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To understand why evangelicals support the president, look to the founder of Protestantism.

BY MICHAEL MASSING
A Worthy Tribute

Victor Navasky, who knows a thing or two about the enduring power of political cartoons (see his brilliant book on the subject, The Art of Controversy), is wise to celebrate Robert Grossman [“Comic Genius,” April 16]. Grossman was my friend since the age of 19, through thick and thin, as our children grew up together and as our later chapters intertwined in a swell, enduring friendship.

This man was a one-of-a-kind genius who knew how to use his wit, wisdom, artistic talent, and sweetness to make our struggling American democracy more aware of its foibles and challenges. His most powerful works were often his portraits and strips on the dreadful failed politicians who have let us down again and again. My favorite was his “Emperor’s New Clothes” illustration of Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, John Mitchell, et al., marching forth to their own destruction in nothing but their underwear. More recently, his “Dump Trump” bags to collect your dog’s droppings made me laugh in celebration once again.

Anne B. Zill
Portland, Maine

Beyond the Border of Cruelty

Laila Lalami’s description of the shift in US immigration policy “from the corrective to the punitive, and now to the abusive” [“The Cruelty of ICE,” April 16] is spot-on. A few months ago, I visited two inmates at a for-profit immigration detention center. One of the men was an asylum seeker from an African nation where, as a conscript, he had suffered incarceration and torture. He had been at the center for over a year. He told me that during his asylum hearing, the judge had ruled that his claims of torture were “well-founded but not sufficient.” I’m sure that statement made sense in terms of some accepted legal construct, but what does it mean in the real world? How is it that a person comes to our shores seeking refuge, and we incarcerate him for an indefinite but lengthy period under poor conditions, although he has done exactly as we prescribe asylum seekers should do? And how dare we tell him that he hasn’t been tortured enough to merit our help?

Kevin McKinney
Camden, S.C.

What Took So Long?

Re “A Voice of Dissent in the GOP,” by Barry Yeoman [April 2]: I was a teenager and young adult while the Vietnam War raged. I knew then that the United States had no business fighting there and, moreover, that the war was unwinnable. The futility and idiotic lack of reasoning behind the debacle was even more evident after the publication of outstanding books by Gary Hess, Neil Sheehan, David Halberstam, and others. This lesson has stuck with me throughout my life.

Republican Congressman Walter Jones Jr. is a decade or so older than I am. I fail to see why he had to wait until after our Iraq War effort caused such chaos and mayhem in the Middle East to finally figure out that these types of conflicts must be avoided. Why didn’t he learn that lesson from the Vietnam experience?

Barry Yeoman’s praise for the congressman’s stance against further ventures of this sort seems a bit misplaced. Yes, it is certainly better that Jones finally gleaned some obvious lessons regarding his uncritical support for this country’s wars, but what took him 35 years? It seems that The Nation could find better “heroes” to enlighten progressives about.

Harry E. Antoniou
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Red-State Rebellion

In the days since House Speaker Paul Ryan announced his retirement from Congress, much of the commentary has focused on his failures. Barring a sudden bout of legislative productivity, Ryan will relinquish the Speaker’s gavel with a deficit-expanding tax cut for corporations and the rich as his only significant achievement. Fortunately, his career-defining goals to privatize Social Security, convert Medicare into a voucher system, and dismantle the rest of the social safety net remain unfulfilled. And then, of course, there is his humiliating failure, dating back to the 2016 campaign, to stand up to President Trump.

Ryan’s legacy, however, is far bigger than any single policy or political battle. For the past decade, he has been the leading advocate of an ideology that divides Americans into “makers” and “takers,” as he infamously put it, and whose main function is advancing the economic interests of the former at the expense of the latter. By putting a friendly face on punishing, plutocratic policies, Ryan hoodwinked a credulous media establishment into believing that he was an earnest wonk instead of the cruel reactor he really is. And while his ideas have mostly stalled at the federal level, they have thrived in Republican-controlled states around the country—to devastating effect.

The consequences of Ryan-style conservatism have provoked a growing backlash in the form of teacher demonstrations in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Arizona. In Oklahoma, where teachers staged a nine-day walkout in April, tax cuts for the wealthy beginning in 2004 were followed by deep cuts to spending on public services. These cuts deprived public schools of more than $350 million per year, according to the Oklahoma Policy Institute, contributing to low teacher pay, large class sizes, deteriorating textbooks, and four-day school weeks in parts of the state. Before teachers began planning the walkout, which ended on April 13, state lawmakers had not merely neglected these pressing issues for years; they had exacerbated them by passing additional tax cuts for the rich and renewing a massive tax break for oil and gas companies.

Many states are facing similar funding challenges. In all, 29 states are now spending less per student on K–12 education than they were a decade ago, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. A number of these states have also cut income taxes. Notably, the 10 states that have experienced the largest percentage decline in spending per student since 2008 all currently have Republican governors and Republican-controlled legislatures.

The ongoing wave of teacher-led activism in red states is heartening for several reasons, not least of which is the fact that the teachers are achieving real victories. Last month, striking West Virginia teachers won a 5 percent raise, among other advances. Oklahoma lawmakers approved an increase in teacher pay funded in part by higher taxes on the oil and gas industry, though they failed to provide additional funding that is still badly needed.

Meanwhile, the groundswell of support that teachers have received from students, parents, and activists is further evidence of what progressives have long known: that the Republican Party’s devotion to gutting public services is deeply unpopular, including with many of the party’s own voters. As one parent who supports the protesting teachers in Arizona told The New York Times, she normally votes Republican but “would switch party lines” over education funding.

The key question, in these states and elsewhere, is how to effectively counter the ascendant right-wing populism that has enabled Republicans to retain power in spite of their policies. One promising model can be found in the Working Families Party, which recruits progressive candidates to run in Democratic primaries and mobilizes grassroots activists in 19 states. The party made headlines on April 14 by endorsing Cynthia Nixon against incumbent Democrat

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since 1865

Red-State Rebellion

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Andrew Cuomo in New York’s gubernatorial race.) That includes West Virginia, where the founder of the state’s WFP chapter played an active role in the recent teacher strike. In 2017, the Working Families Party supported more than 1,000 candidates in state and local elections, nearly two-thirds of whom won their races. Randy Bryce, the leading Democratic candidate to take over Paul Ryan’s congressional seat in Wisconsin, is also a longtime WFP member. And the party recently announced that Maurice Mitchell, a veteran of the Movement for Black Lives, will become its national director, sending a strong signal about the Working Families Party’s commitment to advancing multiracial progressive populism across the country.

Political scientist Corey Robin has suggested that the red-state teacher protests could mark a progressive turning point, parallel to the one presaged by California’s passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which helped usher in the Reagan Revolution. He may be right. But it’s up to those who oppose Ryan’s ideology to offer working people who are fed up with Republican policies an alternative and inclusive vision that transcends race, region, and partisan affiliation. As Mitchell recently told The Nation, all working Americans deserve “a real political home.”

Illegal Attack on Syria

**Only Congress, not the president, can declare war.**

The April 13 missile strikes by the United States, France, and Britain against three sites in Syria, ordered in response to an alleged chemical-weapons assault by Bashar al-Assad’s army on the city of Douma on April 7, were launched in violation of both US and international law. The claims by these countries that they sought to defend another aspect of international law does not make the missile strikes legal. And they’ve done nothing to help bring the seven-year Syrian war to an end.

Furthermore, the allied attack took place before we found out what actually happened in Douma. The organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has a United Nations mandate and is the only internationally credible agency on chemical weapons, was already headed to Syria, hoping to begin its investigation by April 14. But that mission was delayed after the allied attack; the OPCW team only arrived in Douma on April 17.

The problem is that knowing what happened—even knowing who was responsible—doesn’t come with an obvious checklist of what to do about it. This is a classic “even if” situation: Even if we knew that chemical weapons were used, and even if we knew who ordered their use, that still doesn’t tell us how to respond in a way that would uphold international law, prevent future violations of the anti-chemical-weapons treaty, hold the perpetrators accountable, and provide some modicum of justice for the victims.

Chemical weapons are indeed horrifying, and they are legitimately singled out—along with weapons like cluster bombs, which the United States has used with impunity, and white phosphorus, an Israeli favorite in Gaza—for their particularly indiscriminate nature. But we cannot accept the hypocrisy of those who rage against a still-unconfirmed chemical attack even as they remain silent about—or in some cases even applauded—the killing of Syrian and Iraqi civilians by US drones and bombers (according to the British monitoring group Airwars, US and coalition air and artillery strikes have likely killed between 3,940 and 5,937 Syrian civilians, perhaps more, since August 2014); of Palestinian journalists and children by US-armed Israeli sharpshooters; of Yemeni families by Saudi and United Arab Emirates bombers refueled in midair by US Air Force pilots.

The Constitution makes clear that only Congress, not the president, can declare war. The War Powers Resolution allows a president to use military force on a very temporary basis without congressional approval only when there is an “attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces”—none of which apply to Syria. The fact that Congress, in recent decades, has largely abandoned its authority and allowed presidents to go to war without its consent does not make unilateral White House wars legal.

There have been important exceptions to this congressional acquiescence. The Congressional Progressive Caucus has called on President Trump “to immediately reverse his policy of denying protections to Syrian refugees fleeing violence. Syria’s civil war continues to be a complex regional conflict,” the caucus notes, “and it has become increasingly clear that U.S. military interventions will likely add to the mass suffering in Syria.”

In terms of international law, there is no legal justification for the current US troop presence in Syria, let alone air or missile strikes. Perhaps anticipating that concern, Defense Secretary James Mattis told the House Armed Services Committee that the April 13 attack on Syria could be justified as self-defense because the 2,000 US troops on the ground there must be protected. What he ignored, of course, is that the US soldiers in Syria have not been attacked by Assad’s army—but even if they had been, the UN Charter’s self-defense exception does not apply when one country’s soldiers are maintaining an illegal presence in another. And even if it’s proven that the Assad regime violated the chemical-weapons treaty in the Douma attack, no individual country has the right to enforce that treaty’s provisions or deter further violations; such unilateral actions are also violations of international law. Equally important, they do nothing to provide real justice or protection for the victims.

The latest US attack on Syria has undermined—not strengthened—international efforts to prevent the use of chemical weapons. We still need diplomacy, not further military aggression, to end the Syrian war. **Phyllis Bennis**

Phyllis Bennis is director of the Institute for Policy Studies’ New Internationalism Project and the author of Understanding ISIS and the New Global War on Terror: A Primer.
Daniel Ellsberg, a longtime friend of The Nation, is best known for leaking the Pentagon Papers, a trove of government documents that revealed how Democratic and Republican administrations alike had lied about the Vietnam War. But Ellsberg’s greatest concern has long been the United States’ nuclear arsenal and its secret plans for launching a first strike—a policy that, he says, remains in place today and threatens virtually all life on Earth. He spoke with us about his new book, The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner.

—Mark Hertsgaard

MH: You open the book describing a memo that you read in the White House in 1961. President Kennedy had asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff how many people would be killed overseas if US plans for a nuclear attack were carried out. The answer, you write, was “600 million dead. A hundred Holocaus ts.” You assert that launching a first strike has remained US policy ever since. Most Americans don’t know that, but do even most decision-makers in Washington?

DE: It’s important to distinguish between first use and first strike. “First use” means initiating nuclear war at some level; “first strike” refers to an attempt to disarm a highly armed nuclear state. In the case of Russia, a first strike would attempt to annihilate Russia’s major cities and its power to make war. Today, I don’t assume that any given policy-maker knows that first strike remains US policy.

MH: You write that a US first strike would trigger Russian retaliation and result in a “nuclear winter.” What is that?

DE: In a nuclear war between the superpowers, hundreds of nuclear weapons would explode. The resulting firestorms from burning buildings, roads, and so forth would generate a massive amount of smoke. That smoke would be carried into the stratosphere, circle the globe, and eventually block an estimated 70 percent of the sunlight from reaching Earth. This darkening-and-cooling effect would be a nuclear winter. The smoke would kill harvests, causing food supplies to run out within months. By the end of the year, the attacker would die, along with almost everyone else.

That’s why I think it’s fair to call this a “doomsday machine.” It’s not just suicidal. It’s not just genocidal. It’s omnicidal, because it would kill virtually all human beings on the planet, as well as the large animals and species of vegetation.

MH: You write that Barack Obama was the only president who considered ending this first-strike policy.

DE: Yes, Obama urged consideration of that in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. And again in 2016, he raised the possibility of getting rid of ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles], which are a first-strike weapon, and declaring a no-first-use policy—which are the first two things I’d suggest doing to dismantle this doomsday situation. But the military-industrial complex essentially said no, and Obama reversed course. He wanted to get the [New] Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty approved by the Senate, and to do that he had to commit to a massive $1.2 trillion modernization of the US arsenal.

MH: So the military-industrial complex exercises veto power over US nuclear policy?

DE: These are delusional pursuits, but they are very profitable delusions for Boeing and Northrop Grumman and other weapons-makers. The doomsday machine has to be kept on high alert for the sake of profits, but also for the jobs and the votes they bring.

That’s why I call this a “doomsday machine.” It’s not just suicidal. It’s not just genocidal. It’s omnicidal.
An About-Facebook?

