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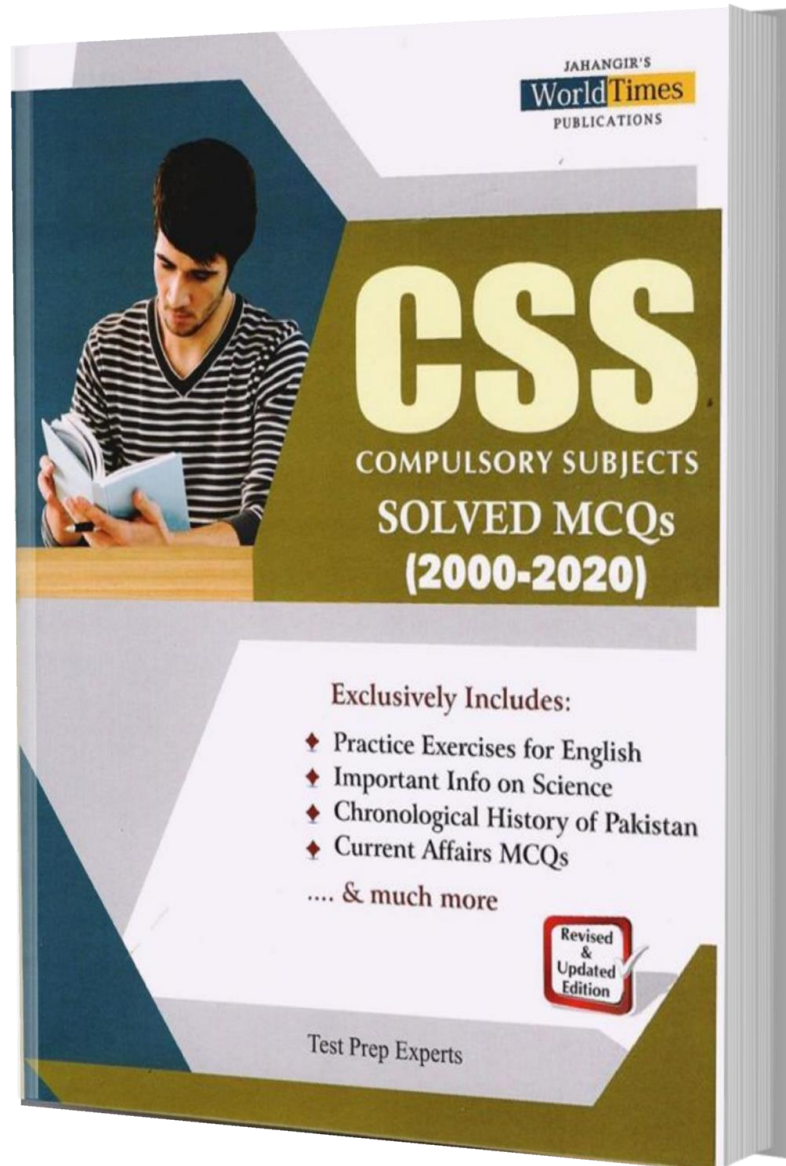
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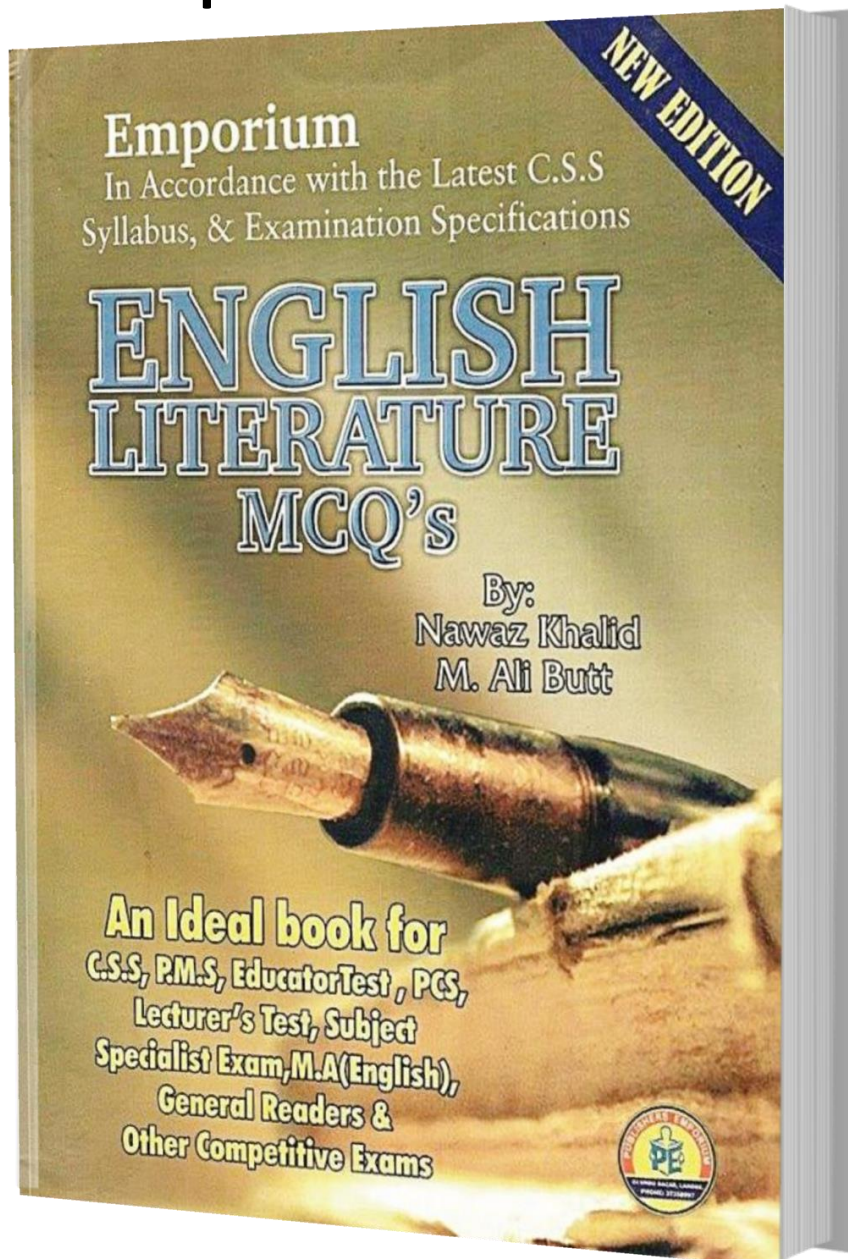
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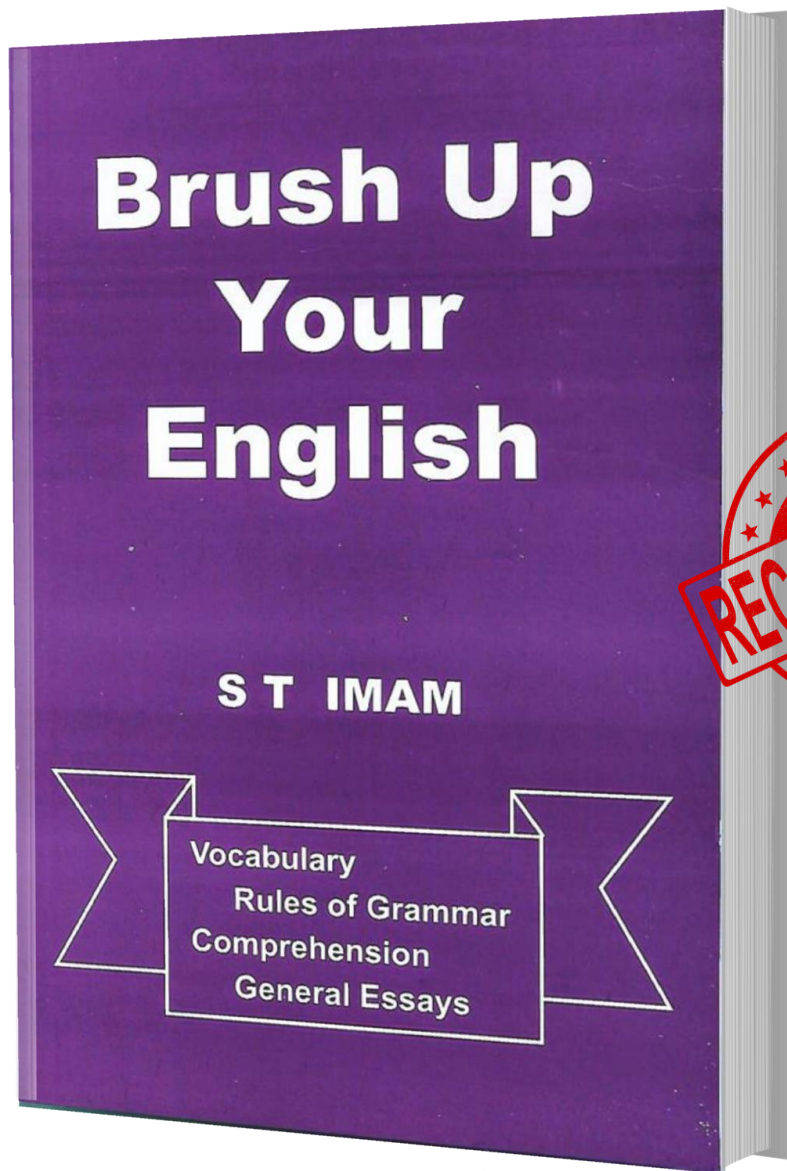


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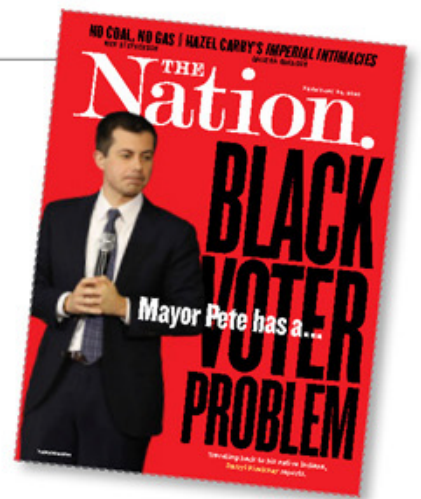


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Letters
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The Rest Is Commentary

Thank you for Joshua Leifer's review of my book *The Lions' Den: Zionism and the Left From Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky* ["A Tense Relationship," February 24]. Though he did not like the book, I appreciate the seriousness and thoughtfulness of his review.

However, I would like to clarify two things. Contrary to what Leifer writes, I do not criticize Chomsky for making "mistakes." I criticize him—and document my statements thoroughly—for manufacturing entirely fictitious claims and then basing his political analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on them. There is a big difference between making mistakes and telling lies. The latter has always resulted in political and moral catastrophe for the left.

Second, nowhere have I "somehow justified" the expulsion and massacre of the Palestinians in 1948 (or ever)—any more than I justify the expulsion and massacre of Jews in those towns where the Arab forces prevailed. What I pointed out is that there would have been no Palestinian refugees had the Arab states accepted partition—and the concomitant proposed Palestinian state; instead, they tried to exterminate the nascent Jewish state. I do indeed see this as "a world-historic mistake," and I suspect there are many people in the Mideast, and not only in Israel, who think likewise. **SUSIE LINFIELD**
BROOKLYN

Joshua Leifer Replies

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to respond to Susie Linfield's letter, and I am grateful that she took the time to read the review. I doubt I will be able to convince her that Chomsky is not a "nightmare" of the American left or guilty of misleading "generations of young people." However, the moral balance sheet of his career finds him on the right side, more often than not, on some of the most important

matters, from the Vietnam War to Israel's occupation, neoliberalism, the Iraq War, and US war making more generally. Because I agree with Linfield that there is "a big difference between making mistakes and telling lies," I'd gladly side with Chomsky against the advocates of "humanitarian intervention" or, say, the signatories of the Euston Manifesto, who laundered unjust wars.

Second, it is an American liberal Zionist fantasy that "there would have been no Palestinian refugees had the Arab states accepted partition." There is ample historical evidence that Zionist settlement in pre-1948 Mandate Palestine resulted in the dispossession of Palestinians from land their families had lived on for centuries. The reality of such displacement is also attested to in Zionist mythology, Hebrew songs, and the debates among early Zionist intellectuals over whether building a Jewish state would require the subjugation of the native Palestinians or their expulsion.

In fact, even before the 1920s, Zionist writers and intellectuals like Moshe Smilansky worried about the violent displacement that accompanied Jewish settlement. As Tom Segev records in his biography of David Ben-Gurion, Smilansky "recounted seeing fellah women weeping and lamenting the lands and homes they had lost, without compensation. Jewish settlers had chased them off with sticks." In the 1930s it was precisely this issue that led philosopher Hans Kohn to resign from Brit Shalom, the binationalist Zionist organization. In his letter of resignation, he denounced the "immeasurable barbarity" of the eviction of Palestinian tenants from land bought by Zionist settlement organizations, like the Jewish National Fund. **JOSHUA LEIFER**
BROOKLYN

letters@thenation.com

Soap and Socialism

The coronavirus crisis has helped popularize an essential truth: There are no libertarians in a pandemic. The rapid spread of Covid-19 is already ripping apart both America's fragile health care system and its economy. The stock market crash is merely the first symptom of what will soon be a system-

wide crisis, one that could rival not just 2008 but also 1929. A vaccine could be 18 to 24 months off. If so, we're likely to see not a single global outbreak but a series of waves, as with the Spanish flu at the end of World War I. That would keep the economy sputtering for months.

In reaction to the pandemic, even very conservative politicians are embracing sweeping responses. In the Senate, Mitt Romney has called for the government to write a \$1,000 check for every American, while Tom Cotton—perhaps Trump's most rabid supporter in the chamber—tweeted about the stimulus deal that Speaker Nancy Pelosi negotiated with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, "The House relief bill doesn't go far enough & fast enough." Cotton called for "stipends to affected workers and their families so they can buy food and pay the bills during this crisis, plus help to small and mid-sized businesses weather the storm."

Romney and Cotton are thinking more imaginatively and on a larger scale than the congressional leadership of the Democratic Party. The Pelosi bill is a step in the right direction, offering universal coronavirus testing, food assistance, and extended sick leave for some workers. But because she caved in to the House Republicans' demands, the sick leave measures are far more limited than they should be. Carve-outs to protect small and large businesses mean that upwards of 80 percent of American workers wouldn't be covered by the measure.

Congressional Democrats have to be much bolder. The European social democracies show just how much can be done. Denmark has reached a deal between unions and large employers to stop layoffs, with the government covering up to 75 percent of wages. Norway has promised to pay the self-employed 80 percent of their precrisis earnings for the duration of the pandemic.

The best response to this crisis is a robust social democracy. Sensible measures would include an emergency universal basic income with job guarantees, low-interest loans to big and small businesses alike, pressure on banks to suspend mortgage payments for the duration, a ban on evictions, and nationalization of factories to produce medical equipment and medicine.

Such actions would be costly, but interest rates are now below inflation. This means the government can run up debts that won't have to be repaid for many decades, if not centuries.



The faction in US politics best positioned to make arguments for large-scale social democratic spending is the insurgent left, led by Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. This group has been divided by the politics of the presidential primaries. Warren has, quite notably, refused to endorse Sanders for the Democratic nomination.

Ocasio-Cortez has been Sanders's most important surrogate, but her recent comments indicate she wants to make peace with the party's mainstream.

These divisions are tragic, preventing what is the best hope for America: a united front on the left that pressures congressional Democrats to make maximum demands. Warren doesn't have to endorse Sanders, but she does need to underscore that she shares his view that a large-scale economic response is needed. The primaries make clear that the Sanders-Warren wing commands at least 40 percent of the party—enough to influence the thinking of the rest.

If Sanders, Warren, and Ocasio-Cortez find a way to speak with one voice, they can push the Pelosi-Chuck Schumer-Joe Biden wing to act with urgency. Otherwise, we're stuck in a world where Romney and Cotton are to the left of the Democratic Party's leadership. **JEET HEER FOR THE NATION**

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APRIL 6, 2020

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BY THE NUMBERS

In March, *Slate* and the Marshall Project released the results from a political survey of 8,266 people incarcerated across the United States.

80%

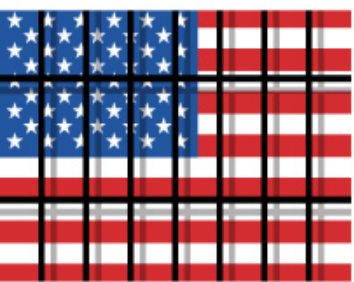
Percentage who said they believe politicians generally do not act in the interests of people like them

75%

Percentage identifying as Republican who said they supported marijuana legalization and an increase in the minimum wage

45%

Percentage of white inmates who said they would vote for



Donald Trump if the election were held today—compared with 19 percent of nonwhite inmates

66%

Percentage in prison for more than 21 years who said their political beliefs had changed since their incarceration began

—Daniel Fernandez

Virus-Proof Elections

We have ways to keep voters safe. Now we just need to use them.

The 2020 primary election schedule is being upended by the coronavirus outbreak, and that should ring alarm bells for the November 3 general election that will decide not just the presidency but control of Congress and statehouses across the country. Steps must be taken now—major steps—to ensure not only that the November elections go ahead as planned, but also that they aim for the highest possible turnout by guaranteeing all Americans safe and secure procedures for casting their ballots.

“No voter should have to choose between exercising their constitutional right and putting their health at risk,” says Senator Ron Wyden, who has proposed ambitious legislation that would require states and localities to develop and administer plans to operate elections in the face of “the very real threat looming this November.”

How serious is that threat? “This pandemic presents unique, novel challenges to election administrators,” says Wendy Weiser, who directs the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law. “It is very different from any of the election emergencies we have seen in recent years. The nation has not prepared for it.” And that’s a big problem. “Our elections will not be perceived as fair if

steps are not taken to assure that people have options for voting, no matter what happens. This is an emergency we can address, but we don’t have that much time.”

The sense of urgency has as much to do with the uncertainty about when the virus will be contained as it does with the virus itself.

