of time. If the mechanics of exit are mishandled, they will. Britons have voted for Brexit, but the intricate, painful, and dangerous job of carrying out their wishes has barely begun. ♦

Unhappy Anniversary

Obama's deal with Iran looks worse and worse.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

Ayatollah Khamenei, the “Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution,” commemorated the end of Ramadan with a lengthy anti-American, antisemitic screed. Khamenei has repeatedly accused the West and Israel, rather than Muslim-majority forces, of sponsoring violence in the region, and the title of his sermon, “American, Zionist and English Intelligence Services Created Terrorism in the Islamic World,” reinforced his favorite talking point. Khamenei blamed these actors for a string of high-profile terrorist attacks during Ramadan—in Iraq, Istanbul, Bangladesh, Yemen, and elsewhere—all of which were carried out by the Islamic State and its followers. “This is the work of intelligence services—particularly the dangerous hands of American, Zionist, and English intelligence services—which have cultivated terrorism,” Khamenei said July 6. “It is they who have created terrorism in the world of Islam.”

Just over one week later, on July 14, Secretary of State John Kerry celebrated the first anniversary of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. The agreement “guaranteed to the world that Iran would not be pursuing a nuclear weapon,” Kerry declared. The administration believes, Kerry added, “that the door that has been opened as a consequence of this dialogue gives us

an opportunity” to discuss various “continuing issues” with Iran, including “in Syria or Yemen, on terrorism.”

The two views could not be more diametrically opposed. Khamenei claims the United States and its allies are responsible for terrorism through-



An Iranian woman passes a mural on the wall of the former American embassy in Tehran during the unveiling ceremony for a memorial plaque (not shown) bearing 100 anti-American comments by the Islamic Republic's late founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, September 2, 2015.

out the Muslim-majority world, an absurd claim to American ears. Kerry, meanwhile, believes he can now engage in constructive dialogue with the Iranians about their own ongoing sponsorship of terrorism.

Clearly, there is a disconnect.

It is no secret that President Obama and other top administration officials hoped the nuclear accord with Iran would lead to a new era of improved relations between the two foes. At times, Obama even entertained the idea that the Iranian regime could evolve beyond its aggressively anti-American origins. Take off the rose-colored glasses

Kerry donned in Paris, however, and a stark reality comes into focus. In the year since the United States and several other countries agreed to the JCPOA, the Iranian regime's terrorist tentacles have grown longer and thicker. Iran remains the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism, backing anti-American, anti-Israeli, and anti-Sunni-Muslim forces throughout the world. In every country where Iran and its paramilitary agents operate, American interests are damaged, not advanced, by the supreme leader's Islamic Revolution. And the Iranian regime continues to harbor some of al Qaeda's most dangerous terrorists.

Consider what Kerry's own State Department had to say this spring.

“Iran continued its terrorist-related activity in 2015, including support for Hizballah, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, and various groups in Iraq and throughout the Middle East,” reads Foggy Bottom's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*, released June 2. Iran even “increased” its terrorist activities in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. government has designated Iran a state sponsor of terror every year since 1984. The State Department's bottom line: Iran's behavior in 2015, the year of the landmark nuclear deal, was no better than that of the previous three decades.

A brief overview of several key issues demonstrates just how unhelpful Iran's ongoing anti-American revolution still is.

Iraq. Iranian-backed forces frequently battle the Islamic State in Iraq, but the net effect of Iran's growing presence is negative. “Look, we have challenges with Iran as everybody knows and we are working on those challenges,” Kerry said at the Aspen Ideas Festival on June 28. “But I can tell you that Iran in Iraq has been in certain ways helpful, and they clearly are focused on ISIL-Daesh, and so we have a common interest, actually.”

In fact, just weeks earlier, the State Department itself recognized why Iran's leadership position on

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ATTA KENARE / AFP / GETTY

the ground in Iraq is so harmful. In 2015, a summary in *Country Reports on Terrorism* notes, Iran “increased its arming and funding of Iraqi Shia terrorist groups in an effort to reverse ISIL gains in Iraq.” The report continues: “Many of these groups . . . have exacerbated sectarian tensions in Iraq and have committed serious human rights abuses against primarily Sunni civilians.”

It is well-established that Shiite sectarianism, actively promoted by Iran, is one of the key drivers of Sunni extremism. Both sides feed off one another in a vicious cycle of hate. While the Islamic State has lost ground to the Iraqi government and Iranian proxies, the environment that created ripe conditions for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s jihadists in 2014, when they swept through Mosul and other cities, isn’t less toxic today; if anything, the situation is just as bad.

As the Islamic State’s territorial losses continue to mount, the group has reverted to insurgency-style tactics. Sunni grievances exacerbated by Iran help to sustain this insurrection indefinitely, driving more civilians into its ranks out of desperation. It is worth remembering that America achieved its greatest success in Iraq during the height of the “surge” ordered by President George W. Bush. Both Sunni and Shiite extremists were targeted by U.S.-led coalition forces in 2007 and 2008, as a key element of the surge strategy was to reduce sectarianism on both sides in order to stabilize the country.

The Obama administration’s policy in Iraq has substituted American boots with Iranian ones. But Iran’s gains mean that one anti-American actor is simply replacing another. Some of the key Iranian proxies inside Iraq have been designated terrorist organizations by the U.S. government, in part, because they are inherently opposed to the West.

Iran “increased” its assistance to these groups in 2015, according to the State Department’s report. One of these Iranian fronts is Kata’ib Hezbollah (KH), which was added to the list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2009.

“In 2007,” a chapter in *Country Reports on Terrorism* reads, “KH gained notoriety from attacks against U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq.” KH, which has “an anti-Western outlook,” killed five American soldiers during rocket attacks on Baghdad in 2011. KH is by no means the only Iranian proxy that has gained power inside Iraq over the past year.

Syria. The Iranian regime has played a pivotal role in one of history’s worst human rights catastrophes. Iran sees Bashar al-Assad’s regime as “a pillar in its ‘resistance’ front,” according to the State Department, and it has been willing to do just about anything to keep Assad in power. In addition to supporting Hezbollah in Syria, Iran “continued to provide arms, financing, training, and the facilitation of primarily Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani Shia fighters to support the Assad regime’s brutal crackdown that has resulted in the deaths of more than 250,000 people in Syria,” the department says. Last year, Iran “more openly acknowledged the deaths of Iranian personnel in Syria . . . including several senior commanders, and increased Iranian troop levels, while continuing to claim publicly that Iranian forces had only deployed in an advisory role.” As in Iraq, Iran’s proxies have expanded their presence in Syria since the JCPOA was signed.

Sometimes the State Department’s omissions are glaring. Such is the case with what Foggy Bottom didn’t say in its latest report about Iran’s support for Houthi rebels in Yemen, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and al Qaeda in South Asia. In each place, Iran’s actions have threatened the interests of the United States and its allies.

Yemen. Iran has sponsored the Houthi rebellion for years. In *Country Reports for Terrorism 2013*, for example, the State Department noted: “Iran actively supports members of the Houthi movement, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region.” Asked why similar language was not included in

June’s report for 2015, acting coordinator for counterterrorism Justin Siberell responded: “There’s a serious concern about Iran’s activities in Yemen, yes.”

The “concern” is that an Iranian-backed insurgency overthrew the Yemeni government, a duplicitous but key ally in the fight against terrorism, in late 2014 and early 2015. President Obama has touted the U.S. counterterrorism mission in Yemen as “successful” because it relied heavily on that same government. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula seized much of southern Yemen following the Houthi coup. It slithered away when an Arab-led coalition invaded the country this year but is well positioned for a comeback.

Afghanistan. In papers past, such as *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012*, the State Department explicitly recognized Iran’s arming and training of Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan. For some reason, this relationship was excised from the report for 2013 and has not been restored since. There are good reasons to suspect that this unholy alliance, which began in late 2001, has continued to the present. In June 2015, for instance, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Iran had even “increased its supply of weapons, ammunition and funding to the Taliban.”

In May, the United States killed the Taliban’s top leader, Mullah Mansour, as he crossed the border from Iran into Pakistan. It is difficult to fathom how Iranian authorities could have been unaware of his presence. Mansour was one of the most-wanted terrorists on the planet and closely allied with al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri. Indeed, eastern Iran, including the city of Zahedan, has long been a key safe haven for both the Taliban and al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda. Beginning in July 2011, the Treasury and State Departments issued a series of designations and other statements highlighting the Iranian regime’s “agreement” with al Qaeda. Language pointing to the formerly secret deal was edited in a misleading fashion in State’s *Country Reports on Terrorism* the past two years. In 2013, the report noted that Iran

“allowed” key al Qaeda facilitators to “operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran.” The last two reports, including the one just published in June, say that Iran “previously allowed AQ facilitators to operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran since at least 2009, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and Syria.” The implication is that Iran’s agreement with al Qaeda is a thing of the past.

The Obama administration has not explicitly said that is the case, however. Just this past week, the Treasury Department designated three al Qaeda leaders who are based in Iran. One of them, Faisal Jas-sim Mohammed al-Amri al-Khalidi (known as Hamzah al-Khalidi), was identified in Osama bin Laden’s files as part of a “new generation” of jihadist talent. Treasury reported that Khalidi is al Qaeda’s “Military Commission Chief.” That is, Khalidi is the equivalent of al Qaeda’s defense minister. And he is in Iran.