People are demanding a new deal with tech.

In the summer of 2012, a group of scholars at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, led by Joseph Turow, put out a national survey on public attitudes toward targeted political advertising. The results were stark: Nearly nine out of 10 Americans said they didn’t want political ads tailored to their personal interests. Eighty-five percent agreed with the statement “If I found out that Facebook was sending me ads for political candidates based on my profile information that I had set to private, I would be angry.”

The report got healthy coverage in mainstream outlets like The New York Times and NPR’s Marketplace, as well as industry journals like ClickZ. But it had zero impact on political advertisers. At the time, Rich Masterson, the chairman of CampaignGrid, a political-advertising firm, told me, “There are many surveys that indicate Americans do not like negative campaign advertising, exercise, or health diets. The fact that Americans do not like these things does not make them bad.”

Jim Walsh and Chris Massicotte, then the CEO and COO of DSPolitical, a Democratic firm that claims to have invented the “political cookie,” an online tool for targeting individual voters, told me that digital targeting was essentially following the same path as direct mail: “Just like any new technology, it comes with a level of apprehension, but once people know more about what it can do—namely spare them from being flooded with useless political ads that they would prefer not to see—more people will accept it.”

After Barack Obama won reelection in 2012, voter targeting and other uses of Big Data in campaigns were all the rage. That spring, at a conference on “Data-Crunched Democracy” that Turow organized with Daniel Kreiss of the University of North Carolina, I listened as Ethan Roeder, the head of data analytics for Obama’s campaigns, railed against critics. “Politicians exist to manipulate you,” he said, “and that is not going to change, regardless of how information is used.” He continued: “OK, maybe we have a new form of manipulation—we have micro-manipulation—but what are the real concerns? What is the real problem that we see with the way information is being used? Because if it’s manipulation, that ship has long since sailed.” To Roeder, the bottom line was clear: “Campaigns do not care about privacy. All campaigns care about is winning.”

A few of us at the conference, led by the technologist Zeynep Tufekci, argued that because individual voter data was being weaponized with behavioral-science insights in ways that could be finely tuned and also deployed outside of public view, the potential now existed to “engineer the public” toward outcomes that wealthy interests would pay dearly to control. No one listened. Until last year, it was almost impossible to get a major American foundation to put a penny behind efforts to monitor and unmask these new forms of hidden persuasion.

If there’s any good news in the revelations about Cambridge Analytica’s acquisition and use of the profile data of an estimated 87 million American Facebook members, it’s this: Millions of people are now awake to just how naked and exposed they are in the public sphere. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s testimony before Congress is an inflection point. Clearly, people care a lot more about the political use of their personal data than they do about someone trying to sell them a pair of shoes. That’s why so many people are suddenly talking about deleting their Facebook accounts.

That said, we have a big problem, and it isn’t just with Facebook or Cambridge Analytica. Nearly the entire Internet is based on the following trade: You give us intimate personal data, and we give you magical services for free. This bargain is the original sin, and almost every major website you visit, with the exception of Wikipedia and Craigslist, commits it. And then there’s a sin of neglect: Instead of building public spaces online where all people are equally free to participate, in the same way that one can walk into a public park without fear of being tracked, our leaders let private capital colonize the digital public sphere.

Imagine that when you go browsing for books, the bookstore monitors which books you take off the shelves, which pages you flip to, how much time you spend on each, and ultimately which books you buy—and then makes that information available to advertisers, including political campaigns. That, in essence, is the deal most Americans have tacitly made with Google and Facebook. Now imagine that when you go to a political rally in a park, the campaign holding the rally has made a deal with the telephone company to acquire the cell-phone number and subscriber information of everyone attending—including yours. When you complain about it, the phone company says: “Well, you agreed to give up your privacy when you started using the phone you bought from us.” Shocking, right? But today, the Democratic data firm TargetSmart will sell you a model database of hundreds of thousands of people who likely attended one of the 200 biggest Women’s Marches in January 2017, based

(continued on page 10)
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Matters of Facts

While the phrase “fake news” has become ubiquitous, the pernicious influence of “fake science” has yet to be fully acknowledged. The Outline recently spotlighted the sensationalist YouTube channel called Riddle, which has nearly 2 million subscribers. Riddle posts explanatory videos about “scientific” phenomena, such as one of its most popular clips, which purports to detail what would happen if a nuclear bomb was detonated in the Mariana Trench. The video has informed more than 14 million viewers that such an event could result in nothing less than the end of the world. This is nonsense, according to expert geologists and planetary scientists. But the clip has more views than all but one of the videos on Alex Jones’s Infowars channel, and, given typical ad rates, Riddle has likely racked up tens of thousands of dollars in revenue.

According to a recent study in Science, fake news about science travels faster and further than real news on social-media outlets like Twitter. Researchers found that such unverifiable theories often reached between 1,000 and 100,000 people, while similar (but accurate) scientific reporting rarely reached more than a thousand. Given typical ad rates, Riddle has likely racked up tens of thousands of dollars in revenue.

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Eric Alterman

No News Is Bad News

Without independent journalism, Trump and other charlatans will thrive.

I had a different column in mind when I woke up on deadline day, but I wrote this one instead—not because any major news had broken (yes, the FBI raided the office of President Trump’s personal attorney), but because our country and our democracy are in the midst of a crisis, and our embattled media are unable or unwilling to explain it.

What inspired my switch was Politico’s publication of the results of a study that demonstrated a clear correlation between low [newspaper] subscription rates and Trump’s success in the 2016 election, both against Hillary Clinton and when compared to [Mitt] Romney in 2012. Those links were statistically significant even when accounting for other factors that likely influenced voter choices, such as college education and employment, suggesting that the decline of local media sources by itself may have played a role in the election results.” It’s an enormously detailed study, and the data confirm what newspaper reporters and editors have been trying to tell a complacent public for years: “Lose us and you lose your democracy.” Walter Lippmann explained the problem in The Atlantic Monthly back in 1919: “The quack, the charlatan, the jingo, and the terrorist, can flourish only where the audience is deprived of independent access to information.”

However flawed our most important media institutions may be, this deprivation is something your columnist has been shouting about for as long as he’s been a columnist. Today, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we have lost more than half of the newspaper jobs we had just 15 years ago. What is less widely known is how much worse the problem is in the middle of the country, where Trump has been so successful in sucking people into voting against their own interests. According to a 2017 Politico report, 73 percent of all Internet publishing jobs are concentrated in coastal cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC.

These numbers, together with the more recent Politico study, bring the extraordinary battle currently being waged by the remaining staff members at The Denver Post into sharper focus. The newspaper, which serves a city of 700,000, has been systematically decimated by its greedy owner, the hedge fund Alden Global Capital, which is in the process of laying off roughly two-thirds of the newsroom. The remaining staff have embarked on a campaign to find a savior. They have made a public demand for Alden to cease its assault on the people’s right (and need) to know what is going on in their communities and their country. As one reporter tweeted, “The @denverpost is being murdered by its owners. It’s the most heartbreaking, panic-inducing thing I’ve seen in 20-plus years of writing for daily newspapers. We need a new owner, or we are going to get shut down (and soon).”

What outlet would replace the local paper? Well, there are the TV stations owned by the Sinclair Broadcast Group, whose Pravda style of robotic reporting is specially designed to mislead viewers and turn them into unwitting victims of Trump-friendly disinformation. Thanks to a video compiled by the sports-news site Deadspin, we now have striking evidence of Sinclair’s deliberate campaign to undermine the ability of Americans to get the truth about their country from their local media. Then there are the naked plays by right-wing billionaires like the Koch brothers, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson, and Robert and Rebekah Mercer to publish hateful propaganda under the guise of “news.” These oligarchs feed bile and bullshit to the people they oppress, and convince them to blame immigrants, African Americans, Arabs, (some) Jews, and uppity women for their plight. Robert Mercer, we learned recently from the Center for Responsive Politics, funds not only the hate site Breitbart News and the secret spy company Cambridge Analytica but also something called Secure America Now, which is dedicated to ginning up fear of imminent “Muslim takeovers of France, Germany and the United States,” as The Washington Post put it.

We don’t know how much money these people have invested in these potentially protofascist...
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on mobile-device data that it got from telecom companies.

In the early days of the Internet, we thought that the rise of connection technologies would give ordinary voters all kinds of ways to band together, have a voice, and shift power from insiders to outsiders, from entrenched incumbents to vibrant challengers. That has happened. But what we failed to recognize was how much power Internet users were giving away at the same time to data aggregators and brokers like Facebook, Google, and the many intermediaries amassing their own data troves as well (not to mention the NSA).

“Privacy,” as Edward Snowden has eloquently argued, “is the fountainhead of all other rights.” It is “the right to a self [and] what gives you the ability to share with the world who you are on your own terms.” If we don’t insist on a digital public sphere that treats the information of individuals as private by default, we will be no more than rats in a maze built and owned by a few digital wizards and their investors. If we want a way out of this mess, it starts by recognizing that we have to remake the Internet into a public square owned by us.

In May, when Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation starts to take effect, forcing tech platforms to get the express consent of users to collect, store, and monetize their data, we will all see a subtle shift in our online experiences. That’s because these companies all operate in Europe, and the regulation also covers citizens of European countries living in places like the United States. There’s a lesson here: Software code is not law. It can be bent to fit local laws. So if we want to stop companies like Facebook from amassing huge profiles on us and selling them to advertisers, the solution is not to delete your account. It is to demand real action from government.

MICAH L. SIFRY
Micah L. Sifry is the president and co-founder of Civic Hall and the author of The Big Disconnect: Why the Internet Hasn’t Transformed Politics (Yet).
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After the Raid

Trump’s immigration crackdown could devastate an entire generation.

Last January, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers raided dozens of 7-Eleven stores nationwide, arresting 21 workers. In February, ICE detained 100 people across several counties in Southern California and arrested another 232 over the course of a four-day sweep in the Bay Area. These raids attracted national coverage, but relatively little attention has been paid to the aftermath of these mass arrests. How are families and communities affected?

A recent case in rural Tennessee provides the clearest evidence yet that ICE’s raids, supposedly a deterrent to undocumented immigration, are instead causing lasting damage to an entire generation of young Americans. Early on the morning of April 5, federal immigration agents raided the Southeastern Provision meatpacking plant in Bean Station, Tennessee, a town of about 3,000 people. Officials arrested 97 Latino workers, put them in white vans, and transported them to a National Guard armory in nearby Morristown, where they were processed. The effect on this small community was felt immediately: The next day, about 550 children missed school, a number that represents more than 20 percent of the county’s Hispanic student population.

The children, some of whom could be native-born citizens, might have missed school because they depended on a parent to drop them off. Or they might have needed to be at home to watch a younger sibling. Or they might simply have been too distraught to go to class after being separated from a parent or relative. The absence is likely to taper off, but research has shown that the detention or deportation of a parent increases a child’s risk of mental-health problems. Students with detained or deported parents can also become disengaged from academic and career goals, which can have lasting effects on their future adjustment and achievement.

In addition, children whose parents are detained face the economic uncertainty that comes with a sudden and dramatic loss of income. One recent study found that families lost, on average, 70 percent of their earnings within six months of a parent’s detention or deportation. This abrupt change is not distributed equally along gender lines. ICE tends to be a bit more lenient with people who are primary caretakers, and that often means women. For example, of the 97 meatpacking-plant workers who were arrested in April, 32 were later released, many of them mothers of young children. The fathers who remained in immigration detention will now be absent from their children’s lives.

The Bean Station ICE raid also affected families with no direct connection to the meatpacking plant. For instance, in the days following the arrests, some 300 immigrant parents set up power-of-attorney documents to grant custody rights over their children to a third party in case they too were detained by federal agents. A climate of such pervasive fear affects the entire town’s safety, because it makes it unlikely that crimes witnessed or suffered by immigrants will ever be reported.

It’s easy to see, then, how a single ICE raid can have cascading consequences for hundreds of young Americans. Perhaps most distressing of all is that what happened in Tennessee has happened before. It is happening now in every part of the United States, and it will keep happening unless we are prepared to approach immigration not as a law-enforcement issue, but as a family issue and a labor issue.

The Southeastern Provision plant first came under investigation when it was discovered that the managers, James and Pamela Brantley, withdrew large amounts of cash from the local bank every week, presumably to pay their employees. In a federal affidavit, the IRS alleges that James Brantley had been evading payroll taxes and filing false tax returns for years. A confidential informant also reported that plant workers faced unsafe labor conditions, including exposure to harsh chemicals without suitable protection.

And yet, while the workers were rounded up and placed in Tennessee’s immigration jails, the plant’s president and general manager was not arrested. It’s
entirely possible that Brantley will not face any criminal charges, but will instead have to pay fines. He may even be able to go back to operating his meatpacking business. In this way, the cost of food production in the United States continues to be borne by undocumented workers.

The outcome of the ICE raid on Southeastern Provision exposes the disturbing dynamic between labor and law enforcement. When undocumented workers are free to work, they provide cheap and unprotected labor. When they are detained in immigration jails, they become sources of revenue for private prisons, where they can be forced into unpaid labor. Either way, they make money for others, while they and their families remain vulnerable to being broken up.

