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JAMES BALDWIN’S BRILLIANCE
ELIAS ALTMAN

HOW SOCIALISTS BUILT AMERICA
JOHN NICHOLS

THE GOLDSTONE AFFAIR
ADAM HOROWITZ, LIZZY RATNER AND PHILIP WEISS

WHAT MAKES LIFE GOOD?
MARThA C. NUSSBAUM

MAY 2, 2011
THENATION.COM
Letters

¡Baja Libre! for the Real Arizonans

Tucson
Thank you for noting our Baja Arizona movement (“Noted,” April 4). One small quibble: since the term “secession” has some unpalatable history, we prefer “separation.” Our model is West Virginia, which separated in order to stay in the Union when Virginia seceded. We have a drink too, the Baja Libre. It’s tequila and Squirt. Don’t waste the boutique stuff in these; any cheap tequila blanca will do. ¡Salud!
Bill Miller

The Insanity of the Nuclear Age

Mineola, N.Y.
As Japan reels from the cataclysm of earthquakes and the tsunami—and the greatest nuclear disaster since Chernobyl—Jonathan Schell’s linkage of the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the folly of Fukushima should serve as a cautionary tale about militarism, the nature of war and the dangers of nuclear proliferation (“From Hiroshima to Fukushima, April 4). Although more than six decades have elapsed since President Truman ordered the atomic bombardment of two densely populated Japanese cities in World War II, we are still haunted by this mass incineration of civilians.

When Italian physicist Enrico Fermi produced the world’s first controlled, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction on December 2, 1942, the objective was the disturbance and elimination of Nazi Germany’s war machine—not the wholesale eradication of noncombatants. Nuclear energy is a fact of life in the Land of the Rising Sun, and Japan has borne the brunt of yet another atomic tragedy.

Rosario A. Iaconis
West Kingston, R.I.
Jonathan Schell’s conclusions on the nature of nuclear crises are biblical. This is what we get for fooling with nature. We humans are tropical animals, akin to monkeys and chimps. It is not a great step from fireplaces to steam engines to nuclear power. Each of these methods of creating heat and fuel is severely flawed and unsustainable.

If we are doomed for fooling with nature and taking on necessities too complex to handle, then we were doomed 1 million years ago when we conquered fire. The control of fire ultimately resulted in our taking over the planet. I suppose one could argue about whether that was a good thing, especially for the other living things on the earth. But the alternative was to remain in the tropics as just another group of quarreling smart apes.

I think of the human species in classical Greek terms. Our nature contains our strengths, beauty and incredible creativity; also the seeds of our destruction through arrogance and greed. We can do nothing but appreciate this fact and try to overcome as we watch and suffer and feel sorrow for our fateful limitations.

Marquisa LaVelle

The Legacy of the Triangle Fire

Brooklyn, N.Y.
Joshua Freeman, in “Remembering the Triangle Fire” [April 4], did not mention a major change in worker protection inspired by the fire. The day before the fire the New York Court of Appeals declared the state’s first workers’ compensation law unconstitutional. It took until July 1, 1914, three years after the fire, before a new law would come into effect, after amending the New York State Constitution.

Ronald Balter
New York City
My grandfather, Benjamin Schlesinger, was president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1903, when he was only 27, then president in 1914–23 and again in 1928–32. At the time of the Triangle fire he was manager of the Jewish daily Forward. My mother often quoted him: “Live a life of social significance!”

(continued on page 26)
Whose Shared Sacrifice?

President Obama’s speech unveiling his deficit reduction plan contained few big surprises—by its very premise, it was destined to preserve the faulty assumptions behind the whole deficit discussion—but some of his words were welcome. The president called Social Security and Medicare fundamental American commitments and, in a rebuke to Congressman Paul Ryan, left these entitlement programs largely untouched. He also refused to renew Bush’s tax cuts for the wealthy. It’s a pledge Obama has made—and broken—in the past, but let’s take at face value his sincerity on the matter. (All the better to hold him to it.)

From there the president outlined his plan to reduce the deficit by $4 trillion in the next twelve years, based on the principle of “shared sacrifice.” Here’s what that looks like: for every $1 raised by closing tax loopholes for wealthy Americans, Obama proposes $2 in spending cuts. Two-thirds of those cuts would come from education, health and other social programs while one-third would come from the military budget. The president’s vision of “shared sacrifice,” in other words, hits the poor and the middle class hardest. Meanwhile, wealthy Americans and the military are asked to sacrifice less, even though it was unfunded tax cuts and wars that got us a deficit in the first place.

The problem with starting with such skewed priorities is that Obama will be negotiating with the Republican Party, whose reverse–Robin Hood agenda proposes sacrifices almost entirely from the poor and middle class to pay for tax breaks for corporations and the rich. Indeed, just such a give-and-take is how we ended up with the 2011 budget compromise that averted a shutdown at the expense of $38 billion in spending cuts, the majority of which will come from the departments of education, labor and health. It’s a rotten deal, which the president curiously chose to hail as “the largest annual spending cut in history.” Any more victories like this and Obama will become a new American synonym for “Pyrrhic.” The cuts in the 2011 budget—“79 percent of what we wanted,” in Paul Ryan’s words—will be exacted immediately, despite an economy still struggling to recover from the worst downturn since the Great Depression, one in which 25 million people are still bereft of full-time work.

Lost in this discussion is what the country needs: a clear strategy to rebuild the economy and revive the middle class. That requires making the investments vital to our future and figuring out how to pay for them. It requires taxing what we have too much of (financial speculation and extreme concentrations of wealth) and investing in what we have too little of (education like pre-K and affordable college, twenty-first-century infrastructure, renewable energy). And it means addressing the real source of our long-term debt crisis: not Social Security or Medicare, not “entitlements” but a broken healthcare system, dominated by powerful drug, insurance and hospital lobbies, that costs about twice as much per capita as the health system of any other industrialized country and producing worse results.

The sad fact is, President Obama knows much of this. He spoke compellingly of the injustice of an economy in which the top 1 percent enjoys quarter-million-dollar windfalls while everyone else struggles. He gets that rising healthcare costs are a burden, and that deficit-cutting is no excuse for neglecting our country’s future. But his “balanced approach” conceded too much too early to the deficit hawks and austerity pushers. He needed to reset the debate, but instead he split the difference.
Saving Climate Science

During the recent budget showdown, as House Republicans made their boldest effort yet—and failed, at least for now—to repeal mainstream climate science, Democratic Representative Ed Markey of Massachusetts managed to find some dark comedy in the situation. It’s customary during legislative debates for members of Congress to preface their remarks with “I rise” in support of (or opposition to) the bill under consideration. As the GOP majority on the House Energy and Commerce committee prepared to pass a bill prohibiting the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating carbon pollution, Markey said that although he opposed the bill, “I won’t rise physically, because I’m worried that Republicans will overturn the law of gravity, sending us floating around the room.”

After provoking more chuckles by asking whether Republicans also planned to excommunicate Galileo’s finding that the earth revolves around the sun, Markey predicted that HR 910 would pass the full House but be “dead in the Senate.” And so it was. The House passed what environmentalists dubbed the Dirty Air Act on April 7, 255 to 172, with not a single Republican voting against. Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, however, could muster only fifty votes for a similar measure, leaving Republicans ten votes short of a filibuster-proof majority.

The backstory here is almost as important as the two votes themselves—and as revealing about how Republicans, the Obama administration and the environmental movement are approaching the battles that surely lie ahead. By pushing so hard for restrictions on the EPA, Republicans made it clear that they view the climate issue as a political winner—red meat for their right-wing base and corporate donors alike. Environmentalists countered by framing the issue as an attack on the EPA—popular with voters—and on public health, with the American Lung Association and kindred organizations joining in accusing HR 910 supporters of putting polluters ahead of children’s health.

Perhaps most valuable, however, was a newfound willingness among Big Green groups to show the White House some tough love. As President Obama has steadily watered down or abandoned many of the environmental promises candidate Obama made in 2008, most major environmental organizations have muted their criticism, apparently calculating that supporting the White House is the surest route to progress and that half a loaf is better than none. But that calculus may now be reconsidered, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Obama’s most recent environmental outrages include a proposal—repeated to Congress at the height of the Fukushima nuclear crisis—to triple, to $54.5 billion a year, the federal loan guarantee to triple, to $54.5 billion a year, the federal loan guarantee for new nuclear power plants, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Perhaps most valuable, however, was a newfound willingness among Big Green groups to show the White House some tough love. As President Obama has steadily watered down or abandoned many of the environmental promises candidate Obama made in 2008, most major environmental organizations have muted their criticism, apparently calculating that supporting the White House is the surest route to progress and that half a loaf is better than none. But that calculus may now be reconsidered, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Obama’s most recent environmental outrages include a proposal—repeated to Congress at the height of the Fukushima nuclear crisis—to triple, to $54.5 billion a year, the federal loan guarantee for new nuclear power plants, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Perhaps most valuable, however, was a newfound willingness among Big Green groups to show the White House some tough love. As President Obama has steadily watered down or abandoned many of the environmental promises candidate Obama made in 2008, most major environmental organizations have muted their criticism, apparently calculating that supporting the White House is the surest route to progress and that half a loaf is better than none. But that calculus may now be reconsidered, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Obama’s most recent environmental outrages include a proposal—repeated to Congress at the height of the Fukushima nuclear crisis—to triple, to $54.5 billion a year, the federal loan guarantee for new nuclear power plants, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf. Perhaps most valuable, however, was a newfound willingness among Big Green groups to show the White House some tough love. As President Obama has steadily watered down or abandoned many of the environmental promises candidate Obama made in 2008, most major environmental organizations have muted their criticism, apparently calculating that supporting the White House is the surest route to progress and that half a loaf is better than none. But that calculus may now be reconsidered, perhaps because it has in fact often yielded much less than half a loaf.
WHERE YOUR TAXES REALLY GO: As tax day passes, millions of Americans will send a check to the IRS, but few know the math that goes into this exchange. In a publication titled “Where Do Your Tax Dollars Go?” the National Priorities Project (NPP) illustrates just that. The organization, which seeks to make confusing federal budget information accessible, breaks down how each federal tax dollar was spent in fiscal year 2010.

Perhaps not surprisingly (to some at least), the military received the highest proportion of American taxpayer dollars in 2010. For every $1 paid in taxes, the military—which includes national defense and security, nuclear weapons–related activities of the Energy Department and international security assistance—received 27.4 cents, up from 26.5 cents in 2009. Health spending came in second, with 21.5 cents of every tax dollar going toward Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP and other health–related expenses.

As NPP points out, federal spending in 2010 in some ways reflected the impact of the recession. The average unemployment rate for 2010 was 9.6 percent; thus spending on programs like job training, disability, retirement and unemployment insurance, and Social Security increased from 8.5 cents of every tax dollar in 2009 to 10.9 cents in 2010.

NPP’s breakdown reveals that some government programs receive surprisingly little federal money: education receives just 3.5 cents of every tax dollar; environment, energy and science receives 3 cents; and transportation receives 2.2 cents.

Compare this with how Americans think their tax dollars are spent. According to a 2005 Washington Post/Kaiser Foundation poll, the majority of Americans believed the government spent more money on foreign aid than on Social Security or Medicare. In reality, international affairs, which includes foreign aid, receives just 1.2 cents of every tax dollar.

This warped vision of the budget, however, is reflected in the $38 billion in cuts proposed in the 2011 budget, which largely come from the social and foreign aid programs that receive the least federal money. Meanwhile, military spending—the largest slice of the federal pie—will see an additional $5 billion for fiscal year 2011.

Maybe if Americans knew just how their money was being spent they could shape future budget debates in a more rational direction. That’s why some policy groups are advocating just that idea. As even the centrist think tank Third Way put it in a recent report, “Consumers can easily see detailed information on every product they buy, but the largest item that they purchase in a given year—their taxes—they get nothing. They have a right to know what they are paying for.”

KATE MURPHY

WORSE THAN COAL? Natural gas has been given a big boost lately from policymakers intent on fighting climate change and reducing America’s dependence on foreign oil. But according to a study published in early April by a group of Cornell University scientists, it’s not quite the panacea many have claimed it to be.

In fact, the study shows that the total greenhouse gas emissions from extracting gas from shale may exceed those of burning coal and oil. “The large GHG footprint of shale gas undercuts the logic of its use as a bridging fuel over coming decades, if the goal is to reduce global warming,” the authors write.

Natural gas from deep shale formations has been touted as a cleaner alternative to coal and oil. Despite the destructive effects of hydrofracking, natural gas proponents often point out that it still burns cleaner than other fossil fuels. That much is true, but if the methane leaks out of the wells before it can be captured, that undercuts the natural gas advantage. (Another study from the Post Carbon Institute, to be published in May, reaches similar conclusions.)

“If you add up the range of estimates and add up what that means in terms of total methane leakage and convert it to CO₂ equivalents, the total greenhouse gas footprint of shale gas drilling ends up looking a little bit better than mountaintop removal mining but not hugely better,” says Robert W. Howarth, the study’s lead author.

Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas—seventy-two times more powerful than CO₂ when measured over a twenty-year span. If anything, shale gas development is likely to accelerate the planet’s warming.

The findings come as domestic natural gas production is poised to expand dramatically. Congress is considering a bill that would offer tax incentives for converting trucks and commercial vehicles so that they run on compressed natural gas. President Obama has embraced the idea. The Energy Department estimates that domestic production of natural gas will increase 20 percent by 2035, much of it coming from shale formations.

“It seems to me you want to get the science as right as you can before policy development before, as a nation, we just go out there and say this is salvation,” says Howarth.

ADAM FEDERMAN

SCHEER GENIUS! With a remarkable track record of writing in-your-face journalism for Ramparts, The Nation, the Los Angeles Times and Truthdig, the web-based investigative news operation he co-founded for the purpose of “drilling beneath the headlines,” Robert Scheer undoubtedly deserves a lifetime achievement award or two. But not content to rest on his laurels, the 75-year-old writer continues to win praise for blowing the lid off the big stories of the moment.

In April, the Park Center for Independent Media at Ithaca College gave its third annual Izzy Award—named for dissident journalist I.F. Stone—to Scheer, who shared the honor with the New York–based news and investigation magazine City Limits. The Izzy Award recognized Scheer’s outstanding achievement in independent media as the editor of Truthdig and the author of a powerful new book, The Great American Stickup: How Reagan Republicans and Clinton Democrats Enriched Wall Street While Mugging Main Street (Nation Books).

That new book is the single best work on the guilty men and women who steered the country off the economic cliff to enrich themselves and their friends—and, as usual, Scheer refused to pull any punches in writing it. Izzy Stone would have been proud.

JOHN NICHOLS
administration’s announcement that it was opening the door to a staggering 2.35 billion tons of new coal mining on Western lands. “When burned, [this] coal threatens to release more than 3.9 billion tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide, equal to the annual emissions from 300 coal-fired power plants,” responded the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and WildEarth Guardians in one of the few pushbacks by green groups.

The fight to defend the EPA and Clean Air Act brought out more of a fighting spirit even among establishment environmentalists. As negotiations about a budget deal and possible government shutdown proceeded, the Associated Press reported that the White House had told the Congressional Black Caucus it was open to a deal that would restrict the EPA’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

The outcry from environmental organizations was swift, and this time it came not just from groups on the activist end of the spectrum. The Natural Resources Defense Council, the League of Conservation Voters and the National Wildlife Federation publicly demanded that Obama make it clear that he would veto such a bill. Even Environmental Defense Fund, normally quite a moderate voice, urged the White House to declare “that children’s health should not be a bargaining chip.”