As in past years, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015* includes this revealing line: “Iran remained unwilling to bring to justice senior al-Qa’ida (AQ) members it continued to detain and refused to publicly identify the members in its custody.” But that is an understatement—some of al Qaeda’s most senior leaders are also operating inside Iran today, safe from the American drone campaign.

Iran’s anti-American revolution continues. The Obama administration often talks about Iran as if it were a traditional Westphalian nation-state. But as the brief synopses above show, it is anything but. The Iranian regime has worked to spread its “Islamic Revolution” since 1979, and it now has more influence in more countries than ever. Lebanon was one of the first nations to be victimized by Iran’s aggressive paramilitary campaign, and today countries such as Bahrain are attempting to fend off Iran’s imperialistic ambitions.

“Nobody pretends that some of the challenges we have with Iran have somehow been wiped away,” Secretary Kerry conceded during his remarks

on the July 14 anniversary. But he believes the JCPOA has made it possible for the United States and Iran to solve some of these “issues” peacefully. He gave the example of “our sailors who stumbled into Iranian waters and within 24 hours we were able to get them out.” Kerry claimed: “That could not have happened prior to this agreement having taken place.”

Kerry didn’t mention that Ayatollah Khamenei reveled in the humiliation of America’s servicemen. He praised

the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the regime’s chief instrument of terror, for capturing the sailors, calling the operation “God’s Deed.” Kerry believes that a door “has been opened” to better diplomacy between the United States and Iran, but the supreme leader speaks more ominously. When Khamenei blamed “American, Zionist, and English intelligence services” for terrorism in his sermon marking the end of Ramadan, he added, “This is a crime which will not be forgotten.” ♦

The Politicization of Everything

Another dimension of presidential overreach.

BY JEFF BERGNER

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s recent outburst against Donald Trump has been roundly criticized by people of all political stripes. Insofar as her comments suggested a clear bias about cases that could come before the Supreme Court, they were clearly a mistake and a departure from the norms of Court behavior. After predictable media attempts to defend her by saying “everyone does it,” Justice Ginsburg apologized and walked back her remarks.

This is not, however, a one-off incident. It is part and parcel of a clear and consistent pattern of the left’s increasing politicization of everything. And the chief instigator of this behavior has been President Obama. In the modern era, presidents and ex-presidents once showed a degree of political restraint. President Obama has blasted through these restraints and spoken freely as a partisan rather than as a president.

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Not a smidgen of self-restraint

An early example is the president’s criticism of the *Citizens United* case in his 2010 State of the Union address. It is one thing for a president to advance a view about the role of money in politics; it is quite another to launch a broadside about a specific Court decision in front of Supreme Court justices captive in the front row of a nationally televised speech, complete with

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cheering partisans standing all around. This, of course, resulted in a classic media deflection, namely, criticism of Justice Samuel Alito's silent (and accurate by the way) response. This was certainly no sign of presidential respect for the Court's independence.

President Obama's behavior here was of a piece with his comments about the unfolding IRS scandal in 2014. Here was a genuine abuse of government power, replete with lying, stonewalling, and the wanton destruction of public documents. It would be one thing if the president were to opine about a congressional investigation into the IRS scandal. It is quite another to do so when the president's Justice Department had launched its own investigation of the IRS.

It is perhaps fair to say that the administration's investigation, headed by Justice Department attorney (and Obama contributor) Barbara Bosserman, was a sham from the beginning. But is it acceptable for the president to pronounce there was not "even a smidgen" of IRS wrongdoing while the Justice Department's so-called investigation was underway?

Nor is this behavior different in kind from the numerous occasions President Obama has chosen to opine about the legal affairs of individual Americans before the facts have been established. This was true in regard to his friend, Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, and was repeated in the cases of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and the Black Lives Matter demonstrators. When the facts eventually became known in these cases, they were quite at odds with the president's comments.

This is in interesting contrast to the cases of Islamic terrorism (Fort Hood, San Bernardino, and Orlando) where the facts and motivations were quite clear from the beginning; indeed, the perpetrators announced their motives clearly and without equivocation. Nevertheless, in these instances the president has withheld judgment, saying the motives are complex, unclear, and in need of thorough investigation—though thorough investigations

of these events never seem to lead to any new presidential conclusions down the road.

More recently, Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign has provided numerous occasions for the president to interfere with his own administration's legal proceedings. We have witnessed President Obama stating categorically that there was no national security threat that resulted from Hillary Clinton's private email server—at the same time his own FBI was investigating that very question, among others.

Not content with this, the president announced he would make a joint presidential campaign appearance with Hillary Clinton at the very moment the FBI was completing its investigation and referring the matter to President Obama's attorney general. The stunning novelty of this was a bit overshadowed when the president's attorney general held a highly unusual, private one-on-one meeting with the husband of the FBI's investigatory target, a man who was himself in the middle of the activity under investigation. All of this is simply unprecedented.

Speaking of unprecedented, President Obama's frequent rhetorical attacks against Donald Trump are in a class by themselves, different from any recent president's behavior during the campaign to choose a successor. Sitting presidents can, and have, made clear their preference of a successor. There is nothing new or untoward about this, but it has invariably been done in a restrained way, often accentuating the positive qualities of the preferred successor. Never has there been a case of a president repeatedly bad-mouthing the opponent of his preferred successor.

For a long time it has been clear that the four Democratic-appointed Supreme Court justices generally vote in lockstep on political issues of importance to the president. When there are public calls for bipartisanship on the Court, this is invariably code that one or more Republican-appointed judges should vote with their Democratic-appointed colleagues. And they often

do, as in the case of Obamacare and college affirmative action. It never means the opposite.

Though Democratic-appointed judges have displayed a clear ideological discipline, until Justice Ginsburg's comments there was at least a polite fiction about the Court's independence from partisan politics. Justice Ginsburg has exposed the game; she has followed the lead of President Obama in destroying the partisan restraint that used to mark our most important institutions.

Nor should it come as a surprise in this environment that there is almost never a single Democratic member of Congress who sides with Republicans in any investigation of Democratic behavior. Every such investigation is ritually denounced as a partisan witch hunt and fought tooth and nail. Republican investigations of Democratic wrongdoing undoubtedly offer partisan benefit. But is the danger of partisan advantage really a sufficient reason to fail to look honestly at the facts?

With regard to IRS targeting of political opponents, for example—the temerity of which would make Richard Nixon blush—was there really a sufficient reason to excuse lying, stonewalling, and the destruction of computers and literally thousands of emails? Is there no single Democrat who can rise above his or her own partisanship and acknowledge that while there may be partisan gain for Republicans, an investigation might also be good for the defense of liberty and government restraint? Would they want the IRS to target them?

In all this, one supposes that the past will be prologue. Is there anyone who thinks that next year the former President Obama—especially if his successor is a Republican—will follow the lead of his predecessors and largely refrain from intervening in political issues? We hear a good deal of fear-mongering about how a President Trump might aim to centralize political power and politicize government decisions. If he does, he will have an excellent example upon which to draw. ♦

Generation Gap

The age of nuclear retirement.

BY DEVIN HARTMAN & CATRINA RORKE

At a meeting of the National Association of Science Writers in New York in 1954, the chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission laid out his vision for a nuclear-powered future. Famines would be the stuff of history, Lewis Strauss said; people would “travel effortlessly over the seas and under them and through the air with a minimum of danger and at great speeds”; they would “experience a lifespan far longer than ours.” That all went over well enough, and many of his prognostications have since come true (though not, alas, the bit where he forecast “an age of peace”). But the part of the speech that caused a sensation—and has come in for much scorn and mockery over the years—was when Strauss said, “It is not too much to expect that our children will enjoy in their homes electrical energy too cheap to meter.”

His vision was indeed ambitious: Though nuclear power has been a uniquely low-cost, stable, and efficient source of power, it hasn’t come close to being free. Still, since the first commercial facility opened in 1958, nuclear plants have, on average, more than doubled their efficiency. Nuclear provides three times more electricity than wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, and all other nonhydropower renewable sources combined. In the face of public opposition, exhaustive regulation, and very limited new investment, nuclear plants have been making cheap, reliable energy for decades.

So why are so many nuclear power

plants shutting down? The retirements of nine facilities have been announced or completed since 2013. These closures add up to nearly one-tenth of the total number of American nuclear plants. The trend has left many nuclear advocates nervous.

One factor driving the closures is that electricity demand has all but stopped growing, thanks to more efficient homes and businesses. And while mandates and tax incentives encourage the installation of new wind and solar power and other renewables, nuclear gets no such encouragement. But far and away the biggest factor has been low-cost natural gas. The fracking boom has transformed the domestic energy economy over the past decade, alleviating concerns about energy scarcity and dramatically depressing fuel prices. It has also largely eliminated the historic price volatility that made natural gas a risky fuel source for electricity. Natural gas is the new fuel of choice for power, squeezing out coal and nuclear. That may be a benefit to the climate as far as coal is concerned, but not so with nuclear.

When the state of Vermont shut down the Vermont Yankee nuclear facility and California retired San Onofre, the power from those plants was replaced by electricity generated using natural gas. They were no anomalies: Thanks to low fuel prices and the low cost of building natural-gas electrical plants, the power lost when a nuclear plant is shuttered is replaced almost entirely by power produced with natural gas. If these trends continue, the net effect of nuclear retirements will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions by more than 10 percent over the decade.

Of course, an even worse option is for nuclear facilities to retire without any replacement to fill the generation gap. Contrary to the forecasts of environmental activists, nuclear cannot be completely replaced by wind and solar, which are by nature intermittent. Cloudy or becalmed days can mean blackouts unless there is backup from the sort of on-demand power that nuclear and fossil-fuel facilities deliver.