Wyden, Weiser, and others who are raising the alarm hope the desperate news of the moment—reports of new cases and deaths, closures, and stock market plunges—will be a distant memory in November. But uncertainty about whether the crisis could linger or perhaps ease in the summer and then return with a vengeance in the fall has experts worried. Dennis Carroll, a former director of the US Agency for International Development’s Global Health Security and Development Unit, says, “What we don’t know about this virus is epic.”

The Covid-19 outbreak has already created a measure of chaos in this Democratic primary season, as several states have postponed voting. Though rescheduling elections should always be a last resort, primary calendars are at least somewhat flexible. “Postponement of the general election is not an option,” says Weiser.

But what happens if the approach to the November election is as chaotic as the approach to the primaries? Instead of allowing fear and uncertainty to frame our choices, perhaps creating a circumstance where turnout

could be dramatically depressed, “we have to move as quickly as possible to make the resources available for excuse-free absentee voting and mail voting,” says Representative Jamie Raskin. “We can maximize everybody’s ability to vote in a way that reduces the medical risk and the psychological anxiety.”

Working with Wyden and House Democrats Earl Blumenauer and Suzan DelBene, Raskin is cosponsoring the Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020—legislation that those representatives say “would require states and localities to formulate and publish their plans within 30 days. It would also require states to offer postage prepaid self-sealing envelopes to voters who vote absentee in order to reduce the risk associated with infection at post offices and provide \$500 million in grants to states to cover the costs of postage and high-speed scanners necessary to process large numbers of absentee ballots.”

Voting by mail isn’t a new idea. Oregon and Washington have long histories of conducting all-mail elections, which generally see higher turnouts and smoother counts. Dozens of other states have made strides in expanding the practice in certain elections.

“We should be making it easier to vote by mail as quickly as possible.”

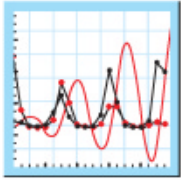
Yet most voters still cast ballots in person. The coronavirus outbreak, no matter its trajectory, makes a move to voting by mail wise for reasons of public health and democracy. It’s not the only fix that’s needed—easing constraints on voter registration and access to absentee ballots, expanding early voting, and developing smart models for maintaining at least some in-person voting also make sense—and consideration has to be given

to the need to protect clerks, mail handlers, and letter carriers, which could put new pressures on the Postal Service. But Alexandra Chandler of the group Protect Democracy is right when she says officials should look to expanded mail voting as “a first step toward protecting our elections against crises or disturbances.”

That first step must be taken now. As Dale Ho, the director of the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project, says, “We should be making it easier to vote by mail as quickly as possible because the closer we get to the election, the less time we will have to avoid a nightmare scenario.”

The argument for expanding options for mail voting is not theoretical. America got a real-time test of its utility in early March, as the race for the Democratic presidential nomination narrowed to former vice president Joe Biden and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders on a series of Super and lesser Tuesdays. In Washington state, where a nursing home was an early coronavirus hot spot, Governor Jay Inslee issued an emergency proclamation on February 29. The March 10 primary election arrived at a moment when businesses were urging employees to stay home and initial school closures were being announced. Yet *The Seattle Times* reported, “Despite a nearly unprecedented public health crisis in Western Washington that kept both septuagenarian candidates from campaigning here leading up to the primary, turnout appeared on pace

(continued on page 8)



THE SCORE/BRYCE COVERT + MIKE KONCZAL

Healing the Economy

The coronavirus is spreading across our economy every bit as much as it is spreading across our communities. As businesses shutter and travel bans go into effect, a recession is almost certain. To lessen the crash and its very real human impact, Democrats in Congress must take immediate action. There are three essential aspects to the stimulus plan we urgently need right now: It should be bold and equitable, it should automatically renew, and its temporary programs should be able to evolve into more permanent ones.

Each of these would help address the threat that hangs over the economy: that we will repeat the mistakes of the Great Recession. That recession started in December 2007 and technically ended after two years—but

The greatest mistake would be to repeat our errors, hoping something will be different this time.

13 years later, we still aren't sure if unemployment is as low as it would have been had we taken stronger action. We failed in our response then, and in our era of continued low interest rates and weak corporate investment, we could be setting ourselves up to fail in exactly the same way again.

The first way to avoid past errors is to make sure any spending package is big enough to address the scale of the coming downturn. Issuing \$2,000 checks to every American would cost upwards of 3 percent of GDP and would be enough to start pushing back a recession. It would also be equitable, reaching all people, unlike a payroll tax cut, which would disproportionately benefit those at the top of the income distribution. The Federal Reserve has acted more quickly this time, lowering interest rates and beginning a purchasing program. To take advantage of these low rates and boost the economy, we also need a major spending package—for example, an infrastructure project designed to mitigate carbon emissions and fossil fuel use—on the order of an additional 4 percent of GDP. Interest rates are projected to be low for many years, and the economic boost from

this investment will be necessary to invigorate what is certain to be a slow recovery.

The second way to avoid our previous blunders is to make sure the spending automatically renews itself if the recession continues. Economists like Claudia Sahm of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth have proposed ways to automatically send money to people once certain thresholds that predict recessions have been met and to continue those payments until the recession is over. This would help solve the problem of doing too little.

But there's also a political dimension: Democrats in 2009 designed their response assuming that they could go back and do more later. In the end, this option wasn't available, even as it became clear that the recession was far worse and more prolonged than originally understood. There's a reasonable chance that a Democrat will take the White House next year with Republicans still in control of the Senate—and if a recession is

ongoing, it's important that any fiscal stimulus won't be held hostage by them, as was the case in 2011, when unemployment was over 9 percent. And even if Democrats control both houses of Congress, they won't want to squander months simply reenacting the measures they agreed to the year before.

Third, the stimulus package should ensure that temporary programs are executed in a way that lets them easily become permanent. Much of the response to the Great Recession was designed to be hidden from everyday people, but even more than last time, we can't just enact a fiscal spending package. The coronavirus crisis has exposed how little security we provide to workers. The fissuring of the workplace, where many full-time employees have been replaced by independent contractors, has shifted risk to individuals instead of being managed through social insurance. Democrats should demand permanent paid sick leave and a broader set of protections for all workers. But these should be structured so the programs can endure after the recession is over. This is a real trade-off, as the pressure will be to do something quick and easy rather than something better and more permanent.

Many mistakes will be made in the months ahead. But the greatest one would be to repeat our errors, hoping something will be different this time. The most important lesson from the Great Recession is that the serious risk is in doing too little, not in doing too much. To meet the challenges of protecting ourselves and our economy from the coronavirus, we must expand social insurance and full employment investment policies—the proven remedies for economic ills in times like these.

Mike Konczal

A National Response to the Coronavirus

The Great Recession taught us that the greatest danger is in the government doing too little, not too much.



1 Start to stabilize the economy with one-time payouts.

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2 Unleash a bold stimulus package.

\$870 billion
or **4%** of GDP

in new spending starting this year

3 And stick with it.

Automatically renew spending
if unemployment slips above 4%

Natalie Shure

Traumatic Care

The bureaucratic burden placed on patients has been ignored for far too long.

In late 2010 a car struck Michelle DuBarry's 22-month-old son, Seamus, in a crosswalk in Portland, Oregon. After two surgeries and a night in the pediatric intensive care unit, he died.

Soon, the bills started coming. They arrived from the hospital and DuBarry's insurer, each itemizing fragments of her toddler's care—anesthesiologists, emergency room physicians, trauma surgeons, orthopedists, intensivists, lab tests, and the ambulance—each accompanied by amounts charged by the hospital or paid by her insurance company. The numbers didn't always match.

"I think anyone who's been through something like that understands that you're not really high functioning in the aftermath of a tragedy," DuBarry told me by phone. "So to start getting the bills was just really bewildering.... You have to sort through this mountain of paperwork and try to understand what you're responsible for paying, what your insurance company is responsible for paying—and if there's anything the insurance company doesn't want to pay for, they just don't."

Even worse than deciphering the math, though, was what the bills evoked. Every one of the technical terms listed in the paperwork corresponded to a medical intervention performed on her son's tiny body, and decoding the items meant anguishing over each one. One bill contained a charge for a "chest tube." DuBarry felt overwhelmed by guilt: She didn't know what a chest tube was and didn't know Seamus had even had one. She'd been so focused on his severe brain trauma that she'd barely considered the rest of his body; now her insurance company left her no choice. Had it hurt? Where had it been inserted? How had she been so inattentive? "Looking at that bill brought me back to a place of complete, blinding panic," she said. "And then having to get on the phone and ask the insurance company why they won't cover it... it's just terrifying."

The pain of losing a child is almost unimaginable anywhere, but forcing grieving parents to navigate the health insurance bureaucracy under threat of financial ruin is uniquely American. No one should have to feel like that, and DuBarry wouldn't have had to if it hadn't been for the damn bills.

Health care reform has dominated the Democratic primary race, but the debates have focused mainly on the choice of plans and providers, access to care, and medical debt. When administrative bloat comes up, it's usually to point to the immense costs of processing claims. Too often the emotionally draining bureaucratic burden placed on patients and their families is overlooked. As DuBarry succinctly put it, "The bills are their own trauma."

A single-payer Medicare for All system would streamline the costs of health care administration—topping \$1 trillion annually, according to a recent estimate—and would also alleviate the headache of battling insurers. That's something that reform proposals relying on a public option can't do. The US health care system is financed by multiple payers, most of which operate as for-profit companies and negotiate payments with providers. As costs rise, insurers have protected their bottom lines by shifting costs onto patients through ever-rising

copayments and deductibles and by narrowing provider networks to limit patient choice. One inevitable result has been the growth of so-called surprise billing: charges from out-of-network doctors at in-network hospitals. Patients get whacked with unexpected bills for any number of reasons—deductibles higher than their bank account balances, confusing fine print, disagreements over necessary care, and human error. Crucially, adding a public option to an already dizzying array of insurance options would do nothing to disrupt this dynamic. The fragmentation of our health care system (which "Medicare for All who want it" would retain) is the very reason for such excessive billing. You can't have a system with so many cracks serving hundreds of millions of people and expect none of them to fall in.

However intensely scrutinized the US health care system has been, the strain of navigating billing has been surprisingly unstudied. Perhaps in a system plagued by so many shocking statistics—our costs, mortality rates, and levels of debt and uninsurance are anomalously high relative to other developed countries—the exasperation of squabbling with insurance companies strikes researchers as petty. But that's not how patients experience it. Over the years, people have told me stories about sobbing on the phone with claims adjusters countless times. I've heard patients describe breakdowns at pharmacies over insurance preauthorizations and, after they were too exhausted to keep trying, damaged credit scores. Disability activist and wheelchair user Colleen Flanagan recalled that some of her earliest memories are of her mother crying as she pleaded with insurance companies for her daughter's care; today Flanagan schedules time every week to do the same thing. "You have to start from the very beginning every single time to explain what the situation is," she said. "It's just a terrible reminder of how people are making money off of me telling the same story over and over again just so I can get access to a working wheelchair."

Such individualized frustration and anger define people's interactions with social systems, argue Georgetown public policy professors Donald Moynihan and Pamela Herd in their book *Administrative Burden*. "In our current health care system, even if you expand it dramatically but leave the basic design as is...it still leaves users dealing with a system embedded with hassles in a way their peers in other rich countries simply can't relate to," Moynihan told me. In other words, its functionality depends on hours of unpaid work finagling over charges foisted onto patients and family members, often in times of extreme stress and illness. "This is an extraordinary hidden cost in the American health care system," he said. "We don't take into account the degree to which it shoves a lot of psychological costs onto its users in a way that other countries have not."

It's time we assess those costs. The elimination of medical bills that Medicare for All promises would represent not just a financial relief but also a psychological one. ■



Natalie Shure is the head of research for Adam Ruins Everything on TruTV. She writes about health, history, and politics for a variety of outlets.

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(continued from page 4)

to set a new state record for a presidential primary, according to Secretary of State Kim Wyman.”

Things have not gone as smoothly in states where in-person voting on Election Day remains common. Louisiana postponed its primary from April 4 to June 20, Georgia moved its election from March 24 to May 19, and Ohio announced on the eve of its March 17 primary that voting would be “delayed.”

In Maricopa, Arizona’s most-populous county, nursing homes and schools signaled that they could no longer serve as polling places for the March 17 primary. After county supervisors closed 78 polling places, the county recorder, Adrian Fontes, announced that he would order ballots mailed to all voters who normally cast them at the polls. It wasn’t a radical notion, as voting by mail is common in Arizona. Unfortunately, the state’s Republican attorney general, Mark Brnovich, objected and got a local judge to block the move. Brnovich accused Fontes of “creating chaos in our elections during an already difficult time.”

Wrong. Fontes was doing the right thing by attempting to expand the options for voting in a regularly scheduled election taking place during a public health crisis. And he was seeking to ensure that the election would be more than just an exercise in bureaucratic responsibility—that the county would take the necessary steps to ensure the highest possible turnout.

Fontes didn’t let up. He appeared on radio and television and all over social media, urging voters to cast absentee ballots and “making sure that every Maricopa County voter has plenty of opportunity to vote and plenty of options to make that happen,” he says.

Congress can help officials like Fontes by encouraging all states to develop plans for maintaining democracy in times of crisis, extending vote-by-mail strategies, and funding them. As the ACLU’s Ho says, “We really need to make advance plans now for the possibility that we will have to hold the 2020 election with more voting by mail than at any time in American history.”

JOHN NICHOLS



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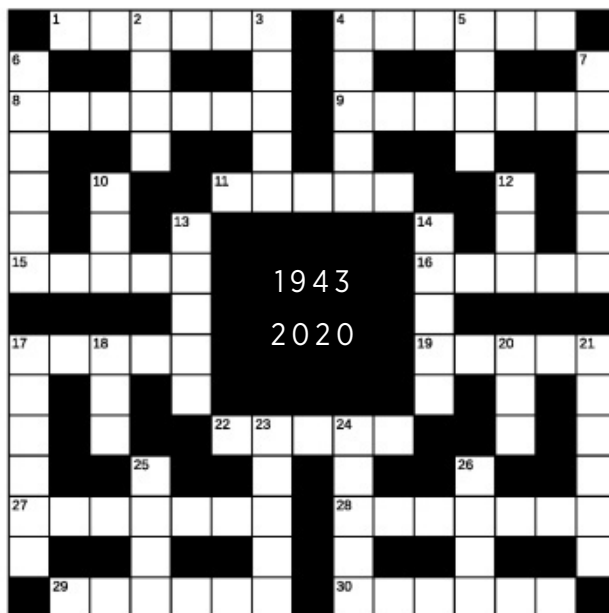
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No Cross Words

Our cryptic maestros say a fond farewell.

For nearly nine years now, we’ve had the honor of providing a cryptic crossword for every issue of *The Nation*. We’re only the third to do so in a lineage that dates back nearly unbroken to 1943—

the oldest and longest-running cryptic crossword in the United States, by far. Our illustrious predecessor Frank W. Lewis constructed the *Nation* puzzle for more than 60 years. We had been devoted fans of his work since the 1970s, and we’ve tried to maintain his tradition of lively wit and wordplay while adding a few wrinkles of our own.



But nothing lasts forever, and the next issue will have the final installment of the *Nation* cryptic. We’re grateful to the magazine for giving us this opportunity, to the readers who chose us as Frank’s successors, and to the solvers who’ve matched wits with us over the years. We’re especially thankful for the chance to work with editors Sandy McCroskey and Judith Long, who lovingly shepherded each new puzzle into print.

We will continue to construct a weekly cryptic crossword, under the name “Out of Left Field,” which will be available to subscribers through the Patreon

website beginning April 2. To keep our puzzles coming without interruption, sign up now at [patreon.com/leftfieldcryptics](#). For an introduction to cryptic crosswords, plus links to our puzzle books, go to our new website ([leftfieldcryptics.com](#)).

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND
HENRI PICCIOTTO

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Readers,

Normally the neighborhood around *The Nation's* office—on Eighth Avenue, in the heart of New York's Garment District—is one of the busiest, most crowded places on earth. But like so many other publications, we are now conducting all of our operations remotely. It is distressing to picture the bustling streets eerily quiet and our office vacant, but we are living in unprecedented times. We extend solidarity to the many businesses and workers—in particular, frontline care workers—who do not have the option to work remotely and who face either an uncertain financial future or unimaginable conditions as they labor to mitigate this crisis.

For many of our editors and writers, working remotely is a familiar experience. But the isolation and loneliness of social distancing affects all of us, and spending more of our lives online will not, I fear, be an adequate substitute for the stimulation and solidarity of working together face-to-face. Yet like the rest of you, *The Nation* will carry on—reporting the truth, analyzing our circumstances, campaigning for justice, and bringing you in-depth commentary and coverage not just of the coronavirus crisis but of the state of our politics, our democracy, and the health of our planet.

Because while the dangers are real—and made far worse by an administration in Washington whose general incompetence has been compounded by its hostility to science—so is the need for bold solutions. We'll continue lifting up those solutions here at *The Nation* and continue calling for courage, solidarity, and compassion. But we can't do that without your support. If you're a regular reader, please consider stepping up and subscribing. Or making a donation. We'll get through this—together.

—D.D. Guttenplan

Katha Pollitt



Tales of Two Plagues

Tips on self-isolation from Daniel Defoe and Giovanni Boccaccio.

Are you looking around for home entertainment now that you can't go out? The other night, we watched *Contagion*, a really exciting (that is, stressful and upsetting) movie from way back in 2011 in which a pandemic kills millions of people but is ultimately defeated by a black guy, a Jewish guy, and the three most beautiful women in the world. Social distancing is mentioned as the best protection, by the way, so you can't say you weren't warned.

Mostly, though, I've been catching up on the classics. For example, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, an early example of the nonfiction novel, written in 1722 about London's Great Plague of 1665. After a slow start—the novel begins with a lot of statistics to establish its factual reliability—it picks up, as Defoe's narrator, H.F., a prosperous saddlemaker, misses his chances to leave London and finds himself trapped in town, where he alternates between prudent isolation indoors and restless wanderings through the streets.

