

SPRING 2017 | VOL.27 | NO.2

Religion & Liberty

ACTON INSTITUTE'S INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RELIGION,
ECONOMICS AND CULTURE



Memory, justice and moral cleansing

What are
transatlantic values?

Freedom and the
nation-state

When our success
threatens our success

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sarah Stanley MANAGING EDITOR

This spring issue of *Religion & Liberty* is, among other things, a reflection on the 100-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the horrors committed by Communist regimes.

For the cover story, *Religion & Liberty* executive editor, John Couretas, interviews Mihail Neamțu, a leading conservative in Romania. They discuss the Russian Revolution and current protests against corruption going on in Romania. A similar topic appears in Rev. Anthony Perkins' review of the 2017 film *Bitter Harvest*. This love story is set in the Ukraine during the Holodomor, a deadly famine imposed on Ukraine by Joseph Stalin's Soviet regime in the 1930s. Perkins addresses the significance of the Holodomor in his critique of the new movie. Romanian Orthodox hermit Nicolae Steinhardt was another victim of a Communist regime. During imprisonment in a Romanian gulag, he found faith and even happiness. A rare excerpt in English from his "Diary of Happiness" appears in this issue.

You've probably noticed this issue of *Religion & Liberty* looks very different from previous ones. As part of a wider look at international issues, this magazine has been updated and expanded to include new sections focusing on the unique challenges facing Canada, Europe and the United States. A senior editor at Acton, Rev. Ben Johnson, explains this new project in "What are transatlantic values?"

Another feature discusses the surge of populism and why global elites are getting the boot. Robert F. Gorman, author of Acton's latest monograph *What's Wrong with Global Governance?*, sits down with John Couretas to expand on the themes of his latest work.

For the first "In the Liberal Tradition" of this newly redesigned publication, we learn about the life and work of Lucretia Mott. This fearless Quaker fought for the most vulnerable of her time and was a champion for both women's suffrage and the rights of America's newly freed slaves.

Plenty of other important topics are also scattered throughout the issue: the danger of success, how poverty follows children well into adulthood, a brief on the accomplishments of Elinor Ostrom and much, much more. Enjoy the new *Religion & Liberty*!



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Ten good reasons for optimism

Oliver Riley R&L TRANSATLANTIC BLOG

Leading economist Johan Norberg's latest book, *Progress*, was a joy to read. He draws attention to the fact that pessimism across the globe is widespread—from the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff testifying before Congress that “the world is a more dangerous place than it has ever been” to Pope Francis claiming that globalization has condemned many people to starve. Then he gives us 10 good reasons in 10 good chapters why this sentiment is wrong.

Norberg zooms you through food, sanitation, life expectancy, poverty, violence, the environment, literacy, freedom and then equality before rounding things up with a chapter titled “the next generation,” in which he asserts that “the future is in our hands.” Along the way, you are bombarded with facts and figures and pleasantly surprised by the occasional graph, so that by the end you scratch your head and question just how on earth it could be possible that so many despair so much.

Occasionally the book reads a little staccato, and at times the speed at which the facts are hurtled your way can feel somewhat overwhelming. But overall it is hard to come away from the book feeling anything other than optimistic.

Nationalism is here to stay

Kishore Jayabalan ACTON ROME

To a very basic degree, economics takes care of itself; to survive, people produce and consume on their own without being told to do so. But people also come together to form communities on their own.

They worship God or gods on their own. They also disagree and fight about territory and religion on their own. Underlying all of human life and its many activities is a concern for justice and claims about the best way of life.

Live and let live is the liberal/libertarian answer to the question of how we ought to organize politically, but it does not go nearly far enough. The greatest thinkers, from Plato and Aristotle to Augustine and Thomas Aquinas to Hobbes and Locke to Rousseau and Nietzsche and all who have come after them, hold politics to be fundamentally more important than economics because it conditions how we think about justice.

Nationalism is an important issue today because we realize that the vast amounts of wealth provided by economic globalization is insufficient in at least two ways: It does not necessarily result in better human beings or in the common good, however we think of our community (ethnic, religious, political or global). The first concern is connected to virtue in general, the second to justice in particular. We are being forced to reconsider some old questions.

The modern world has provided us with many benefits, including the political form of the nation-state. Compared to alternatives such as the city-state or the empire, the nation has the advantage of providing people with both the freedom of self-determination and the solidarity of belonging to something larger than one's own group or identity. At its best, nationalism leads to cosmopolitanism.

As defenders of freedom, we need to take these challenges more seriously not only as individuals but also together.

The long shadow of EU law

Rev. Ben Johnson

R&L TRANSATLANTIC BLOG

The think tank Open Europe calculated that EU regulations siphon £13 billion (\$16.2 billion) out of the U.K.'s economy a year. The Telegraph reports that the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which places high tariffs on imported food, “reportedly costs £10 billion in direct costs and by inflating food prices” annually. These analyses do not include another estimated 14.3 percent of all acts passed by the U.K.'s Parliament from 1980 to 2009, which “incorporated a degree of EU influence.”

By freeing itself of EU regulation, the U.K. can manifest another kind of European economic culture: one that frees the wealth-creating powers of the private sector by valuing innovation, growth, dynamism, initiative, entrepreneurship, subsidiarity, choice and the traditional charitable role of intermediary institutions. This contrasts sharply with Brussels' economic culture: one that empowers global governance institutions by valuing regulation, preservation of the economic status quo, stability, bureaucracy pliable to the lobbying of labor unions and special interest constituencies, public-private “partnerships,” centralization and the social assistance (welfare) state.

Why would London wish to maintain this edifice after declaring independence? Should it do otherwise, the government warns, “UK's statute book would contain significant gaps once we left the EU.”

That is precisely what many British experts hope for. “Brex-it gives us the opportunity: all regulations, but not directives, will fall away automatically,” writes Tim Ambler at the Adam Smith Institute's blog.

The Pope, the professor and the poor

Jordan J. Ballor

JOURNAL OF MARKETS & MORALITY

The preferential concern for the poor, in Scripture as in the writings of Abraham Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII, should not be understood as pitting rich against poor in a kind of zero-sum game of righteousness. Where worldly and materialistic philosophies preach conflict between classes and groups, the gospel proclaims reconciliation. As Leo puts it: “The great mistake made in regard to the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict.”