Slowly but surely, the immigration crackdown that the Trump administration promised, and that ICE is carrying out, is giving rise to a permanent underclass. I don’t just mean the obvious—the undocumented workers who are being underpaid and exploited, and who must live under constant risk of detention and deportation. I also mean these workers’ children, who are starting out in life with significant disadvantages, including growing up in broken homes and dealing with psychological trauma, loss of income, and educational disruptions.

We have seen what mass incarceration has done to African Americans in the United States: The “tough on crime” approach to minor drug offenses contributed to the breakup of hundreds of thousands of families. We may be witnessing the early signs of a similar disaster with Hispanic Americans. An entire generation is coming of age while their undocumented parents are being detained and deported. These young people are conditional citizens, their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness curtailed through no fault of their own.

While the workers were rounded up and placed in immigration jails, the plant’s president and general manager was not arrested.
The Pope is a true werewolf. Sad!

How Martin Luther Paved the Way For

To understand why evangelicals support the president, look to the founder of Protestantism.
The support of white evangelicals for Donald Trump continues to exasperate and perplex. About 80 percent of them voted for him in 2016—the most recorded for a Republican candidate since 2000—and his approval rating among them remains high. In June, some 1,000 evangelical pastors plan to meet the president, both to “celebrate” his accomplishments (as one leading pastor put it) and to rally Christians for the midterm elections. Neither Trump’s relations with Stormy Daniels, nor his endorsement of alleged sexual abuser Roy Moore, nor his reference to “shithole” countries, nor his toxic tweets, recurrent racism, or general crudity have proved a deterrent to most conservative Christians—to the dismay of many commentators.

“I’m stunned at the evangelical support for this president,” Mika Brzezinski remarked recently on the MSNBC show Morning Joe. “I don’t understand it. It’s almost like they’re excited to be in the White House and get access to him.” Those in the evangelical community who are writing books about the president, she added, “are overlooking the most humongous moral failings.”

Peter Wehner, a former speechwriter for George W. Bush, took to the op-ed pages of The New York Times in December to explain “Why I Can No Longer Call Myself an Evangelical Republican.” Throughout his life, Wehner wrote, he had identified with evangelicalism and the Republican Party, but Trump and Moore were causing him to reconsider his affiliations: “Not because my attachment to conservatism and Christianity has weakened, but rather the opposite. I consider Mr. Trump’s Republican Party to be a threat to conservatism, and I have concluded that the term evangelical—despite its rich history of proclaiming the ‘good news’ of Christ to a broken world—has been so distorted that it is now undermining the Christian witness.”

The death of the Rev. Billy Graham in February set off a new round of chiding. In Politico, Stephen Prothero, a professor of religion at Boston University, wrote that “to chart the troubled recent course of American evangelicalism—its powerful rise after World War II and its surprisingly quick demise in recent years”—one need look no further than the differences between Graham and his eldest son, Franklin, who took over his empire. Where the father “was a powerful evangelist who turned evangelicalism into the dominant spiritual impulse in modern America,” Prothero wrote, his son is “a political hack” who “is rapidly rebranding evangelicalism as a belief system marked not by faith, hope, and love but by fear of Muslims and homophobia.”

The alarm over the evangelical embrace of Trump reached a crescendo with Michael Gerson’s cover story in the April issue of The Atlantic, “How Evangelicals Lost Their Way (And Got Hooked by Donald Trump).” Gerson—perhaps the most prominent evangelical writing in the mainstream media—stated that “Trump’s background and beliefs could hardly be more incompatible with traditional Christian models of life and leadership.” The president’s “unapologetic materialism” is “a negation of Christian teaching”; his tribalism and hatred for “the other” “stand in direct opposition to Jesus’s radical ethic of neighbor love”; his worship of strength and contempt for “losers” “smack more of Nietzsche than of Christ.” Christianity, Gerson declared, “is love of neighbor, or it has lost its way. And this sets an urgent task for evangelicals: to rescue their faith from its worst leaders.”

The verdict is clear: In supporting this thrice-married, coarse, boastful, divisive, and xenophobic president, evangelicals are betraying the true nature of Christianity. In making such charges, however, these commentators are championing their own particular definition of Christianity. It is the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus blesses the meek, disdains the rich, welcomes the stranger, counsels humility, and encourages charity. “Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also,” he declares—a most un-Trumpian sentiment.
Yet this ironic message is just one strain in the New Testament. There's another, more bellicose one. In Matthew, for instance, Jesus says, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword”—to “set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” In John, he declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” and “no one comes to the Father except through me”—a statement long used to declare Christianity the one true path to salvation. The Book of Revelation describes with apocalyptic fury the locusts, scorpions, hail, fire, and other plagues that God will visit upon the earth to wipe out the unbelievers and prepare the way for the Messiah.

From the earliest days of the faith, this militant strand has coexisted with the more pacific one. And it was the former that stirred the founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther. In his fierce ideas, vehement language, and combative intellectual style, Luther prefigured modern-day evangelicalism, and a look back at his life can help explain why so many evangelicals support Trump today.

In defending the cause of Christ, Luther was uncompromising. No one, he wrote, should think that the Gospel “can be advanced without tumult, offense and sedition.” The “Word of God is a sword, it is war and ruin and offense and perdition and poison.” In Luther's famous dispute with Erasmus of Rotterdam over free will and predestination, the renowned Dutch humanist suggested that the two of them debate the matter civilly, given that both were God-fearing Christians and that the Bible was far from clear on the subject. Exploding in fury, Luther insisted that predestination was a core Christian doctrine on which he could not yield and that Erasmus's idea that they agree to disagree showed he was not a true Christian.

In his later years, Luther produced venomous attacks on groups he considered enemies of Christ. In his notorious On the Jews and Their Lies, he denounced the Jews as “boastful, arrogant rascals,” “real liars and bloodhounds,” and “the vilest whores and rogues under the sun.” In Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil, he called the pope “a true werewolf,” a “farting ass,” and a “brothel-keeper over all brothel-keepers.” When in 1542 a Basel printer was preparing to bring out the first printed Latin version of the Quran, Luther contributed a preface explaining why he supported publication. It was not to promote interfaith understanding. By reading the Quran, he wrote, Christians could become familiar with “the pernicious beliefs of Muhammad” and more readily grasp “the insanity and wiles” of the Muslims. The learned must “read the writings of the enemy in order to refute them more keenly, to cut them to pieces and to overturn them.”

Luther arrived at his own interpretation of the Gospel after experiencing years of debilitating doubt as an Augustinian friar. The prescribed rituals and sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church—designed to offer a clear path to salvation—provided little relief. No matter how often he went to confession, no matter how fervently he prayed the Psalter, Luther felt undeserving of God's grace. Sometime around 1515, while lecturing on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, Luther had his great intellectual breakthrough: Salvation comes not from doing good works but through faith in Christ. Upon discovering this truth, Luther later wrote, “I was altogether born again” and “entered paradise itself through open gates.” In thus describing his sudden spiritual transformation, Luther provided a model for millions of later Protestants seeking similar renewal. Being born again is one of the defining characteristics of evangelicalism, and it was Luther who (along with Paul and Augustine) created the template.

Another key feature of evangelicalism is the central place of the Bible, and here, too, Luther provided the foundation. In his view, neither popes nor councils nor theologians have the authority to define the faith—the Bible alone is supreme. In his famous To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate of 1520, Luther described his world-altering concept of the priesthood of all believers: Every lay Christian, no matter how humble, has as much right to interpret the Bible as any pope or priest. Luther was thus shifting the locus of authority from credentialed elites to ordinary believers, empowering them to define their own faith.

In Europe, however, these populist ideas were quickly snuffed out. Kings and princes together with bishops and abbots cracked down on all who sought to apply them. The most dramatic case came during the German Peasants' War of 1524–25, when farmers and laborers—inspired, in part, by Luther's tracts—rose up against their secular and spiritual overlords. They were put down in a savage bloodletting that left more than 100,000 dead. Luther himself—fearing anarchy and furious at those who invoked his writings to better their lot—endorsed the slaughter in a lurid pamphlet titled Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants. “Let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab” the peasants, he wrote. “It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you, and a whole land with you.”

Although the killings had started before Luther's pamphlet appeared, he was strongly urged to retract his screed. He reluctantly prepared An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants, but, rather than disavow his position, he restated it in even starker terms. To those who said he was being unmerciful, he wrote, “this is not a question of mercy; we are talking of God’s word.” Luther was incapable of apologizing.

Luther's peasant tracts badly damaged his reputation not only among the peasants but also among many of his fellow reformers. The experience hardened his own retreat from his early radicalism into a reactionary intransigence in which he opposed all forms of resistance to injustice and maintained that the only proper course for a Christian was to accept and acquiesce. He took as his watchword Romans 13: “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities.” It was the individual who had to be re-
formed, not society. Luther also believed in the concept of the “two kingdoms,” the secular and the spiritual, which had to be kept rigorously apart. Christ’s Gospel was to apply only in the spiritual realm; in the secular, the government’s role was to maintain order and punish evildoers, not to show compassion and mercy. The Lutheran churches in Germany and Scandinavia (like most established churches in Europe as a whole) became arms of the state, developing a top-heavy bureaucracy that bred complacency, discouraged innovation, and caused widespread disaffection.

Not so in America: with no established churches to confront and freedom of worship guaranteed by the Constitution, American Christians have been free to create their own spiritual pathways. Over time, Luther’s core principles of faith in Christ, the authority of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers became pillars of American Protestantism—especially of the evangelical variety.

Consider, for example, the Southern Baptists. With more than 15 million members and 47,000 churches, the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in the United States; through its seminaries, publications, public-policy office, and network of missionaries, it has profoundly affected American social, cultural, and political life. The Southern Baptists’ various statements of belief bear Luther’s stamp throughout. The “starting point” of everything related to their churches, they declare, is each individual’s “personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives.” Under the related doctrine of “soul competency,” the Southern Baptists affirm “the accountability of each person before God.” This is a plainspoken version of Luther’s doctrine of sola fide (“by faith alone”). The Bible, they further maintain, is the “supreme standard” by which all human conduct and religious opinion must be measured—a restatement of Luther’s principle of sola scriptura (“by Scripture alone”). Finally, the Southern Baptists explicitly embrace the idea of the priesthood of all believers, asserting that “laypersons have the same right as ordained ministers to communicate with God, interpret Scripture, and minister in Christ’s name.”

Needless to say, there are some significant differences between the beliefs of the Southern Baptists and those of Luther. The Southern Baptists, for instance, practice adult baptism, which Luther vigorously opposed. On many key points, however, their beliefs parallel those of Luther, even though his influence is rarely acknowledged.

Billy Graham himself was deeply affected by Luther. From the fall of 1949, when he led his first major crusade, until the 1980s, Graham was the face of evangelical Christianity in America. Invoking the Bible as his sole authority, he offered a simple message centered on Christ’s atoning death on the cross for humankind’s sins and his resurrection from the dead for its salvation. “No matter who we are or what we have done,” Graham observed in Just as I Am, his autobiography, “we are saved only because of what Christ has done for us. I will not go to Heaven because I have preached to great crowds. I will go to Heaven for one reason: Jesus Christ died for me, and I am trusting Him alone for my salvation.” This intense focus on the Bible and on salvation through faith in Christ came directly from Luther.

In the recent eulogizing of Graham, there has been a tendency to gloss over his aggressive early evangelism. He was a strident anticommunist, a tireless critic of pornography, and a fawning supporter of presidents. While he insisted on integrating his crusades, he shunned the broader campaign for civil rights. Graham refused to participate in the 1963 March on Washington and dismissed Martin Luther King Jr.’s conviction that political protests could create a “beloved community” in which, even in Alabama, “little black boys and little black girls will join hands with little white boys and white girls.” Graham declared that “only when Christ comes again will the little white children of Alabama walk hand in hand with little black children.” In both his obsequiousness toward the powerful and his opposition to social change, Graham was very much Luther’s heir.

Luther’s impact on American life is most apparent when looking at the place of the Bible in it. According to surveys, nearly nine in 10 American households own a Bible, and nearly half of all adult Americans say that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Bible-study groups have proliferated in schools, workplaces, locker rooms, and government offices, including the White House under Democratic and Republican presidents alike. The massive new Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, with its multitude of biblical artifacts, is the creation of Steve Green, the president of the Hobby Lobby craft-store chain and a member of a prominent evangelical family. All of this can be traced back to Luther’s belief in Scripture as the sole authority.

Many evangelicals are animated by the same type of faith-based individualism that Luther espoused. This outlook can be seen in the motivational sermons of Joel Osteen, the purpose-driven appeals of Rick Warren, and the defiant statements of Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who in 2015 refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, celebrates her release from jail.

Modern martyr: County clerk Kim Davis, who refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, celebrates her release from jail.

Many evangelicals see the proper role of the government to be imposing order, not showing mercy.

Michael Massing is the author of Fatal Discord: Erasmus, Luther, and the Fight for the Western Mind, on which this essay draws.