Like so many of us, H.F. is a ditherer. Should he stay or should he go? Stock up or wait and see? By the time he decides to get in a good supply of provisions, the butchers are dead, and the country people who bring vegetables to market have withdrawn from the center of town. You might think you have it tough with the long lines at Trader Joe's, but he and his household must manage on bread, butter, cheese, and home-brewed beer.

It's pleasant, in these scary times, to be reminded that things could be worse. A lot worse. Instead of the coronavirus, which almost all sufferers survive, we could have the Black Death, which was far more fatal. In the 14th century, it killed roughly one-third of Europe's population, and in 1665 about one in five Londoners succumbed. Forget about Purell or nitrile gloves or Clorox wipes or even enough hot water and soap to wash your hands a dozen times a day. The already vast numbers of poor people living in squalid housing or on the street were augmented by workers, especially servants, turned out of their jobs as the plague took hold. (Speaking of which, please remember to pay your household workers—cleaners, dog walkers, nannies, etc.—even if you aren't using their services because you are home.)

In Defoe's time, as in our own, the poor suffered

most and charity could not keep up. Medical treatments were useless and often excruciating. Public health measures were simple and harsh. Besides attempting to exterminate mice and rats, London's lord mayor ordered the killing of all dogs and cats. The pesthouses and the graveyards couldn't keep up, either. In one particularly harrowing scene, H.F. ventures out to watch bodies being tumbled into an enormous, newly dug trench by night.

If one person in a household showed signs of the disease, all the people in it were quarantined for a month, possibly condemning them to death, with watchmen guarding the door 24 hours a day.

But the quarantines weren't very effective. Defoe argues they were even counterproductive. Watchmen could be tricked or bribed; between the death of someone in the house and the arrival of the authorities, people had time to run away and did, possibly spreading the disease.

Defoe's novel shows how far we've come medically, scientifically, and technologically, as well as in terms of

our collective ability to manage emergencies. But it also shows, if you needed more proof, that people haven't changed. Quacks and miracle cures, which flourished during the plague, are still with us, despite our far higher levels of education and the existence of real medicine. (Crystals, anyone? Anti-vaxxers? Homeopathy?) In *Contagion* a blogger pretending to be a crusading journalist makes millions decrying the mainstream media and promoting a bogus cure. Today he'd have his own show on Fox News. At least Defoe's Londoners could say they simply didn't have the requisite knowledge or social capacity to combat the plague; given their limits, they did their best. But what's Trump's excuse for fumbling and denial in the critical early phase of Covid-19?

Defoe's narrator was ahead of us in another crucial way: He resists the popular idea that the plague was God's judgment on the unrighteous, noting that good and bad people were equally likely to be



Defoe shows how far we've come medically, scientifically, technologically. But he also shows that people haven't changed.

struck down. He was smarter than today's fundamentalists who blame disasters on gays, feminists, and liberals—to say nothing of Trumpies who believe the coronavirus is a Democratic hoax or Rush Limbaugh, who told his millions of listeners that it's called Covid-19 because it's the 19th coronavirus, thus obviously something that happens all the time. (In fact, 19 stands for 2019, the year Covid-19 began.)

The fecklessness and selfishness of the rich is another human constant. Defoe mentions that the king and queen fled to Oxford, where the court continued its hedonistic and profligate ways. To be fair, the king reportedly donated £1,000 a week, which was real money back then, to relieve London's sick and poor. Today's aristocrats are just as egotistical but arguably less charitable: They're flying on private jets to their homes in supposedly safer countries, hunkering down in military-style bunkers.

They're definitely not having as much fun as the

wealthy young people in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, who escaped the 1348 plague by holing up in the Florentine countryside, flirting and telling sexy stories. Even if you don't possess a charming Italian villa and are stuck with your children in your too-small apartment, you can take a leaf from Boccaccio. You'll get depressed if you let yourself go, so keep your standards up. Wear your pretty clothes. (I've got my purple Rothy's flats on.) Drink and eat delicious things, go for walks, play music and games, keep up your friendships, real and virtual.

And wouldn't it be great to come out of this time with something to show for it besides an encyclopedic knowledge of crap TV? Why not try to write or paint or draw something or read some challenging books.

The *Decameron* is over 800 pages long, so if you start now, you'll have plenty of time to finish it before life goes back to normal. If it ever does. ■

The fecklessness and selfishness of the rich is another human constant. Today's aristocrats are just as egotistical but arguably less charitable.

SNAPSHOT / DITA ALANGKARA

Sea Change

An employee in protective gear sprays disinfectant near a tank at SeaWorld Ancol in Jakarta, which closed on March 14 in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The city, like many others around the world, shut down all schools, entertainment spots, and tourist destinations.

Calvin
Trillin
—
Deadline
Poet

RELIEFER

Jared Kushner steps in to fix White House's chaotic response to the pandemic.
—*News reports*

He's tasked with devising a Middle East peace,
Has other portfolios equally grand.
So why aren't we breathing a sigh of relief
That Jared's arrived and will take things in hand?



OIL AND WATER

(Don't Mix)

How activists are winning the fight against oil exploration in the Mediterranean—and why so much is still at stake.



BY
EURYDICE BERSI



IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, THE SEA-bed drops to depths of more than 17,000 feet, forming the most stunning geological feature of the Mediterranean basin: the Hellenic Trench, an approximately 400-mile-long, crescent-shaped abyss stretching from western Greece to Turkey, where powerful earthquakes are born and rare marine creatures find refuge. These days, the western edge of the Hellenic Trench represents a stark divide between two opposing worlds: In the west, Italy, Croatia, France, and Spain have banned or are in the process of banning new offshore hydrocarbon extraction as a way of safeguarding the fragile Mediterranean environment and combating climate change. In the east, Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey are locked in a growing geopolitical competition, staking conflicting claims to marine areas containing possible hydrocarbon reserves while warships defend vessels prospecting for oil and gas.

You might call it a paradox. Eastern Mediterranean countries abundantly endowed with sun and wind are aspiring to become fossil fuel producers just as the hydrocarbon era should be drawing to a close. What's more, to help them do so, they are enlisting French and Spanish companies no longer allowed to start oil and gas projects in their home countries. Egged on by successive US administrations and ExxonMobil, which participates in a consortium exploring for gas south of Crete and around Cyprus, the Eastern Mediterranean countries seem detached from much of the rest of Europe.

The next policy frontier in most of Europe is outlawing new oil and gas exploration and drilling, as well as phasing out existing extraction projects. After years of massive political mobilization, this drastic policy shift is well underway in Spain, France, Italy, and other countries. For lessons in how to score major environmental victories with the broad support of citizens' groups and even local capitalists, look no further than the countries of the Western and Central Mediterranean.

IN THE CONSELL INSULAR, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE government of Ibiza, Vicente Marí Torres, the Spanish island's top official, recalls 2012 with dread: "It was a bad dream. We luckily woke up." That year, Scottish company Cairn Energy had four permits to explore oil and gas right off the shores of Ibiza in the deep waters between the mainland and the Balearic Islands, the Spanish autonomous archipelago in the Mediterranean. Those were among a raft of permits issued amid the financial crisis, inviting oil companies to search for oil and gas across the country. Since 2009, more than 100 oil and gas research permits were issued in Spain. But of those, 57 have been officially discarded, and the rest face near certain demise, thanks to the fierce local resistance that ended up influencing central government policy—so much so that the

Eurydice Bersi is a journalist based in Athens. She has worked at the foreign desk of the Greek newspaper Kathimerini since 1998.

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"If someone told me when we started off what we would accomplish, I would have never believed it."

—María Ángeles Marí Puig, general secretary, PIMEEF

Building power:
A protest against oil exploration in Manfredonia, Italy, in October 2012.



country is now on the cusp of banning all new oil and gas projects.

The Climate Change and Energy Transition bill, which Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's socialist-left coalition government is set to bring to parliament and is almost certain to pass, states that "no new exploration authorizations, hydrocarbon research permits or exploitation concessions will be granted in the national territory, including the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf."

"The question of banning all new drilling looks settled," says Sara Pizzinato, a member of the technical secretariat of Alianza Mar Blava (Blue Sea Alliance), a formidable advocacy coalition that formed in 2013 to fight the oil projects around the Balearic Islands. With new wells ruled out, the only remaining controversy in the run-up to the final version of the bill is how soon the few wells that produce oil in the country will cease operation.

"If someone told me when we started off what we would accomplish, I would have never believed it," María Ángeles Marí Puig, the general secretary of Petita i Mitjana Empresa d'Eivissa i Formentera (PIMEEF, a chamber of small and medium-size companies on the islands of Ibiza and Formentera), which is a member of the Alianza.

At first glance, an umbrella organization of 52 groups, from bakers' and plumbers' to caterers' and nursery school owners' associations, is the last place one would look for resistance against deep-sea oil drilling. But this is Alianza Mar Blava's strength: The organization involves everyone—civil society, business, and local authorities—in the widest possible alliance.

"For years, I was dedicating at least half of my workweek as PIMEEF general secretary to the needs of Alianza," says Marí Puig, while at least 15 to 20 employees of various environmental NGOs, other business associations, and municipalities around the Balearic Islands were doing the same. A group of 30 to 40 volunteers was tasked with raising public awareness of offshore drilling, and lawyers and lobbyists in Madrid were following every move by the oil companies and the authorities, immediately alert-

ing people on the islands.

Spanish law allows for a brief window of public consultation before a project is evaluated by the Ministry of Environment, and the alliance used this opportunity to flood the authorities with complaints; the Cairn Energy project received around 128,000 petitions—almost as many complaints as there are inhabitants of Ibiza.

In the Balearic Islands, all efforts were focused on stopping exploration before the initial phase of mapping the seafloor through acoustic surveys even began. “We didn’t want the surveys because maybe they would have found oil and that would have forced us to change our economic model,” says Marí Torres. “Hopefully, now that the nightmare is over, we will focus on the dream of making Ibiza sustainable.”

For years, environmental activists had been at loggerheads with tourism developers over the 13 million annual visitors who flood the Balearic Islands, straining the local ecosystem. But this fight was different. “It is incredible how everyone got together,” says Juan Tur, an engineer who started the social movement Eivissa Diu No (Ibiza Says No), on a bright winter day at Salinas beach, while volunteers trawl the sand behind him, collecting the tiniest scraps of plastic. “We spent 50 euros and organized the biggest demonstration in the history of the island. Everything we asked for was donated for free. We only had to say, ‘It’s about the oil exploration.’ I was literally crying.” Even the local billionaire, Abel Matures, came out against oil drilling—a sign that it might not be necessary to bring down capitalism in order to end the oil era; dividing the capitalists could be enough.

The outpouring of resistance, peaking with the record-

Best-laid plans: Clockwise from top left: Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz, Greek Environment and Energy Minister Kostis Hatzidakis, and Cypriot Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism Minister Yiorgos Lakkotrypīs signing the EastMed pipeline agreement, January 2, 2020.



Great divide: The areas off Spain, France, Italy, and Croatia are now all but barred to drilling, while the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean are still open to hydrocarbon exploration.

“We spent 50 euros and organized the biggest demonstration in the history of the island.”

—Juan Tur

setting demonstration in 2014, had a profound impact on the local branch of the conservative Partido Popular de las Islas Baleares, forcing its leaders to take a stand against their party’s policies in Madrid. “At first, the party tried to say that there’s nothing we can do, since the permits had already been granted,” says Cristina Martín-Vega, the chief editor of the newspaper *Diario de Ibiza*. But as supporters expressed their outrage, the PP Baleares changed course to oppose drilling.

In 2015, Cairn Energy did not follow up with paperwork on the four permits in the Gulf of Valencia and closed down its Spain office, signaling victory for the local movement. Absent any relevant company statement, it’s impossible to say whether the project’s demise was due to the expectation that the company would fail to secure drilling rights, rather than, say, tanking global oil prices. But we do know a lot more about how crucial grassroots pressure was in informing the next decision, the one that permanently banned oil and gas companies not just from that original concession area but from a much larger one.

As Madrid kept issuing more permits for exploration in the Mediterranean, the anti-drilling movement decided its tactics had to change. Rather than fight off the projects one by one, why not push for the protection of an entire area? The one that most urgently needed safeguarding was a deepwater corridor running parallel to the eastern coast of Spain, home to dolphins and whales that feed there or pass through on their annual migration from the Atlantic to the waters off Corsica. Known as the Corredor de Migración de Cetáceos (Cetacean Migration Corridor), it was under threat from acoustic surveys, so activists collected meticulous data on the harm the sound blasts cause and presented it to the authorities at the same time that public pressure was mounting.

The pressure worked. With unanimous decisions in 2016 and 2018, the parliament of the Balearic Islands asked for 46,385 square kilometers (almost 18,000 square miles) to be declared a marine protected area, even though there were more than a dozen active exploration permits inside it. Then, in June 2018, then-Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy’s conservative government collapsed. Sánchez came to power with support from the



left Unidas Podemos and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, and one of the first acts of the new government was to declare the corridor a protected area by royal decree. The oil companies that had been eyeing it, among them the Spanish company Repsol, got the message and in 2019 abandoned more of their permits in the Mediterranean, sensing that a total ban on new extraction was only a matter of time. (Oil companies Repsol and Eni did not respond to requests for comment on this story.)

SPAIN IS NOT ALONE. IN NEIGHBORING FRANCE, A BAN on oil and gas exploration has been in place since 2016, when a moratorium went into effect barring exploration in French areas of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and in the various overseas French territories, as well as on land. That moratorium became law in 2017. The minister for ecology at the time, Ségolène Royal, declared that the end of new drilling was a necessary step for France to fulfill its environmental commitments. To the east, Croatia, home to the splendid Dalmatian Coast, also had no qualms settling the issue with a ban on offshore oil and gas projects in 2016. In Italy, activism has also brought oil exploration to a standstill, with no new licenses issued since February 2019.

"We imposed the moratorium in order to draw up an area plan and see where it is appropriate and where it isn't appropriate to drill," says the right-populist Five Star Movement's Gianni Girotto, the president of the Italian Senate's committee on industry, commerce, and tourism. Drawing up the zoning plan has proved difficult, since even those regions that favor drilling in principle do not want to see oil rigs in their backyards. The ban, originally due to expire in August 2020, was just extended until August 2021.

Italians pushing back against oil extraction may not know about the parallel fight that was gaining steam around the same time in the Balearic Islands, but they are well aware of what decades of oil business have meant for different regions of their own country, and they want none of it. "It is a lie that oil platforms don't pollute," says Saverio Lopedote, a fisherman and the president of the fishermen's association of Monopoli, a scenic town on the southern Adriatic. "I sliced the fish open, and it stank. I seasoned it the best way I could, it still stank," he said, describing how, many years ago, he had to throw back a whole catch contaminated by oil from a platform off the southeast coast.

Fishermen in Monopoli were among the first to mobilize when news came out that Rome had handed out licenses for oil exploration and exploitation off southern Italy. In 2012 dozens of mayors, local businesspeople, and the president of Puglia marched against oil drilling in a demonstration the likes of which the picturesque city of 50,000 had never seen before. The region had spent time and money to improve wastewater treatment to upgrade its beaches and had zero appetite for new marine pollution. Oil and gas platforms nowadays are highly automated, so even the promise of employment rang hollow.

"Currently, a new large offshore gas facility is under



"It is a lie that oil platforms don't pollute.... I sliced the fish open, and it stank. I seasoned it the best way I could, it still stank."

—Saverio Lopedote

Contested waters:

The Casablanca oil platform, operated by the Spanish company Repsol, in the Mediterranean Sea off Tarragona, Spain, in 2016.

construction in Ibleo, south of Sicily," says Alessandro Gianni, the campaign coordinator of Greenpeace Italy. But it's continuing only because two companies, Eni and the Milan-based Edison, obtained the relevant licenses before the current ban. "We asked to take a

detailed look at how many jobs would be created. The number is around 20," he says. Plus there is the matter of the country's very future. "By the end of the century, Italy is projected to lose about 5 percent of its territory to flooding. Most of it is in the northern Adriatic, near Ravenna, which is Italy's oil capital," he adds. "Whenever I am asked about the jobs in Ravenna, I say, 'What about Ravenna itself?'"

THE OIL GIANTS HAVE NOT BEEN DETERRED ENTIRELY. Instead, when a country has banned exploration in its backyard, oil companies simply go farther afield to continue their work. In the past three years, Repsol and the French giant Total were granted licenses to explore for oil and gas in the Ionian Sea and the Sea of Crete, in blocks that largely overlap with the Hellenic Trench. ExxonMobil is part of a consortium investigating the most promising area, and other partners include Hellenic Petroleum and the UK's Energean.

These locations are rich in biodiversity, like the Cetacean Migration Corridor and the waters off France's Côte d'Azur. "The Spanish Corredor has a maximum depth of 2,500 meters [about 8,200 feet], while the Hellenic Trench reaches depths of more than 5,000 meters," says Carlos Bravo, former technical coordinator for Alianza Mar Blava. "It harbors the biggest population of endangered sperm whales in the Mediterranean and lots of other sensitive species." WWF Greece began a campaign to declare the Hellenic Trench a protected area last year, with an appeal by 100 scientists and organizations from across the world. But the effort has not attained a level of local and international visibility sufficient to force the Greek government to shelve the exploration plans.

The Mediterranean is a semienclosed sea whose waters take about a century to renew, and it faces some of



the most intense pressures of any marine environment. It is one of the biggest tourist magnets in the world, and its ecosystems suffer from pollution, overfishing, noise from heavy marine traffic, and invasive species that cross the Suez Canal—increasingly so as sea temperatures rise.

Deafening and continual sound blasts from acoustic surveys, exploratory wells, and oil and gas production could inflict immense harm in both environmental and commercial terms to the entire region. Yet Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey are risking conflict to do just this. As usual, part of the reason boils down to nearsighted economics. Greece cut the Hellenic Trench into exploration blocks in 2011, amid the most severe financial crisis in recent economic history, one that ended up shrinking the country's GDP by a whopping 25 percent. Turkey needs energy resources to develop its economy and close the gap with Europe. Other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean that have just recently invited international companies to look for oil in their waters are war-ravaged Syria and cash-strapped Lebanon.