It is not, moreover, as if the poor are simply righteous while the rich are simply evil. The history and legacy of revolutions teach us that. As Kuyper observes, the corruption of the government came about “not because the stronger man was more evil in his heart than the weaker man.” Rather, “no sooner did a member of the lower class rise to the top than he in turn took part just as harshly—if not more harshly—in the wicked oppression of members of his former class.” Even a reversal of fortunes between entire classes would not solve the problem, for today's victims often become tomorrow's oppressors, and the cycle of violence continues.

Together Leo and Kuyper give us insight into the only way out of this sinful paradigm: the identification of the dignity of the human person in eternal and spiritual perspective, as created in God's image, fallen into sin, called to redemption and intended for glorification.

What are transatlantic values?

What values do the United States, Europe and Canada share?

Rev. Ben Johnson

The notion that the United States and the European Union share an unbreakable set of well-defined values has undergone a resurgence since America's presidential election. Immediately after the election, outgoing French socialist president François Hollande urged then President-elect Trump to "respect" such principles as "democracy, freedoms and the respect of every individual."

At their last joint press conference as world leaders late last November, President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel pressed national leaders—in President Obama's words—"not to take for granted the importance of the transatlantic alliance." Invoking more than transient national interests, they grounded their support for that longstanding partnership on their conception of the bedrock principles which, in their view, unite North America and the EU. In a joint *New York Times* op-ed published the same day, Obama and Merkel called on transatlantic nations to "seize the opportunity to shape globalization based on our values and our ideas."

Among "the values we share," the pair cited themes such as "our commitment to democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, [and] our commitment to the dignity of all people in our own countries and around the world."

Their concerns were conventional enough to verge on being platitudinous. However, applying their definition of transatlantic values to more specific policy issues, Chancellor Merkel called for governments on both sides of the Atlantic to take additional measures aimed at "climate protection," as well as expanded international "development cooperation." For his part, President Obama proposed additional public "investment" in alternative energy.

The elements of this share a few common factors. They grant additional powers to the government to regulate, subsidize or redistribute the profits of new sectors of national and international economic activity. This clashes with the West's ethical heritage, which has led generations to recognize that, due to fallen human nature, society must place greater restrictions and more robust checks and balances on the state and those who aspire to exercise its powers. Furthermore, the principles enunciated by modern EU leaders turn first to the state rather than to private philanthropy or civil society for their fulfillment. This may stem from their thoroughly secular nature, devoid of any reference to a transcendent power or their provenance in an identifiable and articulated moral code.

Both the press conference and the subsequent missives from



Photo: Angela Merkel, David Cameron, Barack Obama and Naoto Kan 2010 by Pete Souza (Flickr)

international leaders were notable for the values they did not enumerate, such as

- *religious liberty;*
- *economic dynamism that allows people to rise to the full extent of their potential;*
- *circumscribing the power and reach of governments, especially at the supranational level;*
- *upholding Judeo-Christian values; and*
- *encouraging strong churches, social organizations and civil society institutions to meet national needs organically, from the bottom up.*

Nor did they mention the shared challenges facing the United States, Canada and the EU, such as

- *lumbering welfare state economies that sap the vitality of their most creative elements;*
- *demographic implosion, which threatens future productivity and state pensions' solvency;*
- *a crisis of faith, undermining both our historically shared values and the concept of objective truth itself;*
- *mounting indebtedness and rising debt-to-GDP ratios that slow current economic growth and imperil future generations' opportunities;*
- *economic policies that discourage firms to hire full-time workers;*
- *large and growing segments of society that share none of the historic values treasured by the West, whether religious or secular; and*
- *the strife between local self-determination and overreaching national or supranational governments.*

“We seek to articulate the values politicians leave out of public discourse.”

Omitting these concerns undeniably impoverishes the intellectual and political discussion. Worse, it coarsens the political climate.

When the leaders of the Fifth European Catholic-Orthodox Forum gathered in Paris in January, they focused their discussions of public moral crises not on income inequality or alternative energy but on the three areas they deem most threatened from Warsaw to Lisbon: “fundamentalist terrorism, and the value of human person, and religious freedom.” They vowed “to stand together in order to face” the “unprecedented challenges and threats” they encounter in the region once known simply as Christendom by “communicating and promoting Christian values and principles in the sphere of public life, including the international level.”

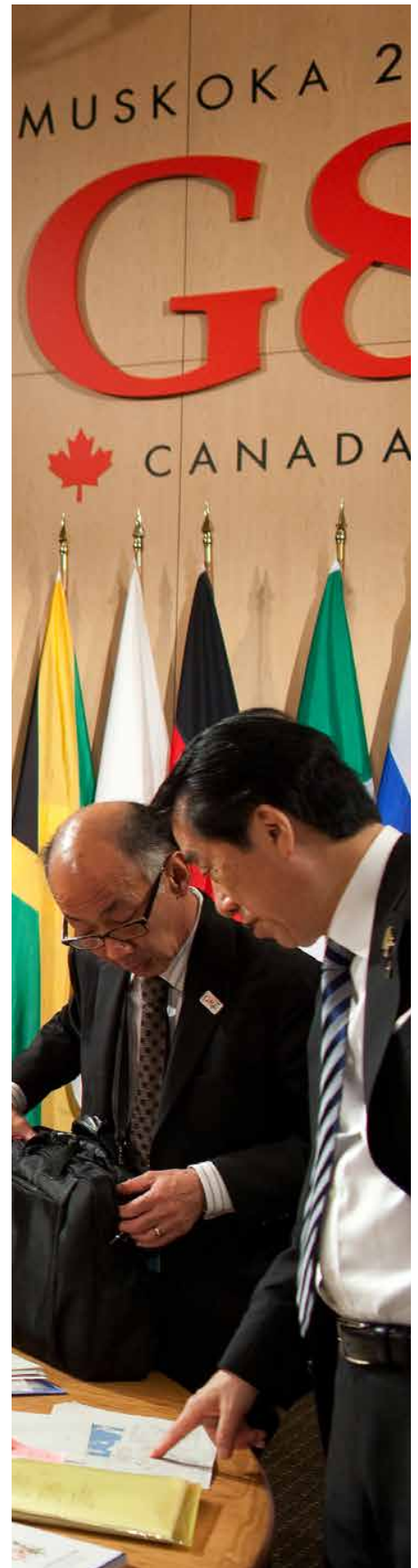
For 27 years, the Acton Institute has promoted these ecumenical principles. Beginning with this issue of *Religion & Liberty*, we will join our efforts more conspicuously with the beleaguered remnant of the like-minded faithful in Europe. We seek to articulate the values politicians leave out of public discourse and to highlight the gaps between politically toxic rhetoric and historically verified principles of freedom and virtue.