Nuclear power is a necessary part of our electrical system. Losing too many facilities to low-priced natural gas will make it much more difficult to meet future carbon emissions targets and maintain low-cost, reliable electric service. Shut down a nuclear plant, and there’s no bringing it back. Recent examples suggest that nuclear plants are more likely to close if they’re victims of poor geographic circumstance. Consider Exelon’s two facilities in Illinois, Clinton and Quad Cities, slated for closure after enduring \$800 million in losses since 2010. These facilities compete with natural-gas plants and a large number of wind farms, but suffer primarily from local transmission-related challenges. Power generated in this part of Illinois is persistently priced 20 percent lower than in neighboring areas. Prices are so low that if the facilities were located elsewhere, such as in the mid-Atlantic, they would have not just erased their losses, but would have likely turned a profit in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Today’s market is tough for nuclear, but the industry won’t disappear. Facilities particularly exposed to low prices may close, but the majority of the nuclear fleet is well poised to weather stagnant demand and competition from low-cost natural gas and subsidized renewables. Markets should be left to adapt to these conditions, and piecemeal mandates, subsidies, or payments to keep these facilities afloat are unnecessary. Looking for government to prop up the nuclear industry would distort the market at exactly the point that customers have started to see the benefits of low prices. There’s still a role for nuclear to play as a reliable contributor to the power system, even if it isn’t too cheap to meter.



But less in-demand

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The Preachings of Brother Bryan

The one-speech pony

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

He was just 36 years old when he gave what was, according to many historians, the greatest political speech in American history. Certainly it was a success in making him not merely famous but also the presidential candidate of the Democratic party. Youth was not the only apparent handicap he needed to overcome in his rise to the top of the political hill. He held no office. He was not a senator, governor, or member of the House, though he had served two terms there. When he'd tried to move up in class and went for a Senate seat, he failed in the Nebraska legislature. Senators were not elected by popular vote in 1894. That would have to wait until 1913 and the 17th Amendment, for which he long crusaded.

If he had no formal title, then it was best to know him by the work that he did. And while he was a member of the bar, people didn't think "lawyer" when they heard his name. He was, rather, an "orator." It was a respectable profession in those times before the advent of motion pictures, television, and the Internet. And there has never been an American for whom the title "orator" was more fitting. It has been estimated that when he was at the height of his powers, half the population of the United States had heard him speak. He had a very long run on the Chautauqua circuit, which traveled the country, providing enlightened speeches to the masses—a sort of late-19th- and early-20th-century version of TED talks. William Jennings Bryan delivered a speech called "The Prince of Peace" over 3,000 times to Chautauqua audiences. The man could work a crowd.

So . . . on a hot Chicago day in July 1896, he rose to address the Democratic party's national convention in the Chicago Coliseum. Though it held the White House in the ample form of Grover Cleveland, the party had seen tough times since the Civil War and was looking at more of the same. Cleveland had been the Democrats' only successful

presidential candidate since Appomattox, winning twice, though not in succession. He was, at the time of the convention, out of favor with just about everyone. During the convention, he passed the time by fishing off Cape Cod.

Meanwhile, the Republicans had vastly more money; they were the party of Wall Street and the great fortunes of the Gilded Age. They had the East, where the banks were, and the Midwest, where, increasingly, the factories were.

The Democrats had the South and what was left of the frontier, the prairie states. They had the farmers and the small businessmen who were struggling as the prices paid for crops seemed to move in only one direction—down—while the railroads raised the fees they charged for shipping those crops and money grew increasingly scarce.

So there was plenty of discontent among the party's constituents when Bryan rose to give it voice and to mobilize it.

His cause was "free silver." The nontechnical definition would be easy money. Inflation. The Republicans were for gold—"hard money"—which worked to make the elites of the East rich and keep the farmers on the frontier poor.

When he took the podium that day, Bryan did not soft-pedal it. While it had been slightly more than 30 years since the end of a civil war that had cost more than 700,000 lives, in describing the fight over free silver, Bryan declared,

Never before in the history of this country has there been witnessed such a contest as that through which we have passed. Never before in the history of American politics has a great issue been fought out as this issue has been by the voters themselves.

One expects a certain amount of hyperbole in a political speech but this was a bit much. There had been a tough fight between two wings of the party that led to the defeat of Cleveland's more centrist faction, which was actually in favor of the gold standard. Bryan represented the insurgents. The fight had split the party, which, in his speech, Bryan made into something close to fratricide as he went from excess to excess, declaring at one point that

in this contest, brother has been arrayed against brother, and father against son. The warmest ties of love and acquaintance and association have been disregarded. Old leaders

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have been cast aside when they refused to give expression to the sentiments of those whom they would lead, and new leaders have sprung up to give direction to this cause of freedom. Thus has the contest been waged, and we have assembled here under as binding and solemn instructions as were ever fastened upon the representatives of a people.

One reads those words, today, with a kind of amused disbelief, thinking, *Oh, come on*. But, to be charitable, Bryan and those in his camp had begun the fight not merely as underdogs but as inferiors. They were the rubes, and all the best and right-thinking people were on the other side. As Henry Adams put it, “All one’s friends, all one’s best citizens, reformers, churches, colleges, educated classes, had joined the banks to force submission to capitalism.” So Bryan may have been entitled to a little exaggeration.

The whole thing seems impossibly arcane today, when not one American in a thousand could explain the fight over the gold standard as opposed to “free silver.” But it can be understood, crudely, as the most elemental sort of political conflict. Namely, *Us vs. Them*. And Bryan painted it in the kind of language that, stripped of some 19th-century rhetorical excess, would fit just fine in today’s political battles.

When you come before us and tell us that we shall disturb your business interests, we reply that you have disturbed our business interests. . . . The man who is employed for wages is as much a businessman as his employer. The attorney in a country town is as much a businessman as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis. The merchant at the crossroads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, begins in the spring and toils all summer, and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain. The miners who go 1,000 feet into the earth or climb 2,000 feet upon the cliffs and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured in the channels of trade are as much businessmen as the few financial magnates who in a backroom corner the money of the world.

Political candidates, from then until today—and probably henceforth until the crack of doom—could touch up the wording and comfortably give that speech. And the people who seek to understand American politics would spot it as 100-proof populism. The speech sets up the enduring conflict between the little man in an unfair struggle against the rich, the fat cats, the “malefactors of great wealth,” and so on. Bernie Sanders could give that speech. He does, in fact, though in much flatter language. Patrick Buchanan gave that speech when he ran for president, though in more belligerent language. The list goes on and on: Huey Long, Eugene Debs. And the list is not comprised only of losers. Franklin Roosevelt could have given that speech. It is the summing-up of the populist grievance and the call to arms for the common man. After the speech, Bryan became known, almost inevitably, as “the Great Commoner.”

The speech had even anticipated the argument for what became known as “trickle-down economics” and gone on to rebuke it:

There are two ideas of government. There are those who believe that if you just legislate to make the well-to-do prosperous, that their prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous their prosperity will find its way up and through every class that rests upon it.

Bryan had put his hand on the beating heart of a great and abiding resentment that has endured, rising and falling in intensity, right down to our own times, when the “1 percent” are, says Bernie Sanders, not paying their fair share. The distinction is that Sanders doesn’t feel obliged to reach for rhetorical effects or the kind of biblical metaphors and cadences that came naturally to Bryan. As, for instance, in the last and immortal paragraph of his Chicago speech, when he thundered,

If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to



them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

At this point, Bryan extended his arms like Christ crucified, and the hall went silent. That silence seemed to last for a very long time and then, there was cheering. Loud and continuous and sincere. Some of the delegates raised Bryan on their shoulders and carried him around the hall as the cheering went on and on. The *New York World* described a scene where “everybody seemed to go mad at once . . . the whole face of the convention was broken by the tumult—hills and valleys of shrieking men and women.”

The cheering and celebrating went on longer than the speech, which had lasted about 20 minutes, not long by the standards of the day. But it had changed everything, not least Bryan’s prospects. The convention had yet to nominate a candidate for president and there were some 13 candidates in the running.

The next day, the balloting began. Bryan was in second place after the first ballot. But the momentum of the speech was with him, and on the fifth ballot, he was nominated as the party’s candidate for president.

Bryan went into the race as the champion of the common man, but what passed for the mainstream media in those days opposed him on grounds of both substance and style. In a subhed to its convention story, the *New York Times* described a scene where “The Silver Fanatics Are Invincible: Wild, Raging, Irresistible Mob Which Nothing Can Turn from Its Abominable Foolishness.”

Other than that . . .

Still, the reaction to the speech had won Bryan important allies. Among them were Eugene Debs, labor leader and future presidential candidate (and hero to Bernie Sanders), who wrote to Bryan that he was “at this hour the hope of the Republic—the central figure of the civilized world.” The speech had done this for him. Now, he needed to capitalize on it.

Bryan’s opponent in the general election was William McKinley, whom none would describe as charismatic. But then, until the advent of Bryan, nobody thought he needed to be. He had the backing of the Republican party and all that this meant in terms of organization and money. He had Mark Hanna, the Cleveland industrialist and moneyman—and later senator—who created an organization and fundraising operation that anticipated much of what is commonplace now. Hanna helped raise what were, for the

times, prodigious amounts of money, including a contribution of \$250,000 from John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil. He built campaign organizations in every state. His strategy was, simply, to overwhelm the Democrats and Bryan.