But economics is not the whole story—after all, Croatia's GDP per capita is lower than that of post-crisis Greece, yet Croatia decided to protect its seas. Cyprus is eager to drill despite being the 34th-richest country in the world in terms of per capita GDP, and Israel is doing the same, despite being the 21st richest, according to the most recent figures from the International Monetary Fund. Parts of Cyprus and Israel could become virtually unlivable in the summer if the climate crisis is not mitigated, but still, those countries form the backbone of a new projected gas pipeline, EastMed, which will span 1,180 miles and carry natural gas from the Mediterranean to Europe.

Recently developed imaging technologies have allowed for the discovery of gas pockets in previously hard-to-explore geological structures unique to the Eastern Mediterranean, and this has fired up geopolitical rivalries. The African countries of the Mediterranean are largely staying out of the fray, though Egypt has begun drawing from its offshore gas reserves, and Libya has signed a memorandum with Turkey to divide Eastern Mediterranean waters in a way that is unacceptable to Greece. The next great battle for the oil companies is securing environmental permits, but judging from the recent spike in mobilization in communities in western Greece and Crete, this might not be as straightforward as they think. Not to mention that installing drilling equipment and pipelines along Europe's most seismically active arc, where powerful earthquakes are a regular occurrence, is not exactly in the best interest of people living nearby.

For Greek activists, the battle is complicated by the new gas rush's underpinning by a US desire to build energy infrastructure that excludes Russia. Green energy infrastructure could accomplish the same goal but would present distinct disadvantages for ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel companies. Indeed, ExxonMobil is lobbying for the construction of EastMed.

In the end, avoiding senseless tensions and dealing with the most global of all problems, the climate crisis, might come down to a strong, shared commitment by communities to protect their immediate surroundings. For a fragile ecosystem like the Mediterranean, this means that the entire region, not just countries in the central and western part, must work in the same direction. "If we do not preserve the Mediterranean Sea, it has no future," says Miquel Mir, the Balearic Islands' minister of the environment. Just like the battles against drilling, scaled from tiny islands to mighty capitals, a Mediterranean free of fossil fuels could serve as a blueprint for climate sanity on a global scale. ■

Unpaid De

The sole slavery reparations program enacted by equivalent of \$23 million—not to the formerly

Free at last: This illustration, "Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia by the Colored People, in Washington, April 19, 1866," by Frederick Dielman, was published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1866.

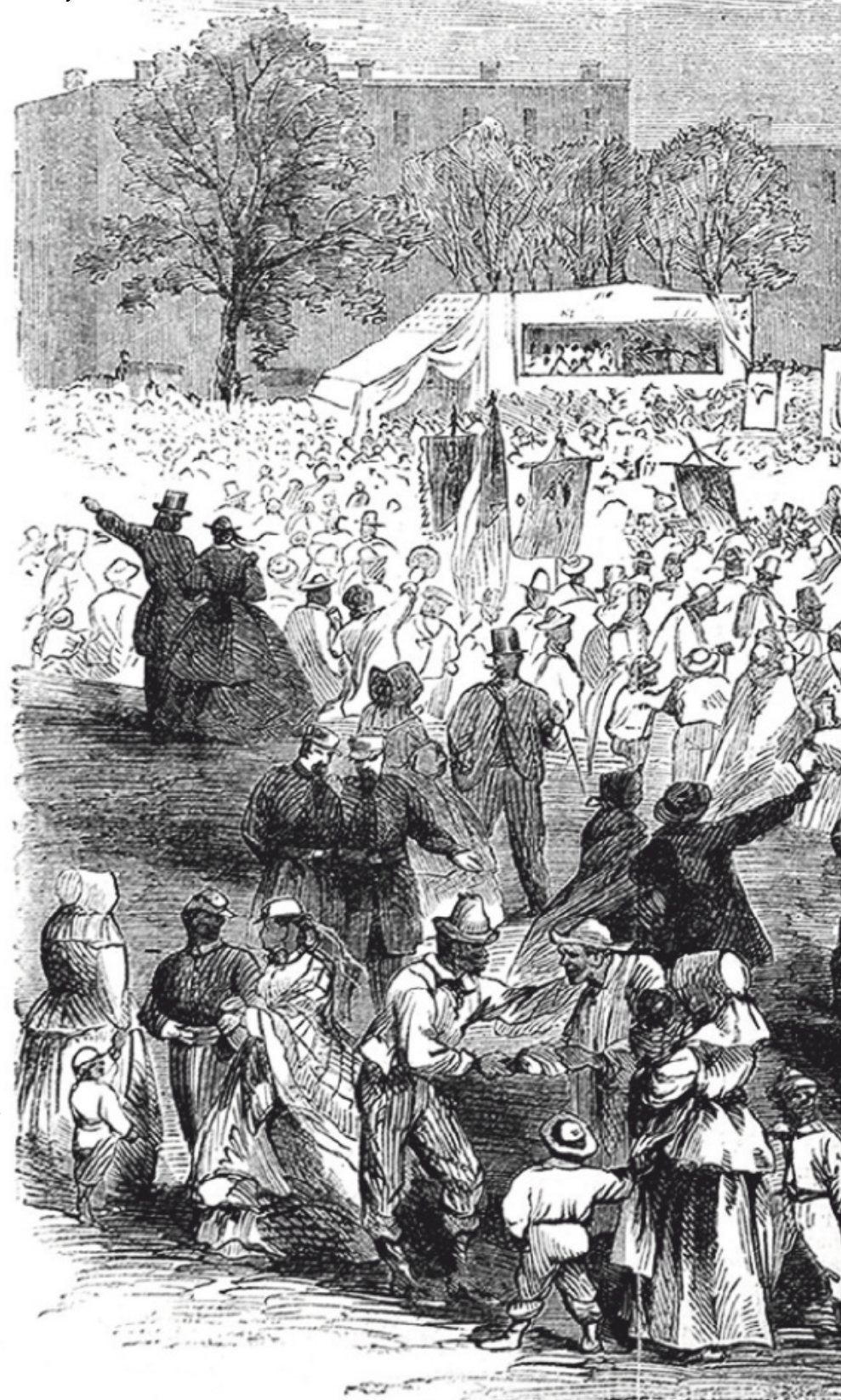


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bts

KALI HOLLOWAY

*the federal government doled out the 2020
enslaved but to their white enslavers.*

IN 1870 A BLACK WOMAN NAMED HENRIETTA WOOD SUED THE white deputy sheriff who, nearly two decades earlier, kidnapped her from the free state of Ohio, illegally transported her to slaveholding Kentucky, and sold her into a life of enslavement that endured until the end of the Civil War. Lawyers for the defendant argued that Wood's claim to reparations for decades of unpaid labor was barred by a statute of limitations. Nearly 150 years later, as Congress prepared to hear testimony on the idea of reparations, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell offered much the same argument. "I don't think reparations for something that happened 150 years ago for



whom none of us currently living are responsible is a good idea,” he said, before ticking off the Civil War, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the election of Barack Obama as evidence that any debts owed to the descendants of the enslaved have already been largely paid. “I think we’re always a work in progress in this country, but no one currently alive was responsible for that.”

Whether five years after Emancipation or a century and a half later, whether the claimants were the formerly enslaved or their descendants, the United States has steadfastly refused at nearly every opportunity to provide recompense for slavery and its disastrous legacy. The country reneged on its post-Emancipation promise of 40 acres and a mule just a few months after making it. In the 1890s, the federal government brutally crushed a national campaign to give freed black people pension plans. And for nearly each of the last 30 years, Congress has rejected a bill that would merely create a commission to study the consequences of slavery and consider the impact of reparations.

“Any legislation that sought to put black people on an equal footing has been ultimately, if not strangled in the crib, slowly starved,” historian Carroll Gibbs, the author of *Black, Copper, & Bright: The District of Columbia’s Black Civil War Regiment*, told me. “It’s important to understand that what makes the argument hollow—that it’s too late to do anything because everybody’s dead now—is that the US refused to do it when everyone was still alive.”

Instead, the US government supported and enshrined into law policies that further entrenched white supremacy. Case in point: The only reparations program enacted by the federal government doled out the 2020 equivalent of over \$23 million in Treasury Department funds—not to the formerly enslaved but to their white enslavers.

In April 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Compensated Emancipation Act, a congressional bill abolishing slavery in Washington, DC. Less than half a year earlier, he proposed similar legislation in Delaware that stalled in the state’s House of Representatives. Under the DC law—the first emancipation legislation in this country’s history—enslavers were eligible to receive up to \$300 for each person they were legally obliged to liberate. (I use the term “enslaver” rather than “slave owner” because it acknowledges the active role those individuals played in keeping human beings locked in a brutal and violent institution. And while the reductive term “slave” has historically been used to strip black people of their humanity, referring to an “enslaved person” makes clear that bondage was a legally enforced position.) No such provision was made for DC’s newly freed black population. Instead, seeing no more use for them, the government offered formerly enslaved people funds only if they agreed to relocate to Haiti, Liberia, “or such other country beyond the limits of the United States.” For this act of self-deportation from the land they had made an economic powerhouse, payment would “not exceed one hundred dollars for each emigrant.”

Almost no freed people took up the government on its insulting offer, but DC-area enslavers submitted 966 petitions in the months following the law’s passage. In accordance with eligibility requirements, each filer

declared loyalty to the Union and presented itemized descriptions—essentially, invoices—of those they’d enslaved, assigning estimated dollar amounts to each human being. Lincoln empaneled a three-person commission to render a final judgment on the monetary merit of each petition and thus on the black lives described therein.

THE TRIO OF DC-BASED COMMISSIONERS DECIDED that their first order of business was to locate someone well acquainted with the task of putting price tags on human beings. The Civil War, now entering its second year, disrupted the retail market for enslaved people, causing instability in pricing. Further, the trading of enslaved people—meaning the literal and legal sale of humans from one enslaver to another—was banned in Washington, DC, under the Compromise of 1850. “There are few persons, especially in a community like Washington, where slavery has been for many years an interest of comparatively trifling importance, who possess the knowledge and discrimination as to the value of slaves,” the commission mused in its written report. This area of unpreparedness, the commissioners feared, might interfere with their ability to assess the “just apportionment of compensation” to which enslavers were entitled. Driven by sympathetic concern for the hardships of enslavers denied the legal right to enslave—and to avoid what they unironically referred to as the “interminable labor” of accurately guesstimating people’s worth—the commission brought on Bernard M. Campbell, “an experienced dealer in slaves from Baltimore.”

According to the law, petitioners needed to “produce” the enslaved people for whom they requested compensation, and Campbell’s duties included conducting physical examinations to determine their value, just as at auctions. But the rule of an in-person appearance was often waived. “Many [freed people] left immediately” when Emancipation was announced in the district, seeking out paid work with the military and in parts farther north. Others had run away before the act became law, and in a few cases, enslaved people died just after Lincoln signed the bill.

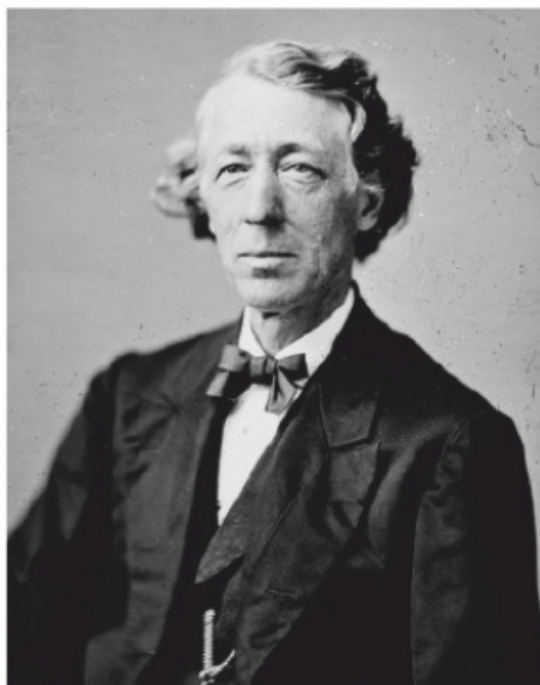
“Under such circumstances,” the commissioners determined, “it would be manifestly unjust to withhold compensation on account of the inability of the claimant to produce” the enslaved person they claimed. The panel decided enslavers deserved compensation if the people they’d enslaved had escaped no more than two years prior. Petitioners were also asked to include “written evidence” substantiating their claims, but submissions lacking that proof ran little risk of being rejected. This “liberal construction of the act,” the commissioners wrote, sprang from the desire to free the most people (and, of course, pay the most enslavers) without paperwork getting in the way. But the laxity with which this rule was applied highlighted one of the many horrific aspects of enslavement: the ease with which white claims to black bodies and lives could be made.

“Slaves were held, owned, and mistreat-

“Any legislation that sought to put black people on an equal footing has been ultimately, if not strangled in the crib, slowly starved.”

—Carroll Gibbs

Putting a price on human beings: Horatio King was a member of the commission adjudicating claims under the District of Columbia’s 1862 Compensated Emancipation Act.



ed so callously that there quite often was not a legal basis for their ownership,” says Kenneth Winkle, a historian at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and co-director of the research project Civil War Washington. “Slave owners were asked to provide records or bills of sale or receipts or some paperwork. Most of them simply said, ‘I’ve misplaced it’ or ‘I’m not sure I ever had any.’ A white person could claim ownership of an African-American as a slave based on the testimony of two other white people, with no paperwork necessary.”

The Compensated Emancipation Act did not grant automatic emancipation to enslaved people not named in petitions, and some enslavers did not file for compensation by the act’s 90-day deadline, many of them pro-slavery Confederate sympathizers who had no intention of emancipating those they enslaved. To address these cases, Congress passed the Supplementary Act in July 1862, which allowed black folks to submit petitions pleading for their own emancipation and to testify and serve as witnesses—the first time African Americans were allowed to do so in federal proceedings. More than 160 claims were filed by people the commissioners described as “held to service in the District of Columbia by reason of African descent.”

Winkle and his colleagues at Civil War Washington have meticulously cataloged, digitized, transcribed, and posted online nearly all of the petitions filed under the Compensated Emancipation Act. No matter how much you may know about the violence, cruelty, depravity, and terror of slavery, those horrors are revealed anew in the petitions filed. The petitioners’ responses to the bureaucratic formality of noting how they “acquired” other human beings as their property leads to firsthand accounts of black people ripped from their families, treated like hand-me-downs, and enslaved by dint of birth. One claimant wrote that an enslaved woman named “Ann Williams [was] acquired by marriage forty years ago” and that her grandson, Albert Hollyday, “was born while his mother (Eliza since sold) was owned by me.” Another enslaver (this time a woman, of which there were many) reported that a black woman identified only as Delilah was “willed to me by my father in 1816” and that “while my slave and in my survice [sic] Delilah had a daughter named Amanda who while my slave and in my survice [sic] became the mother of said Casper & William,” two young men for whom she requested \$450 and \$350, respectively.

Enslaved people are listed by name in the petitions, a rarity in documents from the era. That omission was intentional and institutional: Recording the names of the enslaved threatened to confer personhood, and the denial of humanity was the bedrock on which black chattel slavery rested. Erasure of black people from the American historical record is partly located in the prac-



Broken promise:

The US government reneged on Gen. William T. Sherman’s order to provide “40 acres and a mule” to formerly enslaved people, forcing millions into sharecropping.

No matter how much you know about the violence, cruelty, depravity, and terror of slavery, those horrors are revealed anew in the compensation petitions filed.

Kali Holloway is a journalist whose work has appeared in The Nation, The Daily Beast, The Guardian, and numerous other outlets.

tice of reducing the enslaved to nameless head counts or dollar amounts, an obliteration of black existence that continues to impede African American efforts at heritage and genealogical research. Even this tiny recognition of black humanity was conceded only in exchange for federal dollars.

The degrading reduction of black human beings to what were deemed salable traits is both the most salient horror in the petitions and the entire reason for the exercise. Petitioners described the old, the very young, and the sick as having “no value,” rendered worthless by a market that no longer had a way to exploit them. Just as horrifying are the price tags affixed by petitioners to enslaved people for whom they hoped to receive top dollar. Through descriptions of enslaved people’s physical and mental characteristics, the petitioners provided justifications for their compensation claims, highlighting what the commissioners labeled “their intrinsic utility to their owners.” Ironically, these reductive descriptions provide rare glimpses of the human beings named, the lives they lived, and the circumstances they endured.

Linda Harris, for example, is described as a “slave for life,” of “olive brown complexion with full suit of hair, free spoken and intelligent.” Her enslaver writes that Linda is “honest” and “an excellent cook, washerwoman or nurse. During the past year she has had occasional attacks of rheumatism; and is at intervals troubled with weakness of the breast, but has never been compelled to abandon her usual duties.” (As if, one thinks, she had a choice.) Linda’s estimated worth is given as \$800. Her enslaver was paid \$306.60 for her.

William Alexander Johnson, 22 years old, is described as 5 feet 8 inches tall and “a skillful mechanic, very ingenious in every branch of mechanism...employed in making models for patents, in making and repairing mathematical instruments.” His enslaver requested \$2,000 for him; she was compensated in the amount of \$657.

Twenty-three-year-old Margaret E. Taylor was the mother of 5-year-old Annie and infant Fanny, both of whom are described as being of “mulatto color.” Their male enslaver notes that “both [were] born while their

To the Commissioners under the act of Congress approved the 16th of April, 1862, entitled "An act for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia."

Your Petitioner, *Thomas Scrivener* of *Washington city district* by this *his* petition in writing, represents and states, that *he* is a person loyal to the United States, who, at the time of the passage of the said act of Congress, held a claim to service or labor against *two* --- *Linda or Linda Harris* and *Edward Maddox* --- of African descent of the name of *Linda and Edward* for and during the life of said *Linda and Edward* and that by said act of Congress said *Linda and Edward* *were* discharged and freed of and from all claim of your petitioner to such service or labor: that at the time of said discharge said *Linda and Edward* *were* of the ages of --- and of the personal description following: ---

1st Linda or Linda Harris, female, slave for life; aged about thirty (30) years; of an olive brown complexion with full suit of hair, free spoken and intelligent

The petition: Linda Harris's enslaver received \$306.60 for emancipating her.