In January, the Acton Institute launched the website *Religion & Liberty Transatlantic* (<http://acton.org/publication/transatlantic>) to address these issues as they relate to the transatlantic arena. The website now features news, commentary and analysis from the United States, Canada and the EU. This new addition is one of several changes to the familiar publication, which *Religion & Liberty* has received a sophisticated redesign.

Some believe this battle has already been fought and lost, that the faith has already died in the West and the EU has already been fundamentally transformed into a secularist superstate. But if the

Scriptures proclaim any one message, it's that death precedes resurrection.

Rev. Ben Johnson is a senior editor at the Acton Institute. 



Freedom and the nation state

The Following essay is excerpted from a lecture given on December 1, 2016, at the Crisis of Liberty in the West Conference.

Sir Roger Scruton

It is characteristic of our times to regard freedom as an attribute of individuals. To campaign for *my* freedom, to choose *my* way of life, *my* rights to proceed in this or that way through life without interference and to concede the social dimension of freedom only by default—by recognizing that whatever freedoms I claim I must also grant. In other words, to admit that freedom can be limited only for the sake of freedom and that all our claims to it are equal.

Traditionally, it was not so. Freedom was regarded primarily as an attribute of the body politic as a whole. We Britons prided ourselves on living in a “free country” and regarded our freedom as a quality of the institutions under which we lived and the space in which those institutions operated. This freedom was something we encountered—like a refreshing breeze—when we returned from abroad and crossed the border, sensing that we were now in safe hands. Freedom was seen as an inheritance, a feature of a way of life, not to be understood in terms of the multiplicity of options, still less in a list of civil rights. It was a shared way of being, founded in mutual trust and the product of institutions that were created not in a day but passed on from generation to generation as things to be trusted. The free citizen was marked by a proud independence, a respect for others and a sense of responsibility for their common way of life and the choices it protected. Fair-mindedness, acceptance of eccentricity and a reluctance to take offense, combined with an aversion for abuse and slander, were attributes of free citizens and belonged to them by virtue of public institutions in which they placed their trust and which they were tutored to defend both in thought and deed against those who would destroy them.

Such citizens fought for the freedom of their country and for their own freedom as part of it.

It seems to me that the free individual and the free country belong together and that the one will not survive without the other. However, the emphasis on rights, the neglect of the duties that bind individuals to each other and to the political order, and the growing grievance industry fostered by the welfare state are weakening the obedience on which freedom ultimately depends.

The pursuit of individual freedom, detached from inherited obedience, leads to a new denial of freedom.

Because we share a national identity that subsumes institutions, customs and laws, we can share—without any other cost than that of belonging—that our individual freedoms are

something more than paper documents. It is something that exists only so long as we protect it, and the demand that we do so underlay the surprising result of the recent referendum—surprising because the result expressed the feelings of people who have been most affected by the culture of repudiation and the political correctness of our governing elite.

We should recognize that freedom is nothing if we cannot protect it from predators. Protection comes about only in conditions of trust, in which institutions command obedience and define the public standards of conduct and responsibility which we are to honor and which can be called on against the threats.

We are heirs to a society governed by law, in which the people themselves make and adjust the law through their representatives. Ours is a secular law that we can change as circumstances change and that we obey because it expresses the commitment we all share to the first person plural



of our national identity. Our law is adjusted and amended in the interests of reconciliation and peace within the historical community over which it stands in judgment.

This law-governed society is made possible because we know who we are and define our identity by our country, the place where our man-made law prevails, the sovereign territory in which we have built the free form of life we share.

This sovereign territory is our home, and it is in terms of it that our public duties are defined. We may have religious and family duties too, but they are private duties, not incumbent on the citizenry as a whole. Our public duties are defined by the secular law and by the customs and institutions that have grown alongside it.

It is in that way that we should define the “first person plural,” the “we” of the modern nation state. And in my view, this “we” is much preferred to the “we” of the ruling oligarchy or the “we” of religion. Yet those rival “we” identifications are at this very moment eyeing our assets with a view to imposing themselves, and it is time for us to wake up to what we have—to the blessing of a national identity and a shared homeland, within whose borders we are freely governed.

It has become politically incorrect to affirm one’s loyalty in such terms. The EU insists that to think in this way is to commit the sins of racism and xenophobia. Let it be said that the regime of censorship and intimidation under which we now live is so powerful that no voter will confess to national feelings when they have been told that to do so is proof of racism or xenophobia. That is why the opinion polls were so wrong, both regarding Brexit and the American election. National loyalty has been branded as a sin.

It seems to me that the national identity that I, as an Englishman, have inherited—the identity of a nation joined in a union of like-minded nations in a single, sovereign territory—is far more robust than its detractors assume, and that it has, like the American identity, a remarkable capacity to absorb incomers and to integrate them by a process of mutual adaptation. But we can adapt to the effects of inward migration only if migration is controlled and only if we are allowed to affirm our identity in the face of it so as to renew our obedience to the institutions and customs that define us.

In other words, the global processes that challenge us now are reasons to affirm national sovereignty and not to repudiate it. For national sovereignty defines what we are.

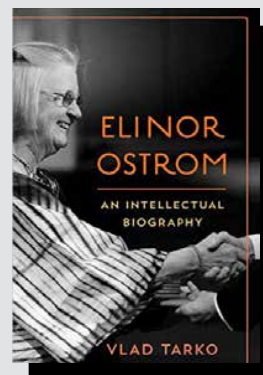
Sir Roger Scruton is a writer and philosopher who has published more than 40 books. He is a fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. **R&L**

BRIEF

WHO WAS ELINOR OSTROM?

New book details work of only female economics Nobel laureate.

Sarah Stanley



In 2009, Elinor Ostrom became the first (and so far, only) woman to receive a Nobel for economics. She and Oliver E. Williamson shared the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel—Ostrom for “her analysis of economic governance, especially the commons” and Williamson for “his analysis of economic governance, especially the boundaries of the firm.” When Ostrom received the award, Acton’s Samuel Gregg wrote about Ostrom’s and Williamson’s research. “Ostrom and Williamson have shown how it is possible for firms and other communities to facilitate economic efficiency from ‘within,’” he said. Their work sought to explain “the development of rules within groups and communities that allow for conflict resolution and efficiency gains in ways that are often far more sophisticated than externally imposed state regulation.” Ostrom’s research challenged the conventional wisdom of the time by showing that local goods can be successfully managed by local players.