(continued on page 26)
OFF TO THE RACISTS

Across the US, white nationalists and their sympathizers are running for office—and they don’t need to win to be dangerous.

by DONNA MINKOWITZ
Jews...commit a disproportionate number of mass shootings.” Wisconsin Republican congressional candidate Paul Nehlen lied on Facebook recently. Earlier, he had tweeted: “Pooro, incest, and pedophilia. Why are those common themes repeated so often with Jews?” Another GOP House hopeful, Pennsylvania’s Sean Donahue, recently told me, “The United States was intended to be white…. I don’t see why we had to have the Fair Housing Act.”

Welcome to Trump’s America, where a rash of white nationalists are running for office. Depending on your definition, anywhere from nine and 17 white supremacists and far-right militia leaders are currently running for House and Senate seats, governorships, and state legislatures. Most have little chance of winning, but as with the neo-Nazi Arthur Jones, who recently ran unopposed in the Republican primary for the Third Congressional District in the Chicago area and garnered 20,458 votes, their mere candidacies, along with their growing acceptance by other Republicans as legitimate stakeholders in the party, are a dangerous development. “They are, by their very presence, shifting the pole of what most Americans find to be acceptable political discourse,” said Eric K. Ward of the Western States Center, a progressive organization that works in seven states where white-nationalist groups have been active.

Heidi Beirich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Project, pointed to an August 2017 Washington Post/ABC News poll indicating that 9 percent of Americans now find it acceptable to hold neo-Nazi views. (Among strong Trump supporters, 17 percent say they accept neo-Nazi views, and 13 percent say they have no opinion one way or the other.) “This is a Trump phenomenon,” Beirich told me. “In the past, [white-power groups] saw no space for themselves in the public sphere at all. You’d see the Aryan Nations saying, ‘We never really thought politics was worth our time.’” Both Trump and a new clutch of racist candidates, she added, have had the effect of “reengaging white supremacists in the political system. Before, they were basically apolitical.”

In the new Republican universe, a flood of so-called alt-lite media organs and activists have become enormously influential. Sites like The Daily Caller, The Gateway Pundit, The Rebel Media, InfoWars, GotNews, and other “mini-Breitbart’s have championed the alt-right, employed white nationalists as editors and writers, and expressed views similar to white nationalism. And through their popularity and their ties to Trump staffers, they’ve been able to influence the White House and demonstrate that there is room for the advocacy of openly racist policies in the US political system. President Trump has read and reacted to at least one article from GotNews, which is run by the racist Internet troll Chuck Johnson. (The piece was about a supposed leak by deputy chief of staff Katie Walsh, with Politico reporting that she left the White House shortly after.)

Alt-lite solo media man Mike Cernovich—who has said “diversity is code for white genocide” and “I like choking a woman until her eyes almost go lifeless”—has demonstrated access to the White House through his scoops on personnel matters and Trump’s strike on Syria last April. Both Donald Trump Jr. and Kellyanne Conway have publicly praised Cernovich, with the president’s son saying he deserves “a Pulitzer.” Cernovich has announced he’s considering running for Congress in California this year.

Many of these far-right media activists maintain what their own comrades call “plausible deniability” with regard to white supremacy. In this media landscape, the effect of having avowed white nationalists running for office is to push the limits of acceptable public racism even further. It not only provides cover for the “merely” anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-Latino candidates and officials; it can also radically shift the Overton window, a term that describes the range of ideas that the mainstream media deem politically acceptable.

These new candidates are not limited by existing norms, “so they can imagine genocide, they can seriously play around with deporting millions of people,” said Spencer Sunshine, a longtime writer and researcher on the far right. As such notions enter the public discussion via the far-right media, racist violence becomes more likely. “White nationalists’ milieu is super-violent,” Sunshine said, “so any rise in their movement,” including mainstream publicity for their candidacies, will be “accompanied by violence.” With Trump’s election and the rise of alt-right media, we’re already seeing a spike in racist attacks. According to a study by the Anti-Defamation League’s Center on Extremism, white supremacists killed 18 people in 2017, around double the number from the previous year; meanwhile, hate crimes in major cities jumped 20 percent in the same year, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.

The growing profile of such candidates means they sometimes have a legitimate shot at winning office. When he was running for governor in Virginia last year, Corey Stewart, chairman of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, made several appearances with Jason Kessler, the white nationalist who would soon organize the violent “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville. (Kessler has been charged in state and federal lawsuits with conspiring to incite violence at the neo-Nazi rally.) Stewart came within one percentage point of winning the Republican nomination by devoting virtually his entire campaign to defending Confederate monuments. That is to say, he won 43 percent of the GOP vote in a purple state clutching a huge Confederate flag and holding events attended by white nationalists. Stewart also palled up to Cernovich, sitting with him for an interview, and used the racist, sexist, white-nationalist terms “cuck” and “cuck-ervative,” applying them in a Reddit chat to his primary
opponent, Ed Gillespie, and to then–Democratic Governor Terry McAuliffe. (The terms come from so-called cuckold porn, in which a white man—the “cuck”—watches, humiliated, as a black man has sex with the cuck’s white wife.)

This year, Stewart is running for Senate against Democrat Tim Kaine. He isn’t emphasizing the Confederacy this time, but he continues to speak in language designed to appeal to the alt-right. In January, he falsely claimed on Twitter that Michael Moore had “call[ed] for the ethnic cleansing of white people in America,” and later that McAuliffe had incited the violence in Charlottesville. Commenting on an article from the Orange County newspaper with the headline “Thousands of pounds of human waste,” Stewart tweeted, “California is full of crap. Stop sanctuary cities!”

So far, Stewart is leading in polls of Republican voters, though Kaine beats every Republican hopeful in a hypothetical matchup. As the Board of Supervisors chair in Prince William County, Stewart is best known for rounding up undocumented immigrants, getting county police to turn over 7,500 individuals to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and calling for mass deportations. It’s hard to tell whether he’s a Trumpian opportunist flirting with white nationalism for political gain or a die-hard true believer, but in the end it might not matter.

As Sunshine has noted, in far-right demonstrations throughout the country, Trumpists have been sharing bullhorns with virulent white supremacists, anti-Semites, and militia members.

And Stewart’s spokesman, Noel Fritsch, has even deeper connections to white nationalism. At one point, Fritsch was the main political consultant for Paul Nehlen, the white supremacist who challenged House Speaker Paul Ryan in the 2016 GOP primaries (and who will attempt to win the Republican nod for Ryan’s seat in the 2018 midterms). Fritsch worked for Nehlen during a period when he appeared on the racist podcast Fash the Nation, retweeted encomiums to the neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville as “an incredible moment for white people,” and told his African-American interlocutors on Twitter to “Run along, Tyrone.” Fritsch also served as a spokesman for former Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore’s campaign, and is heavily involved in the far-right “news site” Big League Politics, which, according to a Daily Beast investigation, is owned and primarily operated by alt-right-friendly political consultants and publishes favorable articles about their clients, including Stewart, Nehlen, and Moore.

Dwayne E. Dixon, a lecturer at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and an anti-Nazi protester at the Charlottesville rally, wrote on a faculty listserv that on February 7, Fritsch and another man (who turned out to be Patrick Howley, the founder of Big League Politics) accosted him with a video camera in the hallway to his office, physically tried to prevent him from leaving, and in the room and see what they all agree on.”

Yet Nehlen is even scarier, compiling lists of Jews in the media and reposting articles from The Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi blog. With Ryan’s announcement that he will not seek reelection, Nehlen’s only opponent in the August 14 Republican primary is Nick Polce, who boasts a mere 609 “likes” on Facebook (as opposed to Nehlen’s 41,000-plus). A source familiar with Wisconsin politics told me it’s expected that “credible” Republicans will jump into the race before the June 1 filing date, but so far State Assembly speaker Robin Vos, ex-White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, and others have declined to run, leading to the frightening possibility that Nehlen could win the nomination.

Two men of color running for Congress in long-shot races are also making broad appeals to white nationalists. Shiva Ayyadurai, an Indian American running against Senator Elizabeth Warren in Massachusetts, has made a fast friend of Charlottesville tiki-torch-holder Matt Colligan, who has said repeatedly that “Hitler did nothing wrong.” (The candidate appeared on a live video broadcast with Colligan, calling the neo-Nazi “one of our great supporters.”) Ayyadurai has also issued campaign pins featuring Groypur, a cartoon toad that’s become a white-nationalist symbol. His candidacy occurs in an international context in which far-right, anti-Muslin politics in India have aligned themselves with Nazism. Meanwhile, contemporary white identitarians, like Richard Spencer, have sometimes sought to include in their organizations fellow “Aryans” from India and Iran.

And Edwin Duterte, a Filipino American running against Democratic Representative Maxine Waters in California, has purchased a premium membership on Gab, a platform popular with white supremacists, where he’s referred to his opponent as “low-IQ Maxine,” echoing a racist comment made by Trump. Asked about it in a phone interview, Duterte just giggled and said, “It’s a good nickname.” He is also insisting that a debate with his Republican primary opponents include as moderators the neo-Nazi known as Baked Alaska (Tim Gionet) and a Twitter personality named folkloreAmericana, who recently retweeted a warning against “Juden Tricks” and who identifies his own video broadcast as “alt-media for all.” In our interview, Duterte bizarrely called for getting the Crips, the Bloods, and the alt-right together “in a room and see what they all agree on.”

Though segments of the Republican Party have condemned these candidates, other GOP institutions are treating white nationalists as normal or even desirable. A Republican women’s group from South Carolina hosted Nehlen as the guest speaker at its Presidents’ Day dinner, and militia groups with ties to white supremacists, such as the Oath Keepers and Three Percenters, have forged strong alliances with the GOP establishment in states like Oregon, Arizona, and Michigan, and have even been asked to provide security at party events.

Sitting politicians are also embracing white-nationalist supporters and groups. Two Republican congressmen up for reelection—Matt Gaetz of Florida and Dana Rohrabacher of California—have associated themselves with GotNews’s Chuck Johnson, whom Gaetz invited to Trump’s first State of the Union address and from whom Rohrabacher accepted a bitcoin donation worth $5,400.
Along with GetNews, Johnson is best known for creating the white-nationalist fund-raising site WeSearchr, which has helped underwrite The Daily Stormer. Forbes has reported that Johnson worked with the Trump transition team—especially executive-committee member Peter Thiel—on hiring decisions. Among others, Johnson pushed for the hiring of Ajit Pai, who became head of the Federal Communications Commission.

Then there are Representative Steve King (R-IA) and former Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio, now running for the Arizona Senate, who aren’t usually classified as white nationalists but deserve a place on this list because of their racism while in office. In December, King approvingly quoted the authoritarian prime minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, who had said, “Mixing cultures will not lead to a higher quality of life but a lower one.” Earlier, King suggested that only white people had contributed to civilization. Arpaio, of course, was found by the Justice Department to have initiated “a pervasive culture of discriminatory bias against Latinos” and to have violated their constitutional rights as sheriff. Arpaio is also connected to the Oath Keepers through the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, an anti-federal-government organization that he helped found; as reported in Rolling Stone, the CSPOA shares leaders with the paramilitary group.

And on the local level, Michael Peroutka, a member until 2014 of the neo-Confederate hate group League of the South, is running for reelection as Anne Arundel County, Maryland. He is also a Christian Reconstructionist, meaning that he wants to enact a theocratic government run by fundamentalist Christians.

This year’s conservative political action conference was in many ways the political center of the Republican Party. There, Trump addressed white nationalists like Nick Fuentes, Peter Brimelow, and Marcus Epstein, as well as alt-lite figures now influential in the GOP, like Cernovich. Although CPAC has continued to ban Spencer, these other open racists were free to attend. As the line separating Trumpists from white nationalists grows finer, the president’s radical policies—such as ending the admission of most refugees, detaining pregnant women in ICE facilities, and seeking to curtail legal immigration—are increasingly being seen as reasonable political decisions. “White-nationalist candidates can make a very hard-right candidate look moderate,” warned the Western States Center’s Eric Ward.

The public conversation around immigration in particular has shifted so far to the right that it’s almost unrecognizable from the mainstream discussions four years ago. Shockingly, a senior fellow at the prestigious Brookings Institution, William Galston, recently said on WNYC’s The Brian Lehrer Show that the United States’ five-decade-long policy of family reunification—what Trump calls “chain migration”—had been “a failure” and should be abolished. Trump, of course, recently ordered 4,000 Na-

“\[The United States was intended to be white. I don’t see why we had to have the Fair Housing Act.\]”

—Sean Donahue

tional Guard troops to the Mexican border, despite the fact that arrests for undocumented border crossings have decreased by 1.4 million since the year 2000. Trump also issued a memo requiring that immigrants be detained until their court dates, even if those dates are several years away. Additionally, the director of Trump’s Office of Refugee Resettlement keeps a spreadsheet of detained undocumented teenagers who want abortions, so he can try to prevent them from obtaining the procedure.