Harris's enslaver wrote that she was "honest" and "an excellent cook, washer-woman or nurse. I believe her to be worth about \$800."

said mother was held to said service or labor by your Petitioner." He was given \$569.40 for the woman and her children, with Fanny garnering just \$21.90.

Gibbs told me that, in addition to the dehumanizing nature of the process, he was consistently struck by the way the descriptions counter the narrative that enslaved people were mentally feeble or lazy. "Despite the claims of proslavery [advocates]," he said, "we're looking at people whom their masters described in many cases as worthy, competent, skilled."

Philip Reid is described in a petition as 42 years old, "not prepossessing in appearance, but smart in mind," and formerly "employed...by the Government." He was a skilled artisan who helped cast DC's Statue of Freedom and whose ingenuity succeeded in placing the bronze figure atop the Capitol, where it stands today. For his 33 weeks of labor without respite, Reid was paid \$1.25 per day. He was allowed to keep only his Sunday wages; the rest went to his enslaver, Clark Mills. In his claim, Mills requested \$1,500 in compensation for Reid. He received \$350.40.

"The primary drawback in consulting these records is that most of them were compiled by the slave owners, not by the slaves themselves," Winkle said. "So this becomes a huge exercise in reading between the lines, so to speak, and certainly not taking this information at face value but analyzing it before putting the pieces together to try to create an authentic collective portrait of who these slaves were, how they lived their lives, and what they accomplished. And surviving slavery was an incredible accomplishment." He added that the petitions represent "just over 3,300 slaves in the District of Columbia. I always say it's one-tenth of 1 percent of all the slaves in the American South, but we see them. They are named. We can see them as individuals."

"Self-petitions" from enslaved African Americans requesting their freedom, many

of them written by white pro bono lawyers, provide yet more insight. Phillip Meredith, a 30-year-old black man, lists his enslaver of 30 years as "General Robert Lee." A corroborating witness notes the general was "formerly of U.S. Army now in Rebel service." Meredith's petition was approved.

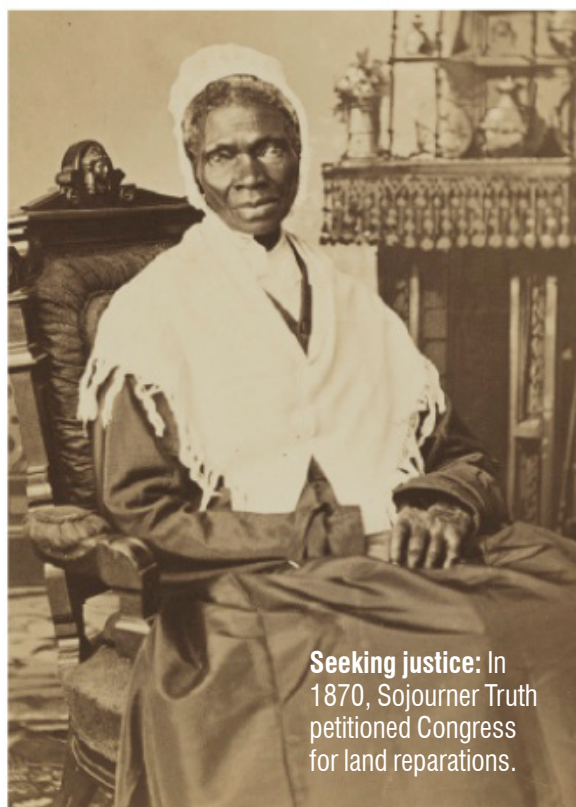
A more heartrending story is told through the "self-petition" of Mary A. Prather on behalf of herself and her 3-year-old son, Arthur. "Mary says she had permission" from her enslaver to be hired out, according to testimony, but that permission was later rescinded, making her a fugitive and thus ineligible for emancipation under the act. Mary's and Arthur's names appear in the commissioners' report among those "from whom certificates have been withheld."

Washington Childs wrote in his "self-petition" that he was 33 years old, 6 feet 2 inches tall, with "a large hair mole on the right side of his chin." He indicated that he was hired out in Washington, DC, "nearly or quite five years last past" by his Virginian enslaver, who would have received all of his wages during that time. His enslaver provided a letter of support for Childs's emancipation to be presented to the commission. Included in the missive is a citation of an outstanding debt of \$60, along with the galling request that Childs pay it off by sending "a barrel of good sugar & sacks of coffee and 2 bolts of cotton & [a] pound of best Tea, that is if you can send the tea & cotton by express."

His emancipation was granted, and his enslaver was not compensated. But the overwhelming majority of those who submitted compensation claims succeeded in getting funds—often in amounts lower than requested, but at times up to \$788. The compensation given to white enslavers helped maintain their financial security and the continuation of white supremacy and power.

"Let's look at the fortunes of the larger holders of enslaved people—for example, George Washington Young, the largest slaveholder in the district, or Margaret Barber, the second largest," Gibbs told me. "Barber's farm, North View, is now the site of the US vice president's house and the Naval Observatory. She was able to use the money [from the act] and parlay it and invest it." Another, Ann Biscoe, "had an employment bureau, essentially. She made good money leasing out the enslaved people who were under her control. When compensated emancipation came, she still made out fairly well."

EIGHT MONTHS AFTER PASSAGE OF the Compensated Emancipation Act, during his Second Annual Message to Congress, Lincoln proposed a gradual expansion of the policy to any state that freed its enslaved people by the year 1900—a plan that would have condemned enslaved black folks to four more decades of backbreaking, brutally extracted labor and exploitation. Compensation for the formerly enslaved never even came up.



Seeking justice: In 1870, Sojourner Truth petitioned Congress for land reparations.

Instead, Lincoln again floated the idea that freed black folks could be consensually expatriated to “Liberia and Hayti.” The plan, of course, was not enacted. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which applied only to the treasonous Confederate states, over which the Union had no jurisdiction. Slavery wasn’t fully abolished until nearly three years later, with the ratification of the 13th Amendment.

In January 1865, the United States undertook the “40 acres and a mule” reparations program, distributing 400,000 acres of Southern coastal land confiscated from disloyal Confederates to freed black families in plots of “not more than forty (40) acres of tillable ground.” (Union Gen. William T. Sherman, who issued the initial order, also authorized distribution of old Army mules.) Historian and former US Commission on Civil

Rights chair Mary Frances Berry noted that by June of 1865, “40,000 freedmen had been settled” on the land and were already “growing crops.” Lincoln’s successor, Andrew Johnson, cruelly reversed the policy, evicting the land’s black occupants and returning their properties to the white Confederate enslavers who had attacked the Union. Many of those black folks would be forced into sharecropping, a Jim Crow form of slavery in all but name.

American history has since been marked by too many calls for reparations to list, each rebuffed in turn by the US government. In 1870, Sojourner Truth unsuccessfully petitioned Congress for land reparations, stating, “I shall make them understand that there is a debt to the Negro people which they can never repay. At least, then, they must make amends.” Walter Vaughan, a white slavery apologist who believed black dollars would ultimately fatten white Southern pockets, wrote an 1890 bill to give freed people pensions like those granted to Civil War veterans. Introduced in Congress by Nebraska Representative William J. Connell, Vaughan’s “ex-slave pension bill” died before becoming law, as did eight other reparations proposals introduced between 1896 and 1903. During the same period, a formerly enslaved woman and mother of five named Callie House cofounded the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association. In 1915, the group sued the US Treasury for \$68 million, the estimated amount of taxes collected on cotton between 1862 and 1868. A lower tribunal and the Supreme Court cited government immunity in dismissing the suit. For her temerity, House was charged



Stolen land, stolen freedom: A sharecropper plowing in Montgomery, Alabama.

“It is impossible to imagine America without the inheritance of slavery.”

—Ta-Nehisi Coates, testifying before Congress in support of HR 40

with mail fraud, convicted by an all-white jury, and sentenced to a year in the Missouri State Penitentiary. Nearly 50 years later, reparations advocate Audley “Queen Mother” Moore secured enough petition signatures—over 1 million—to compel President John F. Kennedy to meet with her, but no legal remedies followed. The US District Court for the Northern District of California dismissed a 1995 reparations lawsuit, and the Supreme Court declined to hear a 2007 class action case against corporations that benefited from black enslavement.

In 2019 the House of Representatives held a hearing on HR 40—the number refers to Sherman’s unfulfilled promise of land—a bill that was introduced in every Congress from 1989 to 2017 by Michigan Representative John Conyers. Unceremoniously killed in committee for nearly 30 years, HR 40 would not compel federal

payouts to the descendants of enslaved people but instead would merely impanel a commission to examine the impact of “slavery and its continuing vestiges.” In taking up the bill’s sponsorship, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee noted that it would help illuminate the statistics that show the “stunning chasm between the destinies of White America and that of Black America.” For example, the median wealth of white families is currently estimated at \$171,000; for black families, it is \$17,600—approximately a tenfold difference. Fewer than 10 percent of white families have zero or negative net worth, while nearly 20 percent of black households do. Discrimination against black people in mortgage lending, historically and today, has hobbled opportunities for homeownership, the source of two-thirds of equity for American households and one of the most reliable forms of intergenerational wealth. And while we’re on the subject of black folks being denied property, it seems like a good moment to note that if those 40 acres and a mule had been distributed as promised, the land would be worth about \$6.4 trillion today.

If there were an actual interest in ending those disparities, Congress would at the very least support studying the numbers. Instead, opponents of HR 40 argue against even investigating the issue. That opposition, including McConnell’s dismissive remarks, demonstrates the ahistorical American self-mythologizing at the heart of the country’s bitter opposition to slavery reparations. The Senate leader and his ilk are fighting an ideological war to defend the lie that slavery was a historical anomaly,

(continued on page 26)

The content of his character: Michael White leaving court in Philadelphia, where he was tried for the killing of Sean Schellenger.

JUSTICE ON THE STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA

When a black bike courier was charged with the murder of a wealthy white property developer, the outcome seemed a foregone conclusion. Only this case didn't turn out that way. **ERNEST OWENS**

Philadelphia



17th and Chancellor: The fateful intersection in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square neighborhood.

MICHAEL WHITE, A 20-YEAR-OLD UBER EATS COURIER, WAS riding his bicycle along the intersection of 17th and Chancellor here when he came upon three men in a Mercedes-Benz shouting at a fellow courier. When White attempted to intervene, the other courier fled, leaving White as the target of the three men's anger. One of them, Sean Schellenger, a 37-year-old real estate developer, chased him into an alley; after a scuffle, White emerged with a knife covered in Schellenger's blood. Schellenger was pronounced dead at Thomas Jefferson University hospital on July 12, 2018, at 11:21 PM.

White surrendered to the police 16 hours later and was charged with first-degree murder and possession of an instrument

of crime. According to the initial police accounts, a traffic tie-up involving another car prompted Schellenger and the two other men to get out of their vehicle to try to clear the jam. When White arrived at the scene, he and Schellenger exchanged words that led to an altercation, and White pulled out a 6-inch knife and stabbed Schellenger once in the back. White's defense team was adamant that he acted in self-defense after a drunken Schellenger violently confronted him. With a poor black defendant and a wealthy white victim, we know how this story ends. Only this one didn't turn out that way.

Instead, White received the kind of legal justice that too many young black men have historically been denied. There are countless statistics and cases that highlight what happens when America's criminal justice system disproportionately stops, frisks, sentences, and incarcerates black people. According to a 2018 United Nations report from the Sentencing Project on racial disparities in the US criminal justice system, prosecutors are more likely to charge people of color with crimes that carry heavy sentences than they are white people. Black youths are incarcerated at over four times the rate of white youths in the country, and African Americans overall are imprisoned at more than five times the rate of white people—a climb from statistics compiled at the beginning of the century.

Behind the statistics of institutional failure lie casualties like 15-year-old Jaquin Thomas, who was found dead in an adult correctional facility; 17-year-old Uniece "Niecey" Fennell, who committed suicide in a North Carolina detention center while waiting to be tried as an adult; and Kalief Browder, who killed himself after spending three years at New York City's Rikers Island jail complex, charged with stealing a backpack at age 16. What made White's encounter with the criminal justice system turn out differently?

MICHAEL WHITE HAS BEEN TRYING TO CATCH A break his whole life. His family life was shattered when he was 12 years old after his father was sent to prison for over 20 years. "It didn't help to sometimes be living homeless and having to move from place to place," White says. "It was rough, but I always just tried to stay positive."

Poetry and music were his therapy as he struggled to find a way out. In 2015, White joined the Philly Youth Poetry Movement slam team, helping the group make it to the semifinals of a national competition, placing fifth in the overall rankings. During this time, he performed historical narratives involving enslaved black people and poems invoking the experiences of his childhood.

"It was an amazing time performing alongside him," says Jamal Parker, White's poetry slam teammate. "Mike instantly connected with other youth poets in the competition, based on his charisma and kindness alone. He was known as someone who was willing to commit to team effort, no matter the circumstances."

White's talent in poetry slam competitions and as a student at the Academy at Palumbo, a college preparatory magnet high school, led to his getting accepted to Morgan State University in Baltimore.

But just as White was beginning his freshman year, he found out that his father had been incarcerated for

sexually abusing and impregnating White's older teenage sister. The exposure of this long-buried secret devastated White, he says, sending him into a "spiral of depression."

"I flunked out of my first year of college. I was taking drugs to cope and just couldn't stay focused," he says. White eventually returned to Philadelphia and struggled to find work. Although he took a leave from college, he says, he had every intention of returning to Morgan State once he had gotten his life back on track. Instead he found himself "caught up in the system" for things he describes as "reactionary." According to court records, he was charged in November 2017 with possession of marijuana, theft, receiving stolen property, possession of an instrument of crime with intent to employ it criminally, and conspiracy. In January 2018, although he had no criminal convictions, he was entered into the city's Accelerated Misdemeanor Program and was ordered to complete community service.

"I was just doing dumb stuff to survive," White says. "I just wanted to do anything that would help me get back to college and connect with my best friend, who kept encouraging me to not give up."

That friend was 19-year-old Jonathan Tobash, a fellow student White met during his freshman year. "We instantly clicked the moment he heard one of my raps," White recalls. "He was from the east side of Baltimore, and I was from South Philly. We both were trying to make it out and make something of ourselves."

Tobash, an industrial engineering major, had many things in common with White—growing up in the rough patches of his city, getting accepted into a prestigious magnet school, and having a deep love for hip-hop music and basketball.

In December 2017, White got a text from friends at Morgan State saying that Tobash had been shot and killed during a robbery attempt outside a convenience store in northeastern Baltimore.

"That broke me," White says. "We kept in touch the entire time I was away. He knew everything I was doing to try to make it back to school, and he never judged me or anything like that. I was so angry that someone took his life."

Saddened by the loss, White helped raise money for his friend's funeral through a GoFundMe campaign. Yet White couldn't attend Tobash's funeral in Baltimore, since he had been advised not to leave the state because of his legal situation at the time. It didn't help that he could not afford to travel, and he gave what little funds he had to the crowdfunding account for Tobash's burial instead.

"That was one thing that I couldn't take back," White says. "I felt like a failure for getting so caught up in my own shit that I couldn't be there for my own friend."

White eventually landed a steady job with Uber Eats, biking through various parts of Philadelphia. He says he considered this type of work "easy money" and "nothing memorable," until the night of July 12, 2018.

"I was delivering on my bike that evening," White



Sean Schellenger: Police initially said he'd been stabbed in the back after an altercation.

"Mike instantly connected with other youth poets... based on his charisma and kindness alone."

—Jamal Parker

Ernest Owens is an award-winning journalist and the CEO of Ernest Media Empire. He can be found on Twitter (@MrErnestOwens) and at ernestowens.com.

recalls. “Everything just felt all too well until it wasn’t.”

White was delivering a Popeyes order to an address near Rittenhouse Square, an affluent neighborhood in downtown Philadelphia. En route to the location, White says, he encountered three white men in a Mercedes-Benz impatiently shouting at a black man, a fellow deliveryman, as his car was parked in their way.

“I overhear a white man in that car refer to this man as a nigger out loud in public,” White says. “They were clearly drunk and loud, and I wanted to make sure he was all right.”

According to White, tensions escalated when one of the men from the car approached the man being shouted at. (Police were never able to identify the other deliveryman.) White says the man who got out of the car was Schellenger.

“Schellenger confronted this guy, and I spoke up, telling him that he didn’t have to be a tough guy,” White says. “The black delivery guy quickly left, and I was headed to my bike. That’s when things took a turn for the worse.”

White says Schellenger drunkenly approached him and began to yell at him. (Autopsy reports showed that Schellenger’s blood alcohol level was 0.199, more than twice the legal driving limit.) As White headed back toward his bike to leave, he says, Schellenger threatened to “beat the black off” him.

“At that point, I was too far from my bike to just run off,” says White. “I pulled out my knife that I carried for safety on the job and began to tell him to back up as I was trying to walk away from him. He kept coming towards me until we landed in a nearby alley.” (Silent video footage of the confrontation that was shown during the trial but not to the public confirms White’s account that Schellenger continued to approach him before the incident escalated to violence.)

What happened next had White “fighting for my life,” he says. “Schellenger held me up in a wrestler-like body-slammng position, and I couldn’t even feel my weight off the ground. I just tried to hold him off me, but I couldn’t feel anything. Once his attempt to slam me on the ground failed, I saw that he landed on the knife as he flipped over.”

Covered in blood from retrieving the knife, White ran down the street, begged money from strangers, then headed home on a trolley. It was now close to midnight, and he says he was too scared to return to get his bike, for fear of being arrested.

“I saw my entire life flashing past my eyes as if it were over,” White says. “I just thought that if the police found me, they would not believe I was acting in self-defense because it involved a rich white man in Rittenhouse.”

Before he got home, White says, he threw the knife over the roof of a nearby apartment building. The following day he turned himself in to authorities. He spent nearly a month behind bars until local activists raised money to cover his bail. He was initially charged

with first-degree murder, but that was quickly reduced to third-degree murder. He was assigned three white men as his public defenders. Then Keir Bradford-Grey entered his life.

“HE COULD HAVE BEEN MY SON,” BRADFORD-GREY says of the first time she met White, when he was out on bail and had just started working at a coffee shop. “I saw the innocence in his eyes and the pain of a young black man who felt helpless.”