Which appeared easy enough. Bryan, however, was accustomed to being outspent and out-organized. But he believed, with justification, that he had never been out-orated. So he took his splendid speaking ability on the road. In this case, the railroad.

The whistle-stop campaign was still in its infancy and had been employed, till then, by candidates who were desperate and willing to try just about anything. Bryan went into his with confidence and abundant energy.

It began in early August and went on, with only the occasional pause to rest and recharge, until Election Day in November. Bryan had enormous reservoirs of energy and never seemed to weary of hearing himself talk. So the train carried him almost 20,000 miles across 26 states with the candidate orating all the way. Some five million people heard him speak.

McKinley, meanwhile, stayed at home. But a concerned Hanna went to work raising both money and fears of what a Democrat in the White House might mean for the men who worked the factory jobs and on the railroads. Those, in other words, who would soon become the dependably Democratic union vote. But in 1896, these people were concerned that they would lose their jobs if Bryan were elected. They believed this, in part, because their bosses told them so.

The newspapers wrote about Bryan because, in the style of Donald Trump, he gave them something to write about. Always another speech before another audience. In addition to being an orator, Bryan had done time as a newspaper editor, and while most of the words that appeared beneath his byline had been written by someone else, he had a feel for the business, and he knew what counted as news and what reporters and editors wanted. So he gave it to them. Meanwhile, McKinley stuck to his front-porch campaign.

One can only imagine how things might have gone if there had been radio in those days. Or television. Or, heaven forbid, social media.

But in the end, the energy and the oratory were not enough. Money and organization and, perhaps, a better and more serious grasp of the issues and the role of government allowed the Republicans and McKinley to win the election. Turnout was almost 80 percent of eligible voters

Describing the reaction to Bryan at the 1896 Democratic convention, the *New York World* said ‘everybody seemed to go mad at once . . . the whole face of the convention was broken by the tumult—hills and valleys of shrieking men and women.’

(all male, of course), and Bryan lost 271 to 176 in the Electoral College. With a swing of merely 20,000 votes in key states, he would have won.

Bryan, his followers, and those who wrote about him may not have realized it, but his time had passed. He did not vanish from the stage, though, and remained an intensely public man. He was a big draw as an orator and was nominated again by the Democrats in 1900. He lost, again, to McKinley. After sitting out the 1904 race, he was nominated, again, by the Democrats in 1908. And lost again, this time to William Howard Taft. In 1912, he did his best for Woodrow Wilson who repaid the favor by making Bryan his secretary of state, a job for which he was particularly ill suited. He was no interventionist and opposed those actions of Wilson's that he believed brought the nation closer to joining the war in Europe. Finally he resigned. Then came the last sad act. He became, at best, a sort of historical footnote; at worst, a buffoon—especially to populists of the left and progressives.

One wonders why. He was, at the beginning of his public life, in the vanguard on the issues that were critical to the progressive cause: a graduated income tax, the regulation of child labour, and the vote for women, among others. He was against what he saw as American imperialism and said, when running against McKinley, in 1900,

The nation is of age and it can do what it pleases; it can spurn the traditions of the past; it can repudiate the principles upon which the nation rests; it can employ force instead of reason; it can substitute might for right; it can conquer weaker people; it can exploit their lands, appropriate their property and kill their people; but it cannot repeal the moral law or escape the punishment decreed for the violation of human rights. . . . Behold a republic standing erect while empires all around are bowed beneath the weight of their own armaments—a republic whose flag is loved while other flags are only feared.

Bryan was, again, out of step. The nation was in an expansionist mood. He lost again, and the numbers were worse this time: 292 electoral votes to 155. Still, he had taken the sort of stand that would, one thinks, have made him a permanent hero on the left.

Personality certainly accounts for some of his loss of standing. Bryan wasn't especially interesting. He was good with words, especially the speaking of them. But he gave the same speeches over and over, and the

emphasis was more on delivery than on content. Shortly after he'd given the Cross of Gold speech in Chicago, one of his political rivals said to Clarence Darrow, Bryan's opponent in the last, sad act of his life, "I have been thinking over Bryan's speech. What did he say, anyhow?"

That speech, like the other Bryan set pieces, was more starch than protein. This was the point, after all. He was an orator, not a university lecturer. But the kind of people who preferred university lectures and who crafted the intellectual and cultural agendas saw him as shallow and, at bottom, a philistine. To Bryan, the Bible was more than a book. And so books were not that important to him. He was, therefore, not much interested in the new ideas of the new century.

He was insufficiently cosmopolitan and sophisticated and seemed to have just about no interior life. He was happily married and a hard worker and a Midwesterner to the center of his soul. His name might have been Reagan. If, that is, Reagan had been the man his detractors thought he was.

At any rate, Bryan was not one of *them*. It was a matter of style as much as anything else. Among his conspicuous faux pas, he had taken up the cause of Prohibition after his third defeat as

a candidate for president. And he would not serve alcohol at State Department functions when he was secretary. He campaigned for the 18th Amendment, which was another strike against him in the minds of the sophisticates and urbanites, though at the time Prohibition was something of a feminist and progressive cause, designed to save the working man from himself and from exploitation at the hands of the big distillers and saloon owners.

It was no help to Bryan that he also campaigned for the 19th Amendment. He had been passionate about the cause of women's suffrage his entire career. But . . . apostasy on just about any issue is punishable by the progressive inquisitors. Bryan's support of Prohibition was one more piece of evidence that he was a rube.

And then, there were two issues upon which no deviation is tolerated. He was an old-fashioned Democrat. That is to say, the kind of Democrat who made peace with the states of the old Confederacy and their racial attitudes. The Democrats needed the electoral votes of those states and, anyway, Bryan's constituents in Nebraska were white and Protestant. At the Democratic party convention of 1924, the last of Bryan's life, a resolution was



A cartoon from 1896 showing Bryan and populism as a snake, swallowing up the Democratic party

introduced condemning the KKK. Bryan spoke against the resolution, and it was voted down. The great orator had employed his gift in support of the insupportable.

Heywood Broun savaged Bryan, writing that he was

the very type and symbol of the spirit of the Ku Klux Klan. He has never lived in a land of men and women. To him this country has been from the beginning peopled by believers and heretics. According to his faith mankind is base and cursed. Human reason is a snare, and so Bryan has made oratory the weapon of his aggressions. When professors in precarious jobs have disagreed with him about evolution, Mr. Bryan has never argued the issue, but instead has turned bully and burned fiery crosses at their doors.

That last piece—the bit about evolution—anticipated the last, melancholy act of Bryan’s life.

It was called the Scopes Monkey trial. The short version is that the state of Tennessee chose to prosecute a school teacher for exposing his students to the ideas of Charles Darwin. In the rural, fundamentalist regions of the country, evolution was considered heresy.

So Bryan went to Dayton, Tennessee, to assist in the prosecution of one John Scopes who had been put up to his act of civil disobedience by the ACLU. When the state filed charges, Clarence Darrow, the nation’s most celebrated criminal lawyer, volunteered his services to the defense at no fee.

The trial was a national spectacle (and was designed to be). Over 100 newspapers sent reporters, including H. L. Mencken of the *Baltimore Sun*. There were even live radio broadcasts over a Chicago station. This was a first.

The judge would not allow expert testimony as to the validity of Darwin’s theories of evolution. The question before the court, in his opinion, was simply did Scopes do it—teach evolution—or didn’t he?

So Darrow engaged in a little legalistic jujitsu and got Bryan on the stand as an expert witness on the Bible. He then proceeded to attack. Bryan was asked questions about the literal interpretation of such biblical matters as the swallowing of Jonah by the whale, Joshua’s causing the sun to stand still, the great flood and Noah’s ark, and so on. Bryan finally had to give in and concede that, well, maybe the Bible was not *always* to be taken literally. He even went so far as to say it was possible that the creation required more time than six days. That those might better be described as “periods.”

By the end of the questioning, Bryan looked like a weary old fool, and everyone, save he, saw it.

Mencken was not there to see it. He had, however, covered the first days of the trial and had written of Bryan,

It is a tragedy, indeed, to begin life as a hero and to end it as a buffoon. But let no one, laughing at him, underestimate the magic that lies in his black, malignant eye, his frayed but still eloquent voice. He can shake and inflame these poor ignoramuses as no other man among us can shake and inflame them, and he is desperately eager to order the charge.

Five days after the trial ended with a guilty verdict and a \$100 fine for Scopes (never paid), Bryan lay down to sleep after eating a more than ample meal. He never woke.

Mencken was happy to violate the old stricture *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum*. Bryan, he wrote, was

an evangelical Christian only by a sort of afterthought—that his career in this world, and the glories thereof, had actually come to an end before he ever began whooping for Genesis. So I came to this conclusion: that what really moved him was a lust for revenge. The men of the cities had destroyed him and made a mock of him; now he would lead the yokels against them. Various facts clicked into the theory, and I hold it still. The hatred in the old man’s burning eyes was not for the enemies of God; it was for the enemies of Bryan.

Bryan’s humiliation became material for a Broadway play, *Inherit the Wind*. The play became a movie with Fredric March in the Bryan role. Spencer Tracy was Darrow and, improbably, Gene Kelly was Mencken. The film was widely praised, of course, and

said to be, somehow, an allegory about McCarthyism.

It was not the first time that Bryan had been treated badly in the movies. There had long been speculation that the character of the Cowardly Lion in L. Frank Baum’s *Wizard of Oz* was modeled on him.