It had been assumed that any resources collectively used would be depleted and destroyed. Ostrom conducted several studies on how small communities manage shared resources. “She showed that when natural resources are jointly used by their users,” explains the prize committee, “rules are established for how these are to be cared for and used in a way that is both economically and ecologically sustainable.”

Elinor and her husband, Vicent Ostrom, set up the Bloomington Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, which is now a global network of scholars and economists.

A new biography, *Elinor Ostrom: An Intellectual Biography*, by Vlad Tarko (Rowman & Littlefield 2017) details Ostrom’s work. It summarizes her contributions to the field of economics and features several figures, photos and tables. George Mason professor Peter J. Boettke argues that the new book “is a must-read not only for those who want to learn about Elinor Ostrom and her contributions but for all students of political economy.”



INTERVIEW

Memory, justice and moral cleansing

Coming to grips with the Russian Revolution and its legacy.

Romanian public intellectual Mihail Neamțu has written eight books on politics, religion and culture in defense of the cultural contributions of Christianity and the political values of classical liberalism. He has become a leading conservative in Romanian policy circles and blogs about European issues at the *Library of Liberty and Law* site. Neamțu, who has a doctorate in theology from King's College, London, has pursued postdoctoral studies at New Europe College, Bucharest; Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington; and the Russell Kirk Center in Michigan. Neamțu, who was in Washington recently, was interviewed by Religion & Liberty's executive editor, John Couretas.

Religion & Liberty: This year we are marking 100 years since the Russian Revolution. Eastern Europeans still live with the effects, the legacy of that cataclysmic event. What are your thoughts?

Neamțu: The Bolshevik Revolution and its 100th anniversary are of relevance for Westerners and Eastern Europeans alike. We still lack in the West a good understanding of the ideological roots of Communism, which lasted for at least a century in Europe, Asia and, to some extent, Latin America. Just look at the reactions of many politicians and intellectuals after the death of Fidel Castro.

When it comes to writing the obituary of a brutal dictator, to quote here President Trump, Western academics still show an amazing degree of moral relativism. From an ideological perspective, Castro was the grandchild of Lenin. Yet Prime Minister Trudeau and Barack Obama failed, among others, to see this form of continuity. However, I fear that Russia today is doing almost nothing to commemorate the victims of the Bolshevik Revolution. Quite the contrary: freedom fighters are being bullied and arrested in Moscow as we talk. This is why I salute the Acton Institute's efforts to grasp our experience of Communism and the way it has impacted our social fabric and Romania's way of life.

R&L: Where is the justice for the tens of million who died under Communist oppression, many of them already forgotten?

N: Since 1989, some countries, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, have accepted the notion of lustration or moral cleansing, which removed from the public square former Communist apparatchiks. Other countries, such as Romania, have postponed the punishment of the evil perpetrators, making the act of memory a form of immanent justice. We can always

Photo: "Да здравствует мировой Октябрь!" General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

tell the stories of those who suffered in the gulag. Perhaps we should do it more often and more eloquently. Dropping names and figures isn't quite enough. Speaking of this danger of equating a human person with a number, should I also add, perhaps, the fact that we just commemorated the victims of the 1966 Chinese Cultural Revolution. The consequences of that collective Maoist brainwashing are still felt to this day in Beijing.

When we talk about the memory of Communism, we talk about a global phenomenon. This is why we should build more memorial sites as museums, such as the one I have recently visited in Vilnius, Lithuania. We should also learn from Germany how to bring about this painful yet liberating recognition of the horrors of a totalitarian regime.

R&L: *Are millennials ready to listen?*

N: It depends on the media platform where we choose to communicate our message. It is true that we live in a day and age where the greatest threat to this understanding of our past is, simply put, ignorance. By constantly living in the present tense, like T. S. Eliot's "insects of the hour," we may find ourselves always at the surface of things. We tend to forget that past is prologue. The world of ephemeral tweets, Snapchats, Facebook posts and Instagram pictures is remarkably colorful. Perhaps we should engage our youth there, in social media. However, there's no way we can preserve the treasures of the past by having only a shallow understanding of those who fought for our freedoms. Our schools and our churches should therefore consider more the art of storytelling. It is important to know that more than 100 million people have been killed since the Bolshevik Revolution started. But our narratives should include tales about individuals who had a name, who had a house, who had dreams, friends and hobbies, which all came under attack. Once we begin to ask fundamental questions, such as "Why did they suffer?" and "Why did they die?" we may see a healthier society.

R&L: *In the United States, both the historical narrative and the fictional narrative in film and print about Communism is meager. The terrible destruction wrought by the disciples of Marx, Engels and Lenin isn't taught in American schools, so our young people are largely ignorant of that history. Why isn't Solzhenitsyn read in our schools? What about The Black Book of Communism?*

N: Our moral instincts are shaped by our close readings of exemplary lives. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were soul mates precisely because, before they first met, they both had read the story of Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss, as well as fragments from Solzhenitsyn's masterpiece, *The Gulag Archipelago*. They both saw in Communism a great existential threat. Why? Because the imaginative powers of their souls were nourished with references to history, music, art and literature.

The diminishing of political leadership in our times may have something to do with our deep ignorance about the brave resistance of Czechs, Poles or Hungarians from the 1950s to the 1980s. How many in the West have heard of the very impressive figure of a Romanian intellectual named Nicolae Steinhardt? He was an expert on constitutional law and a highly skilled literary critic who, in the wake of the 1956 Budapest revolts, was sentenced to prison. There his spiritual hunger led him to prayer. Fasting, of course, was already on the concentration camp menu. While still in a labor camp, Steinhardt embraced the Christian faith and emerged as a luminous figure among his former political inmates. I personally grew up with such powerful stories, which, believe me, could easily be the subject of a Hollywood blockbuster. Why not?

R&L: *When you survey the current political and cultural scene in Eastern Europe, in what ways do you see cultures still struggling with the legacy of Communism? In 1980, according to one estimate, 1.5 billion people were living under Communist regimes out of a global population of 4.4 billion.*

N: Of course there is a lasting legacy. The biblical image of the forty years of wandering in the desert comes to my mind. The story of the Israelites from slavery to freedom captures the struggle of my own nation. One striking aspect of this legacy of Communism is the rampant presence of corruption in my society at all levels. Communism was built on murder, and it was carried out through lies piled upon lies. Actually, we could say the greatest factory of fake news in history was the Bolshevik Revolution. If you were a reader of *Pravda* and

other such periodicals in Eastern Europe, you would find out that every day there was another big lie being told to millions of people. So fake news is not something recent. It's rather old in our part of the world.