Although she’d served as chief public defender in neighboring Montgomery County for four years and in Philadelphia for four years, Bradford-Grey had never worked on a homicide case before. It had been seven years since she’d tried any case before a jury. She says many of her colleagues questioned her decision to “risk it all” for a defendant they “didn’t believe had a fighting chance.”

Their appraisal may have been based on local media coverage, which inflamed passions surrounding the case. Conservative commentators took jabs at newly elected District Attorney Larry Krasner’s office for reducing White’s charge. Black and brown community activists used the hashtag #FreeMikeWhite and held rallies calling for his immediate release and acquittal. Local news shows often used the mug shot of White alongside photos of Schellenger smiling, with some reporters framing the incident as the “Rittenhouse stabbing” and Schellenger as a “stabbing victim.”

For example, a Fox News segment with conservative host Tucker Carlson in November 2019 described Krasner as “[George] Soros-backed” and White as a “killer” and featured Linda Schellenger, Sean Schellenger’s mother, as a guest who criticized Krasner’s decision to reduce White’s charge. She described Krasner as a “rogue DA” who has “gone on a power trip to take this into craziness.”

“It’s literally frightening,” she told Carlson.

“The media did do their white privilege thing quite a bit,” says Philadelphia attorney, journalist, and civil rights activist Michael Coard. “While death in such situations is always tragic, I’ve never seen local media extending the privilege of humanity to black folks who are killed in similar situations.”

He points out that White’s previous legal woes were often used in media stories about him, while “the media rarely, if ever, delved into the fact that Schellenger had three arrests,” Coard says. “Everything about this case wasn’t typical. In fact, it’s actually an aberration.”

“Several lawyers didn’t believe Mike could win because they had become cynical [about] the system altogether due to racial bias,” Bradford-Grey says. “But this wasn’t about my reputation. This was about justice. After reviewing the facts of the case, I had faith that we could prove his innocence.”

One important factor that helped shape the outcome was that Bradford-Grey was able to make her case to Krasner, one of the first of a growing movement of progressive district attorneys. She says that after showing Krasner her investigative findings in the case, he lowered the murder charge to voluntary manslaughter right

“He could have been my son. I saw the innocence in his eyes and the pain of a young black man who felt helpless.”

—Keir Bradford-Grey

A mother’s pain: Linda Schellenger told the press after White’s acquittal in the death of her son, “Our life sentence began... when Sean was fatally stabbed.”



before the trial in October of 2019. Like Kim Foxx in Chicago, Chesa Boudin in San Francisco, and Wesley Bell in Ferguson, Missouri, Krasner is part of a wave of progressive prosecutors elected on promises to end mass incarceration, decriminalize marijuana possession, dramatically reform the cash bail system, and end the death penalty.

“Keir provided information that her public defender’s office independently collected that was useful in helping my office reconsider White’s murder charge,” says Krasner. Among the facts unearthed by Bradford-Grey was Sean Schellenger’s criminal record: He had a 2008 arrest in Florida for battery and resisting detention, although the charges were later dropped. In Pennsylvania’s Chester County he’d also been found guilty of disorderly conduct in 2009 and had been charged with burglary, resisting arrest, criminal trespassing, and theft in 2001.

“The final decision was up to me in reducing White’s charge to manslaughter, and that was due in part to reviewing new information that was being given to us,” the DA told me.

Krasner, who served as a defense attorney for over 30 years, described White’s case as “extraordinary.”

“I saw video footage of the confrontation between White and Schellenger over 20 times,” Krasner says. “Although the clip was silent, a great deal of White’s account when we questioned him corroborated what he described that night as an act of self-defense. My office eventually charged him with manslaughter because we felt that White’s actions were those of imperfect self-defense, based on his use of the knife and other factors.”

Another factor that helped White’s case was the financial support given to the Defender Association of Philadelphia. Last summer the Philadelphia City Council voted to increase the budget for the taxpayer-funded organization.

“With more funding, we were able to hire more experts, send attorneys out of state to conduct interviews, and facilitate mock jury trials to prepare Mike,” Bradford-Gray says. “This case reignited my optimism in the legal system because it showed that working-class people don’t have to go into debt in order to seek justice.”

THE DEFENSE STRATEGY OF HUMANIZING MICHAEL White paid off. On October 17, 2019, he was found not guilty of voluntary manslaughter but was convicted of one misdemeanor count of tampering with evidence, involving his disposal of the knife. He was cleared of all other charges. On January 9, 2020, White was sentenced to two years’ probation, with no jail time.

“What people have to understand,” Krasner says, “is that when a jury finds one not guilty of manslaughter, that means they had an overwhelming reasonable doubt—more than just 51 percent—which essentially shows that the public defender’s office defended White well. I think all of those involved in this case worked their hardest to remain fair and seek justice.”

While the verdict was a huge relief to White and his supporters, not everyone in Philadelphia celebrated.

The Nation.



Day of reckoning: White arrives at the courthouse, where, although acquitted of manslaughter, he was sentenced to two years’ probation for tampering with evidence.

Conservative commentators and leaders criticized Krasner’s role in reducing White’s sentencing in local and national publications.

“Krasner’s outrageous undercharging of Michael White once again raises the troubling questions of whose side is he on, and how much longer can Philadelphia afford to have a district attorney who proudly describes himself as a ‘public defender with power?’” wrote former federal and state prosecutor George Parry in an op-ed for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published a week before White was sentenced.

“Larry Krasner said he wouldn’t prosecute certain offenses and the bad guys got the message,” wrote Republican activist Jennifer Stefano in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed published a day after White’s sentencing. “Mr. Krasner considers himself a reformer, but social justice is no substitute for criminal justice.”

“Our life sentence began on July 12, 2018 when Sean was fatally stabbed with a deadly weapon,” wrote Linda Schellenger in a statement. “The sentencing is, hopefully, the last episode in Krasner’s finely orchestrated obstruction of justice. We have endured enough pain at the hands of The Killer, The DA and Bradford-Grey. Sean Schellenger was intelligent, articulate, successful and kind and no one can ever take those qualities away from him or us!”

Still, the backlash against Krasner has been minor compared with the campaign against Kim Foxx, whose controversial handling of the bizarre case involving *Empire* actor Jussie Smollett threatens her reelection. “I’m not bothered by conservative critics that resort to Trump talking points as an attempt to dismiss the important work being done right now in my office,” Krasner says. “As far as my thoughts on the Schellenger family, I have no comment in regards to the remarks they have said about me in the press. I have spoken to Linda several times and can understand the pain she is going through at this time in response to the trauma.”

While the political divisions exposed by the trial are still playing out in the press, White remains focused on getting his life back together—considering a return to college, homing in on his poetry and musical interests, and taking some time to reflect on the past two years.

“As I strive to move forward with my life, I will never forget that an unfortunate incident led to the death of a man who meant something to his family and friends,” White says. “I have gone past that alley in Rittenhouse a few times to pay my respects. Sean lost his life, and I lost some of myself there as well. The only thing I can do now is take this second chance that justice has finally granted me to be better. That’s all I can do.”



Larry Krasner: Philadelphia’s new district attorney is part of a nationwide movement that sees prosecutors as uniquely empowered to deliver justice.

“Sean lost his life, and I lost some of myself there as well. The only thing I can do now is take this second chance that justice has finally granted me to be better.”

—Michael White

(continued from page 21)

an inconsequential blip on an American moral arc that always otherwise bends toward racial justice. It's an attempt to rewrite history, omitting how the denial of reparations shortchanged black freedom and omitting the policies of Jim Crow, redlining, mass incarceration, and unrelenting white terror against black success. Ta-Nehisi Coates, the author of the highly influential 2014 *Atlantic* article "The Case for Reparations," directly addressed McConnell—whose family enslaved black human beings—in his testimony on HR 40. "We recognize our lineage as a generational trust, as inheritance, and the real dilemma posed by reparations is just that: a dilemma of inheritance," Coates stated. "It is impossible to imagine America without the inheritance of slavery."

RECOGNITION OF THIS FACT HAS VERY SLOWLY DAWNED on a smattering of institutions. Yale, Brown, Harvard, William & Mary, and more than 50 other members of the Universities Studying Slavery consortium have acknowledged the role of black enslavement in their early funding, founding, construction, and maintenance. (The collective includes schools in Britain, which also gave reparations solely to enslavers; the taxpayer-funded payments of \$3.9 billion ended only in 2015.) To atone for their ties to slavery, Virginia Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Georgetown University have all established reparations funds. In November 2019 legislators in Evanston, Illinois, voted to use taxes on legalized marijuana to pay reparations to a community "unfairly policed and damaged" by the War on Drugs. And in 2005, JPMorgan Chase apologized for its connections to black chattel slavery and established a \$5 million scholarship fund for black students. In 2019 then-presidential hopeful Cory Booker introduced a reparations bill in the Senate that was cosponsored by fellow candidates at the time Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Amy Klobuchar, as well as current candidate Bernie Sanders.

Henrietta Wood, the woman who sued for reparations just five years after the end of the Civil War, won her case, although she received only a fraction of her original demand—in itself far less than she was owed, which was a price too great to be quantified. Her story remains a near singular example of US willingness to make some form of reparation for black enslavement. Like many who have studied the enslavement of black people in the United States and its destructive legacy on black lives, Kenneth Winkle believes there should be an effort to study reparations and determine some kind of corrective.

"There must be recompense for descendants of slaves," Winkle says. "I'm a historian, and I devote most of my thoughts to the past and probably too little to the present. And I'm not certain what that compensation can or should consist of—but there needs to be an official recognition of the injustice that Americans collectively inflicted, at the time of their emancipation, on about 4 million African Americans who survived to be able to enjoy their emancipation, and the government participated in committing that injustice."

What is so often labeled America's "original sin" is, in fact, a wrong this country continues to commit. Reparations would not only represent a genuine effort to redress the United States' long history of racial discrimination, white terror and anti-black law-making but also a recognition of the ongoing harm this country inflicts against its African American citizens. ■

The Nation.

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Books & the Arts



THE ROOTS OF ORGANIZING

The Young Lords revolution

by ED MORALES

The legacy of the Young Lords is something that has followed me throughout my adult life as a New York-born-and-bred child of Puerto Rican immigrants. The Young Lords' unrelenting calls for Puerto Rican independence, their various interventions in local politics, their unyielding solidarity with colonized and working-class people everywhere, their stunning presence (often augmented by Che-like berets and street-style military formations) all shaped the way my generation and future ones interpreted the tumultuous late 1960s and early '70s. They

Ed Morales is the author of Fantasy Island: Colonialism, Exploitation, and the Betrayal of Puerto Rico.

were, along with figures like Fred Hampton, Frantz Fanon, and Lolita Lebrón, a guide for my political and cultural life.

Over the last few years, the Young Lords have again become political and cultural lodestars. Three major exhibitions in New York City—at the Bronx Museum, El Museo del Barrio, and the Loisaida Center—have celebrated their radical vision and activism and examined their inextricable relationship with the arts, culture, and the media. The Young Lords' status as a model for Afro-Latinx resistance in the age of Trumpian authoritarianism has given them a moment just in time for the recent 50th anniversary of their founding.

In her new book, *The Young Lords: A Radical History*, historian Johanna

Fernández offers us an exhaustive and enlightening study of their history and makes the case for their influence as profound thinkers as well as highly capable street activists. There have been other books on and by the Lords (including Darrel Wanzer-Serrano's *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation*, Iris Morales's *Through the Eyes of Rebel Women: The Young Lords 1969–1976*, and Miguel Meléndez's *We Took the Streets*) but Fernández's distinguishes itself by providing solid, incredibly detailed historical research, including extensive interviews with the Lords and their contemporaries. It also places them in the context of the political and social debates that shaped the era and reveals how so much of their activism centered

on the same issues—housing, health, education, and the marginalization of women, the LGBTQ community, and the working poor—that we face today. Perhaps most important, she offers a useful reminder of just how central anti-colonial and anti-capitalist politics were to them.

The Young Lords were established in Chicago in 1968, led by a street activist named Cha Cha Jiménez, who organized the group to fight local gentrification, police brutality, and racism. He pioneered the use of the Lords' signature purple berets (perhaps inspired by the Sharks' colors in *West Side Story*) and semi-military code of conduct. But it was only when the New York chapter was founded a year later that the group began to take off and the Young Lords burst into national prominence, adding their unique spin to the moment's revolutionary politics. A less confrontational variation on the Black Panthers, the Weather Underground, and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the New York group and its founders—Meléndez, Morales, Juan González, Pablo Guzmán, Felipe Luciano, and Denise Oliver—were probably the most successful media communicators among these different organizations. They were also representative of two late-1960s phenomena: the Rainbow Coalition of black, Latinx, Native, and white working-class radicals emerging in the era, and the bicultural and bilingual Nuyorican generation. The Lords themselves were a rainbow, since, as Fernández notes, more than 25 percent of the group's members were African American, including Oliver.

The Nuyorican generation was not represented by the Young Lords alone. It operated in three intersecting spheres of influence: salsa music, which fueled a nostalgia for its Caribbean antecedents, representing the past; the Spanglish poetry of the Nuyorican Poets Café, which anticipated the future's code-switching, rap music, and spoken-word performance; and political organizations like the Young Lords, which were inspired by the radical internationalism of their day as well as Puerto Rico's independence struggle.

Some key Lords—like Luciano, the group's early chairman—inhabited all three spheres, while others had varying affiliations with black revolutionary nationalism (Guzmán), the roots of intersectional feminism (Morales), and radical students' and workers' movements (González). But central to almost all of their activism was the Nuyorican generation's dedication to its cultural and political commitments. During

The Young Lords

A Radical History

By Johanna Fernández

University of North Carolina Press.

480 pp. \$30

their takeover of the First Spanish Methodist Church, when the Young Lords set up a free breakfast program for children and ran a “liberation school,” they invited Nuyorican poet Pedro Pietri to perform his signature poem, “Puerto Rican Obituary.” His reading was a contemporary spin on the impromptu *bembés* that went on during the occupation and featured folkloric music. Years later, another Young Lord, Eddie Figueroa, continued this cultural tradition, masterminding a performance space called New Rican Village on Avenue A and Sixth Street in Manhattan, at the site of what later became the gender-bending Pyramid Club during the 1980s East Village art explosion.

Given their influence and wide-ranging activities, perhaps one of the most surprising things about New York's Young Lords is that for all their permanence in the Nuyorican memory, the core founding group was active for a grand total of approximately three years. There were only a few major events that marked their activism: the Garbage Offensive, in which they forced the Sanitation Department to clean the streets in Spanish Harlem; their two takeovers of the neighborhood's Methodist church; and a couple of brief occupations of Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx.

Despite the tough image they projected, the New York Lords were not involved with street gangs. In fact, they represented the best and brightest of the city's high school students. González, for example, was a Columbia undergraduate who was active in the SDS strike of 1968. Guzmán, Oliver, and David Pérez attended the State University of New York College at Old Westbury. By May 1970, the Lords were beginning to organize workers in the city, and they eventually broke with the Chicago chapter over its failure to “cast off the vestiges of gang culture from its daily political routine” (though this was probably unfair, given the Chicago branch's later involvement in the first Rainbow Coalition).

The First Spanish Methodist Church takeover proved to be the New York chapter's formative moment, showing how the Lords synthesized ideology with practical political activity pretty much on the fly and constructed an urban version of liberation

theology along the way. Fernández writes that Guzmán, the Lords' minister of information, “crafted a sophisticated communications strategy” by combining the Lords' “knowledge of scripture, which some had acquired in the religious milieu of their childhood, with the searing critique of organized religion they had adopted as teenagers and young adults in the 1960s.” By demanding that the conservative neighborhood church institute a free breakfast program modeled on the one created by the Black Panthers, the Lords tried to force its anti-Castro Cuban pastor to live up to a precept of Christ's: solidarity with the poor.

The church occupation put the Young Lords on the map in a big way. It attracted celebrity visitors like Jane Fonda, Gloria Steinem, and Elia Kazan, along with tons of local media coverage and, more important, hundreds of recruits. From their headquarters in East Harlem, the Lords expanded into cities like Philadelphia; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and eventually San Juan, Puerto Rico. They established their influential newspaper *Palante* (Spanish for “forward” or “right on”), which published a number of groundbreaking essays about decolonization, racism within the Latinx community, feminism, and revolutionary nationalism.

Hitting their stride relatively late in the 1960s, the Lords were able to react in real time to the radical experiments of the era and create some of the most forward-thinking analyses of the left's weaknesses. They took a measured position on the use of violence, they incorporated the emerging feminist and gay rights movements into their political platform, and they offered a critique not only of American racism but also of the tension between darker-skinned mainland Puerto Ricans and the island's lighter-skinned elites.

The Young Lords' racial analysis of Latinx identity reached an interested public well before the subject became a significant focus of academics in ethnic and Latino studies. It was, in fact, the activism of groups like the Young Lords that forced the creation of Puerto Rican, Latino, and ethnic studies departments in places like the City University of New York and Columbia. According to Fernández, the Young Lords' use of “Latino” was “one of the first public uses of the term.” It was always linked to a vision of “self-determination”; for them, Puerto Rico's fight to become independent was part of a larger struggle that included the rights of “Chicano people [who] built the Southwest... to control their land,” as well as support for the people of the Dominican Republic in their “fight against gringo domination and its



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The Virtues

To practice the virtues, you'll need to ask
 What a virtuous person would do in a situation
 Like this one, here in the health-food restaurant,
 After witnessing the young father, two tables away,
 Slap his son for spilling a glass of orange juice.
 Is it time to practice courage by boldly
 Confronting the father for his fierce impatience?
 Or should a commitment to justice prompt you
 To remain unnoticed so you can follow the pair
 When they leave the restaurant on the chance
 Of including a license number or street address
 In your sharply worded report to Social Services?
 Or is the appropriate virtue here humility,
 The recognition you might do more harm
 By having the boy placed in a foster family,
 Unless you could verify that his new parents
 Would try as hard as you believe you would try
 If the boy were yours? Can you muster the confidence
 That if the father throws down his napkin
 After you scold him, and walks out, as if to say,
 Try fathering for yourself, you'll jump at the chance,
 Suddenly sure of a well of kindness within you
 Deeper than any you felt this morning
 When you left the hermitage of your leafy side street
 And entered the world? But if you're too upset
 By what you've witnessed to wait for this opportunity,
 And make your getaway just after the slap,
 Hope may be the virtue you'll turn to first,
 The hope that the father regretted his anger
 As soon as he showed it, that he's hidden his shame
 Beneath a pose of cool reserve that may succeed
 In fooling those who witnessed the incident
 But not the culprit, not himself.