It was a long fall from the heights of the Cross of Gold speech to the Mencken obituary and the Hollywood treatment. Eugene Debs, who had written to Bryan after the Cross of Gold speech that he was “the hope of the Republic—the central figure of the civilized world,” remarked, on his death, that over his life Bryan “grew more and more conservative until finally he stood before the country as a champion of everything reactionary in our political and social life.”

A sad end for a man who, as much as anyone, formulated the political designation “populist” that is attached, in this season, to both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. If this is the season of populism, it seems strange and sad that Bryan is never more than a footnote or an aside in op-eds attempting to explain the mood of the electorate.

He was a force that, like a prairie thunderstorm, brewed up out of nowhere, created a spectacular show, and then vanished. Still . . . even after all these years, it was one hell of a speech. ♦

By the end of his Scopes testimony, Bryan looked like a weary old fool, and everyone, save he, saw it.



'Bicycling on Riverside Drive, New York' by W.A. Rogers (1895)

Life of Cycles

A two-wheeled theory of modern America. BY DAVID SKINNER

The worst thing I have ever done on a bicycle was race after a car that had just run a red light and nearly run me down. Pedaling like Lance Armstrong after a fresh IV of oxygen-rich blood, I caught up to the beat-up Toyota at the next pause in traffic, banged on its roof, and then, in a ridiculous eruption of speech, took all the rage I had picked up on the side of the road and shoved it in the ears of this unsuspecting driver.

Didn't he see the red light? I asked. Not waiting for an answer, I then

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The Mechanical Horse
How the Bicycle Reshaped American Life
 by Margaret Guroff
 Texas, 295 pp., \$24.95

asked which of my three children he thought least deserved to see their father again? Or was it their mother he didn't like? Or was it my employer? Or was it the bank that owned my mortgage? Because I couldn't imagine, I said, what he had against me personally, being complete strangers and all. But since we were on the subject, I continued, would he, please, for the love of God, tell me what *drove* him to want to *kill* me?

He was a schlumpy-looking guy, about my own age and quite frightened

by my appearance at his car door. Nervously turning down the volume on his radio, he stated, very apologetically, that he had not seen a red light back there. To the driver of a car, a person on a bike is a nuisance; to a person on a bike, a car is a tank, a vehicle of war, a death threat.

But this is all perception—subjective and highly fallible. Standing there, freaking out at this complete stranger who had committed only a simple driving error of a kind that must occur thousands of times a day in the United States, I finally realized that I ought to calm down and be on my way. I was just a few blocks from home when I resolved not to go chasing cars again. What was I, a dog? A maniac?

Years later, however, as I pedal

around town or ride to work, my brain still churns with indignant monologues whenever a driver does me wrong: “I’m sorry. Is my *life* in the way of your *car*?” is a line I have drafted for my next moment of great outrage. Let’s hope it never comes.

These days, arguments are breaking out left and right as the number of bicyclists continues to increase in urban areas such as New York, Washington, Portland, and many other cities. The recent addition of a short bike lane in my neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia, gave rise to clamorous public meetings and even made the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal*, in whose sport pages columnist Jason Gay recently made a deliriously friendly plea for peaceful coexistence between bicyclists and drivers, is also home to some serious anti-bicycle animus. The formidable Dorothy Rabinowitz, I learned from reading Margaret Guroff’s *The Mechanical Horse: How the Bicycle Reshaped American Life* said in 2013 that “the most important danger in the city is not the yellow cabs; it’s the bicyclists.” Which is not even possibly true.

Overreaction is, however, endemic to the debate over the bicycle, all the more reason to welcome the arrival of Guroff’s light but well-researched history of this ingenious, efficient, and salubrious invention. Guroff is a confident social historian who allows her eye for the colorful detail to lead the way while never neglecting to think through the chain of incidents and inventions that paved the road from the early 19th-century *draisine*, two wheels and a seat but not much else, to the battery-assisted fat-wheeled wonders of today. Where the author is especially strong is in drawing out the connections between bicycle and society.

Guroff illustrates the bicycle’s part in women’s liberation. In the last two decades of the 19th century, the safety bicycle came along. It’s the bicycle as you know it: two equal-sized wheels and two pedals and a chain that turns the back wheel. Designed to reduce head injuries, the safety bike became so popular that it knocked a loophole

in the rules for courtship. A young lady who might require a chaperone on an outing with a bachelor—Guroff tells us, citing a *New York Evening Post* article—could forgo such supervision if she and her suitor were only going for a bicycle ride. It also led people to question the utility of long dresses, and changed the shape of bicycle frames for women. That descending crossbar we associate with women’s bicycles was originally an accommodation to women’s clothing, though it would have made more sense as an accommodation to male anatomy.

An even more subtle connection that Guroff draws out is the one between bicycles and the rise of general interest magazines near the turn of the 20th century. This was a key moment



Five Boro Bike Tour, New York (2008)

in the history of mass media as magazine publishers dropped their prices after realizing they could make more money selling readers to advertisers than by selling magazines to readers.

Bicycle manufacturers bought many pages of advertising and their products provided an image, a prop, a “new thing” for the quintessential magazine story about a life better than the one you already have. Albert A. Pope was a major figure in the American bicycle business and a keen student of the relationship between manufacturing and marketing: “We created the demand for bicycles with one hand, and the supply with the other,” he once told a journalist. Pope even published magazines of his own. Guroff notes that S. S. McClure cut his teeth editing two of Pope’s cycling rags. This was the man who gave us the

estimable *McClure’s* magazine, home of various muckrakers where Willa Cather earned her journalistic stripes as a managing editor.

Good stories abound in Guroff’s account: the role of bicycles in the history of manufacturing, where they helped advance factory methods later perfected in the automobile industry; in the history of exercise, where the bicycle helped people understand the benefits of regular physical exertion; in the development of airplanes, the Wright brothers having been bicycle mechanics before they took to the air; in the history of warfare, where bicycles became an alternative form of cavalry, a quiet mode of transportation for scouts, and an effective, low-cost tool of resistance fighters. All this, and yet *The Mechanical Horse* is a sprint of a book, 166 pages, not counting the backmatter.

Partisans of the bicycle such as myself will find it sobering, however, that every time the bicycle has enjoyed a moment of extreme popularity, a major market correction was not far behind. After the 1890s frenzy of the safety bike, sales plummeted by 80 percent between 1899 and 1902. The ten-speed boom of the early 1970s (in which bicycles outsold cars for three years straight) became the bust of 1974-76 as sales declined by 50 percent and the shoddy products that had been raced to the sales floor ended up stolen or gathering dust in the garage, their cheap *dérailleurs* broken, their joys forgotten.

It doesn’t take an Albert A. Pope to suspect that one of the major causes behind the pro-bicycling policies of cities like Washington and New York is mere fashion. And what fashion gives it will eventually take away. Consider, too, how unevenly distributed the current bicycle boom is: Bike commuting is up in prosperous nerd burbs like Portland and Washington, but bike riding is mildly decreasing nationwide—and way down among kids.

Still, the bicycle is a noble beast: Cheap and fun, it can take you far. That it is also environmentally friendly should be counted in its favor. That its riders sometimes act like they’re rolling in virtue should not. ♦

A Publisher's Life

The woman behind the name behind the literature.

BY PETER TONGUETTE

It is a rare book that features appearances by Albert Camus, Willa Cather, and H. L. Mencken, but—alas—an even rarer book that squanders such a captivating cast of characters. The work of the aforementioned authors, along with that of dozens of others, was released by the husband-and-wife publishers Alfred A. and Blanche Knopf, the latter of whom is the subject of this admiring and exhaustive biography. Unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably, the books Mr. and Mrs. Knopf ushered into print are of considerably greater interest than their own story of literary entrepreneurship and marital strife.

To be sure, Laura Claridge approaches this material with a definite perspective. Although the firm the couple set up in 1915 was named just for Alfred, Claridge—the author of biographies of Emily Post and Norman Rockwell—persuasively advances the argument that it was she, not he, who was the brains behind the operation. And in an introduction, Claridge wastes little time in establishing Blanche's bona fides. The publisher “nurtured and often edited” the handiwork of such notables as Clarence Day and Muriel Spark, among others, and her acquisitions were not limited to literary fiction but also included such heterogeneous categories as crime fiction (Dashiell Hammett and Ross Macdonald), serious-minded nonfiction (John Hersey's *Hiroshima*), and foreign-language works translated into English (Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*).

Perhaps Arnold Rampersad said it most succinctly:

Peter Tonguette is the editor, most recently, of Peter Bogdanovich: Interviews.

The Lady with the Borzoi
Blanche Knopf
Literary Tastemaker Extraordinaire
by Laura Claridge
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 416 pp., \$30



Blanche Knopf (1946)

A brilliant woman living somewhat in the shadow of her lordly husband, Alfred, she signed up most of the writers, especially the foreigners, who made Knopf a prestigious as well as a profitable imprint.

Blanche may well have been on the short end of the stick when it came to her partnership with Alfred. For example, Claridge writes that Blanche's stake in the company was a mere 25 percent, despite earlier assurances from Alfred that the two would be “equal partners,” and her involvement was consistently downplayed. On the other hand, Blanche was the beneficiary of a publishing industry that, at the time she entered it, did not value credentials above all else, allowing her to flourish despite lacking a college diploma. Born in 1894 in New York, the daughter of Julius and Bertha

(Samuels) Wolf received no education beyond the Gardner School—which, as described here, possibly provided a surer grounding in Western literature than many college campuses.