And guess what? The White House, which until then had had enormous trouble locating its spine, soon announced that the president would indeed veto any budget resolution that restricted EPA authority. Thus the final budget agreement, odious as it was in many respects, did not include the provisions that Big Oil and climate deniers most wanted. They’ll try again, of course. Which is why it’s essential to draw the right lessons from this battle. Being on friendly terms with a politician is fine. But in the rough and tumble of Washington, the president would indeed veto any budget resolution that restricted EPA authority. Thus the final budget agreement, odious as it was in many respects, did not include the provisions that Big Oil and climate deniers most wanted. They’ll try again, of course. Which is why it’s essential to draw the right lessons from this battle. Being on friendly terms with a politician is fine. But in the rough and tumble of Washington power struggles, elected officials take seriously only those interests that are able—and willing—to punish or reward them.  

MARK HERTSGAARD

Mark Hertsgaard (markhertsgaard.com), The Nation’s environment correspondent, is the author of six books, including, most recently, HOT: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth.

The Goldstone Affair

From the moment the Goldstone Report was published in September 2009, its opponents have worked tirelessly to undermine it. The 452-page investigation of the 2008–09 Gaza conflict by a United Nations Human Rights Council fact-finding mission accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes for attacks on civilians, but its overall thrust was harshly critical of the Israeli onslaught, which took as many as 1,400 Palestinian lives, including those of more than 300 children. The US Congress denounced the report for allegedly denying Israel’s right of self-defense (it didn’t); Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shortlisted the report, along with Hamas rockets and a nuclear-armed Iran, as one of the three main threats to the Jewish state; and Alan Dershowitz accused the report’s chief author, Richard Goldstone, of being a traitor to the Jewish people. As recently as March, Eli Yishai, Israel’s bellicose interior minister, wrote to Goldstone charging his report with giving “legitimacy” to terrorist organizations and “calm[ing] murderers without a conscience” when they murder children.

Then came the “reconsideration.” On April 1 Goldstone, a 72-year-old South African judge, published an op-ed in the Washington Post saying that Israeli army investigations of some 400 incidents during Operation Cast Lead had caused him to disavow a key assertion in the report: that Israel had a policy of deliberate attacks on civilians during the twenty-two-day conflict. “If I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone Report would have been a different document,” he wrote.

Within hours of Goldstone’s op-ed, those who had been gunning for the report all along gleefully pronounced its demise. They characterized the judge’s essay as a recantation, and they declared the report mortally flawed. Netanyahu demanded that the UN cancel the document. The State Department followed suit, with UN ambassador Susan Rice stating that she wanted the report simply to “disappear.” The Israel Action Network, a multimillion-dollar effort led by the Jewish Federations of North America to massage Israel’s image and rebut “delegitimization” efforts, promptly launched a campaign to circulate the op-ed to as many “opinion molders” as possible.

And yet, the Goldstone Report lives on. Not only have all efforts to derail it failed thus far but the report is arguably more relevant than ever. Just a few days before the judge’s “reconsideration,” the UN Human Rights Council gave the report new life by passing a resolution recommending that it be sent to the General Assembly and from there to the Security Council for possible referral to the International Criminal Court. And Goldstone’s op-ed itself has thrust the report, and its recommendations, back into the spotlight. “In my view, the Goldstone retreat, unfortunate for his overall reputation and legacy, has actually given the report, and its recommendation, a second public life, with renewed interest, and civil society engagement with a call for its implementation,” Richard Falk, the UN special rapporteur on Palestinian human rights, wrote in an e-mail. He later added, “It has made people more aware about the need for accountability.”

Eminent figures have stepped up to affirm the validity of the
A Post-Fukushima Program for Increased Nuclear Security and Safety in the US

Nuclear power is dirty, dangerous, and extraordinarily expensive. Routine operation of nuclear reactors releases toxic radiation, generates lethal radioactive waste, requires polluting uranium mining, and poses proliferation risks. The disaster at the Fukushima nuclear complex in Japan serves as a reminder that nuclear accidents happen more frequently than governments and the nuclear industry admit, and that such accidents can be triggered by a myriad of man-made and natural factors.

We believe the U.S. must quickly develop a clear plan to phase-out existing nuclear reactors at the earliest possible date and replace their power with clean, sustainable energy sources.

The United States already has begun a transition to safe, clean, and affordable energy sources, including wind, solar and appropriately-sited geothermal power, increased energy efficiency, smart grids and distributed generation technologies, and research into new technologies such as microalgae fuel. This transition must be accelerated.

We believe it is not only possible, but essential for the life of our country and planet, to attain a nuclear-free carbon-free energy future by mid-century. Specific steps that must be taken now to meet these goals include:

* Immediately and permanently close the 23 General Electric Mark 1 reactors;
* Immediately close all reactors on or near seismic faults;
* Immediately remove all nuclear subsidies, particularly nuclear loan guarantees from the current federal budget; to be followed by repeal of the Price Anderson Act;
* Irradiated nuclear fuel pools should contain no more than the most recent five years of waste generated. Older waste should be put into hardened on-site storage that meets the “Principles of Safeguarding Nuclear Waste at Reactor Sites” endorsed by groups in 50 states. Reprocessing of radioactive waste must be permanently banned;
* No license extension of existing nuclear facilities;
* No new licenses/permits/approvals should be granted for new uranium mines, fuel cycle facilities, reactors, reactor design certifications. Expand emergency evacuation zones to 50 miles for existing reactor sites;
* A safety review of station blackout scenarios must be undertaken;
* Update US radiation standards to reflect Post-Chernobyl understanding of radiological impacts in addition to current standards based solely on A-bomb survivors
* End all import of foreign radioactive waste, stop all incineration of radioactive waste, ensure that all radioactive materials remain regulated.

This program has been endorsed by 68 organizations and more than 1250 individuals across the United States. Full text of program and list of endorsers here: [http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/accidents/postfukushimaprogram.pdf](http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/accidents/postfukushimaprogram.pdf). To sign your organization on, send an e-mail to nirsnet@nirs.org. To support this program as an individual, please go to this website: [http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5502/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6195](http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5502/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6195).

For more information and/or to contribute to implementation of this program, please contact Nuclear Information and Resource Service, 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 340, Takoma Park, MD 20912. 301-270-6477; nirsnet@nirs.org; www.nirs.org

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Your contributions are tax-deductible and gratefully appreciated
original document, including two of the three other commissioners on the report, retired Irish colonel Desmond Travers and Pakistani lawyer Hina Jilani. “The report stands,” Travers said. “Its strength lies in the court of world opinion, which has accepted that it is credible and that the events it described occurred.” Even Goldstone, who for the most part maintained an oracular silence in the days after his op-ed, said in a brief AP interview that he too stood by the original. “As presently advised I have no reason to believe any part of the report needs to be reconsidered at this time,” he said.

Perhaps the largest lesson of the controversy has been that the world is not prepared to forget the report or the tales of civilian suffering documented in its pages. If Gaza was a contemporary Guernica, the report fit the battle by describing riveting horrors: the children forced to sleep next to their parents’ bodies for days on end as ambulances were denied access to neighborhoods; the 15-year-old boy whose mother sought to save him by sewing up the bullet hole in his chest with a needle sterilized in cologne; the mother and daughter, 65 and 37, shot and killed amid a crowd of civilians carrying white flags as they walked from a village in search of safe harbor; the student who calmly told Human Rights Council interviewers, “My legs were exploded away” by a shell that killed several members of his family. These images will haunt anyone who has read the report.

No less powerful is the moral vocabulary the report provided to describe the outrage of these events. This language was drawn from the realm of international law and carried the promise of legal repercussions for the wrongs committed—by Israel and Hamas—during Cast Lead. Thanks to the report there were names, and consequences, for the suffering inflicted on the people of Gaza, as well as the people of southern Israel. The attack on Gaza’s only functioning flour mill became an example of Israel’s intentional destruction of the area’s civilian infrastructure, while the siege of Gaza, which deprived civilians of the means of sustenance, was correctly classified as a form of collective punishment. Both are war crimes, and both require criminal prosecution of those who planned and orchestrated them.

This moral vocabulary has now permeated the global discourse about Israel-Palestine. Israel’s apparent impunity has galvanized the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and inspired grassroots efforts to use universal jurisdiction to hold Israeli leaders accountable where the international community has failed to do so. This too is the achievement of the report: it has retold the story of the Israel-Palestine conflict and reshaped the contours of the debate.

There has been wide speculation on why Goldstone issued his “reconsideration.” Many have pointed to the unrelenting pressure on him—the ad hominem attacks, the accusations that he abetted terrorists, the meeting with members of the South African Jewish community that was designed to “puncture” his heart, according to the Forward. But the judge has offered no window on his motivation. Indeed, it becomes all the more perplexing when his op-ed’s arguments are examined.

Goldstone’s reconsideration hinges on his claim that Israel’s investigations into some of the most serious alleged crimes of Cast Lead have yielded new information that exonerates it of the charge that it targeted civilians as a matter of policy. To bolster this argument, he cites a March report by a UN Committee of Independent Experts, chaired by a former New York Supreme Court justice, which he says “recognized” the validity of Israel’s investigations. And yet, the committee makes no such claim. While commending Israel for initiating investigations, it offers a damning assessment of the quality of those inquiries. It points to Israel’s unwillingness, and structural inability, to investigate those who “designed, planned, ordered and oversaw Operation Cast Lead” as the greatest fault of the Israeli investigations to date.

As John Dugard, a former UN special rapporteur for the occupied territories and chair of a 2009 Arab League Independent Fact Finding Committee on Gaza, wrote, “There are no new facts that exonerate Israel and that could possibly have led Goldstone to change his mind.” Dugard added that Goldstone’s op-ed misrepresented a key finding of the report when he said he no longer believed there was an intentional policy to target civilians. Such a policy was never the issue, Dugard points out; rather, it was Israel’s indiscriminate use of force that broke international law. “The principal accusation leveled at Israel,” he explains, “was that during its assault on Gaza, it used force indiscriminately in densely populated areas and was reckless about the foreseeable consequences of its actions, which resulted in at least 900 civilian deaths and 5,000 wounded.”

There can be no question that Goldstone’s op-ed has thrown up a considerable roadblock to those who hoped to see the report go to the International Criminal Court. “I was shocked and shattered,” said Norman Finkelstein, a longtime student of the conflict. “I immediately understood it was going to do terrible damage, and damage on many fronts. It’s the damage to truth and justice, it’s the damage to Jewish-Palestinian relations, it’s the damage to Israeli dissidents.”

Unfortunately, the willful misrepresentation continues. A bipartisan group of US senators has called for legislation urging the UN to rescind the report as a “libel” against Israel, while the State Department’s chief legal adviser has described the blocking of the Goldstone Report as an achievement right up there with setting up a UN commission to investigate Muammar el-Qaddafi’s human rights violations.

The report has survived more than eighteen months of assassination attempts, and it may weather the latest ones too. But if the attacks succeed, it will be a disaster for the principle of accountability in Israel and Palestine. As we write these words, tension is mounting once again between Israel and Hamas, and Israeli leaders like Tzipi Livni are threatening Gaza with a second Operation Cast Lead. Between April 7 and 11, nineteen Palestinians were killed and more than sixty injured. This fragile moment not only underscores the importance of the report and its central call—the need for accountability—but also the danger of ignoring its chief recommendations. As long as the crimes of Cast Lead go unpunished, we run the risk of seeing them repeated. Or as the Goldstone Report’s authors warn, “To deny modes of accountability reinforces impunity.”

Adam Horowitz, Lizzy Ratner and Philip Weiss

Pioneering audiologist invents “reading glasses” for your ears.

Neutronic Ear is the easy, virtually invisible and affordable way to turn up the sound on the world around you.

You don’t have to pay through the nose to get Personal Sound Amplification Technology.

It’s amazing how technology has changed the way we live. Since the end of the Second World War, more products have been invented than in all of recorded history. After WWII came the invention of the microwave oven, the pocket calculator, and the first wearable hearing aid. While the first two have gotten smaller and more affordable, hearing aids haven’t changed much. Now there’s an alternative… Neutronic Ear.

First of all, Neutronic Ear is not a hearing aid; it is a PSAP, or Personal Sound Amplification Product. Until PSAPs, everyone was required to see the doctor, have hearing tests, have fitting appointments (numerous visits) and then pay for the instruments without any insurance coverage. These devices can cost up to $5000 each! The high cost and inconvenience drove an innovative scientist to develop the Neutronic Ear PSAP.

Neutronic Ear has been designed with the finest micro-digital electronic components available to offer superb performance and years of use. Many years of engineering and development have created a product that’s ready to use right out of the box. The patented case design and unique clear tube make it practical and easy to use. The entire unit weighs only 1/10th of an ounce, and it hides comfortably behind either ear. The tube is designed to deliver clear crisp sound while leaving the ear canal open. The electronic components are safe from moisture and wax buildup, and you won’t feel like you have a circus peanut jammed in your ear. Thanks to a state-of-the-art manufacturing process and superior design, we can make Neutronic Ear affordable and pass the savings on to you.

Hard to see • Simple to use Easy to afford

Neutronic Ear is the easy, virtually invisible and affordable way to turn up the sound on the world around you.

Just think of the places you’ll enjoy Neutronic Ear

• Parties
• Restaurants
• Church • Lectures
• Book Groups • Movies
• Bird-watching and almost any daily activity

The Evolution of Hearing Products

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<td>Digital Hearing Aid</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Not for most people</td>
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<td>Neutronic Ear</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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It works… but don’t take our word for it. Why pay thousands to make everything sound louder when what you really need is a Personal Sound Amplification Product? We’re so sure you’ll be absolutely thrilled with the quality and effectiveness of this product that we are offering it to the public at a low introductory price with our exclusive trial offer. If, for any reason, you are not completely amazed by how this product improves your life, simply return it for a refund of the product purchase price within 30 days. Call now.

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Genocide Trial in Kansas

In what is said to be the first criminal prosecution brought by the US government involving genocide not related to Nazi war crimes, an American citizen is to be tried on April 26 in Wichita, Kansas, for allegedly lying to immigration authorities about his role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. As the last perpetrators of the Holocaust pass away, the trial is a sign that the Justice Department has broadened its prosecutions to encompass more recent atrocities.

Unlike countries such as Canada, Switzerland and Belgium, whose genocide laws have universal jurisdiction, whereby prosecutions can apply to crimes committed by noncitizens outside the country’s boundaries, the United States can only prosecute such crimes committed within the United States or committed abroad by US nationals. But it can prosecute on immigration-related matters, and that’s what the US district court in Kansas intends in its landmark indictment of 84-year-old Lazare Kobagaya.

Even though the case hinges on immigration issues, the question of genocide will be raised in the courtroom, since the defense is expected to argue that to prove Kobagaya participated in the slaughter, the prosecution will have to prove that that genocide occurred. The indictment states that Kobagaya, a Hutu, directed other Hutus to burn down the houses of and murder hundreds of Tutsis around Birambo, a town in the Nyakizu region of southern Rwanda. Kobagaya is also accused of stabbing a man who defied his order.

About 20,000 people were killed in the Nyakizu community, according to Timothy Longman, a former director of Human Rights Watch in Rwanda who wrote about the genocide for the organization’s 1999 report Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda. The report estimated that 500,000 to 800,000 were killed throughout Rwanda during the 1994 carnage.