Another danger of white-nationalist candidacies is that “we know electoral campaigns are one of the surest ways of increasing one’s base and raising dollars,” Ward noted. The more that racists run for office, the more they will develop a political infrastructure. “Campaigns create an influx of cash that can be used to run ads and pay salaries that allow white nationalists to organize.” They also often force the left to spend time preventing catastrophically racist policies from being enacted instead of fighting for the things they want. “If the real issue is the lack of living-wage jobs in a community,” Ward told me, “a white-nationalist candidate can derail that by turning it into a discussion of immigration.” Ditto with issues like working conditions, addiction, gentrification, and lack of access to health care, where white-nationalist candidates can transform the discussion from community needs to the supposed oppressions visited on white people. In the end, one of the most meaningful ways to protect this country from the dangers posed by the white-supremacist movement is to strengthen a multiracial, multiregion movement for economic justice. If the left can’t do that, this year could be the start of a wave of white nationalists riding Trump’s coattails into office.
How Progressives

America’s security depends on defeating oligarchy abroad and at home.

by DAVID KLION
Can Engage Russia

What is the left’s foreign-policy approach to Russia? Long before the advent of the Trump presidency, progressives had been vocal critics of US actions overseas. Yet they have given much less thought to what US foreign policy should be in the plausible event that a left-leaning Democrat wins the White House in 2020.

Whoever the next president is, one immediate problem facing him or her will be how to deal with Russia, which most Democrats—as well as independents like Bernie Sanders—hold responsible for interfering in the 2016 election to help Donald Trump. Even apart from this apparent meddling, managing relations with Russia will be a top priority for any new administration. The next president will face immediate pressure from the national-security establishment to implement a tougher approach to Russia in Trump’s wake. This could include new and rigorously enforced sanctions, increased arms sales to Ukraine, a renewed push for NATO expansion, more pressure on Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria, a new cyberoffensive against Moscow in retaliation for 2016, and covert support for opposition movements in Russia and its former satellites.

This agenda is unlikely to make America or the world more secure, since it will simply further escalate the current dangerous tensions with Russia and increase the risk of future attacks on US institutions. So what should the next president do instead?

Take On Russia’s Oligarchs—by Taking On America’s R eleas, intervention from Russia has been largely opaque, but from the indictments issued so far, as well as the recent subpoena of the Trump Organization’s records, it is clear that a central issue is money laundering. Trump’s former campaign manager, Paul Manafort, and his deputy, Rick Gates, have been indicted on a variety of charges, from laundering millions of dollars to tax evasion, bank fraud, and violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) by working as unlicensed lobbyists. Yet what many in Washington have portrayed as shady financial maneuvers in a new Cold War looks a lot like something else: large-scale white-collar crime.

It should not have taken an international political scandal before the perpetrators were held accountable. Unfortunately, much of the illegal activity that Manafort and Gates were allegedly engaged in is common in Washington and New York, where foreign governments, both allies and adversaries, routinely funnel money in order to promote their interests. Consider the president’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who is under scrutiny from Mueller not only for his contacts with Russia, but also because officials in the United Arab Emirates, China, and Israel sought to influence him. This is the context in which Russian interference should be understood: not as an unprecedented attack on US institutions, but as an especially dramatic example of how those institutions have been made vulnerable to manipulation by foreign governments and financial interests.

Most Democrats and Republicans in Congress are committed to punishing Vladimir Putin and the network of oligarchs surrounding him by expanding the sanctions regime first imposed by the Obama administration following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. Congress has attempted to force Trump’s hand by imposing new sanctions in retaliation for the alleged election interference, but the Trump administration has been lax in enforcing them. However, even properly enforced sanctions cannot solve the underlying problem: Russia is functionally a kleptocracy, and the United States bears some responsibility for making it that way.

In the 1990s, Washington encouraged the rapid and blatantly rigged privatization of Russia’s economy, resulting in skyrocketing inequality, the impoverishment of millions, and the elevation of a tiny billionaire elite. While Putin has claimed credit for a revival of economic stability and a measure of prosperity in the 2000s, driven to a large extent by high energy prices, over time he has consolidated power at the top of a fundamentally corrupt system. The United States has emerged as a leading destination for Russia’s elite to park their fortunes, often at the expense of middle-class Americans in major real-estate markets like New York, and with the help of banks and law firms happy to turn a blind eye to corruption overseas. Russian money laundering through high-end real estate is also a major issue in London, where Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has proposed tackling it in response to the recent poisoning of former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter. Going after the money is far more likely to produce meaningful results than expelling diplomats, the strategy that the United States and its European allies have so far pursued. Some of the recent sanctions, which target a list of wealthy Russians for enumerated corrupt activities, are more promising, but they still represent a flawed attempt to punish individuals close to Putin rather than a comprehensive effort to reduce global corruption.

The United States has little standing to condemn Russia’s oligarchs while the Trump administration openly loots the public with a tax-reform bill designed to benefit the wealthiest Americans and with taxpayer dollars constantly funneled through Trump Organization properties. The next administration should make the case that the transnational oligarchy stretching from New York to London to Moscow poses a national-security threat by undermining the integrity of our political process. It should expand FARA and end foreign lobbying, both legal and illegal, on K Street. It should crack down on money laundering through banks and real estate, as well as offshore tax havens.

Contrary to what some writers on the left have argued, the American public is legitimately interested in the Trump-Russia scandal and isn’t going to stop pay-
ing attention. But rather than singling out Russia, the next president should pledge to take on kleptocrats everywhere, using Trump’s outrageous corruption (including but certainly not limited to his Russia ties) to make the case for a more just economic order.

In addition, the next president should place a champion of global environmental justice in charge of the State Department, rather than an ExxonMobil CEO (the recently departed Rex Tillerson) or an outspoken Islamophobe and climate-change skeptic (the yet-to-be-confirmed Mike Pompeo), to make clear that the oil-and-gas industry is not in charge of US foreign policy. Exxon, like other energy companies, has lobbied for normalized US-Russia relations so that it can exploit Russia’s vast natural resources, and was even fined by the Treasury Department for violating the sanctions regime against Russia by signing an agreement with the oil giant Rosneft while Tillerson was still CEO.

**Work for Peace and Recommit to Disarmament**

The consensus in Washington is that the United States must contain Russia’s imperial revanchism on every front, as though the Cold War never ended. But this only encourages a similar consensus in Moscow, empowering hard-line nationalists who see their country encircled by US proxies and consider neighboring former Soviet republics to belong in Russia’s rightful sphere of influence. Those countries, including flash points like Ukraine and Georgia, are entitled to sovereignty under international law, and Russian encroachment on that sovereignty, from Crimea and the Donbass to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, deserves condemnation. But the next president must also make clear that the United States does not intend to expand its own sphere of military influence via NATO or in any other capacity.

Moscow opposed, and still deeply resents, the expansion of NATO into the Baltic states and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and 2000s, in particular the 1999 NATO military campaign against Yugoslavia, which proceeded despite a Russian veto at the UN Security Council. With considerable justification, Russian military planners see NATO as existing primarily to surround and isolate Russia.

For better or worse, Washington is now committed to the security of its Baltic allies. But the next president should affirm that the United States does not have long-term designs on a military alliance with Ukraine, Georgia, or any other country on Russia’s border. This does not mean abandoning those countries; the United States and its European allies should commit to negotiating a just peace that will preserve Ukraine’s territorial integrity, and must work to ensure that Russia complies with the 2014 Minsk Protocol. Russia must not be rewarded for the illegal annexation of Crimea, which should not be recognized as long as Putin is in power. Down the line, negotiations on a UN-sponsored referendum to determine Crimea’s fate could be held if tensions ratcheted down. The reality, as most policy-makers in Washington are well aware, is that the citizens of Crimea would be unlikely to choose to return to Ukraine in any fair and independent vote.

With respect to Syria, Washington is understandably wary of rewarding Russia’s horrific conduct in defense of Assad’s regime. While there is no justifying Russia’s or Assad’s atrocities, the United States also played a role in stoking this civil war in the first place and bears responsibility for its interventions in Iraq and Libya, which Putin opposed and whose results have been catastrophic. Moscow views Washington’s enthusiasm for toppling dictators as destabilizing, and while this view is motivated by Russian geopolitical interests, that doesn’t make it wrong. The next president must be willing to work for a negotiated peace between all factions in Syria, accepting that Assad will be left in control of much of Syria’s territory for the foreseeable future, with the long-term goal of withdrawing US and Russian forces from the region.

Finally, the next administration should seek to once more engage Russia in negotiations over nuclear weapons. During the Obama administration, the United States and Russia signed the 2011 New START accord aimed at dramatically limiting the deployment of strategic nuclear arms by both countries. Trump, however, has disparaged the treaty and recently committed the country to a new nuclear-arms race. If there is one lesson to be drawn from Trump’s volatile and unpredictable behavior as president, it’s that nuclear weapons are far too destructive for any nation to possess. The United States and Russia must recommit to diplomacy with the aim of further arms reductions and a stronger global nonproliferation regime.

**Break Up Tech Monopolies**

It is reasonable for the United States to want to hold Russia accountable for its 2016 interference, including the dissemination of fake news via social media and the e-mail hacks of the Democratic National Committee. A proportionate response would be to release embarrassing information about the shady finances of Putin and his inner circle. But this may have already occurred in the form of the Panama Papers, a giant info dump on the global oligarchy published in early 2016 that Putin blames on the US government (along with distorting evidence in the Russian Federation’s Olympic doping scandal).

It is in neither country’s interest to pursue this tit for tat indefinitely, although arguably both Americans and Russians benefit from the exposure of their elites’ secrets. Ultimately, there will have to be negotiations, including other major powers like China, to establish rules of the road for cybersecurity. At the same time, the United States should embrace strong campaign-finance laws in order to insulate itself from interference not only by foreign powers but by oligarchs and corporate interests everywhere.

But if the United States wants to prevent Russian cyberattacks in future elections, one crucial step would be to begin dismantling the tech monopolies that have left the US electorate exposed to foreign influence. In 2010, Russia’s then-president, Dmitry Medvedev, visited Silicon Valley as part of the Obama administration’s ill-fated “reset” policy. An impressed Medvedev met with the CEOs of companies like Apple and Google. While Medvedev’s dream of a
Russian silicon valley remains unrealized, Russia has plenty of homegrown tech talent, as seen in the “troll factory” that sought to manipulate American swing voters.

The next US president should make clear to the public that the biggest tech companies have gotten too powerful, and that their hoarding of private data for profit undermines national security and election integrity. Social media can be a powerful tool for political organizing and protesting authority, but when it is regulated only by the free market, it becomes a way for wealthy interests—including foreign governments—to manipulate people. Renewed antitrust enforcement should be a priority in general, but with regard to silicon valley it would offer the additional benefit of countering foreign influence and restoring the credibility of real news.

Russian hackers have exposed a flaw in the US political system created by years of coddling unaccountable monopolies. Lawmakers have pressured companies like Facebook and Twitter to crack down on Russian bots, but this doesn’t address the underlying threat that for-profit social networks pose to the democratic process. The extent of this threat is clear from the revelations about how Cambridge Analytica used Facebook data, acquired without the consent of Facebook users, to help the Trump campaign target voters. As Tamsin Shaw, a professor at New York University who has written about cyber warfare, told The Guardian, “Silicon Valley is a US national security asset that [Russia] has turned on itself.” The only effective solution is to break these monopolies up and regulate them like utilities.

Support Human Rights, Not Regime Change

Despite the claim by New York Times national-security correspondent Steven Lee Myers that Putin is “a hero for the world’s populists, strongmen and others occupying the fringes of global politics, both left and right,” few on the left are under the illusion that Russia is a utopia. As Jeremy Corbyn wrote recently, “Labour is of course no supporter of the Putin regime, its conservative authoritarianism, abuse of human rights or political and economic corruption. And we pay tribute to Russia’s many campaigners for social justice and human rights, including for LGBT rights.” Bernie Sanders has voiced similar sentiments, stating that “our goal is not only strengthen American democracy, but to work in solidarity with supporters of democracy around the globe, including in Russia. In the struggle of democracy versus authoritarianism, we intend to win.”

Putin has attacked civil society, consolidated control of the media, and marginalized opposition parties. One of the most prominent opposition leaders, Alexei Navalny, was barred from running for president this year in what everyone understands were sham elections. Many journalists and politicians have been murdered, and LGBTQ people have faced discriminatory laws throughout Russia and a brutal purge in Chechnya. And with the close cooperation of the Orthodox Church, Putin has stoked xenophobic nationalism, homophobia, misogyny, and jingoism, not only at home but with his support for far-right parties across Europe. The left has an interest in countering this influence, but the next president must do so in a way that is not a cover for empire and is not aimed at regime change in Russia. Putin uses the perception of Western designs on Russia to maintain his legitimacy and to justify his most aggressive policies.

Putin will eventually leave power, but it is not Washington’s place to facilitate this, nor is it an inherently desirable outcome. No one knows what will follow in Putin’s wake, or who could fill his role after nearly two decades (and counting) in the Kremlin. And no one doubts that Putin is genuinely popular, although support for him in the largest cities, where he has faced mass protests from educated younger Russians, has slipped.

The United States should not ignore human-rights abuses in Russia. But principled criticism is only undermined by the perception that civil-society groups in Russia serve as fronts for US intelligence, and Russia has become increasingly hostile to such groups. The next administration should make clear that the United States is not trying to bring Putin down, and that its support for human rights is genuine. It should be wary of directly supporting opposition figures, who are easily tarred as US puppets. And it should lead by example and hold its allies accountable for their human-rights abuses and elite corruption as well.