In Claridge's insightful telling, it was while studying at the “enchanted universe” of Gardner that the bookish Blanche blossomed. The six-story structure, Claridge writes, included a “wind-ing white marble staircase that led to an endless array of grand bookcases,” which were stocked with the collected works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Gustave Flaubert, among others. The stage was set for a career in which Blanche became a perceptive judge of talent with a ken for the cutting-edge.

She carried her single-minded devotion to a literary life into her romance with Alfred, whom she married in 1916. “We never talked anything,” she remembered, “but books and music, music and books.” Being mad about the arts, of course, is a poor substitute for love: “At the beginning of the marriage, in the house in Westchester before Pat was born,” said friend Elsie Alsberg, referring to their son, Alfred A. (Pat) Knopf Jr., “I sensed the marriage was not too good.” There were aesthetic disagreements as well. As early as 1913, the two had opposite reactions to the famous International Exhibition of Modern Art at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York. To Blanche, the show's examples of “Fauvism, Futurism, and Cubism” were intriguing, while to Alfred, such art was “lightweight.”

As usual, Blanche was prescient, but that did not quell Alfred's condescension. Later, she lobbied to acquire Norman Mailer's *The Deer Park*, but was overruled. Board meetings at Knopf would feature rancorous exchanges between the marrieds. “Sometimes going too far when nothing seemed to blunt her husband's rudeness, she deliberately nettled him,” Claridge writes. “She'd turn to the man on her left, then her right, speaking softly until Alfred shouted at her to be quiet.”

The highs and lows of Alfred and Blanche's personal and professional union hold our attention to a point, as do the specifics of the business

of book-making that are sprinkled throughout. We learn, for example, of the canny choice to set Knopf's debut publication—an English translation of Emile Augier's *Four Plays*—in Cheltenham, a font which had already been “adopted as a headline typeface by the *New York Times*.” And we learn of Blanche's early decision to use so-called stained tops, in which color is added to the tops of pages; the elegant practice will be familiar to any reader of the collected works of John Updike (a Knopf author until his death in 2009).

In the end, however, this biography does feature a fatal flaw: The many classic books referenced as having been acquired and published by the Knopfs are invariably more enticing than a life of the Knopfs. The saga of Alfred and Blanche simply cannot compete with Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* or Leslie Marchand's *Byron: A Biography* or *The Collected Tales of E.M. Forster*. At one point, Claridge strains to establish a connection between W.H. Hudson's *Green Mansions*—which the firm reissued in 1916—and Blanche herself, writing that her fingernails resembled “the talons of the book's dying heroine” in her malnourished later years. Yet this only serves as a reminder that Blanche did not write, nor is she the subject of, *Green Mansions*; she was “only” involved in making the book available to the public. To put it another way, a biography of a publisher is akin to a biography of a movie producer or a frame-maker. Each profession comes into contact with creative work, but none is primarily responsible for it.

This is true in spite of the fact that Blanche (who died in 1966) comes across as a charming and sympathetic individual, admirably gallant when she pretended not to hear her husband's put-down of her “haggard” appearance following a medical procedure (“Do you recognize yourself now, Mrs. Knopf?”) and, for all her cerebral qualities, appealingly concerned with appearances, as when she relayed instructions to Christian Dior for a dress to be worn at the Nobel Prize ceremony honoring Albert Camus (“You have my measurements, can't spend too much but it must be elegant”). ♦

BCA

Shots Fired

When the subject is guns, politics trumps history.

BY JOHN R. LOTT JR.

Pamela Haag calls gun makers “merchants of death.” And America's love affair with guns, she says, didn't really start until the late 1800s, when the “merchants of death” convinced Americans that they wanted guns. She describes how gun makers were innovators in advertising, using promotional materials to lure Americans into buying firearms, even deploying skilled marksmen and trick-shot artists to show off the guns.

Haag's story centers around the Winchester family, famous for its rifles, and she focuses on two members of the family: Oliver Winchester, who started the company, and Sarah Winchester, his daughter-in-law, who was supposedly haunted by her family's “blood fortune” and experienced an “enormous, haunting debt of guilt.”

The Gunning of America, however, is an advocacy book, not a history book, and Haag carefully selects her facts and gives readers a biased presentation of history. She tells us, for example, that Winchester gun sales soared from 9,800 in 1875 to 292,400 in 1914. But 1914 makes for a convenient end-year: The First World War had begun in July, and Winchester increased production to provide guns for the British and Canadian armies. (In 1875, the company was only selling two types of rifles.) Total gun sales *did* increase over that period; but a lot of that came from cheaper guns, many produced in Europe—a fact that doesn't fit Haag's story of easily duped buyers.

Indeed, little evidence is provided that Sarah Winchester actually dis-

The Gunning of America

Business and the Making of American Gun Culture
by Pamela Haag
Basic Books, 528 pp., \$29.99

liked guns. Yet if she really hated guns so much, there's a lot she could have done to prevent their sale. Oliver Winchester died in 1880, Sarah's husband William died in 1881, and by then, Sarah owned 50 percent of the stock in the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. Until her death in 1922, over 40 years when gun sales were exploding, Sarah could have done anything she wanted with Winchester Repeating Arms. So if she really hated guns, why didn't she sell her stock or move the company away from gun manufacturing? Haag fails to note that Sarah Winchester ended up controlling half the company stock; all she tells us is that Sarah owned 7.8 percent of Winchester stock while her father-in-law was still alive.

Sarah Winchester did struggle with depression, and Haag attributes this to guilt largely caused by being in the business of making and selling guns. But it is equally possible that Sarah was depressed because she suffered numerous stillbirths and her only child to survive birth would live for just one month. One fact not mentioned by Haag is that, until Sarah's death at age 82, she kept various items that she had bought for her expected children.

Haag also tries to revive two claims made by the disgraced historian Michael A. Bellesiles. In *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (2000), Bellesiles asserted that probate records showed gun ownership was rare in pre-Civil War America, arguing that

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“the gun industrialist ... was crucial to the development of the commercial market.” But Professor Bellesiles had falsified his probate data and, as a result, Alfred A. Knopf stopped publishing the book and an investigation commissioned by his university concluded he had committed fraud.

Haag also selectively references probate records from the pre-revolutionary era to argue that guns were not commonly owned in early America. According to the numbers she reports, there was an estimated low in Massachusetts of 37 percent of wills mentioning guns to a high of 62 percent in the South. But she ignores other studies that show higher rates, as well as the fact that these records provide only a partial account of gun ownership. She also mentions current gun-ownership rates, claiming that they have been falling in recent decades, according to the General Social Survey and Pew Research Center. But surveys by Gallup, ABC News/*Washington Post*, and CNN have found no decline. Haag offers no explanation for picking only the two surveys that support her thesis, nor does she mention concerns that these surveys systematically miss gun owners.

Let us assume, however, that Haag is correct that gun ownership has recently fallen. Is this because gun makers have lost their marketing prowess? No answer is provided, and her treatment of current gun-control debates is filled with errors. She claims that the 2005 Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act “prohibits civil liability actions against gun manufacturers, distributors, or dealers for damages caused by their products.” But that is false: Gun makers can be sued if they fail to do background checks or sell to someone who doesn’t pass the check or if any reasonable conclusion can be drawn that the buyer intended to commit a crime.

The best history books grapple with opposing evidence and alternative explanations, arguing why one interpretation makes more sense than another. But in *The Gunning of America*, Pamela Haag simply ignores inconvenient facts. ♦

BCA

Denial of Faith

The slow, steady, largely unheralded assault on religious freedom.

BY RYAN SHINKEL

Two years ago, students and administrators successfully obstructed a debate about abortion at Oxford. Last year, Stanford students tried to cancel a campus conference on the sexual revolution. Mary Eberstadt argues that groups at each university, separated by an ocean and a continent, joined ranks against social-conservative student groups because both groups entertained questions about the sexual revolution. In her brief against political assaults on religious believers, she reports why Christian dissenters from progressive sexual ethics are, quite simply, not tolerated.

It’s old news that conservatives have lost cultural ground in America. But “in this profound and still-unfolding transvaluation,” Eberstadt writes, “yesterday’s ‘sinners’ have become the new secular saints; and yesterday’s ‘sins’ have become virtues, as positive expressions of freedom.” Likewise, Christian conservatives—far from instilling theocracy in America, as their critics like to suggest—are subject to witch hunts by an amplified minority of secular progressives.

These new beliefs form a new religion, Eberstadt argues, with their own “neo-puritans” possessing “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be a Christian exercising the right to free association with other Christians.” Whether it’s forcing Brendan Eich to resign from Mozilla or crushing small businesses and charities with fees and penalties, the “enemies of religious freedom are the enemies of liberalism itself.”

Whether secular progressivism is anything like a new religion or just ide-

It’s Dangerous to Believe
Religious Freedom and Its Enemies
by Mary Eberstadt
Harper, 192 pp., \$25.99

ology imitating religious feeling, Eberstadt’s analysis is revealing. Religious freedom is being redefined, along with family and gender, because this phase of the culture wars is part of a wider sexual revolution. The expressive individualism of the 1960s and ’70s is the faith of those who wield the levers of power; “traditional” morality is retained by “believers” who don’t share that faith. Their ongoing clash is fundamental: Do dissenters from the new sexual orthodoxy have a place in American society?

Mary Eberstadt’s previous works include *How the West Really Lost God* (2013) and *Adam and Eve After the Pill* (2012). The former suggested that the decline of marriage and family has hastened the decline of religion; the latter vindicates the warnings against the sexual revolution in Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968). Now she extends this analysis to religious freedom and its class implications: Because Christian communities are primary resources of community and aid and material resources are limited, “to discredit and impede people who help the poor is to hurt the poor.” Secular progressive witch hunts are class warfare.