Kobagaya, who had run a sorghum-grinding mill in Birambo, became a naturalized US citizen in 2006. If convicted on the two charges—unlawfully procuring citizenship and fraudulently obtaining and misusing an alien registration card—he could lose his citizenship, be deported, receive up to ten years in prison and a fine of up to $250,000. The Justice Department claims that Kobagaya lied to immigration authorities by stating that he lived in Burundi from 1993 to 1995, when he should also have stated that he lived in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide (Kobagaya denies intentional misrepresentation; Birambo is about a three-hour walk to the Burundi border, and inhabitants can easily pass back and forth between the countries). The indictment also claims that Kobagaya lied in denying he had committed crimes for which he had not been arrested, and in denying in his immigrant visa and alien registration that he had “committed the crime of genocide.” He denies these charges.

Kobagaya was indicted in 2009 after he had earlier given video testimony in defense of his former neighbor François Bazaramba, charged by the government of Finland with crimes against humanity for planning and carrying out the killings of 5,000 Tutsis. In June 2010 a Finnish court sentenced Bazaramba to life imprisonment for his role in the genocide. After Kobagaya testified, Finnish police contacted American authorities, and the Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigations began its inquiry. (OSI was created in 1979 to find and prosecute Nazi war criminals living in the United States. In March 2010 it became part of the Justice Department’s Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section. Eli Rosenbaum, OSI’s director of strategy and policy, said that about thirty people were under investigation for Nazi war crimes and another eighty for crimes in more recent conflicts, according to a 2009 New York Times interview.)

One of the difficulties of the Kobagaya case is locating witnesses willing to testify. Rwanda is “a country in dictatorship” and its citizens “can’t say what they want to say,” said Kurt Kerns, Kobagaya’s main defense attorney. The safety of witnesses who testify against their neighbors or in support of Hutu defendants—and who therefore could face possible retribution—is also of concern to Human Rights Watch, which had been subpoenaed by Kobagaya’s attorneys for the names of people it interviewed for its 1999 report. HRW claimed First Amendment rights and reporters’ privileges, but last October Judge Monti Belot ordered that the names be released. In his decision Belot wrote that while he was “not unmindful or insensitive” to concerns about the safety of Rwandans who had been interviewed, he found the concerns “overstated and speculative.”

The trial is expected to be unique and controversial. “Many witnesses,” the judge noted, “will have to come or be brought to the United States from Africa and perhaps other countries,” and “some of the witnesses may have criminal records stemming from their participation in the Rwanda genocide.”

In another example of its expanding scope regarding genocidal crimes, the Justice Department has filed charges against Beatrice Munyenyezi, a 41-year-old resident of Manchester, New Hampshire, for allegedly lying on her citizenship applications about her participation in roadblocks and ID checks that resulted in the killing of numerous Tutsis during the genocide. Her trial is scheduled to begin on May 17.

John S. Friedman, a longtime contributor to The Nation, is working on a biography of Dr. Beny Primm, a pioneer of drug abuse treatment. He is also producing a documentary film, The End of Living Memory, about the Holocaust.
What began in Britain in 2005 as “a third-rate burglary” of voicemails, supposedly limited to a criminal invasion of privacy by a News of the World reporter and a private investigator, has flowered beautifully into a Level 7 scandal that threatens the careers of two of Rupert Murdoch’s top executives, not to mention the heir apparent to the News Corp. empire, James Murdoch. It even laps at the ankles of the 80-year-old magnate, threatening the final heir apparent to the News Corp. empire, James Murdoch. It even lapsed beautifully into a Level 7 scandal that threatens the careers of two of Rupert Murdoch’s top executives, not to mention the

In late April Jeremy Hunt, culture secretary in the coalition government led by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, will rule on whether News Corp.’s bid for full control of the government led by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, will rule on whether News Corp.’s bid for full control of the

In years gone by Murdoch used his newspaper empire as a bludgeon to crush regulatory obstructions. He has forged strategic alliances with Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and Republican administrations on this side of the Atlantic. Rebekah Brooks, editor of News of the World between 2000 and 2003 and now chief executive of News Corp. subsidiary News International, is a regular informal visitor to Cameron at Chequers, the official country residence of Britain’s prime ministers.

But these days their private colloquies may be marred by a certain apprehension. Cameron was scarcely installed in 10 Downing Street before he summoned Andy Coulson as his media adviser. It was a flagrant declaration of interest, since Coulson was a notably grimy character in the Murdoch archipelago, having served as editor of The New York Times, which was happy to remind the world at huge length in September that its rival, the Wall Street Journal, is part of an empire stained by criminal conduct.

Last Christmas Hugh Grant broke down while motoring in Kent. A man stopped, photographed him and then came over, offering to help. He was a former News of the World reporter, Paul McMullan, who now runs a pub in Dover. He invited the actor to drop by. Grant duly honored the invitation, armed with a hidden mike. He recently published his chat with McMullan in The New Statesman, guest-edited by his former girlfriend Jemima Khan. In the transcript, McMullan says Brooks knew about phone hacking at the paper. He also claims that Prime Minister Cameron probably knew as well.

As Burden speculates on his blog, “If Ian Edmondson [a former NoW editor] was involved, so was Andy Coulson. If Andy Coulson was involved, so was Rebekah Brooks. If Rebekah Brooks was involved, so was Master James [Murdoch]. And if they were, it’s very likely that Les Hinton, CEO of [Dow Jones and Company] (the brightest bird in Rupert Murdoch’s bush), was involved, too, because he was Executive Chairman of News International at the time.”

On April 10 Guardian columnist Steven Barnett expressed sentiments widely shared in Britain, writing in favor of a full review of the BSkyB deal: “The issue is that every aspect of Sky’s output will be driven by the same uncompromising corporate culture which has given us the News of the World’s criminality.” On April 8, in an effort to keep incriminating documents from being disclosed, News International said it would settle out of a £20 million fund. This supposedly last and final offer will crumble too in the face of hundreds of other claimants.

Will Rupert himself be enmeshed? Bruce Page, author of a fine book on Murdoch, suggests to me that what could drag the dirty digger into the swamp would be the disclosure of any deal he may have made to stem the scandal when Gordon Brown was still PM. Brown won’t confirm or deny that Murdoch approached him.
Katha Pollitt
Women: The Bus Rolls On

It’s getting awfully crowded underneath that bus. You know, the metaphorical one women keep getting thrown under, along with their rights, their health and their money. Women lost much of their insurance coverage for abortion during the fight over the health-care reform bill last fall, but at least they got some good things out of it: coverage for millions of uninsured women, preventive care including breast and cervical cancer screenings, and a ban on refusing coverage for such pre-existing conditions as having been a rape or domestic violence victim. Overall—and assuming the law is not overturned or sabotaged by the Republicans—women will be better off in terms of affordable healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, than if the bill had been scuttled over the Stupak-Pitts amendment.

The budget deal just concluded was no such compromise. The headlines are all about how the Democrats refused to cave to Republican demands to defund Planned Parenthood and saved the day for women’s reproductive health—at least until September, when the GOP and its media spokespeople will crank up their misogynistic fog machine all over again. It’s hard to see how they’d go further: Arizona’s Jon Kyl claimed on the floor of the House that “90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does is abortions” (it’s actually around 3 percent); his office later said his statement was “not intended to be factual.” Rush Limbaugh claimed, “Planned Parenthood is a money-laundering operation for the Democrat Party.” Glenn Beck said that only “hookers” use Planned Parenthood (in fact, one out of every five women has visited a PP clinic, including this writer). Widespread mockery of these weird remarks might lead you to think they backfired. Arizona’s Jon Kyl claimed on the floor of the House that “90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does is abortions” (it’s actually around 3 percent); his office later said his statement was “not intended to be factual.” Rush Limbaugh claimed, “Planned Parenthood is a money-laundering operation for the Democrat Party.” Glenn Beck said that only “hookers” use Planned Parenthood (in fact, one out of every five women has visited a PP clinic, including this writer). Widespread mockery of these weird remarks might lead you to think they backfired. Not necessarily. Look at the fine print: to keep Planned Parenthood’s $317 million in Title X funding, Democrats agreed to bar Washington, DC, from using its own revenues to pay for abortion care for women on Medicaid. And in a tiny footnote, the final budget cuts Title X, the federal family-planning program, by $17 million. What women “got” was only that one of the three bad possibilities didn’t happen. You have to hand it to the Stupak-Pitts amendment.

The Washington ban is more important than has been portrayed. First of all, it involves a lot more money than reported. For instance, the annual sum paid out by the Metropolitan Washington, told me by phone that PPMW, the region’s largest abortion provider, just began accepting Medicaid for abortions in February. Thus, the annual sum paid out by the District would have been much higher than Tavernise implied. I mention this not to suggest that abortion is an expensive budget item—it isn’t, especially compared with, say, tax breaks for millionaires or our many ongoing wars—but to point out that this ban is not a trivial issue. There are 105,874 poor women receiving medical assistance, including Medicaid, in Washington; many are in their childbearing years. For them, the cost of a first-trimester abortion is a big deal. “When someone is struggling to feed and cloth their kids,” said Meyers, “$400 is huge. Just huge. Women will be scrambling now.” She noted that abortion funding bans do not prevent abortion; they merely push them later in pregnancy, when they are more expensive and more stressful.

This point has been made so often, to so little effect, that I sometimes wonder if the antichoice plan is not actually to prevent abortion but simply to make it as awful as possible for the woman. Many of the 370-plus antiabortion bills now wending their way through state legislatures are simply about creating misery, anxiety and fear—forcing women to view ultrasounds, see antichoice counselors, listen to scripts claiming falsely that abortions cause breast cancer and infertility, and wait, wait, wait for their procedures. Prevention, after all, would mean birth control—the very thing Title X provides! Now, with $17 million less. Because why should hookers have free birth control? If you ever doubted that the next target of the antichoice movement will be contraception, you need to start paying attention to the fine print.

And if you want a clue to the power of the antichoice movement to sway conservative ideology, consider this. Conservatives constantly tout the virtues of states’ rights, small government and self-determination for taxpayers—except when those taxpayers and that local government want to do something conservatives don’t like. Why can’t Washingtonians spend their own money on their own low-income women’s abortions? Because Congress, for ridiculous historical reasons, refuses to allow the District the self-government conservatives love to talk about when they are trying to overrule federal environmental regulations and get rid of the Voting Rights Act. Because DC residents are Democrats? Because they are black? Maybe someday Washington will become a Mormon enclave, and we’ll find out the answer to those questions. What I’d like to know is, should one of those future women of Washington need an abortion, will she still be a hooker?

* * *

The DC Abortion Fund helps low-income women in Washington pay for their abortions. Between the terrible economy and the funding ban, never has the need been greater. DCAF is an all-volunteer organization, so 95 percent of every dollar you give goes straight to patient care. Even a small donation, added to others, can mean the difference between dignity and desperation. Show solidarity with low-income people in crisis by giving online at dcabortionfund.org or mailing a check to DC Abortion Fund, PO Box 3372, Washington, DC 20033.
If there's one constant in the elite national discourse of the moment, it is the claim that America was founded as a capitalist country and that socialism is a dangerous foreign import that, despite our unwarranted faith in free trade, must be barred at the border. This most conventional “wisdom”—increasingly accepted at least until the recent grassroots mobilizations in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan and Maine—has held that everything public is inferior to everything private, that corporations are always good and unions always bad, that progressive taxation is inherently evil and that the best economic model is the one that allows the wealthy to gobble up as much of the Republic as they choose before anything trickles down to the great mass of Americans. Rush Limbaugh informs us regularly that proposals to tax people as rich as he is for the purpose of providing healthcare for kids and jobs for the unemployed are “antithetical” to the nation’s original intent and that Barack Obama’s reforms are “destroying this country as it was founded.”

When Obama offered tepid proposals to organize a private healthcare system in a more humane manner, Sean Hannity of Fox charged that “the Constitution was shredded, thwarted, the rule of law was passed aside.” Newt Gingrich said the Obama administration was “prepared to fundamentally violate the Constitution” and was playing to the “30 percent of the country [that] really is [in favor of] a left-wing secular socialist system.”

In 2009 Sarah Palin raised similar constitutional concerns, about Obama’s proposal to develop a system of “universal energy building codes” to promote energy efficiency. “Our country could evolve into something that we do not even recognize, certainly that is so far from what the founders of our country had in mind for us,” a gravely concerned Palin informed Hannity, who responded with a one-word question. “Socialism?”

“Well,” she said, “that is where we are headed.”

Actually, it’s not. Palin is wrong about the perils of energy efficiency, and she’s wrong about Obama. The president says he’s not a socialist, and the country’s most outspoken socialists heartily agree. Indeed, the only people who seem to think Obama displays even the slightest social democratic tendency are those who imagine that the very mention of the word “socialism” should inspire a reaction like that of a vampire confronted with the Host.

Unfortunately, Obama may be more frightened by the S-word than Palin. When a New York Times reporter asked the president in March 2009 whether his domestic policies suggested he was a socialist, a relaxed Obama replied, “The answer would be no.” He said he was being criticized simply because he was “making some very tough choices” on the budget. But after he talked with his hyper-cautious counselors, he began to worry. So he called the reporter back and said, “It was hard for me to believe that you were entirely serious about that socialist question.” Then, as if reading from talking points, Obama declared, “It wasn’t under me that we started buying a bunch of shares of banks. And it wasn’t on my watch that we passed a massive new entitlement, the prescription drug plan, without a source of funding. “We’ve actually been operating in a way that has been entirely consistent with free-market principles,” said Obama, who concluded with the kicker, “Some of the same folks who are throwing the word ‘socialist’ around can’t say the same.”

There’s more than a kernel of truth to this statement. Obama really is avoiding consideration of socialist, or even mildly social democratic, responses to the problems that confront him. He
took the single-payer option off the table at the start of the healthcare debate, rejecting the approach that in other countries has provided quality care to all citizens at lower cost. His suppos edly “socialist” response to the collapse of the auto industry was to give tens of billions in bailout funding to GM and Chrysler, which used the money to lay off thousands of workers and then relocate several dozen plants abroad—an approach about as far as a country can get from the social democratic model of using public investment and industrial policy to promote job creation and community renewal. And when BP’s Deepwater Horizon oil well exploded, threatening the entire Gulf Coast, instead of putting the Army Corps of Engineers and other government agencies in charge of the crisis, Obama left it to the corporation that had lied about the extent of the spill, had made decisions based on its bottom line rather than environmental and human needs, and had failed at even the most basic tasks.

So we should take the president at his word when he says he’s acting on free-market principles. The problem, of course, is that Obama’s rigidity in this regard is leading him to dismiss ideas that are often sounder than private-sector fixes. Borrowing ideas and approaches from socialists would not make Obama any more a socialist than Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt or Dwight Eisenhower. All these presidential prede cessors sampled ideas from Marxist tracts or borrowed from Socialist Party platforms so frequently that the New York Times noted in a 1954 profile the faith of an aging Norman Thomas that he “had made a great contribution in pioneering ideas that have now won the support of both major parties”—ideas like “Social Security, public housing, public power developments, legal protection for collective bargaining and other attributes of the welfare state.” The fact is that many of the men who occupied the Oval Office before Obama knew that implementation of sound socialist or social democratic ideas did not put them at odds with the American experiment or the Constitution.

The point here is not to defend socialism. What we should be defending is history—American history, with its rich and vibrant hues, some of them red. The past should be consulted not merely for anecdotes or factoids but for perspective on the present. Such a perspective empowers Americans who seek a robust debate, one that samples from a broad ideological spectrum—an appropriate endeavor in a country where Tom Paine imagined citizens who, “by casting their eye over a large field, take in like wise a large intellectual circuit, and thus approaching nearer to an acquaintance with the universe, their atmosphere of thought is extended, and their liberality fills a wider space.”