We still see politicians telling lies to their constituencies, former spies or snitches telling lies to their friends, doctors telling lies to their patients without a peculiar reason, university professors telling lies to their students about plagiarized doctoral dissertations and so on. This collective form of self-deception is very harmful and may lead not just to moral but also financial bankruptcy.

R&L: *Where will the healing come from? Must everyone wait for the passing of generations?*

N: Only truth can set us free. Nobody can deny the progress made by South Africa with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Our own churches in Eastern Europe could perhaps begin to confront the past by opening the archives and getting involved in the work of memory that we have already talked about. New York City has built an impressive memorial for the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attack. No visitor to Ground Zero can miss the therapeutic

aspects of such a memorial site. Unless we honor our heroes, who stood up for freedom, the ghosts of the past will strike us back.

Is that what we were seeing in Romanian cities this past winter?

Throughout the whole month of February 2017, nearly a million people took to the streets of Bu-

charest and other cities to protest against corruption and the empire of lies told by politicians who hate justice and the rule of law. Remember what Solzhenitsyn told Russians back in the 1970s: "Live not by lies!" I'm hopeful now because we live an age of digital transparency. Just turn on Google Maps and you will see how filthy rich are those politicians who have stolen billions of dollars from their own people. I remain hopeful because the U.S. is our strategic ally and because there's a new generation who wants to see more accountability and transparency. Corruption kills. Corruption steals our future and buries our dreams. This civic awakening that I have personally

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

witnessed during many hours of protests in the public square makes me more optimistic.

R&L: *Have the Romanian churches been providing witness at the cultural level?*

N: If you believe in Christ, you know how blessed are those who hunger for righteousness' sake. During the protests, the Romanian Orthodox Church issued a statement in support of the anti-corruption fight, suggesting that "robbery and theft degrade society morally and materially." However, the protests mustered people from all walks of life. People demanded justice because, for many decades, they saw their lives diminished by what are aptly known as "the extractive elites."

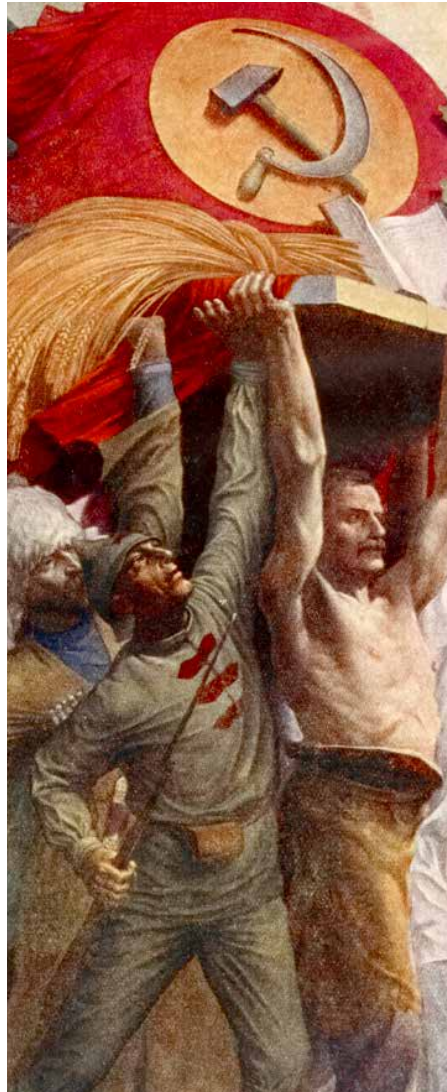
Several times, Pope Francis has also stated that institutionalized corruption is a big threat to our ways of life. It may sound trite, but it is just commonsensical. We may recognize, after all, that common sense is our common denominator. Most autocratic regimes defy reason and turn free people into objects of exploitation, consumption and mockery. This is why Christian leaders have to get involved and restore the dignity of the individual.

R&L: *What you're talking about is really those common values that exist between Europe and North America and still bind us together in a way that perhaps we are not linked by other regions. We still have something to talk about.*

N: And something to build. I do not talk here merely about future policies, though NATO needs to rethink its mission and vision by recognizing the threat of a global jihad. We should build a culture that understands *why* individual freedom is our greatest gift in life.

Here I am, talking about the legacy of Communism, nearly thirty years after the 1989 revolution in Romania. Could this conversation have happened in the absence of a great leader, such as Ronald Reagan? I grew up listening to Voice of America in a basement, together with my grandparents. In a sense, I feel like I'm the grandchild of Ronald Reagan. I belong to a generation in Eastern Europe that benefitted immensely from the personal courage of Pope John Paul II and from the prophetic insight of Ronald Reagan, who knew that the Berlin Wall could be demolished, who knew Communism could be collapsing in our lifetime. So I'm very grateful. On this historic foundation we can build a robust future.

There are many U.S. politicians who are



fully aware of the horrors of Communism. One of Donald Trump's favorite books is an excellent biography of Chairman Mao. Younger politicians, such as Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, understand why Eastern European countries are far more pro-American than France, Spain and Germany. We understand our transatlantic values to be rooted in this existential quest for political freedom, not in whims and social experiments. Countries such as Poland, Romania and the Baltic States are good allies for the United States not just from a military perspective. We value deeply what America did for us, before and after 1989. Younger Americans should hear more often about Radio Free Europe, which was funded by the CIA, and its contribution to our civic awaking in December 1989. Since then, our way of life has dramatically improved. Our economies are better off. We owe it to ourselves, but we also owe

it to the American people, who trusted the instincts of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and then in 1984. This memory keeps us close and gives us a new direction.

The Marxist's love for humanity

Prime Minister Alexi Tsipras (known as the Greek "Che Guevara") said that "the communist regime . . . at least had humanity at the center of their thinking." Young and radical politicians such as he do not feel the need to explain the criminal deeds of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Instead of looking at the horrors of the gulag, the leaders of Syriza and Podemos offer their audience the same toxic and yet mesmerizing incantations that make people forget about the Ukrainian Holodomor or about the Stalinist labor camps of Perm, Volga Canal, and Pitești.