As it happens, Eberstadt has little to say about how conservative Christians can build up their own institutions. But strengthening distinct Christian institutions and culture is fundamental as nominal Christianity fades and the wider culture grows increasingly hostile. If there is to be civic renewal in American churches and families, as

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well as public-spiritedness and civility, religious Americans must be involved.

Eberstadt speaks in cataclysmic terms about the “soft despotism” Western Christians face—in contrast to the full despotism their brethren face in the Middle East and China—and here a broader perspective is helpful. Consider, for instance, the insights of church historian Christopher Dawson who argues that Christian life means continual

spiritual warfare. Despite temporary successes, “the successive ages of the Church are successive campaigns in this unending war, and as soon as one enemy has been conquered a new one appears to take its place.” That is to say, soft threats to religious freedom need not mean the beginning of the end but the end of one age and the beginning of another—for a church already separated by oceans and continents. ♦



Bright College Years

How professors see their students and vice versa.

BY JONATHAN MARKS

Among several things Alexander Astin’s impassioned new study sets in italics is this disconcerting observation: “*Most of the students who end up in college are [about] average or even below average.*” That is, the main business of most colleges and universities is educating average or below average students. We are in debt to Astin, professor of higher education emeritus at UCLA, for bringing up this fact of college life, for our commentariat neglects it. They are too riveted, by the struggle to get into Harvard or to make Yale more just, to attend to the vast majority of students, or the possibility that “*most colleges and universities are not well designed to educate*” them. Italics again.

Part of the problem, Astin argues, is money. In 2014, the University of Michigan, that state’s flagship, spent \$22,728 per student on instructional expenses. Michigan State, next in the pecking order, spent \$14,779. Lansing Community College spent \$5,884. No one should begrudge University of Michigan students what’s spent on them; some of that sum represents their own tuition dollars and, in any case, the education of our strongest students is a worthwhile public investment. None-

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Are You Smart Enough?

How Colleges’ Obsession with Smartness Shortchanges Students
by Alexander W. Astin
Stylus, 128 pp., \$22.50

theless, Lansing Community College’s students can’t be educated on the cheap, either. They need mentoring to succeed in college more than their better-prepared counterparts do.

Community colleges enroll about “one third of the new high school graduates who [enroll] as [full-time] college freshmen.” To fail here is to fail big. More broadly, most colleges and universities, if they are selective at all, are not terribly selective. Yet their graduates are our citizens. Our deplorably low six-year graduation rates suggest that we are not very good at educating quite a few of our students. Astin’s main explanation for our failure is that too many “faculty members ... value merely *being smart* more than *developing smartness.*” Indeed, Astin’s “central thesis” is that professors value being smart more than anything else. For that reason, “most of the students who attend community colleges, not to mention those average or modestly bright students” who get into four-year colleges, “are not particularly welcome ... from the perspective of ... faculty.”

This charge against faculty is unjust, but there is something to it. Faculty members probably gravitate toward students who remind them of their younger selves, and whatever affection they may have for their students at Middling University, some would abandon those students mid-lecture if the Ivy League summoned them.

Faculty members also enjoy teaching good learners. That, too, is a noble kind of teaching. That a concert violinist picks up a new technique with ease doesn’t mean she didn’t need to be taught it, and to make something grand possible is, itself, grand. But even at the college level, much teaching is more akin to what grade-school violin teachers do. The pupils are not sure that they like the violin, and may have to learn how to practice and how to benefit from instruction, or to learn better how to learn. Smartness is one name for this ability to learn, and while there is presumably wide natural variation in this capacity, aspects of it are teachable. Teachers can easily forget that students who show little interest in (or aptitude for) their subject are not necessarily fixed in that state. Where a teacher deals primarily with average students, such forgetting greatly limits what he can accomplish.

Still, Astin’s most damaging charge—that faculty consider most of their students unwelcome—is unsupported. Astin gives us just a handful of data points from a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute. First, when asked what issues are major priorities at their institutions, private university faculty rank “[enhancing] the institution’s national image” above “[promoting] the intellectual development of students.” Does Astin think that faculty members don’t distinguish between their priorities and their institution’s priorities? That they are capable of distinguishing between them is suggested by the fact that 88 percent agree that their teaching is valued by other faculty members in their department but only 22.4 percent think that their institutions reward good teaching.

Second, Astin notes that only about a third of professors consider

their students “well prepared academically,” that only about half are satisfied with the quality of their students, and that more than half describe working with underprepared students as a “source of stress.” But Astin neglects other relevant evidence from the same survey: 89.2 percent of faculty agree that “all students have the potential to excel in my course” and 91.4 percent say that “no question is too elementary” for their classrooms. At community colleges, where faculty deal most with below-average students, 85.7 percent agree that faculty are interested in student’s personal problems and 83.5 percent agree that faculty are strongly interested in student’s academic problems. Community college faculty are no less likely than their colleagues to say that their work adds meaning to their lives, and are somewhat more likely to say that they experience joy in their work.

A nonperverse reading of the data suggests that faculty long for better-

prepared students but dedicate themselves to the students they actually have. Astin’s description of the typical faculty member, who caters to the brightest and leaves others to sink or swim, describes no faculty member I know, and the data tend to confirm that Astin, in this passionate book, has gotten carried away.

That does not diminish the seriousness of the problem Astin identifies. Even the too-many-people-are-going-to-college crowd doesn’t think that *most* of the students presently in college should learn a trade instead, so we cannot avoid the problem of how best to educate a group we are evidently not very good at educating. But no sound approach to that problem can accept the misleading idea that, if faculty just cared more, things would begin to turn around. Astin has done good work on how students succeed in college. That kind of (admittedly wonkish) approach is worth more than all his italics. ♦

displayed for years as genuine articles. In retaliation, the Spaniards reneged on their agreement to send one of these paintings to the Noordbrabants exhibition, where it was going to be demoted to a pseudo-Bosch. To its credit, the Prado was still willing to lend their Dutch rivals one of the two greatest of all Bosch paintings, *The Haywain*. In the end, despite all the controversy, the Treaty of Westphalia is holding.

I didn’t make it to the Dutch exhibition, but I’m just back from the one in Madrid. I’ve spoken to people who did go to the Noordbrabants Museum, and I have looked through its catalogue. Each exhibition can lay claim to items not present in the other: The Dutch had more Bosch drawings, for example, but the Spanish have more Bosch paintings. I wish I had been able to go to both. But in the end, one must award the prize to Madrid. All along, the Prado had its trump card, and it’s called *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. This is the iconic Bosch painting, and indeed one of the most famous paintings in the world. In 1995, on my first trip to Spain, there were two things I wanted to see: (1) *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and (2) the rest of the country. By withholding its trophy painting, the Prado ensured its triumph over the Noordbrabants Museum. Let’s face it: Given two Leonardo exhibitions, the one with the *Mona Lisa* is going to be the winner.

And make no mistake about it, Madrid is presenting one of the greatest art exhibitions of all time. It offers an opportunity to see simultaneously almost all of Bosch’s authentic paintings, and all but one of the greatest of them (it lacks *The Last Judgment* from Vienna’s Academy of Fine Arts). If you’re seeking the very definition of a mind-blowing visual experience, make every effort to get to Madrid before this exhibition closes. And if you’ve already seen many Bosch paintings and are wondering whether this exhibition is really worth the effort, trust me—it is. In my personal obsession of tracking down Bosches, I had previously seen 19 of the 24 Bosch paintings now in Madrid (it’s a rough count because of the attribution controversy). Despite my familiarity with many of the paintings,

BCA

Unearthly Delights

A Bosch addict returns from pilgrimage.

BY PAUL A. CANTOR

Madrid

Spain and the Netherlands have been officially at peace since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, but war threatened to erupt between the two nations this spring. The seemingly innocuous occasion of commemorating the 500th anniversary of the death of the great painter Hieronymus Bosch touched off a battle of museums. It all began in February when the Dutch town of ’s-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch for short)—from which a man born Jheronimus van Aken took his professional name—

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Bosch

The 5th Centenary Exhibition
Museo del Prado
through September 11

mounted in its Noordbrabants Museum what it billed as the greatest Bosch exhibition ever seen.

Not to be outdone, Spain’s premier art museum, the Prado in Madrid, went all out for the artist known locally as El Bosco with an even greater exhibition, which opened when the Noordbrabants show closed in May and runs until mid-September. At times, the Bosch battle got ugly. Perhaps anticipating the coming competition, the Dutch scholars who curated the Noordbrabants exhibition denied the authenticity of several Bosch paintings the Prado has proudly



'The Haywain' (c. 1516)

I still was overwhelmed by the experience of seeing them all together, and it was of course a great joy to cross off the remaining items on my personal Bosch bucket list. (There goes my separate trip to Rotterdam.)

It is also worth noting that the paintings are almost all better displayed than they normally are in their home institutions, and that includes the Prado itself. When I first saw *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *The Haywain* in the Prado in 1995, I have to confess that I was disappointed. These paintings that I loved so much from reproductions in books seemed comparatively dull and lifeless in person, almost as if the colors had faded. Imagine my thrill when I saw them burst into life in the Madrid exhibition. I give the credit principally to much brighter and carefully positioned lighting that brings out Bosch's colors in all their vibrancy.