America has always suffered fools who would have us dwindle the debate down to a range of opinions narrow enough to contain the edicts of a potentate, a priest or a plantation boss. But the real history of America tells us that the unique thing about our present situation is that we have suffered the fools so thoroughly that a good many Americans—not just Tea Partisans or Limbaugh Dittoheads but citizens of the great middle—actually take Sarah Palin seriously when she rants that socialism, in the form of building codes, is antithetical to Americanism.

We have suffered fools so thoroughly that too many Americans believe Sarah Palin when she says socialism is antithetical to Americanism.

President Obama did not choose the social democratic model of using public investment and industrial policy to promote job creation and community renewal. Instead, he left it to the corporation that had lied about the extent of the spill, made decisions based on its bottom line rather than environmental and human needs, and had failed at even the most basic tasks.

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Palin is not the first of her kind. There's nothing new about the charge that a president who is guiding “big government” toward projects other than the invasion of distant lands is a socialist. In the spring of 2009, just months after Obama and a new Democratic Congress took office, twenty-three members of the opposition renewed an old project when they proposed that “we the members of the Republican National Committee call on the Democratic Party to be truthful and honest with the American people by acknowledging that they have evolved from a party of tax and spend to a party of tax and nationalize and, therefore, should agree to rename themselves the Democrat Socialist Party.”

Cooler heads prevailed. Sort of. At an emergency meeting of the committee—which traces its history to the first Republican convention in 1856, where followers of French socialist Charles Fourier, Karl Marx's editor, and their abolitionist comrades initiated the most radical restructuring of political parties in American history—it was suggested that the proposal to impose a new name on the Democrats might make the “Republican party appear trite and overly partisan.” The plan was dropped, but a resolution decrying the “march towards socialism” was passed. Thus, the RNC members now officially “recognize that the Democratic Party is dedicated to restructuring American society along socialist ideals” and that the Democrats have as their “clear and obvious purpose...proposing, passing and implementing socialist programs through federal legislation.”

The Republican Party is currently firmer in its accusation that the Democrats are steering the nation “towards socialism” than it was during Joe McCarthy's Red Scare of the 1950s, when the senator from Wisconsin was accusing Harry Truman of harboring Communist Party cells in the government. Truman had stirred conservative outrage by arguing that the government had the authority to impose anti-lynching laws on the states and by proposing a national healthcare plan. But what really bugged the Republicans was that Truman, who had been expected to lose in 1948, had not just won the election but restored Democratic control of Congress. To counter this ominous electoral trend, conservative Republicans, led by Ohio Senator Robert Taft, announced in 1950 that their campaign slogan in that year's Congressional elections would be “Liberty Against Socialism.” They then produced an addendum to their national platform, much of which was devoted to a McCarthyite rant charging that Truman's Fair Deal “is dictated by a small but powerful group of persons who believe in socialism, who have no concept of the true foundation of American progress, and whose proposals are wholly out of accord with the true interests
and real wishes of the workers, farmers and businessmen.”

Truman fought back, reminding Republicans that his policies were outlined in the 1948 Democratic platform, which had proven to be wildly popular with the electorate. “If our program was dictated, as the Republicans say, it was dictated at the polls in November 1948. It was dictated by a small but powerful group of 24 million voters,” said the president, who added, “I think they knew more than the Republican National Committee about the real wishes of the workers, farmers and businessmen.”

Truman did not cower at the mention of the word “socialism,” which in those days was distinguished in the minds of most Americans from Soviet Stalinism, with which the president—a mean cold warrior—was wrangling. Nor did Truman, who counted among his essential allies trade unionists like David Dubinsky, Jacob Potofsky and Walter Reuther, all of whom had been connected with socialist causes and in many cases the Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas, rave about the evils of social democracy. Rather, he joked that “Out of the great progress of this country, out of our great advances in achieving a better life for all, out of our rise to world leadership, the Republican leaders have learned nothing. Confronted by the great record of this country, and the tremendous promise of its future, all they do is croak, ‘socialism.’”

Savvy Republicans moved to abandon the campaign. The return to realism was led by Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith, who feared that her party was harming not just its electoral prospects but the country. That summer she would issue her “Declaration of Conscience”—the first serious challenge to McCarthyism from within the GOP—in which she rejected the anticommunist hysteria of the moment:

Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism—

- The right to criticize;
- The right to hold unpopular beliefs;
- The right to protest;
- The right of independent thought.

Republicans might be determined to end Democratic control of Congress, Smith suggested in her declaration:

Yet to displace it with a Republican regime embracing a philosophy that lacks political integrity or intellectual honesty would prove equally disastrous to this nation. The nation sorely needs a Republican victory. But I don’t want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear.

I doubt if the Republican Party could—simply because I don’t believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest.

Most Republicans lacked the courage to confront McCarthy so directly. But Smith’s wisdom prevailed among leaders of the RNC and the GOP chairs of Congressional committees, who ditched the Liberty Against Socialism slogan and reduced Taft’s 1,950-word manifesto to a 99-word digest that Washington reporters explained had been cobbled together to “soft pedal” the whole “showdown on ‘liberty against socialism’” thing. Representative James Fulton, who like many other GOP moderates of the day actually knew and worked with Socialist Party members and radicals of various stripes, was blunter. The cheap sloganeering, he argued, had steered the party away from the fundamental question for the GOP in the postwar era: “whether we go back to Methuselah or offer alternative programs for social progress within the framework of a balanced budget.”

Imagine if today a prominent Republican were to make a similar statement. The wrath of Limbaugh, Hannity, Palin and the Tea Party movement would rain down upon him. The Club for Growth would organize to defeat the “Republican in Name Only,” and the ideological cleansing of the party of Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Margaret Chase Smith would accelerate. Some of my Democratic friends are quite pleased at the prospect; as today’s Democratic friends are quite pleased at the prospect; as today’s Democrats suggest, the high ground will be cleared for candidates of their liking. But that neglects the damage done to democracy when discourse degenerates, when the only real fights are between a party on the fringe and another that assumes that the way to win is to move to the center-right and then hope that fears of a totalitarian right will keep everyone to the left of it voting the Democratic line.

This country would not be what it is today were it not for the positive influence of revolutionaries, socialists and their fellow travelers.

If universal building codes and health protections for children can be successfully depicted by our debased media as assaults on American values and the rule of law, then the right has already won, no matter what the result is on election day. And a nation founded in revolt against empire, a nation that nurtured the radical Republican response to the sin of slavery, a nation that confronted economic collapse and injustice with a New Deal and a War on Poverty, a nation that spawned a civil rights movement and that still recites a Pledge of Allegiance (penned in 1892 by Christian socialist Francis Bellamy) to the ideal of an America “with liberty and justice for all” is bereft of what has so often in our history been the essential element of progress.

That element—a social democratic critique frequently combined with an active Socialist Party and more recently linked with independent socialist activism in labor and equal rights campaigns for women, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities—has from the first years of the nation been a part of our political life. This country would not be what it is today—and indeed it might not even be—had it not been for the positive influence of revolutionaries,
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THAT’S WHY SO MANY SOMEBOBIES READ IT.

Reverend Jesse Jackson is a longstanding Nation reader.

(Legally speaking, of course, everything has an owner, but as a Nation editor once wrote, “it is one of the superb facts about The Nation that you can no more ‘own’ it than you can own the spirit it represents.”)
radicals, socialists, social democrats and their fellow travelers. The great political scientist Terence Ball reminds us that “at the height of the cold war a limited form of socialized medicine—Medicare—got through the Congress over the objections of the American Medical Association and the insurance industry, and made it to President Johnson’s desk.”

That did not just happen by chance. A young writer who had recognized that it was possible to reject Soviet totalitarianism while still learning from Marx and embracing democratic socialism left the fold of Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker movement to join the Young People’s Socialist League. Michael Harrington wanted to change the debate about poverty in America, and perhaps remarkably or perhaps presciently, he presumed that attaching himself to what was left of the once muscular but at that point ailing Socialist Party was the way to do so. In a 1959 article for the then-liberal Commentary magazine, Harrington sought, in the words of his biographer, Maurice Isserman, “to overturn the conventional wisdom that the United States had become an overwhelmingly middle-class society. Using the poverty-line benchmark of a $3,000 annual income for a family of four, he demonstrated that nearly a third of the population lived ‘below those standards which we have been taught to regard as the decent minimums for food, housing, clothing and health.’”

Harrington succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. The article led to a book, The Other America: Poverty in the United States, which became required reading for policy-makers, selling 70,000 copies in its first year. “Among the book’s readers, reputedly, was John F. Kennedy, who in the fall of 1963 began thinking about proposing antipoverty legislation,” recalls Isserman. “After Kennedy’s assassination, Lyndon Johnson took up the issue, calling in his 1964 State of the Union address for an ‘unconditional war on poverty.’ Sargent Shriver headed the task force charged with drawing up the legislation and invited Harrington to Washington as a consultant.”

Harrington’s proposals for renewal of New Deal public works projects were never fully embraced. But his and others’ advocacy that government should intervene to address the suffering of those who couldn’t care for themselves or their families underpinned what the author described as “completing Social Security” by providing healthcare for the aged. It urged on the Johnson administration’s Great Society, including the Social Security Act of 1965—or Medicare. Johnson took his hits, but Americans agreed with their president when he argued that “the Social Security health insurance plan, which President Kennedy worked so hard to enact, is the American way; it is practical; it is sensible; it is fair; it is just.”

Could a plan decried as “socialized medicine” by the American Medical Association because it was, in fact, socialized medicine really be “the American way”? Of course. During the Medicare debate in the early ’60s, Texas Senate candidate George H.W. Bush condemned the proposal as “creeping socialism.” Ronald Reagan, then making the transition from TV pitchman for products to TV pitchman for Barry Goldwater, warned that if it passed citizens would find themselves “telling our children and our children’s children what it once was like in America when men were free.” But Bush and Reagan managed the program during their presidencies, and Tea Party activists now show up at town hall meetings to threaten any legislator who would dare to tinker with their beloved Medicare.

Americans would not have gotten Medicare if Harrington and the socialists who came before him—from presidential candidates like Debs and Thomas to organizers like Mary Marcy and Margaret Sanger and the Communist Party’s Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—had not for decades been pushing the limits of the healthcare debate. No less a player than Senator Edward Kennedy would declare, “I see Michael Harrington as delivering the Sermon on the Mount to America.” The same was true in abolitionist days, when socialists—including friends of Marx who had immigrated to the United States after the 1848 revolutions in Europe were crushed—energized the movement against slavery and helped give it political expression in the form of the Republican Party. The same was true early in the twentieth century, when Socialist Party editors like Victor Berger battled the American Medical Association because it was, in fact, socialized medicine—Medicare, Medicaid and the War on Poverty.

Again and again at critical junctures in our national journey, socialist thinkers and organizers, as well as candidates and officials, have prodded government in a progressive direction. It may be true, as historian Patrick Allitt suggests, that “millions of Americans, including many of these critics [of the Obama administration], are ardent supporters of socialism, even if they don’t realize it and even if they don’t actually use the word” to describe public services that are “organized along socialist lines,” like schools and highways. In fact, contemporary socialists and Tea Partiers might actually find common (if uncomfortable) ground with Allitt’s assertion that “socialism as an organizational principle is alive and well here just as it is throughout the industrialized world”—even as they would disagree on whether that’s a good thing. Programs “organized along socialist lines” do not make a country socialist. But America has always been and should continue to be informed by socialist ideals and a socialist critique of public policy.

We live in complex times, when profound economic, social and environmental challenges demand a range of responses. Socialists certainly don’t have all the answers, even if polling suggests that more Americans find appeal in the word “socialist” today than they have in decades. But without socialist ideas and advocacy, we will not have sufficient counterbalance to an anti-government impulse that has less to do with libertarianism than with manipulation of the debate by all-powerful corporations.

Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy were not socialists. But the nation benefited from their borrowing of socialist and social democratic ideas. Barack Obama is certainly not a socialist. But he, and the nation he leads, would be well served by a similar borrowing from the people who once imagined Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and the War on Poverty.
What Makes Life Good?

Measurements of economic growth fail to capture many facets of well-being.

by MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

All over the world people are struggling for lives that are worthy of their human dignity. Leaders of countries often focus on national economic growth alone, but their people, meanwhile, are striving for something different: meaningful lives for themselves. Increased GDP has not always made a difference in the quality of people’s lives, and reports of national prosperity are not likely to console those whose existence is marked by inequality and deprivation. As the late Mahbub ul Haq, the Pakistani economist who inaugurated the Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Programme, wrote in the first of those reports, in 1990: “The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth.”

According to Haq, development economics needs a new theoretical approach if it is to respond to people’s most urgent problems.

Consider Vasanti, a small woman in her early 30s who lives in Ahmedabad, a large city in the state of Gujarat, in northwestern India. Vasanti’s husband was a gambler and an alcoholic. He used the household money to get drunk. When that money was gone, he got a vasectomy to take advantage of the cash incentive that Gujarat’s government offered to encourage sterilization. So Vasanti had no children, a huge liability given that a childless woman is more vulnerable to domestic violence. Eventually, as her husband became more abusive, she left him and returned to her own family.

Poor parents (or siblings, if the parents have died) are often unwilling to take back a child who has been married, especially a woman who took a dowry with her. Many women in Vasanti’s position end up on the street, with no alternative but sex work. But it was her good fortune that her family was willing to help her. Vasanti’s father, who used to make Singer sewing machine parts, had died, but her brothers were running an auto parts business in what was once his shop. Using one of his old machines, and living in the shop, Vasanti earned a small income making eyeholes for the hooks on sari tops. Meanwhile, her brothers gave her a loan to get another machine, one that rolls the edges of the sari. She took the money, but she didn’t like being dependent on her siblings.

Vasanti then discovered the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), a pathbreaking organization in Ahmedabad that works with poor women. Founded by internationally acclaimed activist Ela Bhatt, SEWA had by that time helped more than 50,000 members, with programs including microcredit, education, healthcare and a labor union.

With the help of the group, Vasanti got a bank loan and paid back her brothers. (SEWA now operates a bank in an office building in downtown Ahmedabad. All the officers and employees of the bank are women, many of them former beneficiaries of SEWA’s programs.) By the time I met Vasanti, several years later, she had paid back almost all the SEWA loan. She was also eligible to enroll in SEWA’s educational programs, where she was planning to learn to read and write. With the help of her friend Kokila, she was actively involved in combating domestic violence in her community. This friendship would have been very unlikely but for SEWA; Vasanti, though poor, is from the high Brahmin caste, and Kokila is from one of the lower castes. Though still all too evident in society in general, divisions along lines of caste and religion are anathema in the Indian women’s movement.

What theoretical approach could direct attention to the most significant features of Vasanti’s situation, promote an adequate analysis of it and make pertinent recommendations for action? Suppose for a moment that we were interested not in economic or political theory but just in people: what would we notice and consider salient about Vasanti’s story?
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Evidence abounds that Indian girls are less well nourished than boys and less often taken to the doctor in childhood when ill.

First we would probably notice how small Vasanti is, and we could initially take this as evidence of poor nutrition in childhood. Poor families are often forced to feed all their children poorly, but we would want to ask about how her brothers fared. Evidence abounds that girls are less well nourished than boys and less often taken to the doctor in childhood when ill. So Vasanti's nutritional deficiency is a result not just of poverty but also of gender discrimination.