When a freely elected leader of a European nation can say that "humanity" was "at the center" of the communist experiment, we must pause and ask ourselves: How can Europe regain the vast amount of moral clarity it has lost since the 1989–1991 period? Will perhaps the foe of the former evil empire make a Reaganite comeback to help Europe find its way? Might we believe that a future president of the United States will call out the new Jacobins? May we hope that future leaders of democratic parties will stop indulging in a shameless nostalgia for Marx and Lenin?

It is a matter of historical record that, like the victims of the Shoah, the prisoners of communism underwent unimaginable physical degradation and psychological torture. Who will educate the Prime Minister of Greece and tell him of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's long-lasting witness? Who will enlighten Pablo Iglesias Turrión, secretary-general of Spain's leftist Podemos party, about the black mass which, in the name of humanity, the KGB proxies organized at Pitești Prison during the late 1950s? Students of theology living under communism were forced to denounce God, to mock Christ, and to blaspheme the name of the Virgin Mary under the burden of extreme beatings and despicable sufferings. Such was the "love" for "humanity" that millions of people witnessed during the 20th century.

Mihail Neamțu writing at the Library of Law & Liberty, January 2016. R&L

Faith as a bulwark against inhumanity

The 20th century was full of horrors, but atrocities are not just part of the past.

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

As we approach the 100-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, a familiar phrase comes to mind: “Man’s inhumanity to man.” I had never explored the provenance of this line. A quick internet search provided not only the author but also the entirety of Robert Burns’ 1784 poem “Man Was Made to Mourn: A Dirge,” from which the quote resonates. The complete stanza reads:

*Many and sharp the num’rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heav’n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!*

Burns crafted these lines more than 130 years before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution overthrew what all reasonable scholars would confess was a corrupt aristocracy. Rather than establish a safe harbor of republican democracy, however, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and their cohorts completely unmoored the Eastern European countries that became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with their brand of totalitarian tyranny. In so doing, they unleashed terror on untold millions, numbering far more than Burns’ “countless thousands.”

Among the many ignominies inflicted on the unfortunate citizens under the Soviet boot was the Holodomor, the name given to the Ukrainian famine of the early 1930s. The exact number of those who perished from starvation may never be tallied, but it’s certain multiple millions of innocent people suffered excruciating and needless deaths.

Lest readers assume all the inequities and humiliations inflicted on God’s children are only historical in nature, the current protests against Romanian corruption prove otherwise. The Romanian Orthodox Church is among the most vocal opponents of government measures that would decriminalize official misconduct.

Returning to “Man Was Made To Mourn,” Burns captures perfectly the “inalienable rights” granted us by God and defined through natural law:

*If I’m design’d yon lordling’s slave,
By Nature’s law design’d,
Why was an independent wish
E’er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow’r
To make his fellow mourn?*

Today, those who would trample on our freedoms and “make his fellow mourn” still exist. At the Acton Institute, we keep the memory alive of those who have heroically championed our freedoms—some making the ultimate sacrifice. [R&L](#)

INCOME INEQUALITY AND POVERTY AREN’T THE SAME THING

Joe Carter ACTON POWERBLOG

Income inequality and poverty are separate issues. For many people this is obvious. But there are numerous Christians who believe income inequality is an important issue because they assume it is a proxy for poverty. If this were true, Christians would indeed need to be concerned about income inequality because concern about poverty is a foundational principle of any Christian view of economics.

Fortunately, there is neither a necessary connection nor correlation. A country could have absolutely no poverty at all and have extremely high-income inequality. The reason is because income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient) measures relative, not absolute, income.

But you don’t have to take my word for it. Harry Frankfurt, a philosopher who has written a book on inequality, makes the same point: income inequality and poverty aren’t the same thing. Here’s a quote from a recent Forbes article:

It is not inequality itself that is to be decried; nor is it equality itself that is to be applauded. We must try to eliminate poverty, not because the poor have less than others but because being poor is full of hardship and suffering. We must control inequality, not because the rich have much more than the poor but because of the tendency of inequality to generate unacceptable discrepancies in social and political influence. Inequality is not in itself objectionable—and neither is equality in itself a morally required ideal.

Joe Carter is a senior editor at the Acton Institute.

ESSAY

The middle class in an age of inequality

The political and social crises of our times are rooted in moral and spiritual malaise.

Jordan J. Ballor

Writing in 2013, Moisés Naím, formerly executive director of the World Bank and currently at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, decried the increasing impotency of elites to lead in a fractured and fractious global public square. Naím's concerns were voiced before the most recent surge in populist movements around the world, from Brexit to Trump's victory in America.

As Naím put it, "Insurgents, fringe political parties, innovative startups, hackers, loosely organized activists, upstart citizen media, leaderless young people in city squares, and charismatic individuals who seem to have 'come from nowhere' are shaking up the old order." In one sense, Naím's observations were prescient and foreshadowed the localist, nationalist and populist strains of the last year or so. But in another sense, Naím's analysis is only half the story. What Naím laments is the resulting "end of power," as the title of his book casts it, in which political, educational and bureaucratic elites no longer are able to exercise the influence and leadership necessary to good governance



in a complex and complicated world. At the same time that in Naím's account power seems to be flowing downward, to "micropowers," as he calls them, a corresponding shift is occurring that continues to concentrate power upward, in so-called "megapowers."

This is the central dynamic of inequality: it isn't just that the elites have more and more power while the rest of us are increasingly powerless. Instead, the perceived impotence of the majority holds within itself a latent power to call forth a new leader, a new guard, a new order to protect and promote its interests. This is why populist movements, which rely so much on majoritarian social support, are so often connected with particular figureheads and strongmen. The leader and the masses go together.

What is really left behind in such a scenario isn't the dynamic of elites and those they lead. The power is still there, but the relationship of leader to those led changes. In times of extreme inequality, power flows upward and downward, to the elites and simultaneously to the lower classes. At the same time, power is evacuated from

the middle. There will always be an aristocracy and plebs of some sort or another. What is tenuous and historically contingent is the middle class and the values, virtues and social order it represents.

As power flows out from the middle in both directions, the basic features of a free and virtuous society are lost. The foundations of civil society wither. The sustaining virtues of a flourishing society become scarce. In a hyperstylized celebrity culture and hyperpartisan political community, the quiet practices of fidelity, prudence and thrift are drowned out by bling and #winning.

The challenges we face today are not primarily political or policy-related. The political and social crises of our times are rooted in moral and spiritual malaise. And it is on resources in these realms that we must find our aid. Let us hope that we still have eyes to see them and ears to hear them.