Ultimately, the best way the United States can help civil society in Russia is by normalizing relations enough that private civil-society groups from the United States and other countries can more effectively work in tandem with their Russian counterparts. It is hard to argue that the US-Russian tensions following the failure of Obama’s attempted “reset” have done Russian civil-society any favors.

Punish the Real Culprits

In short, the next president’s Russia policy should reflect an agenda of combating corruption, inequality, and abuses at home. If the US political system is vulnerable to interference from abroad, it is only because it has decayed from within. Thus, while Russia should be held accountable for its intervention, the greater priority must be to hold accountable those Americans who accepted Russia’s assistance in order to enrich themselves at the expense of the public. The most important thing the next administration can do to prevent another 2016 is to root out the institutionalized corruption in Washington that Russia successfully exploited, and to investigate, expose, and prosecute everyone in Trump’s orbit who knowingly facilitated Russian interference. The only way to secure American democracy from foreign influence is to make America more genuinely democratic.
riage licenses to same-sex couples and went to jail for it. She said:

I never imagined a day like this would come, where I would be asked to violate a central teaching of Scripture and of Jesus Himself regarding marriage. To issue a marriage license which conflicts with God's definition of marriage, with my name affixed to the certificate, would violate my conscience. It is not a light issue for me. It is a Heaven or Hell decision.... I have no animosity toward anyone and harbor no ill will. To me this has never been a gay or lesbian issue. It is about marriage and God's Word.

These remarks recall Luther's concluding statement at the Diet of Worms of 1521. Ordered by a representative of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to recant his writings, Luther resisted: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason...I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.” Luther's bold defense of his religious conscience has become a hallmark of the Protestant tradition, and Davis, consciously or not, stands squarely within that tradition.

The message from evangelical pulpits is overwhelmingly one of self-reliance, personal responsibility, individual renewal, scriptural authority, and forging a personal relationship with God and Christ. American evangelicalism has further assumed the populist stance of the young Luther. His rebellion was directed at the dominant institution of his day—the Roman Catholic Church. He denounced the ordained clergy, anointed theologians, and university scholars who, appealing to custom and tradition, sought to silence and discredit him. Protestantism, in short, arose as a revolt against the elites, and Luther's early appeals to the common man and his disdain for the entitled lent the movement a spirit of grassroots empowerment that remains alive to this day. His insurgent nature further implanted in the faith a reflexive adversarialism—a sense of being forever under siege.

Luther's rebelliousness was, however, paradoxically joined to an opposition to real-world change. While rousing the masses, he refused to endorse measures that would concretely address their needs. This combination of incitement and passivity is apparent in contemporary American evangelicalism, with both its ceaseless self-reliance, personal responsibility, individual renewal, scriptural authority, and forging a personal relationship with God and Christ. American evangelicalism has further assumed the populist stance of the young Luther. His rebellion was directed at the dominant institution of his day—the Roman Catholic Church. He denounced the ordained clergy, anointed theologians, and university scholars who, appealing to custom and tradition, sought to silence and discredit him. Protestantism, in short, arose as a revolt against the elites, and Luther's early appeals to the common man and his disdain for the entitled lent the movement a spirit of grassroots empowerment that remains alive to this day. His insurgent nature further implanted in the faith a reflexive adversarialism—a sense of being forever under siege.

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The Gilded Age, as Mark Twain enduringly described it, sticks out like a sore thumb on the American historical landscape. It is a symbol of corruption, greed, extravagance, and exploitation, of a country gone wild with excess. It also serves as a yardstick to measure the indiscretions and inequalities of subsequent times, not least our own. Still, the Gilded Age has never received the scholarly attention lavished on Reconstruction or the Progressive era—the periods before and after—though it is generally attached to the latter as a way of explaining the eventual swing toward a long period of reform.

Richard White takes another approach. In his impressive new book *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1896*, the latest volume in the ongoing “Oxford History of the United States,” White links the Gilded Age with Reconstruction—the two “gestated together,” he writes—and, in so doing, casts both in a different light while raising new questions about a nation born in the cauldron of civil war. Indeed, there’s a sense in which White has the Gilded Age effectively encompass the Reconstruction era; both periods, he

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**PROGRESS AND POVERTY**

The America that emerged out of the Civil War was meant to be a radically more equal place. What went wrong?

by STEVEN HAHN
argues, were defined by ongoing, and often explosive, struggles over the fundamentals of society and state in postbellum America: Who would rule and be ruled, whose vision of political economy and social relations would prevail, and who would pay the price? White thus speaks of the “twins” that were conceived in 1865. The first was “the world [that Americans] anticipated emerging from the Civil War,” which “died before being born”; the second “lived” but was “forever haunted by its sibling.” The book’s prologue, “Mourning Lincoln” (acknowledging an important study of the same name by Martha Hodes), makes the case for the larger social meaning of Lincoln’s assassination and sets the tone for the many pages that follow. The Republic for Which It Stands offers a sobering and generally dispiriting view of the nation’s contested road from the end of the Civil War to its emergence as an industrial-capitalist power by the turn of the 20th century.

There are no small challenges to conceiving the three decades of American history that White covers in his book, especially given the demanding standards of comprehensiveness to which the Oxford series is devoted. Readers will find a veritable kaleidoscope of subject matter, from electoral politics, political economy, and industrial warfare to popular culture, literature, and sports. They will find figures of political and cultural prominence as well as those who are now relatively obscure, but who at the time were consequential for their ideas and activism. And they will find geopolitical breadth, as White—drawing on his expertise in Western US history—makes sure that the trans-Mississippi West and its racially and ethnically mixed denizens figure significantly in the unfolding story. Holding the more than 900 sprawling pages together is a framework in which party politics and national elections are set as the chronological markers for a developing battle between the forces of liberalism and anti-monopoly, all carried along by the commentary of the novelist, editor, and critic William Dean Howells, whose intellectual journey in many ways mirrored the political drift of the times.

White’s early chapters on Reconstruction unspool many of the thematic threads that he then weaves together for the remainder of the book. On the one hand, Republicans in Congress looked to extend Lincoln’s America—exemplified by Springfield, Illinois, a place in which artisan shops, small manufacturers, and family farms predominated—to both the West and the South. To that end, the federal government extended and expanded the power that it had accumulated during the Civil War into the postwar period and created new institutions to enact this vision. On the other hand, this newly powerful federal government still lacked the administrative capacity to see such projects through. The Freedmen’s Bureau was to supervise the transition from slavery to freedom in the former Confederacy, ensuring that contract rather than coercion mediated new labor relations, but the bureau was understaffed and underfunded. The Reconstruction Acts, the high point of Republican Radicalism, enfranchised African-American men, but the rapidly shrinking US Army of Occupation was often unable to protect the exercise of their new rights. (In both of these cases, White draws on the important recent work of the writer and historian Gregory Downs.) The results predictably saw African Americans sink into the mire of a “coercive labor system, which although not slavery, was not free labor either,” dependent as it was on “extralegal violence, coercive laws, burdensome debt relations, and the use of convict labor.”

In the trans-Mississippi West, part of the “Greater Reconstruction” (a term that White borrows from the historian Elliott West), the federal government—acting as an “imperial state”—extended its reach and promoted railroad development at the expense of Native peoples, who fought back with ferocity and determination before being relegated to reservations. In effect, the government engaged in a form of land redistribution that it had refused to impose in the South, transferring lands from the control of Native Americans into the hands of aspiring white agricultural operators (through the Homestead Act) and railroad corporations (through the Pacific Railway Act and a raft of other incentives). As White portrays it, Reconstruction—in the South and the West—was largely an uneven process of state-building that advanced a highly repressive brand of capitalist development.

In this way, despite the gains of emancipation and of advancing the principles of civil and political equality, Reconstruction laid the groundwork for the Gilded Age, with its growing wage-labor force, expanding industries, swelling cities, massive population movements, and unprecedented consolidations of wealth and power. Reconstruction also threw a dominant liberal ideology into crisis, as the dramatic expansion of the federal state and the mobilizations of working people in the South, North, and West posed new questions about the world that the abolition of slavery appeared to make possible.

Here White turns to Howells, who seemed to put his finger on the political dilemma that most of his fellow liberals found themselves confronting. “The era’s problem, as Howells saw it, was adjusting the ideal of liberty to the necessity of order,” he writes; the solution “was to sever ‘administration’ from democracy” and, in Howells’s words, “evolve order out of chaos, government out of anarchy.” For Howells and other liberals of the era, this meant free trade, civil-service reform, a return to the gold standard, limitations on male suffrage, opposition to women’s suffrage, and replacing elected government officials with appointed ones. The liberal sensibilities that had once nourished the antislavery movement were now fractured by the challenges of “free labor” and had given way to a deepening suspicion of democracy itself. Liberalism’s retreat into an antidemocratic search for order was not precipitated by the ambitions of Radical Reconstruction alone. It was also encouraged by one of Radicalism’s offspring: anti-monopoly. As a movement and a set of ideas, anti-monopoly had its roots in the 1820s, when workingmen’s parties and their intellectual allies pushed back against the market expansions of the era. But it was in the post–Civil War era that anti-monopoly developed a mass following and made its presence felt in American politics.

Anti-monopoly expressed the vision and aspirations of Lincoln’s America in a world in which the prospects for its survival were rapidly eroding. Anti-monopoly sentiments took hold among urban workers, family farmers, and small-town merchants and retailers, fed by the traditions of Euro-American republicanism, free-labor ideology, and socialism. They would find a geographical base in the South and West, but especially in what White, channeling the writer Hamlin Garland, calls the “Middle Border” (effectively the Upper Plains and the Missouri River Valley). They would also find organized expression in the Grange, the Greenback-Labor Party, the Knights of Labor, the Farmers’ Alliance, and, eventually, the Populists.

Anti-monopolists bridled at the inequalities of wealth that surrounded them. They decried the voracious markets that enabled a small elite to monopolize society’s most vital resources and undermine the independence of small producers in town and country. And they blamed the moneyed
corruption of party politics for their collective plight. To readjust the balance in favor of small producers, they set their sights on the privately controlled national banking system and large railroad corporations; to restore the integrity of the political system, they rallied voters to the banners of independent political parties.

For anti-monopoly struggles, the so-called money question—how much currency should circulate, what it should consist of, and who should issue it—was key. White does an excellent job of explaining the complex manifestations involving gold, greenbacks (the paper currency first issued by the federal government during the Civil War), and silver. Coining silver as well as gold served inflationary ends and won the favor of many small producers whose debt burdens would be lightened; it also stoked the enmity of bankers and financiers, who were creditors and thus worshipped at the altar of gold. But it was greenbacks, not gold or silver, that became the center of anti-monopoly politics—both because they would increase the volume of currency in circulation and, especially, because they would put the federal government, rather than private banks, in charge of the money supply.

Still, anti-monopoly was far more than a single-issue movement. To attract farmers and industrial workers, it embraced a wide range of issues, from railroad regulation, cooperative purchasing and marketing, and the eight-hour workday to mechanics’ lien laws, land reform, and progressive taxation. Henry George, one of the most formidable anti-monopoly theorists, saw land monopoly as the cause of economic impoverishment and catapulted to national and international fame after the publication of his immensely influential _Progress and Poverty_ (1879). In 1886, George nearly won election as the mayor of New York City on a United Labor Party platform that included a land tax and a critique of wealthy landlords (gathering more votes than a young Republican named Theodore Roosevelt in the process). Meanwhile, anti-monopoly tickets—some associated with the Knights of Labor—emerged victorious in towns small and large across the country. William Dean Howells also came under George’s (and anti-monopoly’s) spell.

Yet George’s politics also exposed the limits of anti-monopoly as a mass movement. Although some efforts were made by Greenbackers and the Knights of Labor to court the support of African Americans, these anti-monopoly groups, like George himself, were adamantly hostile to Chinese immigrants, whom they saw as symbols of heathenism and slavery (Chinese workers were often derided as “coolies”). “Look to the Midwest, East, and South,” White observes, “and the Knights seemed the vanguard of at least a limited racial equality; look to the West and they appeared very different. At various times, the Knights distrusted Italians, Finns, Hungarians, and more, but the one racial or ethnic group they banned from the organization was the Chinese.”

White’s critique of the racism that anti-monopolists embraced, or at least failed to shake, frames his interpretation of the course of Gilded Age reform. On the one hand, his heart is very much with anti-monopolism and the related reform impulses of the period, and no one could be a sharper critic of the alliance between capital and the state that emerged out of the Civil War. Readers of _Railroaded_, White’s 2011 book, will see much of what they admired there in this volume, including deft treatments of policy-making and corrupt bargains at all levels. Vivid chapters on the “Great Upheaval” of the 1880s and on “Dying for Progress” demonstrate the hard costs that industrial development imposed on the country and many of its people.

On the other hand, White has serious misgivings about the era’s radicals and reformers. Over the last half of the book, he shows us the expanse and depth of reform activity across the United States—though he tends to be dismissive of the socialists, who were crucial to the mobilization of the immigrant working class and eventually left their special mark on the country’s midsection—and he reminds us of the remarkable spectrum of people reform attracted, including renegades from the liberal elite like Howells. For all of these reformers, whether workers and farmers who faced impoverishment and dependency or temperance advocates who attempted to tie the evils of drink to those of industrialization, the “home,” and the dangers it faced in the Gilded Age, proved to be the animating image.