Unequal laws of property and inheritance contribute to the predicament of India's daughters, and anyone thinking about Vasanti's life must consider the role they have played in her situation. The religion-based systems of personal law in India govern property and inheritance as well as family law. All the systems institutionalize large inequalities for women. Under the Hindu property code, women attained equal shares in agricultural land only in 2005, seven years after I met Vasanti. Hers is not a land-owning family, but an analysis of her predicament would naturally lead us to notice that closely related inequity.

Thinking about such issues, we would be led to a study of the striking gender imbalance in India's population. Demographers estimate that where similar nutrition and healthcare are present, women live, on average, slightly longer than men—so we would expect a ratio of something like 102 women to 100 men. Instead, the 1991 Indian census shows ninety-two women to 100 men. It's well-known that these imbalances increase wherever information about the sex of the fetus is available. Amniocentesis clinics are ubiquitous throughout the nation. Because sex-selective abortion is such a widespread problem in India, it is illegal to seek information about the sex of the fetus. But these laws are rarely enforced.

Vasanti, then, has had a bit of good luck in being alive at all. Her family didn't nourish her very well, but they did better than many poor families. When I met her she seemed to be in reasonable health, and she is fortunate to have a strong constitution, since healthcare is not easily accessible to the poor in Gujarat. The Indian Constitution makes health a state issue rather than a federal one, so there is great variation by state in the resources available to the poor. Some Indian states—for example, Kerala—have effective healthcare systems, but most do not.

Next, we are likely to notice that a woman as intelligent and determined as Vasanti has had few employment options because she never learned to read and write. We can put this down to a failure in the Gujarati education system, since education, like health, is a state matter and literacy rates vary greatly from state to state. In Kerala, adolescent literacy for both boys and girls is close to 100 percent, whereas, according to the 2001 census, nationally 75.3 percent of men are literate, compared with only 53.7 percent of women. The factors that produce this discrepancy are related to those that produce the sex gap in basic life expectancy and health: women are thought to have fewer options in employment and politics, so from the family's perspective it makes more sense to assign domestic labor to girls while sending boys to school. The prophecy is self-fulfilling, since illiteracy bars women from most employment and many political opportunities. Moreover, because a girl will soon leave her birth family and join another family through marriage, her parents have a smaller stake in her future.

Because education is such a crucial avenue of opportunity, the Indian Constitution was amended in 2002 to give primary and secondary education the status of an enforceable fundamental right. Recognizing that poor parents often keep children out of school because they need their labor to survive, the Supreme Court has ordered all schools to offer children a nutritious midday meal, thus giving poor parents an economic incentive that often outweighs the lost wages from their child's labor during school hours. Vasanti missed this change, which might have made her both literate and physically bigger.

Meanwhile, at the national level, the Constitution was amended in 1992 to assign women one-third of the seats in local panchayats, or village councils. This system, like the midday meal, provides incentives for parents to educate daughters as well as sons, since one day they may well represent the interests of the family in local government. Again, this change came too late for Vasanti.

Because Vasanti has had no formal education, she is cut off from a full understanding of her nation's history and its political and economic structure. She is also unable to enjoy poetry, novels or the many works of the imagination that would make her life richer and more fun. She is not, however, cut off from music and dance, and SEWA makes valuable use of these media in educating women like Vasanti.

Key issue in Vasanti's story is domestic violence. That complex story, in turn, involves social and governmental choices in many areas. Her husband's alcoholism clearly fueled his violence. Several Indian states have adopted prohibition laws for this reason. This hasn't proved to be a very effective remedy: more helpful would have been educational programs about alcohol and drugs and high-quality treatment and therapy, none of which were provided by state government to Gujarat's poor population. By contrast, it was state action rather than inaction that explains her husband's vasectomy: bribing poor people to have vasectomies is not a great means of population control for many reasons, not the least of which is that it robs women of choice. As for the violence, Vasanti received no help from the police, a consequence of weak law enforcement and bad police training. So her bodily integrity and health were constantly at risk, and her dignity was violated.

When we think about domestic violence we have to think about exit options and bargaining power in the marriage. When a woman can leave, she doesn't have to endure being
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beaten. And when the husband knows she can leave because she has employment opportunities or control over property, she is at least somewhat less likely to be beaten. A compassionate birth family also offers exit options. Vasanti’s family was unusual in that they gave her the chance to leave her husband with dignity, and even to take up employment. Nonetheless, the difficulty of getting a divorce—the legal system is slow and notoriously corrupt—made it hard for her to stand fully on her own.

The SEWA loan changed that picture. The organization gave Vasanti a source of support not tied to her status as a dependent; the money was hers to use even if she displeased her brothers. This independence enhanced her self-respect and capacity for choice.

The toll that domestic violence takes on physical health is enormous, but its effect on emotional health is equally devastating. Women in Vasanti’s position usually suffer greatly from fear and the inhibition of anger. They often lack any true pleasure in love and sexual expression. The conditions that made it possible for Vasanti to leave her husband also improved her emotional health, as did her good relationship with her brothers. The SEWA loan opened still more doors to happiness: Vasanti clearly enjoys her friendship with Kokila and the experience of being respected and treated as an equal within a group of women.

Vasanti is active in one area of politics, as she and Kokila work to diminish domestic violence. We might ask, though, whether she knows her rights as a citizen, whether she is a voter, whether she knows anything about how to use the legal system. The panchayat system has done a great deal to enhance women’s political engagement and knowledge, and India’s poor in general have an extremely high level of participation in elections, so Vasanti probably has at least some understanding of the political system. In the absence of literacy and formal schooling, however, her ability to inform herself further is limited. Studies of the panchayats have shown that illiterate women have a hard time participating in public affairs and gaining respect.

SEWA focuses on a very basic theme that runs through all these issues: the ability of women to control and plan their own lives. SEWA teaches women that they are not merely passive, not objects to be pushed around by others or pawns or servants of others: they can make choices; they can plan their futures. This is a heady new idea for women brought up to think of themselves as dependents with no autonomy. In Vasanti’s case, choice and independence were, indeed, the main difference between the SEWA loan and the loan from her brothers. The pleasure in this newfound status as a decision-maker seemed to pervade her relationship with Kokila (a chosen friend, per-

The toll that domestic violence takes on physical health is enormous, but its effect on emotional health is equally devastating.

haps her first chosen friend) as well as her dealings with the women’s group.

In thinking about play and fun, I wondered if Vasanti was interested in meeting some nice men and perhaps marrying again, once her divorce was final. One of the most striking aspects of the Indian women’s movement has been the virtual absence of Western romantic notions. Women who have endured an unhappy marriage rarely express interest in seeking another spouse. They want to be able to live without a man, and they love the fact that one of SEWA’s central ideals is the Gandhian notion of self-sufficiency. The thought is that just as India could not win self-respect and freedom without achieving self-sufficiency with regard to its colonial master, so women cannot have self-respect and freedom without extricating themselves from dependence on their colonial masters, namely, men.

We might wonder whether such women (who are often homophobic and thus unlikely to be involved in lesbian relationships) are deprived of one life’s great pleasures. When they talk of Western notions of romance and express a preference for solidarity with a group of women, however, we are reminded that one way of life (in this case, as part of a romantic couple, whether opposite or same-sex) is not necessarily best for women everywhere.

Some of us, at least, might want to ask about Vasanti’s relationship to the environment around her. Is it polluted? Is it dangerous? Many women’s movements are ecologically oriented; SEWA is not. Nor does the state in which Vasanti lives do much on such issues. Chances are, then, that Vasanti has no opportunity to be productively involved in environmental thinking, and her health may be at risk from environmental degradation.

These are at least some of the aspects of Vasanti’s situation that a concerned onlooker or reader, knowledgeable about her social context, would consider. Most of these issues are recognized as salient by SEWA and those close to Vasanti. A decent public policy can influence all aspects of her experience. It makes sense for an approach to “development,” which means making things better, to focus on how Vasanti’s opportunities and freedoms to choose and act are affected by the variety of policies available for consideration.

Unfortunately, the dominant theoretical approaches in development economics, approaches used all over the world, are not allies of Vasanti’s struggle. They do not “read” her situation the way a local activist or a concerned observer might. Nor, indeed, do they read it in a way that would make sense to Vasanti. They equate doing well (for a state or a nation) with an increase in GDP per capita. In other words, Gujarat is pursuing the right policies if and only if its economy is growing, and it should be compared with other Indian states simply by looking at GDP per capita.

What does that figure, however glorious, mean to Vasanti? It doesn’t reach her life, and it doesn’t solve her problems. Somewhere in Gujarat is increased wealth deriving from foreign investment, but she doesn’t have it. To her, hearing that
GDP per capita has increased nicely is like being told that somewhere in Gujarat there is a beautiful painting, only she can’t look at it.

Increased wealth is a good thing in that it might have allowed the government to adopt policies that would have made a difference to Vasanti. That, however, has not happened, and we should not be surprised. In general, the benefits of increased wealth resulting from foreign investment go in the first instance to local elites, and this is not simply because GDP is an average figure, neglecting distribution: as the Sarkozy Commission report shows, profits from foreign investment frequently do not raise average household income [for more on the Sarkozy Commission, see “Beyond GDP,” by Eyal Press, page 24]. The benefits of this increased wealth do not reach the poor, unless those local elites are committed to policies of redistribution of wealth; and they particularly do not reach poor women.

The standard approach, then, does not direct our attention to the reasons for Vasanti’s inability to enjoy the fruits of her region’s general prosperity. Indeed, it distracts attention from her problems by suggesting that the right way to improve the quality of life in Gujarat is to shoot for economic growth alone.

Most nations, operating domestically, have understood that respect for people requires a richer and more complicated account of national priorities than that provided by GDP alone. On the whole, they have offered a more adequate account in their constitutions and other founding documents. But the theories that dominate policy-making in the new global order have yet to attain the respectful complexity embodied in good constitutions; and these theories, defective as they are, have enormous power. Unfortunately, they greatly influence not just international bodies but also the domestic priorities of nations—and many nations today are pursuing economic growth in ways that shortchange other commitments they have made to their people. The use of incomplete theories is only part of the story behind this narrowness of focus, but it is a part that can be and is being resourcefully addressed.

A new theoretical paradigm known as the Capabilities Approach is evolving. Unlike the dominant approaches, it begins with a commitment to the equal dignity of all people, whatever their class, religion, caste, race or gender, and it is committed to the attainment, for all, of lives that are worthy of that equal dignity. Both a comparative account of the quality of life and a theory of basic social justice, it remedies the major deficiencies of the dominant approaches. It is sensitive to distribution, focusing particularly on the struggles of traditionally excluded or marginalized groups. It is sensitive to the complexity and the qualitative diversity of the goals that people pursue. Rather than trying to squeeze all these diverse goals into a single box, it carefully examines the relationships among them, thinking about how they support and complement one another. It also takes into account that people may need different quantities of resources if they are to come up to the same level of ability to choose and act, particularly if they begin from different social positions.
For all these reasons, the Capabilities Approach is attracting attention, all over the world, as an alternative to dominant approaches in development economics and public policy. It is also attracting attention as an approach to basic social justice, within and between nations—in some ways agreeing with other philosophical theories of social justice, in some ways departing from them—for example, by giving greater support to the struggles of people with disabilities than a social contract model seems to permit.

Our world needs more critical thinking and more respectful argument. The distressingly common practice of arguing by sound bite urgently needs to be replaced by a mode of public discourse that is more respectful of our equal human dignity. The Capabilities Approach is offered as a contribution to national and international debate, not as a dogma that must be swallowed whole. It is laid out to be pondered, digested, compared with other approaches—and then, if it stands the test of argument, to be adopted and put into practice.

Beyond GDP

The Sarkozy commission advanced new ways of measuring progress—but hurdles remain.

by EYAL PRESS

For years, Western journalists and commentators have depicted the continent of Africa as an economic basket case, a caldron of hunger, joblessness, corruption and despair where living standards have barely risen. Certainly the figures on gross domestic product, the standard measure of growth and income, suggest as much. Between 1960 and 1999, per capita GDP in the world’s more developed countries rose from $13,000 to $31,000. During this same period, it went from $477 to just $561—about $1.50 a day—in sub-Saharan Africa.

But does this mean most Africans have seen little improvement in their quality of life? Hardly, argues economist Charles Kenny in his provocative new book, Getting Better: Why Global Development Is Succeeding—and How We Can Improve the World Even More. Consider the fact that between 1970 and 1999 the percentage of sub-Saharan Africans who can read and write doubled, from less than one-third of the adult population to two-thirds. Or that in northern Africa, life expectancy rose from forty-eight years in 1962 to sixty-nine in 2002. Across the continent, enrollment in primary education has surged, while infant mortality has fallen. Our image of African stagnation is closely tied to our fixation with GDP, Kenny suggests, producing a highly distorted picture of reality. “The biggest success of development has not been making people richer but, rather...making the things that really matter—things like health and education—cheaper and more widely available,” he contends.

There was a time not long ago when many mainstream economists and policy-makers would have rolled their eyes at such a claim. Far fewer are likely to do so today, thanks to the growing realization that, as economists Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi argue in another recent book, Mismeasuring Our Lives: Why GDP Doesn’t Add Up, GDP is a deeply flawed indicator of well-being. Their book is a streamlined version of the final report produced by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, which was created in 2008 by French President Nicolas Sarkozy to identify the limits of GDP and to outline new metrics that take things like education, gender equality and environmental sustainability into account.

More than a few policy-makers have taken note. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister David Cameron recently directed the Office for National Statistics to conduct a nationwide survey asking citizens what they believe should be used to measure happiness, with the goal of formulating policy “focused not just on the bottom line, but on all those things that make life worthwhile.” In Germany, the Bundestag has established a commission on “Growth, Prosperity, Quality of Life” to develop a more holistic measure of progress. Reforms are under way in Italy, Australia, South Korea, Canada and the United States, where a project called State of the USA, supported by the National Academy of Sciences and numerous prominent foundations, has begun to track some alternative indicators of progress, which will eventually be accessible to citizens online.

In light of the harsh austerity measures that have been adopted recently in Britain and several other European countries, it’s admittedly hard not to wonder how serious leaders like Cameron are about moving beyond the bottom line. Yet the push to rethink GDP is partly a product of self-interest, born of awareness that policy-makers can seem out of touch by insisting that citizens are faring well simply because the standard metrics say so. “I think the disconnect between our measures of national income—which have been growing for eighteen months—and how people

Eyal Press, a Nation contributing writer, is the author of Absolute Convictions: My Father, a City, and the Conflict That Divided America (Picador). He is a Schwartz Fellow at the New America Foundation.
feel about their lives is raising interest in broader measures of society’s well-being,” Alan Krueger, an economist at Princeton who recently stepped down as assistant treasury secretary in the Obama administration, tells me.

Attempts to overcome this disconnect face many hurdles, among them opposition from the forces that stand to lose from such a shift. In 1994, the Commerce Department unveiled an initiative to tally the financial impact of environmental harm for the first time. The initiative called for creating separate satellite accounts to track things like air quality and the depletion of mineral resources, which did not please the extractive industry and its friends in Washington. “Somebody is going to say…the coal industry isn’t contributing anything to the country,” complained Congressman Alan Mollohan of West Virginia, a major coal-producing state, at an appropriations hearing. Congress promptly ordered the initiative suspended until the merits of “green accounting” could be reviewed more thoroughly. When the National Academy of Sciences eventually issued a report strongly endorsing the initiative, its recommendations were ignored.

One person who remembers that battle well is Stiglitz, who before heading the commission created by Sarkozy served as chair of Bill Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers. Stiglitz is more optimistic about the prospects for reform today. “The reason is that this is a very broad movement—it’s very global,” he says. “The fact that two governments of the right—Sarkozy and Cameron—have embraced it so strongly and yet it’s an agenda that has been advocated most vociferously by the center-left suggests it has broad appeal. I think that’s because political leaders in both camps want guidance in what they’re doing. Any political leader wants metrics that reflect the well-being of their citizens because, to put it frankly, if their constituents are happier they’ll get re-elected.”