Jordan J. Ballor is a senior research fellow at the Acton Institute, where he also serves as executive editor of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*. **R&L**

Photo: Occupy Wall Street by David Laundy (flickr) (CC BY 2.0)

BRIEF**UNSTABLE
CHILDHOOD LASTS
INTO ADULTHOOD****Joe Carter**

Children who grow up in poverty are twice as likely to struggle with financial challenges later in life, said Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen recently.

A recent survey revealed that more than half of young people age 25 to 39 who reported that as children they worried over things like having enough food were currently facing financial challenges.

“Young adults who regularly or sometimes worried when they were children about their care, safety, or having enough to eat are also less likely to be employed, less likely to have consistent income month-to-month, and less likely to be able to pay all their current monthly bills in full, compared with those who never or rarely worried about these concerns as children,” noted Yellen.

The research makes a compelling case for the need to think longer term about how to prepare people for success in the labor market:

In fact, this research underscores the value of starting young to develop basic work habits and skills, like literacy, numeracy, and interpersonal and organizational skills. These habits and skills help prepare people for work, help them enter the labor market sooner, meet with more success over time, and be in a position to develop the more specialized skills and obtain the academic credentials that are strongly correlated with higher and steadier earnings. Indeed, a growing body of economic and education literature has focused on the relative efficiency of addressing workforce development challenges through investments in early childhood development and education compared with interventions later in life.

Joe Carter is a senior editor at the Acton Institute.

ESSAY

It's time to bury the 'executioner' Lenin for good

An appropriate birthday gift on the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

Rev. Ben Johnson

April 22 marks the birthday of the architect of that cataclysmic “proletarian” revolution, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known to the world as Lenin.

These century-old events continue to dominate the news in modern-day Russia, where leaders grapple with how to deal with one tangible legacy of the Marxist past. After his death in 1924 at the age of 53, Lenin's corpse became the centerpiece of a gargantuan, pyramid-shaped mausoleum in Red Square, where he still lies in artificially preserved repose. Today, many would like his body, and his legacy, buried.

If Christians are eager to bury Lenin, it is less an act of spite than of reciprocation. His decree of October 26, 1917—one of the first acts of the atheistic Bolshevik regime—ordered the seizure of all church and monastic property for redistribution to “the whole people.” The great famine of 1921–22 that killed five million people due, in part, to Lenin's collectivization of farmland during the time of “war Communism” would give him the excuse he needed to seize property.

In a letter to the Politburo on March 19, 1922, Lenin wrote:

With the help of all those starving people who are starting to eat each other, who are dying by the millions, and whose bodies litter the roadside all over the country, it is now and only now that we can—and therefore must—confiscate all church property with all the ruthless energy we can still muster. This is precisely the moment the masses will support us most fervently, and rise up against the ... religious conspirators.

“Think of how rich some of those monasteries are,” he wrote. “We must have those hundreds of millions (or even billions) of rubles” to consolidate Soviet strength.

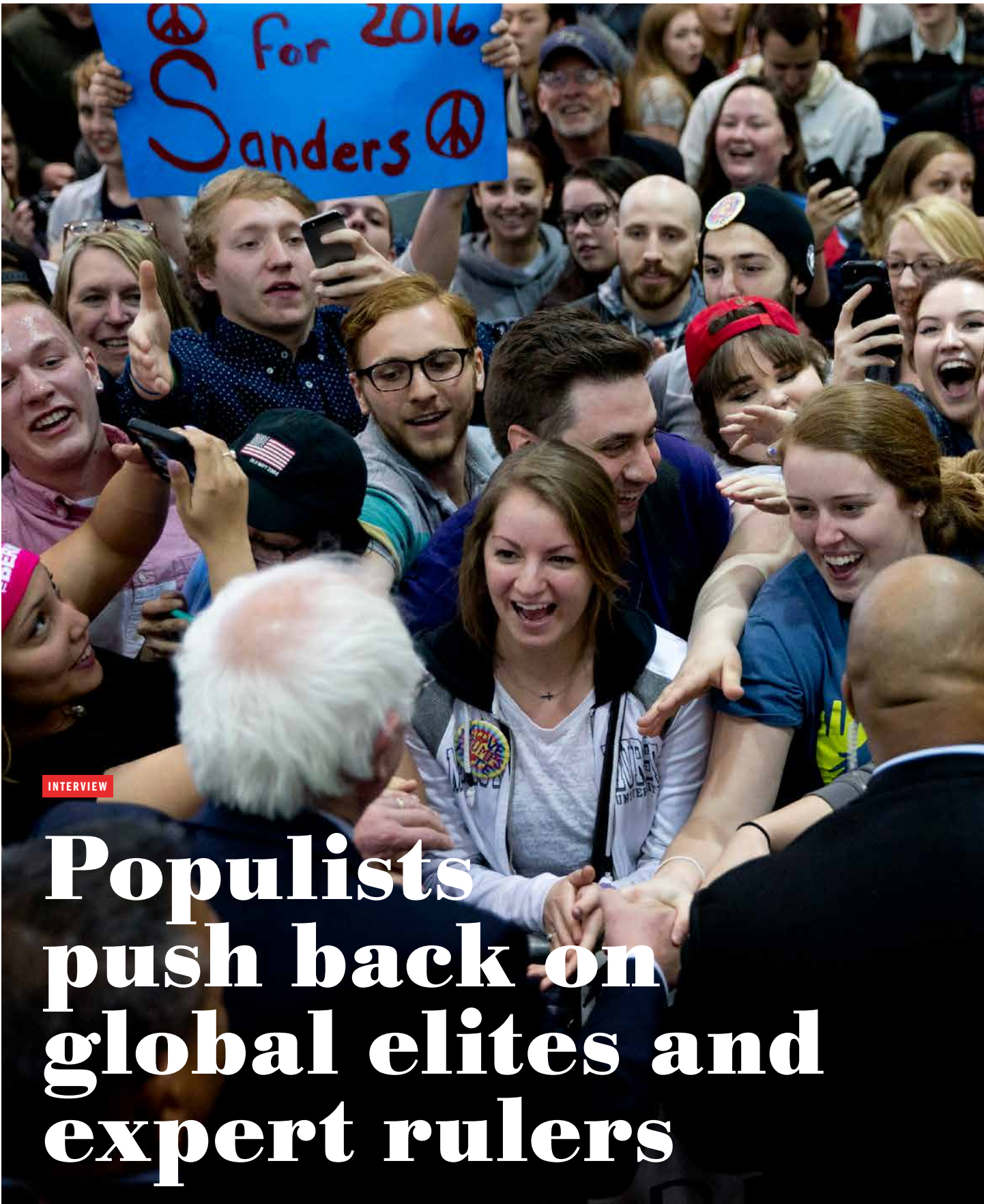
The theft, he urged, should take place with “the sort of brutality that they will remember for decades.”