CARL DENNIS

puppet generals” and for “the armed liberation struggles in Latin America.”

The strong influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Lords resulted, at first, in the lionizing of male anti-capitalist guerrilla leaders and in rooting revolutionary thinking in a kind of righteous masculinity. The 13-point plan the group issued in late 1969, modeled after the Black Panthers', originally included this point: “We Want Equality for Women. Machismo Must be Revolutionary... Not Oppressive.” The Young Lords soon embraced feminism outright, and after some internal resistance, gay liberation as well. The women, organizing around Oliver and Morales, fought back against a dynamic in which female Lords were assigned to so-called women's work; they adopted the practice of having consciousness-raising circles from white feminism, read Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and denounced what they called sexual fascism. They forced the inclusion of women on the group's Central Committee and changed the point about revolutionary machismo to one that read simply, “Down with Machismo and Male Chauvinism.” The legendary drag queen Sylvia Rivera, a key figure in the Stonewall rebellion, began to collaborate with the group.

The Young Lords peaked in late 1970 when they staged an occupation of Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx. Focusing on improving health care for the poor, they demanded lead-poisoning tests for children (which would result in laws banning lead paint in tenements) and worked to expose the hospital's poor conditions and exploitative division of labor. They advocated for patients, formulating a patient bill of rights, a feature that is now standard in substance-abuse and health care programs—and hospital workers, who were mostly black and Latinx.

One of the more difficult aspects of the Young Lords' history that any serious evaluation must come to grips with is the group's painful decline. Fernández documents the troubling events frankly and compassionately. The Lords' dissolution was largely attributable to a few key problems. Like many radical organizations of the period, their core leaders were in their early 20s, which encouraged impetuous decision-making. The Lords' early successes caused them to overextend themselves in the United States and Puerto Rico, their shift in focus to Puerto Rican independence created an irreparable rift, and the left's tendency toward Maoism created a mania for self-criticism and the purging of those perceived

as counterrevolutionary. The group's increasing infiltration by federal law enforcement agents under the FBI's Counterintelligence Program exacerbated all of these factors.

There were signs of trouble as early as September 1970, when Luciano, one of the Lords' most charismatic and eloquent leaders, was demoted from the chair position. While his demotion symbolized the growing power of women in the Young Lords' leadership, it also appeared to demonstrate an inflexibility and tendency toward harsh criticism that would only grow.

During a second takeover of the First Spanish Methodist Church in late 1970, the Lords began to show more signs of strain. Ostensibly set off by the death of a popular

Lords member, Julio Roldán, in the Tombs jail in Manhattan, this occupation did not have the same feel as the first one. The Lords staged the event accompanied by an announcement that they believed Roldán was murdered, despite police reports asserting that he hanged himself in his cell. Fernández carefully considers the conditions at the Tombs, the suicide data for that year, the report ordered by the city, and the evidence that Roldán may well have died by suicide—and she notes that even if it's difficult to know for sure what happened, Roldán was murdered by the system either way.

Yet it was not the takeover itself that caused the problems but the Lords' display of weapons during it, which led to an acri-

monious internal debate. Tensions continued to rack the Lords in the months that followed, especially as they began to shift their priorities away from local organizing and advocacy and toward the independence struggle in Puerto Rico. A faction of the group led by Gloria Fontanez, who for a period was González's wife, wanted to focus its efforts on the island because she decided to prioritize reuniting Puerto Rico's "divided nation" over Guzmán's proposal to return to the Young Lords' roots of organizing diverse urban groups in the United States. Despite pushback from the island's light-skinned pro-independence elite, Fontanez's stubborn commitment was perhaps a defiant insistence that the real constituency for

Carbon Copies

1-

Cattle in the agriculture of a self
besieged by the deceit of payback

as insurance against extinction.

There are other ways.

Everything in moderation. The middle
path comes after violence. No point

in whose brutality was on first,
who balked, and who walked it home.

2-

When we decipher memory
we'll have created another memory:

longing and reflex are forever
in the package insert.

3-

What kind of yearning, and what response?
You're a tourist in your identity,

from earthworms to diatoms,
extraordinary exhibition of ordinary

you behind love lines,
all the way behind them.

You weren't parachuted in,
you were born in—back against the wall,

you screamed at grizzlies
but they were stuffed animals.

4-

We sent emails, holograms, online petitions,
"Maybe this, too, is love"

we said to ourselves and they heard us think it,
neo-Cupids who asked us

"to find out how others love
differently than we love."

5-

Inert and bloated with epigenetics,
"All bodies are local," I shouted.

Another softly murmured, "Our bodies
are endless but we're all one."

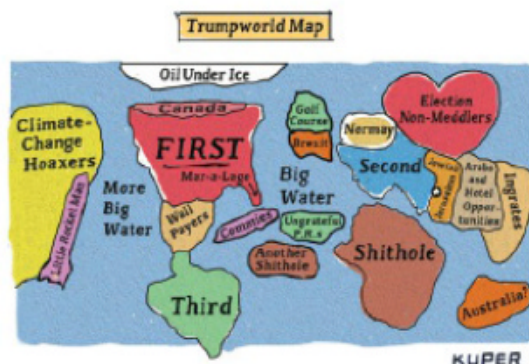
That's when my wife shook me.
"For real, Fady, this is for real," she said.



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independence was darker-skinned Puerto Ricans, like the constituency of the Young Lords' El Caño and Aguadilla branches, which she felt had been neglected by the traditional island independence movement.

In the end, those internal tensions proved fatal. In late 1971, Guzmán visited China with a delegation of radicals for a dialogue with communist leaders and was questioned about the Lords' deployment in Puerto Rico. The Chinese officials argued that it was a mistake to attempt to lead an independence movement in a place where they'd never lived, and when Guzmán raised this and other issues with González and Fontanez, he was rebuffed. But he had allies, and with them he continued to insist on, as Fernández puts it, a "return to the organization's roots," which was what many wanted "but were hesitant to say." The fight between Guzmán and those involved in Puerto Rican independence led to the Central Committee's increased garbling of the Maoist principle of democratic centralism. "Debate and discussion," Fernández explains, "were sacrificed for a greater insistence on party discipline."

After Guzmán was suspended from the Central Committee and he and Morales were transferred to Philadelphia, the main office of the Young Lords in Spanish Harlem was closed for several months. In 1972, Juan Ramos and Juan "Fi" Ortiz were purged because of "lazy dilettante behavior" and declared "enemies of the people, and in 1973, González was accused of "petit bourgeois tendencies" and transferred to Philadelphia. Under Fontanez's leadership, the Lords explicitly embraced Maoism and changed their name to the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization.

Frightful events followed, including the use of kidnapping and torture to discipline and remove members who disagreed with the leadership. Fernández briefly mentions the story of Richie Perez and his partner, Diana Caballero, who were held captive, tortured, and beaten in a New York City apartment. After Fontanez's separation from González, she became deeply involved with Donald Herbert Wright, who headed the Revolutionary Union, a Maoist party in the United States that was a predecessor of the Revolutionary Communist Party. According to Fontanez's interview with Fernández, Wright's behavior was "a microcosm of the violence that gripped the organization." Coincidentally, it was Guzmán who introduced the couple—he met Wright during his trip to China—and now-declassified documents show that Wright was an undercover FBI agent. The purpose

of several of his missions was to destabilize left movements by discouraging unity among different groups representing people of color and to sow discontent by exploiting the conflict between nationalist and class-based or communist interests.

By 1974, all the original Young Lords had resigned from the group, and eventually the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization ceased to exist, too. Despite the Lords' lasting and powerful legacy, the group's terrible ending has always hung heavy in my understanding of its history and my interactions with its former members. The Perez episode was especially poignant because I began my journalism career covering his anti-police-brutality efforts, and he remained one of the most politically active Lords in the 1990s, organizing Latinos in protests against police brutality in New York.

In the early 2000s, I attended the funerals of Perez and Pedro Pietri, probably a few weeks apart, in the First Spanish Methodist Church. Despite their passing, the two men's unique vision—encompassing the political and cultural essence of the Young Lords and the Nuyorican generation—was embedded in New York's Latinx community, in the movement that sought to close the US naval training range in Vieques, and among a new generation of activists, educators, and social justice legal groups.

I think the best way to honor the Young Lords is to revisit the complex political problems they grappled with, often ingeniously and with a fearless youthful enthusiasm. One of the most debilitating debates vexing the left at present is the notion that organizing around class issues and marginalized identities (race, gender, sexual orientation) involves ideas that are somehow mutually exclusive. Either you're supposedly a race- and gender-challenged "Bernie bro" or you're supposedly a neoliberal "Talented Tenth" identitarian leveraging elite schooling into a powerful establishment position in New York or Washington. Most of us working in social movements and activism today know this is a false binary, and the Young Lords' history is a reminder that this has long been the case. Although I'd almost forgotten it, the Lords had always helped me see it was possible, perhaps essential, to be both local and international, at once working-class and culturally nationalist. In the space they created, I was at ease with, even energized by, all my contradictions—the black and brown, New York–San Juan, Spanglish-speaking, materialist/spiritualist/revolutionary me. ■



MAKING PICTURES

Lillian Ross in Cold War Hollywood

by MAX NELSON

In the summer of 1950, Lillian Ross started following the acclaimed director John Huston around Los Angeles as he tried to film Stephen Crane's Civil War novel *The Red Badge of Courage*. She was on a return trip for *The New Yorker* to report on blacklist-era Hollywood. Two years earlier, Ross wrote a long feature about the immediate aftermath of the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings across the industry. The mood was one of bafflement, apprehension, and reaction. At parties, people tried to deduce one another's communist sympathies by asking "who was or was not a guest at the White House when Roosevelt was president." A pamphlet titled "Screen

Guide for Americans" was making the rounds, with headings like "Don't Deify the 'Common Man,'" "Don't Glorify the Collective," and "Don't Smear Industrialists." Lela Rogers—Ginger Rogers's mother—cheerfully informed Ross that her "friend Ayn Rand wrote it."

In one of that essay's central scenes, Ross had lunch on the set of *Key Largo* (1948) with Huston and two of the actors—Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart—with whom he recently flew to Washington, DC, to protest the HUAC hearings on behalf of a short-lived liberal group called the Committee for the First Amendment. Ross stayed in touch with Huston. When she visited him at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel one day, she wrote, he invited her back out to LA. "I'm going to show you how we make a picture," he told her.

"Huston as a person is almost too interesting to be true," she wrote to *The New Yorker's* editor, William Shawn, two weeks into her trip. Here, she thought, was someone "outside of the conventional pattern of Hollywood, yet drawn and held by it, and people in the business are attracted and held by him." Huston had stayed close to the industry's center. He could give Ross a direct line into the sites of Hollywood power: its offices, restaurants, and parties. But because he affected a persona of what she called "lonely" distance from its operations, he also seemed to show what it looked like to struggle against the film industry's conformity and reaction. "It is going to involve so many of the elements of Hollywood that it is too good to let go by," Ross wrote Shawn. "You see, if the story turns out to be what I think it is, it's really almost a book, a kind

of novel-like book because of the way the characters may develop and the variety of relationships that exist among them.”

Watching Huston make *The Red Badge of Courage* took Ross 18 months. (“I didn’t even return [to New York] for my brother’s wedding,” she wrote in her memoir.) The story ran in *The New Yorker* in five installments in May and June of 1952. Later that year, Ross bundled those pieces into a book under the title *Picture*. It tracks the story of the film’s making, from Huston’s initial phone calls to the shoot on his San Fernando Valley ranch and the movie’s prolonged, grueling edit. When preview audiences reacted with boredom and frustration to Huston’s nightmarish, churning, thinly plotted vision of war, Dore Schary, MGM’s vice president in charge of production, cut some of the movie’s scenes of death and despair to make it tamer and more politically palatable. In the 69-minute version that eventually appeared in theaters, the opening voice-over promises “a story of many frightened boys who went into a great Civil War and came out as a nation of united, strong, and free men.”

What this wrecked production gave Ross was a tour through the film industry’s levels of influence and power: directors, editors, composers, actors and extras, producers and studio executives, countless peripheral hangers-on. She lingers over what they say and refuse to say. Unlike “Come In, Lassie!” (1948), Ross’s earlier report from Hollywood, *Picture* never mentions HUAC by name, but its background presence fills the book. It was as if Ross wanted to trace the unarticulated, invisible ways in which the investigations shaped a generation’s creative and professional compromises.

Huston becomes this “novel-like” book’s charismatic hero. Ross saw that he was a contradictory figure, “drawn and held” by Hollywood’s “conventional pattern” even as he resisted it. But she nonetheless got a kind of dramatic energy by positioning him outside Hollywood’s conventions and priorities. It was a position he endorsed. “You know something?” he asked Ross during the visit that set the book in motion. “They don’t want me to make this picture. And I want to make this picture.”

The five installments of Ross’s story caused a stir. In his memoir, Huston remembered that “Hollywood readers waited in line at the newsstands for the next issue of *The New Yorker*, eager to see who would be done in next, frequently discovering to their dismay that

Picture

By Lillian Ross

New York Review Books Classics.

240 pp. \$16.95

they were themselves the targets.” Ross had a fondness for tacky furnishings—much is made of MGM’s “cream-coloured” office decor—and tasteless shows of power, but most of all she loved talk: anxious conferences, forced or stifled banter, embittered jokes, bloviating monologues, tense conversations at parties.

Everywhere Ross went, she found scenes of crisis and bravado. A publicist grumbled to Huston about “the junk they go for on television.” The “voluble” composer Bronislau Kaper told Ross that “every picture is sick” when it reaches him. “That is my premise. We must take the picture and find out what it needs to make it well and healthy.” One day, Ross heard Louis B. Mayer, MGM’s grandstanding cofounder, tell the musical producer Arthur Freed a story about a reviewer who “used to knock our movies” and subsequently, as if by divine retribution, attempted suicide. In the hospital, Mayer pursued the critic and extracted an apology:

“The doctors are pushing her, trying to make her walk. ‘Walk! Walk!’ She doesn’t want to walk.” Mayer got up and acted out the part of the girl. “Suddenly, she sees me, and she gives a cry! ‘Oh!’ And she walks. And this is what she says: ‘Oh, Mr. Mayer, I am so ashamed of myself. When I think of how I used to knock the movies, I am *ashamed*.’”

Much of *Picture* turns on a quarrel between Schary and Mayer, who considered *The Red Badge of Courage* a bad investment and resisted Schary’s efforts to get it made. (“You want to be an artist!” he bellowed at the film’s producer, Gottfried Reinhardt, outside the MGM barbershop. “Would you work as an artist for one hundred dollars a week?”) Shortly after losing to Schary, he quit the company. “Louie said that as long as he was head of the studio, the picture would never be released,” Nicholas Schenck, Mayer’s and Schary’s boss at Loew’s, told Ross. “I supported Dore. I let him make the picture. I knew that the best way to help him was to let him make a mistake.”

The blacklist warped the shape of these debates about profit and loss. Its influence emerged, for example, in the articles that the right-wing gossip columnist Hedda Hopper

wrote for the *Los Angeles Times*, which Ross quotes near the start of the book. “For a change, we’ll have a real soldier on the screen,” Hopper wrote about the picture’s leading man, the 25-year-old World War II veteran Audie Murphy. “It couldn’t happen at a better time.” Words like “American” had special weight. “I want to give the public entertainment, and, thank God, it pays off,” Ross heard Mayer say to Freed. “Clean, American entertainment.” Midway through an earlier exchange with Freed, Mayer pivoted “his powerful shoulders” toward Ross and recounted overseeing the production of one of MGM’s Andy Hardy movies. “Andy’s mother is dying,” he said, “and they make the picture showing Andy standing outside the door. *Standing*. I told them, ‘Don’t you know that an American boy like that will get down on his hands and knees and *pray*?’”

Mayer and Schary (then still at RKO Pictures) both testified at the 1947 HUAC hearings. A month later, they attended the meeting at the Waldorf during which the country’s film executives voted to blacklist the group of screenwriters and directors who became known as the Hollywood 10. By the time he joined MGM in 1948, Schary had conservative critics who thought he “had been altogether too cozy with the Reds during the war,” the critic J. Hoberman wrote in his study of Cold War Hollywood, *An Army of Phantoms* (2011). But for others, “most now blacklisted,” Schary “epitomized the movie industry’s spineless capitulation to HUAC and the witch-hunters.” He comes off in *Picture* as a figure of bureaucratic blandness, less crude than Mayer but no less invested in making MGM films announce their national loyalty. He, like Mayer, insisted that “there’s no story” in *The Red Badge of Courage*. What he decided the movie needed turned out to be not just any story but one about the forging of “frightened boys” into a unified national front.

Huston wanted to make no such thing. Even in its bowdlerized form, *The Red Badge of Courage* stews in the grime and misery of the bedraggled Union troops it follows. The camera studies their sweaty, dirt-covered faces in tight close-up and pauses over unsettling figures: a deranged, wounded soldier belting out “John Brown’s Body” and wielding a tree branch like a saber; a hoarse-voiced night watchman (played by the character actor Andy Devine) rambling on cheerfully about the consolations of death. To play Crane’s guilt-stricken protagonist, Huston

insisted not on an established movie star but on the baby-faced, much-decorated Murphy, who took up acting in the late 1940s and projected a mixture of naivete, ruthlessness, and desperation on-screen. “This little, gentle-eyed creature,” Huston enthused to Ross. “Why, in the war he’d literally go out of his way to find Germans to kill.”