Some of Stiglitz’s colleagues are more circumspect. “What is happening now is that it is very fashionable, polite, for each country to design a system of its own, to show the government is interested,” says Fitoussi, a French economist who served as coordinator of the Sarkozy commission. One thing that hasn’t happened is the creation of a permanent commission at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to develop a set of common standards, which Fitoussi said was promised at the time and which he views as crucial to lending any alternative system credibility. “Assume you design a good measurement system for one country—how can you compare what is happening in another country?” he says. “If you have a system, it has to be common; otherwise it has no validity.” Invited to Britain for the unveiling of the Cameron initiative on measuring happiness, Fitoussi tells me he declined out of frustration. “I was invited, but I said no, because it’s a bit ridiculous: we will end this adventure with fifty systems of national accounting and measurement.”

It’s a fair point, though it’s also worth noting that having the OECD impose a one-size-fits-all alternative to GDP right now is not realistic, as Enrico Giovannini, who until recently served as the OECD’s chief statistician, acknowledges. “Does income distribution matter? Do CO2 emissions matter?” he says. “What are the domains that matter for each particular country?” Giovannini, who established an initiative called the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies, points out that these questions are inescapably political, which is why he believes “instead of total harmonization it is better that each country find its own way to develop a shared and legitimate view of societal progress over time.”

Of course, what many countries have lately focused on is finding their way out of recession and crisis. Before he went to the Treasury Department, Krueger published innovative research on developing new ways to measure subjective well-being. But when he arrived in government, his attention was drawn to other things, he admits: “To be frank, I was so busy with battling the fallout from the financial crisis that I didn’t have much time to pursue well-being measures.”

Krueger’s experience underscores one of the problems with what politicians like Sarkozy have hailed as a “revolution”: unlike the recent uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, this is a revolution being led largely by technocrats and bureaucrats rather than civil society organizations or ordinary citizens. To some extent, this is because only bureaucrats and economists care about statistics. But it’s also because not enough effort has been invested in engaging the public on this issue, according to some of the most ardent advocates of change. “I think we made a mistake to go after the policy-makers, where really we should be going after the people who vote,” says Jon Hall, who has been instrumental in leading the OECD’s effort to develop new indicators of progress. “The reaction from politicians is, they want to get re-elected. The ordinary person thinks much more long-term.” In Hall’s view, “the intellectual battle has possibly been won, but how to actually make change happen is the next big battle.”

Sharing this view is Lew Daly, director of the Fellows Program at Demos, which last spring co-sponsored a meeting with the World Resources Institute and the Institute for Policy Studies to discuss how to advance change in the United States. As a forthcoming Demos report argues, part of the reason the initiative on green accounting in the ‘90s failed is that the Clinton administration, which was sympathetic to the initiative, didn’t hear from constituents or advocacy groups that might have raised their voices in support of it. The report quotes Brent Blackwelder, former head of Friends of the Earth, who, looking back, says, “We didn’t put the emphasis on it that we should have.”

“A big difference in the future is going to have to be more public engagement,” argues Daly. It was with this in mind that, after the meeting last year, Demos organized a letter to Congress signed by more than thirty policy and professional...
groups and organizational leaders that urged accounting initiatives focusing on the welfare of average households. Even some business-oriented groups signed on, and Congress proceeded to approve several of the proposed initiatives (although the subsequent budget freeze has made their ultimate fate uncertain), suggesting the strategy can pay off. On the other hand, Demos deliberately focused on an initiative around which a consensus could be built: more fine-grained data on household income, which does not pose a threat to any established interests. The same cannot be said of projects that would tie national performance to, say, CO₂ emissions, or greater income equality, or access to affordable healthcare.

“I hold a firm belief: We will not change our behavior unless we change the ways we measure our economic performance,” wrote Sarkozy in his foreword to Mismeasuring Our Lives. In the book Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi observe that “the commissioners decided early on in their work to limit themselves to a focus on our statistical system…and not to extend their work to the policy implications that might follow.”

This was probably a wise strategy. But it is in some ways artificial. Implicit in the critique of GDP is, after all, a belief that many things the free market can’t provide, such as leisure time and quality public services, matter, and that some activities that increase output—clearcutting forests, spending exorbitant amounts on inefficient private healthcare systems—are wasteful and destructive. If social welfare and equality are no less valuable than growth and entrepreneurship, nations like France and Sweden might start looking like they’re outperforming the United States, which is surely why the effort to rethink GDP has attracted more interest in European countries than in America.

Stiglitz and his co-authors are surely aware that, in fact, certain policy implications do follow if the excesses and injustices of twenty-first-century capitalism are to be mitigated. Fitoussi acknowledges as much. “Whatever measurement system you devise, if you put real interest in the well-being of people, you have to be not completely dominated by the market,” he tells me. “For example, one of the main components of well-being is economic security. And if you have a policy that is trying to have a meager welfare state and a policy of flexibility”—which, for all the talk of rethinking GDP, he notes wryly, is very much in fashion in Europe—“you are increasing economic insecurity.”

Letters

(continued from page 2)

When his wife complained that they were living in a fourth-floor walk-up in the Bronx and she had to shlep carriages, etc. for three small children, Grandpa would say, “When all the workers live in an elevator building, we will live in one too.”

So much has been written about the Triangle fire. Less known is the role of women in the history of the ILGWU. By and large, these very young women, girls as young as 14, came from Eastern Europe. Most were Jewish and lived on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Through these shared experiences the women developed a loyalty to one another, and, as Joshua Freeman notes, a passion to work together. One of them, Clara Lemlich, who had been beaten up on the picket line, called for a general strike. The “Uprising of the Twenty Thousand” followed.

The kind of unity that developed among these women workers is, I believe, unique. Yes, today’s feminists work together and have accomplished much. And there are women today serving as mentors to younger women just beginning their careers.

But we come from all over, speak different languages, have various levels of education—these differences make it difficult for me to imagine a feminist leader calling for a strike today that would be followed by a walkout of 20,000 women.

Now and then, I wish I had lived at the time of Clara Lemlich, especially now when “labor” is a bad word and belonging to a union is treated as if it were a crime. “Labor” was a bad word then, too, and belonging to a union was a crime. But the women went on strike, and bit by bit the unions and the nation grew stronger.

JUDITH S. ANTRIBUS

NEW YORK CITY

My mother, Rhoda Rothman Gladstone, lived through the Triangle fire, 100 years ago, by hiding in a closet.

Morton Gladstone

The F-word

HIGHLAND, N.Y.

I’m a retired teacher and after I finish reading your wonderful publication, I donate it to my former high school’s library. So that is the reason for this request; not for censorship. You do not use the F-word gratuitously, and I am not offended by it. But I fear a parent may complain and your valuable publication would be taken away from those youngsters, who would benefit from the progressive point of view. Perhaps you could print that word like this: f**k.

Joe DiBlanca

We understand your dilemma, and also that sometimes call for censorship. But we also see “f**k” as censorship, a euphemism that weakens language and is a tool of hypocrisy. We’d like the kids to see this word used properly. If the parents remove the magazine, the kids will lose. But either way they lose.

—The Editors

No More Bottom of the Bird Cage

NORTHGLENN, Colo.

How to recycle your Nation magazine:
1. Remove your name and address label to protect your privacy.
2. Place a sticker on the front instructing others to also recycle by passing the magazine along.
3. Make sure the subscription address and phone number are prominent.
4. Leave copies at the airport, and in your doctor’s, dentist’s and other waiting rooms so others can learn about The Nation.

GARY COXA

‘Death to PBS and Planned Parenthood!’

ST. JAMES, Mo.

While we supposedly fight to eradicate the Taliban and their oppressive Sharia law in Afghanistan, the “Tea-liban” and their oppressive law take over our country!

DON THOMANN
When the maverick literary agent And-rew Wylie divulged last July that he intended to sell to Amazon the exclusive e-book rights to twenty titles by authors he represents, execu-tives at Random House declared war. As the owner of print rights to thirteen of the books on Wylie’s Amazon wish list, the world’s largest trade publisher refused to conduct new business with Wylie or any of his clients. At stake was control of classics like *Lolita* and *Invisible Man*, each of which sell more than half a million copies annually, and while the two parties have since reached an accord (Amazon emerged the loser), the standoff was a reminder of the economic value of backlist titles. Vladimir Nabokov and Ralph Ellison are among the industry’s blue-chip authors, a marketplace reality that surely informed the recent publication of their unfinished final novels, respectively *The Original of Laura* and *Three Days Before the Shooting*.

Because such books are bound to receive national coverage and post modest sales figures owing to brand recognition alone, the question of their literary merit is often brushed aside. So too with another division of the posthumous book business—the publication of uncollected works. Aesthetics and business may keep little company nowadays, but one might hope that essays, poems or stories excluded from previous collections amount to something more than the last marketable relics plundered from the tomb of the known writer. If so, what does the collection of these antiquities accomplish beyond shoring up a writer’s reputation or satisfying the completist? Just as an unfinished manuscript may, at best, contain clues about a writer’s working method and the finished product, a well-curated selection of uncollected works offers the possibility of a backward glance at the path the writer took, which is rarely direct and often rough. In the course of retracing his steps and missteps, we may also find more than a few items—juvenilia, ephemera, hack work—that the writer might have preferred to remain undiscovered or hadn’t the chance to burn.

If great writing transcends its time, then lesser writing often only embodies it. Such is the case with a good deal of James Baldwin’s *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*, edited by novelist Randall Kenan. Though many of the pieces in the volume were used as plot points in James Campbell’s fine biography of Baldwin, *Talking at the Gates*, published in 1991, as works of writing they are not among Baldwin’s most enduring. Baldwin omitted them from his three original volumes of essays as well as his mammoth collection of nonfiction, *The Price of the Ticket*, published in 1985, two years before his death. Toni Morrison also passed them over while assembling the Library of America edition of Baldwin’s *Collected Essays* (1998), which includes fifty-

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Watered Whiskey

by ELIAS ALTMAN

When the maverick literary agent Andrew Wylie divulged last July that he intended to sell to Amazon the exclusive e-book rights to twenty titles by authors he represents, executives at Random House declared war. As the owner of print rights to thirteen of the books on Wylie’s Amazon wish list, the world’s largest trade publisher refused to conduct new business with Wylie or any of his clients. At stake was control of classics like *Lolita* and *Invisible Man*, each of which sell more than half a million copies annually, and while the two parties have since reached an accord (Amazon emerged the loser), the standoff was a reminder of the economic value of backlist titles. Vladimir Nabokov and Ralph Ellison are among the industry’s blue-chip authors, a marketplace reality that surely informed the recent publication of their unfinished final novels, respectively *The Original of Laura* and *Three Days Before the Shooting*.

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The Cross of Redemption
Uncollected Writings.
By James Baldwin.
Edited by Randall Kenan.
Pantheon. 304 pp. $26.95.
James Baldwin was 22 in 1947. By then he had quit the church, worked as a manual laborer at a defense plant, moved from Harlem to Greenwich Village and come out about his homosexuality to friends and acquaintances. He had also received the blessings of America’s leading black writer, Richard Wright, who helped Baldwin obtain a $500 grant to work on the manuscript that eventually became his first novel, Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953). In his Nation review of Gorky’s Best Short Stories, Baldwin outlined a position that would become his central conviction as a book critic: literature is meant for the examination of head and heart, not for the dissemination of politics or the scolding of society. Gorky is guilty of the latter, Baldwin writes, because he “is concerned, not with the human as such, but with the human being as a symbol…. His failure was that he did not speak as a criminal but spoke for them; and operated, consciously or not, not as an artist and a prophet but as a reporter and a judge.” Baldwin refined and elaborated these distinctions two years later in his most famous work of literary criticism, “Everybody’s Protest Novel” (1949), an essay in which he levels a similar accusation against Wright for Native Son. Presenting the literary offenses of Uncle Tom’s Cabin as evidence that “literature and sociology are not one and the same,” he closes his argument with the suggestion that Native Son is Uncle Tom’s unwitting accomplice. Bigger Thomas may be the opposite of Uncle Tom, but both characters are deployed in service of a cause, and so each lacks humanity and lives in an implausible world.

It’s invigorating to encounter Baldwin’s hostility to what he deems mediocre— which is nearly everything he reviews—not only because he’s trying to make a name for himself but also because he believes it is life, not just art or entertainment, that is at risk in a work of fiction. Reviewing The Myth, Baldwin writes that James M. Cain “shyly confesses a hankering to tell tales of a ‘wider implication than those that deal exclusively with one man’s relation to one woman’—an ambition which, since I have yet to meet either a man or a woman in Mr. Cain’s pages, seems rather premature.” Commenting on other writers, such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Baldwin is less severe and more nuanced, but he worries over the same question: why read novels if you can’t meet a man or a woman in their pages? For Baldwin, good books are not dead things; he believed they should embody “perception at the pitch of passion.” The phrase is Henry James’s, and Baldwin used it to end brief remarks published in The New York Times Book Review in 1962 about his aspirations as a novelist (the piece is included in this volume). It’s a testament to Baldwin’s talent and intellect that as a young critic he advocated this vision and then, in his personal essays and fiction, realized it. Baldwin hit and held his most perceptive and passionate pitch from 1949 to 1959, when he published his best essays, among them “Many Thousands Gone” (1951), “Stranger in the Village” (1953), “Notes of a Native Son” (1955), “Princes and Powers” (1957) and “The Discovery of What It Means to Be an American” (1959), as well as two powerful and radically different novels, Go Tell It on the Mountain and Giovanni’s Room (1956), and one of the finest American short stories from the second half of the twentieth century, “Sonny’s Blues” (1957). It’s understandable, then, that only four artifacts from this period remain for exhibition in The Cross of Redemption: one from 1949 and three from 1959. Because Baldwin wrote so well during this decade, the story people like to tell about him—and their interest in reading his work—usually tapers off shortly after his most celebrated achievement: the publication of his New Yorker essay of 1962, “Down at the Cross,” a grand meditation on race and reconciliation, as The Fire Next Time the following year. It’s a high note to end on. So is Blood on the Tracks.

There has been much speculation about the Fall of James Baldwin, with criticsflagging different dates for when the young man who had been so keen to avoid being merely “a Negro writer” became just that, when he seems to have forgotten, in Langston Hughes’s words, that “RACE and ART/Are far apart.” The irony is very near, befitting the conventions of classical tragedy, and that’s one reason we should be suspicious. The neatness forces one to presuppose a belief in Baldwin’s original sin of becoming too racial or too political, which led to his banishment from the kingdom of art. This tale of transgression has been too often applied to the careers of black writers, Hughes among them. (Hughes’s alleged offense was to give up writing about race for writing about socialist politics.) It’s not that there is no tension between art and politics, as the author of “Everybody’s Protest Novel” clearly understood; but without carefully examining it anew in every circumstance, one might end up asking, even with good intentions, why Baldwin didn’t see fit to stay in his place.