Yet, as White sees it, reform’s very capaciousness was also its weakness. “Reformers pushed against the bonds of the status quo,” he writes, “but when they broke those bonds their own lack of common purpose became all too apparent.” They achieved piecemeal victories, but a larger reconstruction seemed elusive, especially given the juggernaut of centralization and industrial consolidation they were up against. White’s treatment of Populism, the largest of these movements and the one best embodying the Greenback and anti-monopoly traditions, thus emphasizes both its “essential moderation” and its contradictory views of the state: simultaneously distrusting federal power and demanding federal intervention in the American economy to the benefit of small producers. If anything, the changing demographics of the country (especially the declining size of the rural population) and the reform currents already under way (including the achievement of some demands regarding taxation and farm legislation) marked Populism’s effective irrelevance.

What is missing from White’s nearly exhaustive book is a vision of the United States in the Gilded Age world—of its foreign relations and of how it emerged as a world power. White doesn’t attempt to duck this matter: “Most of the changes examined in this volume took place on national and regional scales, not the transnational,” he notes in the introduction. “Transnational developments mattered, but during the Gilded Age the nation took shape in response to these larger changes rather than as a simple reflection of them.”

Perhaps. But America’s imperial presence in the world was central to the capitalist society that came into being. After all, this was the period that saw the appearance of newly configured nation-states on the country’s northern and southern borders (the Dominion of Canada in 1867 and the Porfiriato in Mexico in 1877, both overlapping with Reconstruction); massive new US investments in Mexico and the Caribbean Basin; the purchase of Alaska (in 1867) and the annexation of Hawaii (in 1898); and the crafting of a commercial imperialism that emphasized the Pacific and Asian markets. (William Seward, the Republican luminary and Lincoln’s secretary of state, played a central role in this, while the anti-monopolist farmers, as William Appleman Williams long ago showed, bought into it readily.)
There were also the US invasions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (we call this the “Spanish-American War”), which give wider meaning to White’s important points about the federal state during the Gilded Age. The West, he argues, “became the kindergarten of the American state.” Indeed, in many ways the West became an imperial laboratory (White refers, correctly in my view, to the federal government of this period as an “imperial state”). The federal government created a number of large new territories in the trans-Mississippi West during the Civil War to secure its power and authority there. It then kept those territories under federal control for a lengthy period and established a number of substantial hurdles involving race, religion, family (“home”), and belonging that all had to be cleared before the territories could be admitted to the Union as states. The trans-Mississippi West, that is to say, served in many ways as a proving ground for the overseas occupations that followed.

The same holds true for the US Army, which not only served as the military wing of state authority and imperial reach; it also became an important vehicle for capitalist development. The Army suppressed Indian resistance to infrastructure-building and white settlement; broke labor strikes; and supported the work of industrialists in the trans-Mississippi regions. Many of the same soldiers and officers then served in the Philippines and the Caribbean during the Spanish-American War. The Jim Crow segregation that increasingly characterized the South in the 1890s and early 1900s needs to be considered in relation to the apartheid policy of reservations, while the escalating racism and anti-Catholicism of the period—both absorbed and reconfigured by reformers—fueled the imperial warfare of the late 1890s. Which is to say that the regional, national, and transnational were intricately connected and together made up the United States that emerged at the turn of the 20th century.

As was true of the earlier Railroaded, White seems quite mindful, in The Republic for Which It Stands, of the resonance between past and present. “I have written a book about a time of rapid and disorienting change and failed politics,” he tells us at the very beginning of the book, “and now I finish it in a parallel universe.” White’s treatment of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age gives the lie to any argument about 19th-century “laissez-faire” as the progenitor of American capitalism, and helps us understand the historical depth of capital’s dependence on the state and vice versa. (“Laissez-faire was planned,” as Karl Polanyi once put it.) Without state action at many levels—defeating slaveholding antagonists, securing private property and commercial contracts, offering generous incentives to developmental entrepreneurs, repressing labor agitation, and sending Native peoples to isolated reservations through military means—capitalism’s traction would have been shakier and more limited.

White also highlights the violent confrontations that Gilded Age capitalism provoked and the wide-ranging popular critique it nurtured. The proponents of anti-monopoly mounted a withering attack on the sources and nature of power in American society—a more fundamental attack, I believe, than White allows—that rallied millions of Americans to their side, whether through independent parties or a large variety of social movements. Progress and Poverty, a long and difficult work of political economy, outsold every other book in the 19th century except for the Bible and Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Never before, or since, have national elections been more closely contested or “third” parties—Greenback-Labor, Knights, Readjusters, Populists—more successful in competing for power at the state and local levels. Although these parties were gone by the early 20th century, they would leave important social-democratic legacies for Progressivism and the New Deal, and for us to recognize and appreciate.

But not to emulate. Contemporary activists looking for inspirations from history—a “usable past”—often find this period rich in examples. And there can be little doubt that a commitment to democratic practice was most strongly embraced by those who marched under the banners of Radical Republicanism and anti-monopoly—especially African Americans, whose political struggles don’t get the attention they deserve in this volume. There can also be little doubt about who led the charge against political democracy, not only in the South, where that effort had the most repressive effect, but in the Northeast, Midwest, and West as well: the businessmen, financiers, and liberals of the Gilded Age, along with the planters and other large-scale agricultural interests.

Yet while White may underestimate the radicalism of these popular movements and overestimate their fit within a reform mainstream (many of the policies they had earlier championed were enacted in pared-down form only after their own defeat), his disappointment and disenchantment are worth reflecting upon. The racism of these movements was endemic and cannot be explained away by reference to political overtures across the lines of race and ethnicity; it grew out of a deep hostility toward the propertyless poor and those who symbolized the slave and the abjectly dependent (thus the Chinese as well as African Americans). Only rarely was a new direction charted, and it usually required extraordinary leadership and a lengthy period of incubation.

Equally important, the economic analysis of the anti-monopoly movements, especially Populism, proved of less and less
The relevance as the “producers” these movements comprised increasingly fell into the ranks of the working class. Anti-monopoly identified exploitation mainly in the sphere of exchange; its focus was on control over the money supply (greenbacks), cooperative marketing (subtreasury), and the regulation of vital infrastructure, especially railroads. Anti-monopoly was far less concerned with relations of power in workshops, on farms, and in families, which often involved women as well as people of color; nor did it adequately address the challenges of industrial labor, aside from a commitment to the eight-hour workday. Thus the anti-monopolist Southern Farmers’ Alliance (composed mainly of landowners) not only excluded African Americans (who were mostly farm laborers and sharecroppers) from membership, but also brutally crushed a black cotton-pickers’ strike in 1891 that the Colored Farmers’ Alliance had supported.

Populism, and anti-monopoly sensibilities more generally, lived on in a variety of forms, mostly veering left through the 1930s and veering right thereafter. That the “populist” label can be attached today to movements of the left and the right (though mostly of the right) is an indication of both its continued rhetorical salience and its limited usefulness as a way forward for progressives, despite the lift that Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren have given it. Democracy in the 19th century was widely understood in the gendered terms of masculinity and patriarchy, and could be imagined as a central component of populist and anti-monopoly movements whose social base was constituted by male household heads. Democracy today cannot possibly be imagined without including relations of power that 19th-century populism and anti-monopoly for the most part ignored or actively excluded: those involving racialized groups, stateless people, and women and men as well as the rich and poor, or the “people” and the “interests.”

In The Republic for Which It Stands, Richard White re-creates the rich textures of a world that still speaks to ours and from which we have much to learn—a world that created forms of wealth and power that still bedevil us, while invigorating notions of economic justice that had emerged across the 19th century and would remain consequential well into the 20th. But from the 21st-century perspective of what many see as a second Gilded Age, it is clear that we need a language of struggle and a vision of the political future that the first Gilded Age simply did not provide.

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**Ode to the Belt**

it’s clear the future does not bode well for the living

my man won’t let me forget where leather comes from

the engineered animal bent over in chemical grass

the slit thing hanged & blood slunk skin stripped

& tanned in order to keep a man decent i know

how to keep a man the belt knows how to keep order

the sound of his unbuckling’s pavlovian a sidewalk

split into drooling meat. he beats me into my evening

blush, i clutch pearls, eyes the color of a little red cloak.

bless this bridle wrapped around my throat while he

bloods me, bless the constricted windpipe’s unlikely music

bless any thing that can be remade to eke out pleasure

from stone, bless all this life thrashing against death’s

garish precipice, o bless me lord, bless me doorman,

bless me cormorant & courtship & torture & husbandry,

give me enough compression to remember i once lived

here & i’ll accept in the end not even death will wife me

SAM SAX
The maturity of the late works of significant artists does not resemble the kind one finds in fruit,” Theodor Adorno once wrote. “They are, for the most part, not round, but furrowed, even ravaged.” The current exhibition at the Tate Modern in London devoted to the unclassifiable American artist Joan Jonas, 81, is an occasion for thinking again about late works—and especially in ways that Adorno could not have done in 1937, when he was writing about Beethoven’s late style.

That’s because Jonas does strange things with time. More than the objects she makes or finds, more than the moving and still images she creates with a camera or by her incessant practice of drawing, more than the bodies (her own or those of others) that appear in live or recorded performances, more than the words and sounds that accompany them, time itself seems to be the main material Jonas works with, manipulating it as a sculptor might mold, tear, and recombine bits of clay. “I deal with space in a very physical and a conscious way,” she says in a conversation reprinted in the exhibition’s catalog. “In video and film and performance, time accompanies that. How long to move from here to there? How long does it last? Give it time. Flash an image—a memory. I work with time, but I don’t plan ahead of time. I juxtapose different times, curious about how they’re going to affect each other.”

When what we experience as the present is always a palimpsest of other times—of recurrent pasts and emergent futures—can time really be the linear sequence we imagine? If linearity is only one aspect of time as we experience it, and time’s simultaneity is just as significant, then we should be wary of parsing an artist’s oeuvre into early and late phases, or at least careful that we’re not looking for earliness and lateness in the wrong places. Memory puts the presentness of the present into question as much as it does the pastness of the past, and so does forgetting. What’s lost when memory is suppressed is the knowledge captured by William Faulkner’s famous observation that “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” It remains with us, however elusively, like the ghosts that pass through so many of the stories that inspire Jonas.

Perhaps it is the case that Jonas has been making her late work all along, or that the work she was doing in the late 1960s...
The blank spaces in which we see Jonas’s subjectivity most directly appear in the earliest piece in the Tate exhibition (which was curated by Andrea Lissoni and Juliennne Lorz and will be on view through August 5, after which it will travel to the Haus der Kunst, Munich, and the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto). Wind (1968) is a silent black-and-white film—displayed here on video—that shows a group of black-caped figures, two of them with mirrors covering their costumes, as they perform (or attempt to perform) a sequence of mysterious, sometimes comical-looking, perhaps ritualistic movements on an empty beach on Long Island’s North Shore. The wind blows so hard against the performers that it sometimes seems to thwart their efforts, yet at other times it appears to be a necessary partner in their strange dance through this inhospitable winter landscape at the water’s edge. Jonas calls it “a comedy of chaos,” but its comedy is austere and rueful.

For Adorno, it is symptomatic of a stereotypical misreading of late works as expressions of untrammeled subjectivity that they are thereby “relegated to the outer reaches of art, in the vicinity of document,” but this seems unavoidable if he is right that they record the process of shedding artistic appearance and leave “only fragments behind.” As is common in exhibitions that include performances and other similarly transient works, a section of documentary photographs of video recordings and descriptions of several of Jonas’s performance pieces from 1968 through 1980 has to communicate the nature of these works by indirection. Those of us who were not there at the time have to try, from what is truly a handful of fragments, to conjure what they might have been, to fill in the blanks. In these images, the mostly urban backdrops are often just as striking as the actions they frame.

For Jonas, now, in retrospect, the blank spaces of the city where most of the pieces were made emerge as active forces in the creation of the works: “some parts of New York looked like ruins,” a wall label quotes her as saying, referring to the city as it was in the 1960s and ’70s. (It is one of the exhibition’s strengths that the labels feature the first-person voice of the artist herself.) “These were places to explore. SoHo was relatively empty, and artists were able to move into old, recently abandoned factory lofts there that had the beauty of another time. It wasn’t expensive to find a place to perform or exhibit one’s work, and you could work on these streets, lots and docks without an official permit. My performance and video reflected that setting. It was an atmosphere grainy and rough.”

“Grainy and rough” is how I would characterize the photographs themselves, as well as the films and videos made in these early years—it’s almost the essence of their style. In a 2003 interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, reprinted in the Tate exhibition’s catalog (which also reprints an interview that I did with Jonas last year), she recalls how “that grainy quality of early video was so strange, even otherworldly. That was the aesthetic that we all really liked. Filmmakers hated it, of course.”