Ross’s Huston is full of lines like those: brash, irreverent, disquieting. A sense of exceptional gravity gathers around him. “When I entered a restaurant with him—‘21,’ for example—life inside seemed to stop,” Ross wrote in a 50th-anniversary preface to *Picture*. By 1950, his ability to stay “outside of the conventional pattern of Hollywood” had become an important part of his public persona. He had made hit movies about private detectives (*The Maltese Falcon*), gold prospectors (*The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), and jewel thieves (*The Asphalt Jungle*). He had shot a documentary for the Army Signal Corps about veterans suffering from “combat neuroses” (*Let There Be Light*) that the War Department promptly suppressed. In 1946 he directed the first Broadway production of Jean-Paul Sartre’s *No Exit*. His opposition to the blacklist had become another part of his legend.

Huston’s persona as an irrepressible, defiant underdog is one of the few Hollywood myths Ross never puts under scrutiny. But from a distance of 70 years, that persona can seem less incompatible than Ross suggests with the studio system’s structures of power. The visions of terror and suffering that fill *The Red Badge of Courage* surely put Huston at odds with MGM, just as the scenes of traumatized veterans giving shattered testimonies in *Let There Be Light* (1946) angered the War Department. But *Picture* is also an inventory of the tones—reassuring, macho, ingratiating, patriotic, regally aloof—that Huston used to smooth his way through the industry and make common cause with figures he seemed to oppose.

“I love John,” Schary told Ross after the two of them watched rushes of *The Red Badge of Courage* together. “That guy will live forever. He’s a hearty, tough soul. When he wants something from you, he sits down next to you and his voice gets a little husky, and pretty soon you’re a dead pigeon.” It’s an intriguing, ambiguous moment: a record of Schary’s gift for flattery—he went on to reedit the movie anyway—and of Huston’s own means of persuasion. After he denounced HUAC, Huston wrote in his memoir, he assured a group organized by the McCarthyite col-

umnist George Sokolsky that he opposed communism but “mainly didn’t care for dictators or bullies.... What I really like are horses, strong drink and women.” Soon enough, Huston added, Sokolsky wrote “that he felt assured I was a good American. Of course I was relieved to hear that!”

In “Undirectable Director,” an influential profile that appeared in *Life* magazine weeks after Ross went to LA, the writer James Agee called Huston “a natural-born antiauthoritarian individualistic libertarian anarchist, without portfolio.” To Ross, Huston’s individualism took the form of a plucky opposition to power. But to compare *Picture* with some roughly contemporary accounts of Huston is to see that plucky, embattled artist turn into something closer to a tyrant with his own power to abuse. A fawning 1949 article in *Look* reported how “he once approached Joan Crawford at a party with this comment: ‘You wear too much make-up.’ Before that startled actress could reply, he applied his thumbs to her cheeks and smeared her rouge down her face.” A 1953 roman à clef by Huston’s collaborator Peter Viertel, *White Hunter, Black Heart*, depicts a swaggering film director named John Wilson subjecting his female secretaries to barages of verbal humiliation that the narrator calls “his daily torture.”

In *Picture*, Ross introduces Huston as “one of the most admired, rebellious, and shadowy figures in the world of motion pictures.” That triptych of adjectives strikes an odd note: If he was rebellious, it never quite cost him the industry’s admiration. “Hollywood’s fair-haired boy, to the critics, is director John Huston,” the film critic and painter Manny Farber wrote in *The Nation* in 1950. “In terms of falling into the Hollywood mode, Huston is a smooth blend of iconoclast and sheep.”

Immediately after finishing *The Red Badge of Courage*, Huston started shooting *The African Queen* for Horizon Pictures, an independent production company he cofounded several years earlier. It was a hit. “I stand to make a lot of money,” he told Ross. “I’m going to have it all in twenty-dollar bills with a rubber band around it.” When Ross made a visit to the Loew’s offices that serves as the end of *Picture*, she heard Schenck and the company’s advertising head, Howard Dietz, note ruefully that it “was for his *own* company” rather than for MGM that Huston made such a profit. “Don’t forget he made the picture with *stars*,” Dietz said. “*Red Badge* had no stars,” he grumbled, “and no story.” ■

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UNHOLY GHOSTS

Paolo Sorrentino's *The Young Pope* and *The New Pope*

by ERIN SCHWARTZ

The *Young Pope*, the first part of an HBO trilogy about the contemporary papacy by director Paolo Sorrentino, begins with a fake-out. Suntanned 47-year-old Lenny Belardo (Jude Law) wakes to the round marimba tones of an iPhone alarm. This is the first day of his papacy as Pius XIII. He showers, dresses, and passes through an antechamber full of cardinals and greets a roaring crowd from the balcony of the Apostolic Palace, above the Piazza San Pietro. “We have forgotten you,” he shouts to the masses. Then he goes off script. “We have forgotten to

masturbate, to use contraceptives, to get abortions, to celebrate gay marriages. We have forgotten that you can decide to die if you detest living.” The crowd falls silent, three cardinals faint, and a swarm of black-frosted priests rushes through the antechamber like a SWAT team. “In short, my dear, dear children, not only have we forgotten to play. We have forgotten to be happy,” Pius continues. “There is only one road that leads to happiness. And that road is called freedom.”

With that, he wakes up—for real this time. The first day of his papacy is beginning, but Lenny is not the grinning liberal rhetorician of his dream. The former archbishop of New York and first American to become pope is stern and haughty; in

fact, he doesn't sleep next to an iPhone. And when he delivers his first homily as Pius, he reprimands the crowd, “You have forgotten God!... You need to know I will never be close to you, because everyone is alone before God.” He abruptly ends after someone in the audience trains a green laser pointer on his body. We hear claps of thunder, rain begins to pour down, and the unhappy throng disperses.

The conceit we are encouraged to take from Pius's dream—that a free-thinking, iconoclastic pope would endorse many of the same positions as 21st century liberal thinkers—is seductive. It imagines our world as the source of truth and the cloistered Vatican as a backwater of esoteric biases and taboos. But the idea appears

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and is retracted so early in the series to inoculate the audience against it. It is uninteresting to get the affirmation we most obviously want. *The Young Pope* and its recently released sequel, *The New Pope*, do not document an ancient institution struggling to retain relevance in the modern world. Instead they study more enigmatic phenomena, using a story about the workings of power in the Vatican to tell us something bigger about ourselves than just the inner workings of church or state: Sorrentino's shows are about the limits to our perceived freedoms and the hindrances to understanding life's baffling mysteries.

The *New Pope* begins with Pius having collapsed after addressing a crowd in Venice and now in a coma, his chiseled abs sponge-bathed by a young nun who promptly lies down and masturbates next to him. After a failed heart transplant, the young pope is deemed incurably ill, so the Vatican's power players—led by stout, ruthless Cardinal Voiello (Silvio Orlando)—set out to anoint a new one. But strange things are happening behind the scenes. The sisters of the Convent of St. Thérèse, a monastery within Vatican City, are rising after bedtime, putting on lipstick, throwing off their coifs, and dancing to Sofi Tukker's "Good Time Girl." Millipedes crawl into ears; a cockroach scurries up the sleeve of a saturnine priest named Leopold Essence. A new pope is chosen, then dies of a "sudden illness" and is replaced at the last minute by an eyeliner-wearing British cardinal named Sir John Brannox (John Malkovich), who reluctantly emerges from seclusion on his ancestral estate to become Pope John Paul III.

The first series in Sorrentino's trilogy is defined by Pius's hard-line refusals. He refuses to be seen in public, to explain his theology, or to compromise his conservative stances. John Paul III, a former punk rocker, is more of a reformed libertine than an authoritarian figure. Perhaps as a symbol of his laxity, the world of *The New Pope* becomes an orgy of nonprocreative sex, including fellatio performed through a hole in a wall, a tryst between Cardinal Bernardo Gutierrez (Javier Cámara) and a younger man, and a striptease performed for the disabled sons of wealthy Italian families. Whether these constitute sins or acts of generosity is ambiguous. "Do you know what the difference is between a whore and a saint? None," a client tells Ester (Ludivine Sagnier), a woman whose

infertility was seemingly cured by a miracle performed by Pius in the earlier series. In *The New Pope*, sin is seldom without virtue or the capacity to do some good. The sexual liberation of the nuns of St. Thérèse empowers them to strike during the day for equal rights and an even division of labor with the Vatican's clergy.

All of this orgiastic excess is punctuated by a terrorist attack on St. Peter's Basilica, which forces John Paul to flee Rome for an alpine villa, where he struggles to decide whether to return.

"It is burdensome to feel profoundly alone for a lifetime," John Paul tells the Vatican's press secretary, Sofia Dubois (Cécile de France). "It has been, in fact, a dead life. And God was not enough. Nor was God's wisdom nor God's grace nor God's presence."

But John Paul is soon visited by a surprising guest: Pius, who has awoken from his coma. Pius conspicuously declines to kiss John Paul's ring, and soon a series focused on one pope becomes focused on two. Will Pius yield power to John Paul? We learn the answer very quickly. "John, you're gonna have to resign yourself to believing in me," Pius tells him. "Now that you've realized what I am."

Hypocrisy is a charge often leveled against the Catholic Church. But *The New Pope* also posits a different reading of the contradictory and morally complex characters it highlights: that judging oneself solely against either a religious or a secular worldview not only presumes more insight than we might have but destroys life's mysticism and inevitable tensions as well. John Paul advocates for the "poetry" of Christian values, as opposed to the more direct "rhetorical tools" born of independent-mindedness. His predecessor, too, emphasizes the powerful nature of mystery. It is a way to bring believers into the church. "It's too easy to come to terms with God as the sun is setting. They have to find him in the cold and the dark of night," Pius says in the first series.

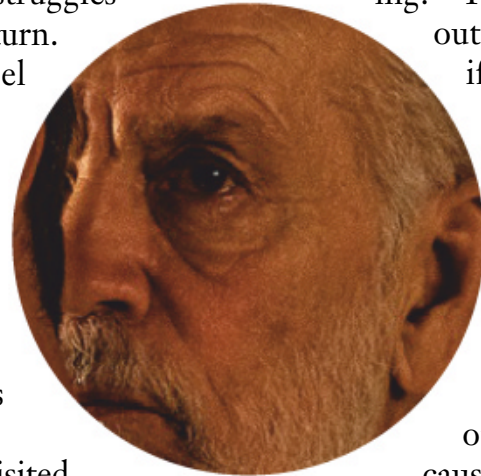
Amid *The New Pope's* and *The Young Pope's* enigmas, Sorrentino has developed a second theme that is far less opaque: a defense of inexplicable, unfashionable moral choices, ones that defy both common sense and church doctrine. The most beautiful scene so far comes near the end of the first series, when kind, fragile Cardinal

Gutierrez is preparing to leave New York after a breakthrough in his investigation of a powerful Queens archbishop accused of child abuse. He has become close with Rose (Jan Hoag), the owner of the gloomy hotel where he is staying. She is confined to her bed and spends her days watching the building's security cameras and cooling herself with a small electric fan.

Rose is scheduled to undergo a surgery that she has a 40 percent chance of surviving. "They're going to empty me out," she tells Gutierrez. "And if I refuse, they can't even begin to guess at my life expectancy." To get her outside, workers will open a giant hole in the outer wall of her sixth-story room, and her bed will be lowered to the street by crane. "I'm not afraid of dying," she says. "But because I suffer from vertigo, I am afraid of being swung out of this

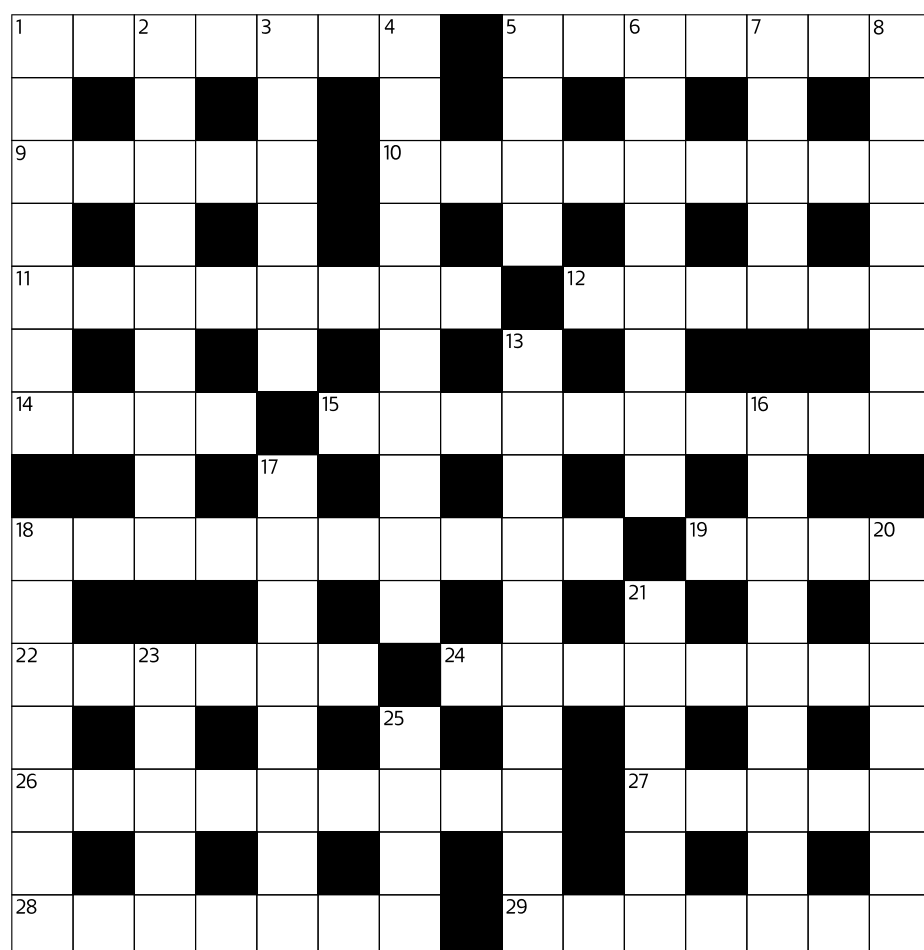
place through that hole in the wall and being dangled in midair." When the day for the surgery comes, her bed is secured to the crane with nylon slings, and she is lifted out of the building, the whole operation guided by two men inside her room wearing hard hats. A sparse crowd with Gutierrez among them watches the floating bed from the street. Rose squints as the bright sunlight hits her face. She spots the cardinal and waves; he waves back.

Suddenly she shouts, "Bring me back!" The two men nod to each other and guide the bed back into the room. The shadow of the window frame passes over her face, and Rose disappears from view. It is one of many decisions made in the show that seem absurd and—by the Catholic and secular moral rubrics *The New Pope* cites—are difficult to defend. Rose's choosing comfort over life and forgoing a possibly lifesaving surgery to avoid the unpleasantness of vertigo and the spectacle of being watched by a crowd is a difficult choice for us to understand, and yet Sorrentino finds beauty and power in it. For him, Rose is both free and not free. She has made a decision between options that are horrifically limited in a situation that is impossibly complicated. She did not allow herself to be emptied out or perish in an operating room, even if the alternative is knowing nothing about when she will die. Rose chooses not to know but to fly above the street in her bed and feel the sunlight on her face, anticipating what lies beyond. ■



Puzzle No. 3528

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



ACROSS

- 1 Reverse damage involving single candelabra (7)
 5 Wine and mead curdled nest egg (7)
 9 Like Johnson, engage in beach activity while embracing former partner (5)
 10 Steampunk walk in real life (9)
 11 We hear Costello dispatch a piece of unfinished business (5,3)
 12 Announce German vehicle for Venetian heiress (6)
 14 Nobleman from European country seen in small American state (4)
 15 Conceived anew, study beginning to investigate more smelly boomerangs (10)
 18 Damned similar to Australia? (10)
 19 Help to swallow cold drug (4)
 22 Crescent-shaped instrument captivates North America (6)
 24 Unholy crusades for lemons, perhaps (4,4)
 26 Play with tailless miniature (a feline) (9)
 27 Ominous-sounding name for a storied pair? (5)
 28 Shameful cop-outs for army animal? (7)
 29 In front of university park, part of wheel got louder (5,2)

DOWN

- 1 Calico cat climbing on top of the semiconductor (7)
 2 Family member's number (including extension) printed by rotten fink (4,2,3)
 3 Come back in without the second letter (6)
 4 Person suspended, having taken Ambien erratically (5,5)
 5 Nothing in what's before the door provides a defense against invaders (4)
 6 Say, "The Grand Canyon makes me want to retch and vomit" (8)
 7 Spilled paint is not suitable (5)
 8 Lincoln overlooks a fat epistolary lover (7)
 13 Certain characters with unopened basket on dunes (10)
 16 Unhealthy trace found in a square fruit (9)
 17 Dismiss exaggeratedly theatrical style in training program (4,4)
 18 Company adopts absurdist plays and West Indian music (7)
 20 Cleaning implement must upset fool outside, with no end in sight (4,3)
 21 Slow promotion to Attorney General by idiots in the center (6)
 23 Disturbing thing, when Dracula stalks the land (5)
 25 51 extra words—they might be red or read (4)

Dear Readers: This is the penultimate *Nation* puzzle. After next week, you can continue to get Kosman and Picciotto's cryptic crosswords by going to leftfieldcryptics.com. See page 9 for their goodbye message.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3527

ACROSS 1 SWA(M)P 4 TONYA-WARD
 9 IFS + TONE 10 TERRA[p]IN 11 rebus
 12 STEV + E (rev.) 13 AD + DON 14 rev.
 17 CELER(IT)Y 19 OC CAM (rev.)
 22 ET(H)IC (rev.) 24 ON(THETA + K)E
 26 rev. hidden 27 EXUL(T)ED (rev.)
 28 OVER(NIGH)T 29 ELAN + D

DOWN 1 S(W + I + M)WEAR 2 ASS +
 URED (anag.) 3 PRO + N + OUNCE
 4 T + REED 5 NATU (anag.) + RALLY
 6 "achers" 7 AM + ATEUR (anag.)
 8 anag. 14 TAIL + O RING 15 anag.
 16 E(MB + ED)D + ED 18 EN[d c]HANCE
 20 "tai chi" spoonerism 21 anag.
 23 CR + O + ON 25 T + RENT



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