It is indisputable that his 1949–59 writings are very different from those from the following decade. In 1948 he boarded a plane to France because he doubted his “ability to survive the fury of the color problem” in the United States; he “hated and feared white people” at the same time that he “despised” blacks, “possibly because they failed to produce Rembrandt.” Paris gave Baldwin the physical and emotional distance from his country necessary for him to write with precision about both. When he returned nine years later, an established and respected author, he discovered those Rembrandt-less people—his people—living through the most important time in their history since 1863. The native son now had “a role to play” and lines to deliver to receptive audiences; Harper’s Magazine, The New Yorker, Esquire and the glossies were more than happy to have him act the part in their pages. By 1962 his collection of essays Nobody Knows My Name (1961) and his novel Another Country had become bestsellers. When commemorating the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1963, Time placed Abraham Lincoln on the cover; the next week, it was James Baldwin. That year was the first in which more interviews with Baldwin were published than essays written by him, and it is this movement of a great writer from his typewriter to our televisions that The Cross of Redemption is uniquely suited to chart.

Baldwin changed as surely as the country did, and as all of the work in this collection—
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Baldwin thought of himself first and foremost as a novelist, but his finest accomplishment is his body of autobiographical essays, literary sleights of hand where a social truth is drawn effortlessly from personal narrative. Such mastery requires solitude, patience and time, three things Baldwin increasingly found in short supply. In the pieces from the early and mid-’60s in The Cross of Redemption, though the collection’s strongest, he has abandoned his signature style, and would never return to it with the same vigor. In “As Much Truth as One Can Bear,” “Letters From a Journey,” “Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare,” “The Fight: Patterson vs. Liston” and “The Uses of the Blues,” Baldwin holds forth on subjects such as history, nationalism, language, movies, theater and the artist. Analyzing the American personality in “The Uses of the Blues,” he shrewdly observes that a significant part of the country’s neuroses originates from the fact that slaves in the United States, unlike those in other Western countries, lived and labored on the mainland. Such close quarters required that Americans go further in convincing themselves that slaves weren’t human, which led to a “hidden, festering, and entirely unadmitted guilt” as well as the perpetual necessity for self-delusion. In “As Much Truth as One Can Bear,” Baldwin criticizes F. Scott Fitzgerald for the lyrical sentimentality of Jay Gatsby, who “searches for the green light, which continually recedes before him; and he never understands that the green light is there precisely in order to recede.” We allow ourselves to be borne back ceaselessly into the past if we forget the realities of slavery and despoilment. Such a blithe disregard of American history was an illusion that Baldwin increasingly felt a duty to shatter. Unfortunately, his vehemence began to undermine his craft, resulting in generalization, hyperbole and needless repetition. Baldwin was still perceptive, but his passion was at times pitched too high.

The tragedy is that almost as soon as Baldwin was in a unique position to be heard by everyone, many of those he felt he was speaking for no longer wanted to listen. With his relationship to the black community already strained—what kind of black American would write a novel about a couple of gay white men in Paris?—his mainstream success alienated him further. Martin Luther King Jr. questioned his role, saying in a conversation recorded by an FBI wiretap in 1963 that the press mistook Baldwin for “a spokesperson of the Negro people,” when in fact he was “better qualified to lead a homosexual movement than a civil rights movement.” Baldwin insisted that the lives of blacks and whites were intertwined: “It’s only the black artists in this country—and it’s only beginning to change now—who have been called upon to fulfill their responsibilities as artists and, at the same time, insist on their responsibilities as citizens.”

The Poitier piece bristles with resentment, as does much work from the period, but it is also written with cool candor, as if Baldwin were a dying man dictating his life into a tape recorder. There are also tender memories of Poitier, which, to my knowledge, Baldwin mentions nowhere else in print. Regarding the first time he watched Cry, the Beloved Country (1952), he writes, “That was the young Sidney, and I sensed I was going to miss him, in exactly the same way I will always miss the young Marlon of Truckline Cafe and Streetcar Named Desire. But then, I miss the young Jimmy Baldwin, too.” Poitier, Brando and Baldwin had stood shoulder to shoulder at the March on Washington in 1963. The profile ends with an anecdote to illustrate “how black artists particularly need each other”; it is also a beautiful expression of friendship, of how its greatest gestures are often small, and are recognized only after they’ve occurred. In 1962 Baldwin was terrified about the reception of his new novel Another Country; Poitier had read an advance copy and liked it. The night of the novel’s release party in Harlem, Poitier turned up early to find Baldwin all nerves, and he walked his friend around the block, preparing him to meet the crowds and faces. By the time the two returned, the party was in full swing. Baldwin calmly began his rounds; when he looked up Poitier was gone, and the truth dawned on him: Poitier hadn’t come for the party at all.
History and Heartbreak
by VIVIAN GORNICK

When I was a child, Rosa Luxemburg's name would sometimes be mentioned with awe in my slightly irreverent left-wing household. Who was she? I'd ask. A great socialist, I'd be told. She criticized Lenin. She was assassinated. For years I thought the Soviets had murdered her. In a sense, I wasn't so far off. In 1931 Joseph Stalin had Luxemburg "excommunicated" from the canon of Marxist heroes. If she'd been living in his Russia she'd certainly have been eliminated. No revolutionary as independent-minded as she could fail, come the revolution, to be denounced as a counterrevolutionary.

She was born Rozalia Luksenburg in 1871 in a small city in Russian-occupied Poland to a family of secular Jews. When she was 3 the family moved to Warsaw, where the Poles hated the Russians, the Russians hated the Poles and everyone hated the Jews. Nonetheless, the Luksenburgs settled in, the children were sent to school and all went well enough until Rosa was 5, when it was discovered that she had a hip disease. She was put to bed for a year with her hip in a cast, and when she got up, one leg was shorter than the other.

There she was: a girl, a Jew, a cripple—possessed of an electrifying intelligence, a defensively arrogant tongue and an unaccountable passion for social justice, which, in her teens, led her to the illegal socialist organizations then abounding among university students in Warsaw. In the city's radical underground, she opened her mouth to speak and found that thought and feeling came swiftly together through an eloquence that stirred those who agreed with her, and that he could say that in New York, "I can't go where I like to drink, to see people I like, to hang out," yet white landlords on West End Avenue still refused to sell him a house. If this was the case for him, what did it mean for "the local cat on the corner?" That the answer was obvious, and that the question needed to be asked at all never ceased to enrage Baldwin. We may think times have changed, but Baldwin's frank discussions of race and racism are still pertinent, and his ideas about the redemptive power of literature remain poignant. Minority writers who write about being minorities generally aren't treated very well in America: too often they are offered up in high school and college courses merely as ritual sacrifices to the gods of multiculturalism. Yet the reason to read James Baldwin, and any good writer regardless of color or creed, is that he can teach us how to be more human. "Pain is trivial except insofar as you can use it to connect with other people's pain," Baldwin observed in 1963, "and insofar as you can do that with your pain, you can be released from it, and then hopefully it works the other way around too; insofar as I can tell you what it is to suffer, perhaps I can help you to suffer less." That is a theory of art and of salvation.
When it came to politics, however, Rosa and Leo were at one. The all-important source of agreement between them was that nationalism in all its forms was abhorrent; it was the international working class alone that was the hope of a socialist future. So every night throughout the early 1890s, in a furnished room in Zurich, they plotted and planned the enlightened uprising of the workers of the world, and within three years it was Rosa who was climbing up on a chair at the Third Congress of the Socialist Inter-

national in Zurich, appealing for recognition of the antinationalist Polish Marxist Party, which she and Leo had just founded. In 1898 it was decided that Luxemburg—who had Westernized the spelling of her name—would move to Berlin to make her way in the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), then the most powerful socialist party in Europe. Jogiches would remain behind in Switzerland, where he was still studying for a doctorate and working to build the Polish party. Never again, except for short periods here and there, would they live in the same city.

Several weeks after her arrival in Berlin, with the backing of the SPD, Luxemburg addressed Polish-speaking miners in Upper Silesia, and discovered her gift for making those who heard her feel intimately connected to the pain inherent in whatever social condition she was denouncing. As she spoke, Luxemburg could see that the men looking up at her were beginning to feel penetrated by the drama of class warfare. By the time she fell silent, they were living on a mythic scale of history and heartbreak. Afterward, they cheered and applauded, covered her with flowers and spread the news about the astonishing woman from Poland who had come to plead their cause. She returned to Berlin in a blaze of personal glory, now the darling of the party elite.

Over the next two decades, Luxemburg wrote books, essays and articles on one aspect of radical politics or another; engaged regularly in long speaking tours across Europe; taught in the party school; and grew into one of the most articulate and influential members of the SPD’s increasingly troublesome left wing. The SPD was, essentially, a theory-driven, centrist party devoted to the workings of its own organization and to the achievement of socialist progress through parliamentary change. Luxemburg, on the other hand, believed heart and soul that capitalism in all its forms had to be eradicated—through nothing less than the spontaneous uprising of rank-and-file workers—if there was ever to be a social democracy. For Luxemburg, the words “general strike” were definitive. For the SPD elite, they were words that sent shudders up the collective spine. It was in fiery opposition to her conservative comrades that she wrote her most insightful works.

Soon, however, the internal splits within international socialism were to become painfully moot, as Europe drifted toward war in 1914, and German, French and Austrian social democrats prepared to support not the international working class but the war effort of their own countries. The mental paralysis of the theoretical socialists was overwhelming, and Luxemburg all but had a nervous breakdown. Along with colleagues Karl Liebknecht and Clara Zetkin, she broke with the SPD and took to speaking out, in loud objection to the war. In 1915 she was arrested (open opposition to the war had
become illegal in Germany), and spent the next three years in prison.

She’d been in prison many times before, and it had always been something of a lark—visitors, books, good food, furnished cells—but now the party, in more ways than one, was over. Her hair turned gray and she began to grow confused, not in her mind but in her spirit. Nevertheless, she read—Tolstoy, not Marx—and wrote incessantly. In the summer of 1918, still in prison and now in distress over what was happening in Russia as well as in Europe, she completed a pamphlet called The Russian Revolution, which to this day qualifies as one of the most stirring documents in modern political thought. Luxemburg was a diehard democrat. Never for a moment did she think democracy should be sacrificed to socialism, and in this brief work—the work of one ever mindful of what a human being needs to feel human—she laid out her impassioned insights on the danger to democracy that the Bolshevik Revolution posed.

Luxemburg had met Lenin at the turn of the century, and had been immensely drawn to him. Temperamentally, she felt more at home with him than with the urbane and theoretical Germans. She loved his fierce intellect, his fantastic willpower, his shrewd grasp of Russian reality. But early on, she sensed that if he could make a revolution it would be a troubling one. In 1904 she had written a paper on the Russian social democrats in which she objected to their growing glorification of the proletariat at the expense of the intelligentsia, and even more strongly to the idea of all authority being gathered in the hands of the intelligentsia, and even more strongly to the idea of all authority being gathered in the hands of the intelligentsia. Lenin, she said, “concentrates mostly on controlling the party, not on fertilizing it, on narrowing it down, not developing it, on regimenting, not on unifying it.” This, she thought, did not bode well. Now, in 1918, the revolution had come, the Bolsheviks had assumed power and she was in a state of active dismay. A year after Lenin had taken control, and only six months before her death, she wrote from her prison cell:

[Lenin] is completely mistaken in the means he employs. Decree...draconian penalties, rule by terror.... Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free exchange of opinions, life dies out in every public institution and only bureaucracy remains active.... Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party, no matter how numerous, is no freedom. Freedom is always freedom for the one who thinks differently.

Luxemburg was released from prison in Breslau on November 8, 1918, and went immediately to Berlin. The city reflected the dangerous chaos into which Germany’s defeat had plunged the country: streets filled with armed citizens, drunken soldiers, open criminality. With Jogiches and Liebknecht at her side, Luxemburg immediately went to work to help found the Spartacus League (ultimately Germany’s CP), in the hope that it would become the revolutionary group that could achieve a peaceful socialist takeover. But all such hopes were doomed; in whichever direction one looked, there was only cynicism and despair. In a desperate attempt to save the rapidly failing monarchy, the newly elected chancellor, a corrupted social democrat, had made a secret deal with the army to rid Germany of its ultra-left—no matter the human cost. The Spartacists had turned violent as well: they wanted power, and they wanted it now. Luxemburg felt like she was staring into space.

On January 15, 1919, the police came for her. She thought she was being returned to prison, and was actually relieved; the last two months had been a waking nightmare. She got into the car without a protest, was taken to army headquarters for purposes of identification, then returned to the car, where she was shot in the head. Within hours Liebknecht met with the same fate. Two months later, Jogiches was beaten to death in an army barracks on the edge of the city. The men who killed all of them—with the blessing of the government—were members of the Freikorps, the illegal paramilitary organization that, fourteen years later, would form the nucleus of Hitler’s Brownshirts.

By 1918, in whichever direction Luxemburg looked, there was only cynicism and despair.

What we have here are 230 pieces of correspondence, written to forty-six friends, comrades and lovers, all drawn from the six-volume German edition, which contains 2,800 letters, postcards and telegrams sent to more than 150 correspondents. Letter writing was Luxemburg’s necessity: she wrote many each day, and long ones at that. Depending on whom she’s writing to, they are filled with everyday news—where she’s living, what she’s reading, thinking about, the weather, the view from her window—or with politics: events and conferences, headlines and deadlines, party relationships and problematic positions. Whether the subject matter is mundane or acute, she addresses it with a wealth of commentary, description and opinion, uniformly enriched by a surprising knowledge of art, history and literature, and always made vivid by a strength and immediacy of feeling that is everywhere visible.

It was Luxemburg’s success as a public speaker that made her think about the relation between speaking and the development of a natural style of writing. “You have no inkling of what a good effect my attempts so far to speak at public meetings have had on me,” she writes Jogiches soon after she’s come to Berlin. “Now I’m sure that in half a year’s time I will be among the best of the party’s speakers. The voice, the effortlessness, the language—everything comes out right for me…and I step onto the speaker’s stand as calmly as if I had been speaking in public for at least twenty years.” Shortly after this, she tells him, “I want [my writing] to affect people like a clap of thunder, to inflame their minds not by specifying but with the breadth of my vision, the strength of my conviction, and the power of my expression.”

From there to a sophisticated critique of party writing was one easy step. To her comrades back in Poland putting out The Workers’ Cause, a paper she helped start, she advised, “I believe that people need to live in the subject matter fully and really experience it every time, every day, with every article they write, and then words will be found that are fresh, that come from the heart and go to the heart.”

Her regard for writing as such is a key to her considerable understanding of the rela-
tion between art and politics. In a letter to a close friend, written from prison in May 1917, only a year and a half before her death, she recalls one of life's great experiences: "The time when I was writing the Accumulation of Capital belongs to the happiest of my life. Really I was living as though in euphoria, 'on a high', saw and heard nothing else, day or night, but this one question, which unfolded before me so beautifully, and I don't know what to say about which gave me the greater pleasure: the process of thinking, when I was turning a complicated problem over in my mind...or the process of giving shape and literary form to my thoughts with pen in hand." This is what she means when she speaks of reaching deep into oneself, to pull up the miracle of good writing that flourishes when clear thinking and expressive language feed on each other.

Rosa Luxemburg's letters have been published in English before, but this collection, of which about two-thirds are newly translated, has delivered to us a real, recognizable human being. In the previous volumes, Luxemburg often seemed uniformly heroic; here we have her in all her strength and all her frailty. And it is in the letters from prison, more than in any others she wrote, that she emerges as one of the most emotionally intelligent socialists in modern history, a radical of luminous dimension whose intellect is informed by sensibility, and whose largeness of spirit places her in the company of the truly impressive. To one old comrade she writes, "To be a human being means to joyfully toss your entire life 'on the giant scales of fate' if it must be so, and at the same time to rejoice in the brightness of every day and the beauty of every cloud...the world is so beautiful, with all its horrors, and would be even more beautiful if there were no weaklings or cowards in it." With another friend, she indulges in descriptive memories of wandering in a field on a spring day, listening to the St. Matthew's Passion in a Berlin church, hearing a beer wagon rattle down the street, looking at the flower shop and the cigar store that flank a suburban railroad station—somehow associating all this sensuality with the Cause. Hers was a spirit that never ceased responding to the world as it was—even as she fought for a world that could be. The intactness of her responsive nature, throughout the years, seems remarkable; especially so when we consider what she was up against in her life with Leo Jogiches.