Jonas’s aesthetic of fragments was a prolongation of modernism, and less in keeping than might at first have been obvious with the burgeoning postmodernism of the time. Her artistic aspirations were very different from those of the various types of blunt-impact minimalism in works by her colleagues in that era—of a sculpture like Richard Serra’s 1968 Prop, a rolled sheet of lead holding another sheet flat against the wall, or a composition like Philip Glass’s Music With Changing Parts (1970), with its intricately patterned rhythmic modules creating unexpected shifts of texture within an unrelentingly consistent pulse.

Jonas has repeatedly emphasized the importance of modernist poetry for her developing aesthetic; Yeats, Williams, Pound, and H.D. are the names that crop up again and again in her interviews. That means her sense of “image” has always been as literary as it is visual—which Pound called “an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.” And it means that, like Williams, Pound, and H.D. (whose long 1961 poem Helen in Egypt became the inspiration for Jonas’s 2002 installation and performance Lines in the Sand), Jonas would eventually expand from a poetics of the single, condensed image to one based on a multitude of images in contiguity, implying that each instant of time might in some way be simultaneous with, or in communication with, many others.

Another of Jonas’s acknowledged literary progenitors is Jorge Luis Borges, whose intellectual games with time and space suggest an even more radically nonlinear sense of temporality than that of his American and Irish predecessors. Think of his story “The Aleph,” which presents a point in space where all other points coexist, or of his “The Garden of Forking Paths,” which suggests that time can be conceived as the simultaneity of all possible outcomes of any given action.

The most recent installation in the Tate show, Stream or River, Flight or Pattern (2016–17), which was shown last summer in New York, contains three video projections on freestanding screens that are surrounded by enlarged drawings of birds on wooden boards and paper kites, made in Vietnam, hanging from the ceiling. The imagery in the videos—now crisp and clean enough to satisfy any filmmaker—spans the globe: We see what are essentially portraits of the feathered inhabitants of a bird sanctuary in Singapore, as well as mosaic floors in Venice and the redwoods of California, to name a few. Some of the most strik-
ing footage, filmed in a village near Hanoi, shows a ritual in which large, colorful paper models of animals are taken first to an altar, then to a pyre, where they are burned. The strange thing is that this ceremony is carried out in an absolutely unceremonious way, as if the sacrifice of elaborate paper simulacra, made for no other purpose but sacrifice, were of no importance, just a banal necessity like taking out the trash.

These vérité shots from Jonas’s travels are interspersed with others, taken in a studio in New York, in which a couple of children, and the artist herself, perform their own strange, quasi-ritualistic but also gamelike sequences of movements while similar travel footage is projected behind and onto them. The “real” performers become something like ghosts haunting landscapes to which they are foreign and which their gestures can’t affect.

As children, the performers represent the future, but here they seem cut off from the present, as does Jonas, around 80 as she was making this piece. There is a poignant sense that one is always too early or too late to be at home in the now; and, as a viewer wandering through this environment of juxtaposed images, moving and still, one is always at a distance from things—objects that are doubles of other objects and images that layer various traces of various times in a single frame.

In Stream or River, Flight or Pattern, as in other recent works—among them Reanimation, which began as what Jonas calls a “lecture-performance” in 2010 and took its present form as an installation in 2013; or They Come to Us Without a Word, not shown in London, which she made for the US Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale—Jonas manifests, in an oblique way, a preoccupation with our environmental crisis. Not that there’s any preaching about climate change, but the recurrent (I could almost say obsessive) circling back to images of birds, trees, bees, and the land in general takes on an elegiac tone, as if these life forms, which we need much more than they need us, were in the process of taking leave of their connection to the world of humans.

Is all this beauty nearing its end? Jonas’s camera gives things a lingering look, as in secret hope that a moment of perception could hold for eternity. Stream or River, Flight or Pattern could be a late work, not just in the career of its maker, but in that of the civilization of which it is a product. That’s a kind of late work that Adorno might not have been able to imagine in 1937, even as the disaster of World War II was looming.

With its many elements spread throughout a room, Stream or River, Flight or Pattern offers no perspective from which things resolve into a whole. Each of its videos can command your rapt attention, yet in the back of your mind, and perhaps the corner of your eye, the others solicit equal consideration; concentration and its dispersal are solicited in equal measure. That’s also one of Jonas’s techniques for populating her images with the ghosts of others—the ones that might be reeling off behind you or off to the side. But other works of hers put the viewer in a fixed relation to the image. I’m thinking in particular of a group of pieces called “My New Theater,” which she’s been making occasionally since 1997.

These are long wooden boxes, each of which houses a video screen that’s set at a distance from the opening through which one views it. It’s almost as if the device funnels its imagery directly to the eye, while at the same time maintaining an insuperable distance between them. Set in the space between the screen and the viewer are occasionally various small props and sometimes pictures. Depicted in the videos are mostly a few simple actions, such as tap dancing or drawing, that turn out to be more complex than they might at first seem.

One of the most charming of these pieces is My New Theater VI: Good Night Good Morning ’06 (2006), a sort of remake of a work from 30 years earlier. In the video, Jonas’s reflection appears in a convex mirror as she bids herself good night, then good morning, night after night and day after day. We see her groggy and rumpled in the morning, drowsy as she’s preparing herself for bed. The artist, genially informal for once, is performing the self she is when she’s not in performance, the self that’s not seen by anyone but her mirror (and her dog). Each day the position of the mirror changes, so we keep seeing the same room from a different angle. It’s like a running joke that’s always told a little differently. But is Jonas talking to herself, to the mirror as a sort of imaginary interlocutor, or to anyone who might happen to see the piece?

Borges was the reason I started using mirrors,” Jonas has said. It’s the most persistently recurring metaphor or device in her art, one she began to use in 1968, often to produce a note of unease. Jonas introduces the mirror to fragment, obscure, or recompose the image; rarely does she use it in the disarming manner of My New Theater VI. Video, too, is one of her mirrors—and, of course, until flat screens became the norm, the surface of a video monitor was typically convex. One of the most striking of Jonas’s early works is titled Glass Puzzle II (actually, it’s dated 1974/2000—that is, as both an early work and a fairly late one, in accord with Jonas’s way of turning time back on itself). The black-and-white video shows the artist carrying out a sequence of movements and actions while another performer, the painter Lois Lane, attempts to “mirror” her gestures. But their actions are both seen, as it were, through a glass darkly—shot off a monitor, which we can tell because of the reflections.

Jonas has spoken of how video can create “an illusion of boxed space,” explaining that “I wanted to alter it; to climb inside, to use the reflective surface, to tape the layers of reflection and interior image fed to the monitor by a second camera.” In the installation that she built around this single-channel video in 2000, she added a small monitor showing color footage of some of the same activity, along with props that seem to have emerged from the grainy footage of decades earlier—yet in this context, the material objects can be seen as mere images of the ones glimpsed in such an intangible way in the video. If the 1974 Jonas wanted to climb inside the illusory box and see what its limits might be, the 2000 Jonas opened that box and spilled out its contents in space—without accepting the notion that space’s three dimensions are any more real than the image’s two. This is one of the underlying stories of the exhibition and of Jonas’s career: how the video art of the 1970s unfolded itself from inside the monitor to occupy the bigger box of the room as what we now call video installations—a genre that Jonas and a few others had to make up as they went along.

Video technology and the mirror have this in common: that in reduplicating some fragment of the world, they introduce at least a very small spatial or temporal division into reality. The reflection is always at a greater or lesser distance—and if I try to take what I see in the mirror as a guide for my movements, I will always be in the paradoxical situation of trying to follow something that is following me.

In the 1970 performance Mirror Check, the performer (Jonas herself at the time, though during a night of performances at the Tate a different performer took her place) stands naked, systematically inspecting her body, inch by inch, using a small circular mirror. The audience never sees what she sees. In a way, we see more than she does, but what her eyes see is lost to us. We will never see enough of our world or ourselves.
Hook Me In The First Five

Young Fathers attempt to make a mainstream pop album

by Briana Younger

Most artists have to push themselves to be more experimental, but the challenge that Young Fathers face is being more conventional. This was the task that the Edinburgh trio—Alloysious Massaquoi, Kayus Bankole, and Graham “G” Hastings—set for themselves when they took to the studio to create their latest album, Cocoa Sugar. As the story goes, the band had come to find their idiosyncratic mix of everything from rap to punk to gospel to pop just a wee bit boring and wanted a new sound. The result is something like the weird kids trying to fit in at the popular kids’ lunch table: The signifiers are there (traditional song structures, more refined production), but some people are just destined to stick out. Massaquoi, the band’s lead vocalist, summed it up for The Guardian earlier this year: “If we try and put ourselves in a box, it’s gonna end up with spikes coming out.”

For about a decade, Young Fathers have made their name by pushing the formalist notions of genre and song structure to their limits, drawing comparisons to groups like TV on the Radio, Suicide, and Massive Attack in the process. Their first two mixtapes, conveniently titled Tape One (2011) and Tape Two (2013), were fuzzy lo-fi blends of (in the band’s own words) “white-boy beat” and “black-boy rhythm.” Dead, their debut LP, was a sensory overload of experimental fusion that earned Young Fathers the coveted Mercury Prize in 2014. That album’s follow-up, White Men Are Black Men Too (2015), revealed a band continuing to widen its sound palette—and to make its audience uncomfortable.

As far as contemporary pop albums go, Cocoa Sugar, released on March 9, is as singular as it is disarmingly gorgeous. The first track, “See How,” features a rumbling bass line that anchors the song’s chorus, which invites listeners—and perhaps Young Fathers themselves—to drop all their expectations and just “see how it goes.” But no sooner do the feel-good croons come in than the album jolts in the opposite direction with the second track, “Fee Fi,” an eerie song with tribal drums and piano chords fit for a John Carpenter film. In this way, Cocoa Sugar seesaws through its 12 tracks, juxtaposing harmonious light with dark discord.

The standout “Lord,” for example, be-

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Waste My Life

sleep, boredom, gossip, cruelty
imaginary feuds and small resentments
various, complex plans that amount to nothing
at some point, every poet has to admit art is just a distraction from the boredom of life

every morning I get dressed
and I walk past the road outside the Salvation Army
overflowing with toys and clothes and plastic crap
I think they probably deserve it for being so explicitly homophobic in their core organizational values

I work all day in a bookshop
each night when I come home
it’s dark, and the rain is falling
covering the world in black diamonds
some days I feel so deep inside my life I don’t think I’ll ever get out again

I never read the Russians but I have read most of the Babysitters Club
I can’t remember the meaning of poetry
other than it’s a broken telephone
with which to call the dead
and tell them a joke

life is great
it’s like being given a rare and historically significant flute
and using it to beat a harmless old man to death with

I used to think the more something hurt, the more meaningful it was
but I never learned anything useful from pain
I just drank a bottle of wine and tried to fall asleep
when you’re unhappy you can’t think
pain is just boredom with the stars turned up

there’s not much I like in this world
I’m always walking away too early in a conversation and having to yell apologetically back over my shoulder

I don’t think good art comes from happiness either
but who said good art was the point

HERA LINDSAY BIRD
Puzzle No. 3464
JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO

ACROSS

1 Momentous heart? (5-10)
9 Essential energy reflected the sound of a cat and the sound of a bird (7)
10 Backslide and return psychic’s gift with warning, mostly (7)
11 No! A thousand times no! Teasing is unacceptable! (9)
12 Mona Lisa’s home is beyond standard (5)
13 Between drinks, sorcerer’s way to make money (7,4)
16 and 18 Refuse destination, even after rejecting Teddy Roosevelt (3,3)
19 Elevated less serious reader’s implement (11)
21 Termination of ailment by licking a fish (5)
22 Plenty from Chaplin’s tabletop performance in The Gold Rush (9)
25 Chant about Baltic capital with one type of Asian art (7)
26 Mesa, Arizona’s leader follows behind schedule, turning up outside (7)
27 Common bird, once carrying only letters from Singapore (9,6)

DOWN

1 Odd enchantress, rising to ensnare copper (9)
2 Feeling sorry for everyone (including children) after destruction (5)
3 Infusion distressed the bear (4,3)
4 Greeting very quiet orange beast (5)
5 Gets ready to run away, reciting something Chaucer might have written about a seabird? (5,4)
6 Mathematical figure otherwise circumscribing edge (7)
7 Orgiastic romp with titan of great consequence (9)
8 Participant in rogue’s shindig: One can be educated or wild (5)
14 Salmon I’d cooked holding unknown instruments (9)
15 Engineer overlooking crazy impression (9)
17 Cheer up large bobtail horse with a clown (9)
19 Something you could eat for breakfast: fish sandwiches, without a doctor’s orders (7)
20 Former African strongman raised stipulation to put in silver (7)
21 Bad time coming up for soldiers (5)
23 Start dinner late—it is stimulating (5)
24 Family member in French city taking a bite of éclair (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3463

1 ME + NAG + ERIE 6 DEMUEJ
2 RATIONS 10 (OW) [|] ARDS
3 COMBATMISSION (6 let.)
4 ASSEMBLE[en] 14 SCA[T]HE
5 AT[EN]S 20 FAN7 + ASIA
6 BROTHERKEEPER 26 5PIG[OTS]
7 TRAPEZE (final letters) 28 [DOG]MA
8 SC + [RAM]BLED

1`2`3`4`5`6`7`8
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