Moreover, some of the paintings have been painstakingly restored in anticipa-

tion of these anniversary exhibitions. When I saw the painting now known as the *Saint Wilgefortis Triptych* in Venice in 2008—long thought to portray Saint Julia—I refused to believe that it is by Bosch. The painting was in such bad shape that, in places, the colors looked smudged and the outlines were sometimes vague. Now restored, the triptych looks like vintage Bosch—and Saint Wilgefortis has her beard back. (You'll have to go to Madrid to find out what that means.)

For me, the personal highlight of the exhibition also comes from Venice: The four paintings collectively known as *Visions of the Hereafter*. These paintings have long been difficult to see, hidden away as they were in the Doge's Palace. I was crushed when I splurged for the famous Palace Secret Itineraries Tour to see the Bosches—only to discover that all four were off being restored. What a relief it was, finally, to see them in Madrid, and to confirm

that they are among Bosch's greatest works, especially the panel known as *The Ascent of the Blessed*, which uncannily depicts the tunnel of light that people who have had near-death experiences often describe.

In their home institutions, the famous Bosch triptychs are normally displayed almost flat up against walls, thus making it difficult to observe the reverse sides of the wing panels. The Madrid exhibition lets you see these paintings in the round. Indeed, you can walk all around them and admire them from many different angles—up close and from far away. This is particularly important with Bosch. What fascinates viewers in his paintings are the details—all the strange miniature scenes he conjures up in heaven and in hell, and on the earth. The one drawback of the exhibition is the huge crowds it has inevitably attracted; but if you're patient and willing to jostle a bit, within a few minutes you're able to get a front-row



'The Garden of Earthly Delights' (1503-15)

seat, as it were, for the great triptychs. In fact, you can get within a few feet of all of them and observe the details as long as you like in a way that is normally impossible in their home settings.

What may be even better is that you can get sightlines that allow you to appreciate the triptychs in a way that also is difficult in their home institutions. The devil may be in the details in Bosch paintings, but seen from the proper distance, they reveal another aspect of his genius: the way the details fit together into larger patterns and form a genuine artistic whole. After all, one can observe the details of Bosch paintings in books; photographic reproduction can offer sections of the works blown up. But especially for the larger triptychs, reproductions in books fail to convey a sense of the big picture. You have to view the paintings in person to be able to see how artfully composed they are—how Bosch balances the colors, creates a rhythm in the figures, and shapes larger patterns out of the minuscule details he so brilliantly portrays.

That is why the Madrid exhibition is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. But as they say on late-night television

ads, "Wait! There's more." A ticket to the Bosch exhibition entitles you to see the whole Prado, and it may well be the most impressive art museum in the world. Its collection of Spanish paintings is, of course, unrivaled (including El Greco, Velázquez, and Goya), and because of the Habsburg connections of the Spanish royal family, the Prado excels in its Flemish and Dutch collections as well. And your feet will give out before the Prado's Titians do. Just to be provocative, I will add that, for me, the greatest single painting in the world is Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*, and it's in the Prado, gorgeously restored.

Just across the street from the Prado is the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, which in almost any other city would be the artistic highlight. Its collection is strong in the areas where the Prado is weak, including one of the best collections of modern art in Europe and, surprisingly, what may now be the best collection of American paintings outside the United States. And the Thyssen-Bornemisza is currently featuring an exhibition called "Caravaggio and the Painters of the North" (open till Sep-

tember 18). If 24 Bosch paintings are not enough to attract you to Madrid, then how about 10 or 12 Caravaggios? (I fudge again because of attribution issues.) I can't think of a moment when one city has hosted two exhibitions of this quality, both involving great artists whose paintings are rare and hard to track down. (I saw five Caravaggios I hadn't seen before, from exotic places such as Cremona and Kansas City. Incidentally, Kansas City is on a roll this art season: One of the seemingly minor paintings in its Nelson-Atkins Museum just got upgraded to a genuine Bosch and is included in the Madrid exhibition.)

And rounding out the art scene in Madrid is the Reina Sofia Museum, which currently has an exhibition (open until mid-August) of the Cuban surrealist Wifredo Lam, who was influenced by Bosch. Last time I checked, the Reina Sofia also had a painting called *Guernica* by a Spanish painter whose name escapes me at the moment, but I think he's pretty famous.

Even in normal times, Madrid is one of the premier destinations for world-class paintings, but at the moment, it's the center of the artistic universe. ♦

The Dry Decade

Yet another reason to oppose the 18th Amendment.

BY BENJAMIN WELTON

It was the decade of hot jazz and short skirts. Knowing what we now know about the 1920s, the Jazz Age can feel at times like the *Decameron*, with beautiful people dancing on the edge of oblivion. Even though liquor, wine, and beer were prohibited, thanks to the Eighteenth Amendment, the nation kept on drinking, turning America into a land full of (technical) criminals. But of course, very real criminals like Al Capone and George “Bugs” Moran benefited the most and even became heroes to some.

This story is the focus of Lisa McGirr’s most recent work. A professor of history at Harvard, she approaches the topic like many other academics—with dry, repetitive prose and a seeming aversion to the more raucous aspects of the decade in question. Her chief concern is how the anti-liquor crusade created a new model of invasive government for “conservative ends.” Spurred on by a bevy of mostly middle-class, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, Prohibition was enforced widely, but unevenly, its primary targets being working-class and urban immigrants, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and poor whites in the rural south.

McGirr connects the war on liquor with our contemporary war on drugs, describing the lopsided enforcement of Prohibition as a root cause of police brutality and the use of law enforcement as a means of social control. The temperance movement and Prohibition were correctives based on notions of cultural superiority, she explains. Begat by Protestant supremacists bent on using government

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The War on Alcohol

Prohibition and the Rise of the American State

by Lisa McGirr

Norton, 352 pp., \$27.95



Confiscation of beer, Jersey City (ca. 1925)

to make the nation more holy, Prohibition, McGirr contends, fueled the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, expanded the penal state, promoted the centralization of “scientific” policing, and helped transform the Democrats from a dry party backed by Southern and Midwestern Protestants into a haven for blacks and blue-collar workers.

In a sense, Prohibition helped to create the modern American system, whereby the two major political parties play to their bases in the hopes that they can get a chance to further expand the power of Washington. But McGirr fails to fully recognize the political truth about Prohibition: a battle between two different interpretations of progressivism. The Anti-Saloon League and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union captured the reform enthusiasm of the Progressive era to advocate “muscular action by the federal government.” In that sense, Prohibition was the apex of the progressive drive to “coerce, con-

trol, and reshape public and private behavior.” McGirr rightly asserts that such plans were anathema to conservatives (even those sympathetic to the anti-liquor cause) but she also calls to task the 1920s Supreme Court, which affirmed Prohibition in the name of a conservatism that supported “federal powers and legal positivism for conservative ends.”

With religious zealotry on the old left and big-government contrivance on the right, ending Prohibition was left up to a new Democratic coalition composed of those most affected by the law—first and second generation immigrants, the urban working class, blacks, rural whites, Roman Catholics, and others—who flocked to Al Smith’s 1928 presidential campaign. Even though he lost in a landslide to Herbert Hoover, who was himself a progressive dedicated to expanding federal power, Smith helped pave the way for Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal coalition. McGirr contends here that a “new civilization was in the making, one more self-consciously pluralist,” which held until the 1970s when Richard Nixon and subsequent presidents revamped the spirit of Prohibition in order to suppress narcotics.

This version of events, however, is too tidy. McGirr’s “new civilization” thesis, which ended once the Democrats lost their stranglehold on Washington, seems to blame Republicans exclusively for today’s decay. But while Republicans must shoulder some of the blame for the disastrous war on drugs, the great American crime wave, which began in 1963 and lasted until the early 1990s, occurred under the watch of liberal Democrats. Similarly, the Prohibition spirit of thou-shalt-not has been kept alive and well by progressive Democrats.

In any case, given her political sympathies, Lisa McGirr is to be lauded for rescuing this formative period from historical neglect. The Prohibition age was a bipartisan moment when Democrats and Republicans looked to the federal government for answers—and with what results!

Transcript: Melania Trump’s Apology Speech (continued)

July 28, 2016
Mar-a-Lago Club Ballroom

DONALD TRUMP: ...going to be spectacular, just spectacular. Now, please welcome my beautiful, tremendous, supermodel wife: Melania Trump. She has a little something to say about her speech last week—which was great, by the way, and was over 93 percent original, which is very original. Okay, Melania. Everybody, here’s Melania. Come on out now, isn’t she beautiful? Though I’m not so bad myself.

(APPLAUSE)

MELANIA TRUMP: Hello. First of all, I want to apologize for borrowing some phrases from Michelle Obama’s 2008 DNC speech. I promise, it was not intentional, and it will never happen again. After all, two score and six years ago, my father brought forth, on a different continent, a new daughter, conceived while listening to Neil Diamond, and dedicated to the proposition that her future husband, Donald Trump, would become the greatest president ever.

Friends, Americans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I have a dream that, someday, I will be judged not by the wording of my speeches, but by the content of my character. After all, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, sweat, and a line of affordable, high-quality cosmetics.

You may ask, what is my aim, and I can only answer with one word: Victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the late night jokes, victory however mean all the memes may be, because without victory we’re stuck with Crooked Hillary. With malice toward some, with charity for the deserving, with firmness in the right as Donald gives us to see the right, let us remember that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Because, as I always say, there is no red America or blue America, there are just Americans who think Donald Trump is great.

I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the Earth. When I travel the country, I always hear people say: Mrs. Trump, build up that wall! Duty, Honor, Country, those three