From earliest times, Luxemburg had felt existentially homeless. She believed that "home" was to be found in a cause great enough to make world and self come together in a common effort to renew the human race. That effort, of course, was socialism. At the same time, she understood—really understood—that socialism had to be made, on a daily basis, from the inside out, through the internal struggle of people to humanize (that is, "socialize") themselves, even as they worked for radical change. She knew instinctively that if socialists closed down inside, they’d become the kind of people who, devoid of fellow feeling, would make police-state socialism. This was Luxemburg's single most important insight—that socialists must remain empathic beings throughout their revolutionary lives. Otherwise, she asked, what kind of world would they be making? Whom would it serve? And how would human existence be bettered? This meditation never left her; in fact, as the years went on it grew in size and depth. Out of it, ultimately, comes her opposition to war, her criticism of Lenin, her analysis of why she reads Tolstoy in prison instead of Marx.

And it all begins—and ends—with Leo. It was with Leo that she hungered to see this great ideal of hers come to life, with Leo that she wanted to make, in the here and now, a socialist home within themselves, through the nourishment of mutual love. Leo, however, would not play ball—and Rosa could not give it up. Hundreds of letters passed between them. For years on end, his are cold and inexpressive, consisting solely of political advice, criticism and instruction, while hers are saturated with bitter objection to his emotional stinginess. A little pastiche of her letters, written over a period of twenty years, says it all:

Your letters contain nothing but nothing except for news of The Workers' Cause. Say something nice to me!

When I open your letters and see six sheets covered with debates about the Polish Socialist Party, and not a single word about...ordinary life, I feel faint.

It's either the next issue, or it's the pamphlet, or it's this article or that one. That would all be fine if at least in addition to that...there was a bit of the human person, the soul, the individual to be seen. But from you there's nothing, absolutely nothing.... Have you had no impressions...have you reading nothing, had no perceptions that you could share with me?

Right now I'm as touchy and skittish as a hare. Your slightest gesture or inconsequential remark makes my heart shrink and seals my mouth.... I've had so many thoughts to share with you.... I don't know, I don't know how to behave, I can't get control over the way I am in our relationship. I don't know how to do it. I'm not capable of taking firm hold of the situation...so much love and suffering have accumulated in my soul that I throw myself at you, throw my arms around your neck, and your coldness pains me—it tears at my soul, and I hate you for it—and I feel I could kill you.

Her argument that the personal is political went unanswered. Her demand that they work to "shape a human being out of each other" met with a blank stare. Her warning that his joylessness was taking a terrible toll on them only made him turn the pages of The Workers' Cause.

Before the Flood

by PAULA FINDLEN

When I was in high school and needed to look up something I didn't know, I went to the public library and dared to forage among the pages of the most authoritative reference work available: the Encyclopedia Britannica. I can't remember which edition it was, but I opened it with the unshaken certainty that experts had distilled vast quantities of useful knowledge for my edification, entry by entry, in those gossamer pages bound sturdily in burgundy leather. How I envied people who owned a set of these weighty tomes! Men and women who knew just the right amount of almost everything, or something about something, they were much as the young Shah of Iran Fat'h Ali declared himself to be in 1797,
The ‘information age’—a term dating to 1962—is not a new phenomenon.

the Encyclopedia Britannica still has an aura about it for those of us over 40, but I suspect that nowadays most of us do not read further than the free version available on the web. Wikipedia and other virtual encyclopedias compete for our attention, absorbing many standard entries that preceded them, if not always with accuracy or rigor. We become ever more dependent on tools such as search engines and aggregators to help us navigate the sprawling and undisciplined encyclopedia of the human mind that the web has become. The current fascination with mastering long, complex and seemingly inexhaustible print works of reference like the OED is undoubtedly tinged with a certain nostalgia for an era in which print compendiums were reliable ports of call for anyone who wanted to look up an idea, check a fact or define a word. Ann Blair’s erudite and excellent Too Much to Know is a welcome opportunity to step back for a moment from our harried encounter with an information deluge to consider how, in the centuries before and after the invention of the printing press and predating the ages of the modern encyclopedia and the computer, readers coped with the profusion of print information at their fingertips. Blair, a history professor at Harvard and a MacArthur Fellow, takes us on an itinerary that encompasses more than 2,000 years of Western knowledge, with brief excursions into the worlds of Chinese and Arabic encyclopedias. Her goal is to correct the contemporary misperception, born of narcissism and ignorance, that the “information age”—a term dating to 1962—is a new phenomenon. Humans have been accumulating knowledge and finding ways to condense, sort and store it ever since it was understood that knowledge could exceed the limits of memory and oral transmission. The transformation of knowledge into digital bits is the latest episode in the long, ongoing his-
of contents to assist readers in finding those facts of greatest interest. By the tenth century enterprising scholars in Byzantium, the Islamic world and China were furiously trying to compile and summarize everything their respective civilizations produced. Entries multiplied rapidly, and bibliographies ballooned to immodest proportions as diligent compilers such as the Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadim did their best to insert in their compendiums a reference to anyone who had ever written something worth remembering.

The scale of such enterprises before the age of the computer, with its ease of access to all sorts of information that we can simply click, copy and paste, confounds the imagination. In the tenth century an encyclopedia of Chinese learning and wisdom contained a thousand chapters. By the fifteenth century the comprehensive encyclopedia created for the Ming emperor by 2,000 court officials had grown to almost 23,000 chapters. Not to be outdone, the Manchu emperor commissioned an even more definitive encyclopedia of Chinese knowledge, the Siku Quanshu, which was compiled between 1773 and 1782. Its sheer bulk puts to rest any Western fantasies of superior information management. Around 3,800 scribes employed their calligrapher’s brushes to create seven copies of the 79,000-chapter tome of tomes. Containing 800 million words, it was far larger than the modern Encyclopedia Britannica and OED combined, making it the definition of a truly unreadable book. One of the few reference works to surpass it in terms of volume is Wikipedia, which now contains around 2 billion words.

Yet it is not simply the dizzying scale, and folly, of the omnium gatherum that engages Blair. She is also interested in explaining how medieval manuscript practices migrated into the world of printed books, and how the expanding market for printed materials allowed the genre of reference work—dictionaries, commentaries, bibliographies, library catalogs, collections of quotations and all manner of books about books—to evolve in order to cater more explicitly to readers’ needs by giving them useful information quickly, efficiently and comprehensively. Her descriptions place us alongside the monks of the medieval scriptorium as they gloss books from beginning to end, and allow us to observe how this culture of note-taking was mechanized, in the century after Gutenberg’s marvelous invention, to create shortcuts to knowledge.

First and foremost was the index. For many of us, the index of a book—like the title page, table of contents, copyright page and bibliography—seems so mundane as to be undeserving of comment. These features are the bones but not the marrow of a book, a necessary but unremarkable structure enveloping its contents. But imagine an era about 500 years ago, when many of the features of the modern book were first being laid out by Renaissance printers, borrowing and improving upon devices they knew from medieval manuscripts. The index was often printed as a stand-alone volume, and was proudly advertised as an enhancement to any reading experience. Among the most ambitious Renaissance encyclopedias was Theodor Zwinger’s vast and vastly erudite Theatre of Human Life, published in 1565, which amassed a level of comprehensive knowledge that astonished even Zwinger’s contemporaries, who watched the book expand to 4,500 pages as the Basel physician digested everything he encountered in print. Like other Renaissance encyclopedias, Zwinger’s contained multiple indexes to facilitate looking up every discrete parcel of knowledge through an elaborate sequence of headings and subheadings that outlined, as if in bullet points, the structure of knowledge while also dissecting it thematically. Little wonder that by the early eighteenth century Jonathan Swift would poke fun at contemporaries who displayed a veneer of erudition acquired through “index learning.” Thumb through an index. Find an entry. Dive into a chapter. Surf the Renaissance web and skim fustians of Greek and Latin words to sprinkle into daily conversation. Swift’s cynicism about sincere enterprises like Zwinger’s was already a sign of the limited shelf life of this particular kind of encyclopedia.

The most useful books, however, were not only well indexed. A world filled with ever greater numbers of books produced a growing demand for a new kind of book, one that extracted, compiled or condensed useful information found in other books, thus saving the reader time and money. As Blair explains, many readers wanted these digests, and they became the bestsellers of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. They were the CliffsNotes of the Renaissance, and they allowed readers to avoid the dreary fate of the reader sitting in front of the book wheel designed by Agostino Ramelli, an Italian military engineer. A device for reading multiple books simultaneously, Ramelli’s book wheel was a sort of miniature Ferris wheel that rotated vertically and was outfitted with self-adjusting shelves, each of which held one book.

Who nowadays has read the Ligurian cleric and rector of schools Domenico Nani Mirabelli’s Polyantbea (1503), an almost half-million word compendium of Greek and Latin learning that combined the contents of the medieval encyclopedic tradition with the best fruits of Renaissance learning? Like the fictional English professor Howard Ringbaum, whose existential dilemma about not having read Hamlet is immortalized in David Lodge’s novel Changing Places, I plead guilty—I have not read this book. But many early modern readers did. They considered the Polyantbea to be a staple of their own education. It began as a series of personal notes on books by a diligent and pious schoolmaster who translated his experience as a reader into a reference work that could reach beyond the classroom through the medium of print. It grew with each edition to accommodate the best examples of new forms of learning, until it became obsolete after the 2.5 million–word edition of 1686. Thanks to Blair’s excellent detective work, we know that the Polyantbea was surely the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations of the Renaissance.

If only Nani Mirabelli had found his way to the town of Bergamo, perched above the Lombard plains, to compare notes with the Augustinian monk and philologist Ambrogio Calepino, the James Murray of the Renaissance, who created the greatest single-author dictionary to predate those by Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster. Calepino’s 1502 dictionary was the bestselling reference work of the early modern era, having appeared in more than 200 editions by 1800, as editors and publishers expanded its Latin entries to transform it into the ultimate polyglot experience, a key for all languages rather than just one. As if to prove that dictionaries are far more likely than encyclopedias to enjoy a long shelf life—the history of words unfolds continuously and incrementally, whereas knowledge more reluctantly preserves its past—Calepino has the distinction of being the only author of a reference work to have his name become a noun. (“Calepin” is by now an obsolete noun. (“Calepin” is by now an obsolete word for a dictionary.) And yes, I did look it up in my copy of the compact OED to confirm its usage. It will surprise no one to discover that Calepino was blind by the time he died in 1511.

Samuel Johnson, author of A Dictionary of the English Language (1755), once declared, with characteristic wit, that the making of dictionaries was “dull work.” He nonetheless produced a dictionary of great verve that others rightfully regarded as a work of literature produced from the read-
ing of literature. Blair offers a detailed account of the process for making these kinds of books, though she does not exhibit the same fascination with character that so preoccupied Simon Winchester, who in *The Meaning of Everything* stepped inside the lives and minds of the men and women who made the *OED*. And yet the manias, passions, idiosyncrasies and, yes, capacious erudition and mind-numbing discipline of the makers of knowledge—medieval and Renaissance monks, professors, humanists and printers—shines through every page of Blair’s book. I confess to having become especially curious about the seventeenth-century Jesuit professor Francesco Sacchini, who wrote *A Little Book on How to Read With Profit* (1614). While not as widely read as Calepino’s dictionary, the *Little Book* suggests that its author was the Dale Carnegie of the Society of Jesus. As Blair demonstrates throughout her study, knowledge had become a business by the end of the Renaissance. There were many people poised to offer the surest and most efficient path to success—with a book in hand.

Yet it is not only the composition and reading of books that preoccupy Blair but also the ways knowledge is transmuted through a reader’s encounter with them. Once read, what did those millions of printed words become for the reader? The corollary of Ramelli’s sixteenth-century book wheel is the seventeenth-century note closet, a cabinet used to organize the slips of paper covered in jottings that multiplied the more one read. From such projects the note card and the index file would eventually emerge, though not definitively until the age of Melvil Dewey. (I now scribble on the backs of discarded filing cards every time I use my university’s library computers to look up a book.) Blair devotes a large part of her book to telling the history of Renaissance readers who copied memorable passages culled from their reading onto strips of paper and glued these scraps of wisdom into commonplace books, a kind of motley memory book fashioned entirely from notes. Compilers devised ever more efficient methods to extract knowledge: buying multiple copies of books to keep some intact while cutting memorable passages from others, a practice that suggests paper was becoming more readily available; employing wives, children and assistants to accelerate the process of excerpting and cataloging absolutely everything; and creating furniture to house the fruits of this ceaseless industry.

By the end of the eighteenth century, that great age of dictionaries and encyclopedias, the passion for extraction, compilation and condensation had inspired the French satirist Louis-Sébastien Mercier to envision a future in which books had all but vanished. In his utopian novel *The Year 2440*, published in 1771, he transported readers to a twenty-fifth-century library. It is not an immense gallery lined with floor-to-ceiling shelves housing innumerable books but rather a modest cabinet containing a handful of volumes. With pride, the librarian explains how all important knowledge had been threshed from the previous millennia of scholarship, and that the books that were its husks had been burned. Yet as Blair recounts in her elegant study of the past centuries of information management, every project to condense or dispense with books has its corollary in the overwhelming desire to preserve what might otherwise be forgotten. And that is why I can look up “Calepin” in the *OED*, sharing across the centuries the pleasures of a word that conjures up a world of Latin learning and encyclopedic scholarship we no longer inhabit but still find utterly fascinating.
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS
1 You and I, by the girl’s fabric remnant, might predict 17. (7,6)
10 A pinch of tea, by the sound of it, not strong. (5)
11 An uncommonly great help in communications! (9)
12 Where they used to put apples in casks? (9)
13 Girl from the country running from pole to pole. (5)
14 Possibly rash treatment for the very young. (6,6)
19 and 27 Regardless of how the summer was spent, the next few months were exceedingly pleasant, though the subject remained apart. (6-6, 3, 1, 5, 4)
20 Some pronounce it to be the poorest possible filler for a sandwich. (5)
22 Intrinsically, always inside, but keep trying! (9)
24 Oriental symbol possibly associated with New Orleans of song. (6,3)
26 Longfellow said “Sail on, O” to it. (5)
27 See 19 across

DOWN
2 Come out of liquid, perhaps, in a Bessemer-generated process. (6)
3 If you want the best celery, don’t be discouraged! (4,5)
4 Might be shifted from center and carried away. (9)
5 Possibly lists, in more than one way. (5)
6 Summons, perhaps, in the book. (5)
7 By the way, you might be located here. (8)
8 With the urge to be benefited by such as 14? (5)
9 Polish experts? By tradition, what could turn out to be a favorite course has application here. (7)
15 Is the Roman made to be confused by it? (They should help to straighten him out!) (9)
16 Some useless buttons might be found, and not paid for. (2,3,4)
17 Do they also tell at kindergarten? (7)
18 Bee-bread. (8)
20 Your humble servant, once? (6)
21 Purposes of wealth? (5)
23 Got an alternative answer? Friendly association with it, possibly. (5)
24 The artist’s subject might be a difficult one. (5)

From the April 17, 1976, issue. Voting has closed for Frank Lewis’s replacement. Winner TBA.

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