The Bolsheviks seized at least 2.5 billion rubles of gold from Russian churches and spent one million rubles on grain in 1922. The same year, Orthodox Church records show that 2,691 priests, 1,962 monks and 3,447 nuns were murdered. Having been deprived its property and the people of their means of self-defense, the church entered a period so typified by persecution that it created an entire class of “New Martyrs” to commemorate the victims. The number of Orthodox churches plunged from as many as 50,000 before the revolution to 500 by 1940, and other faith communities suffered similar decimation.

Reappropriating church wealth paralleled the way the Bolsheviks despoiled the Russian people as a whole. “The present system arose,” former Russian politician Yuri Vlasov would assess in 1989, “entirely on the suppression of the individual, the powerlessness of each of us, and as a result, our defenselessness.”

William Faulkner wrote—appropriately enough, in *Requiem for a Nun*—that “the past is never dead. It's not even past.” But in this case, the detritus of a nation's past can—and should—be buried in ignominy, denying Communism the capacity for a resurrection that it so fiercely denied.

Rev. Ben Johnson is a senior editor at the Acton Institute. **R&L**



INTERVIEW

Populists push back on global elites and expert rulers

Photo: Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. Bernie Sanders in Erie, Pa. (AP Photo/Mary Altares) Reprinted with permission

Does the Donald Trump supporter in a bright red “Make America Great Again” ball cap have anything in common with the Bernie Sanders–inspired activist who fervently hopes for an end to the “political oligarchy” in America? Maybe on both the left and the right voters have finally had enough of global elites in Washington, Brussels and Davos calling the shots. In his new Acton monograph *What’s Wrong with Global Governance?*, Robert F. Gorman looks at the rise of a globalist ideology that seeks centralization and regulation of “wide reaching areas of international action.” Gorman is University Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Studies at Texas State University. He spoke recently with Religion & Liberty’s executive editor, John Couretas.

Religion & Liberty: In your new book, you make a distinction between globalization and global governance. You say global governance advocates tend to prefer both transnational regulation of markets and the creation of new human rights norms. If I understand you correctly, you’re not saying economic globalization is in itself a bad thing.

Gorman: Yes, I make a distinction. It’s what the scholar Marguerite Peeters would call a new global ethic that emphasizes centralization of decision-making, reducing the influence of national governance in that process and, by definition, other more local forms of government. We’re talking about the subsidiary bodies that do most of the heavy lifting in all the questions dealing with human dignity and economic life and promotion of work and economic development. These are at the core of what has actually been the most staggeringly positive expansion of wealth in the world, with economic globalization, the trade migration patterns, communication and that sort of thing.

R&L: This global economic transformation has occurred in parallel with the rise of a new global ethic, as you call it, that aims to establish a purely secular political and social order. The heavy lifting for this project takes place quietly in the work of NGOs, UN committees and innumerable

nonprofits for the most part.

G: What I try to do is point out a little bit of the contradiction. These cultural elites that command the high ground on almost all national and international organizations, and increasingly even local education, tend to claim that centralization of secular institutions at the global level is responsible for this alleviation. And this is partly symbolized through the claim that the Millennium Development Goals and the more recent sustainable development goals developed by the U.N. are largely responsible for the improved economic condition of humanity. And as I point out in the book, that’s simply not true. The subsidiary work of private enterprises through direct investment, trade and private individuals, and remittances of income earned by migrants and sent back to their families in the developing world is really where the dynamic is occurring.

This secular global ethic is an insidious ideology because much of it is accomplished beyond the spotlight, in private conferences, in academic gatherings, even in treaty-making oversight bodies for human rights treaties. The academic expert and the NGO, all of whom pretty much accept the liberal, progressive, secular, humanist anthropology are working to advance this project.

R&L: In your monograph, you say there’s been a complete transvaluation of values, how things are sort of turned on their head. Could you explain how you connect this global governance ideology with Marxist thought?

G: It’s actually utilitarian thinking, the reduction of the human person to simply

members. That all disappears when families have only one child.

What the Marxists understood and what more contemporary expressions of post-modern thinking understand is that the real battle for control of societies is predominantly cultural. Paradoxically, the language they use, the principles advanced in the name of human rights and human freedom are actually counterproductive to genuine freedom and the genuine good of peoples and the human dignity of individuals who are most frequently violated in these global governance political systems.

R&L: Your book makes the case that the Catholic Church is in many places the main hurdle to the global governance project.

G: The church is supposed to be the conveyor of the gospel, a sign of contradiction against the novelties of human thought that emerge against that gospel. And so by emphasizing the importance of marriage and family life and freedom of religion and freedom of conscience and practice of the faith, the church upholds traditional values.

R&L: At the same time, divisions within churches, liberal and conservative wings, see this global ethic in both positive and negative lights. How well will the traditional Christian witness be able to keep itself together going forward?

G: I think in some ways that’s what Pope Emeritus Benedict was telling us when he said the church might be a smaller but more faithful remnant. The Catholic Church is not going to go away, but its capacity to influence the world depends on our bishops, specifically, those committed to the

propagation of the gospel itself.

R&L: What about the way global elites are redefining the very definition of human dignity? Do you see that as part and parcel of this whole global governance project?

G: They reduce

the dignity of the human person to the pursuit of pleasure and predominantly sexual pleasure. And what’s ironic about this is that there’s a tendency on the part of advocates of this new global ethic to attack the church as preoccupied with sex and a guilty understanding of sex. But in fact, these global governance elites are preoccupied with it. They define freedom as radical autonomy.

“This secular global ethic is an insidious ideology because much of it is accomplished beyond the spotlight, in private conferences, in academic gatherings, even in treaty-making oversight bodies for human rights.”

a material object rather than a personal subject. In practice, Marxists have made it their business to directly attack both the church and family life in an effort to develop direct relationships with individuals. So it’s not surprising to look at China and see that its one-child policy is, in a sense, a way to exterminate the Confucian ethic, which involved all those duties to extended family

R&L: There is no sense that human dignity is connected with anything transcendent.

G: It's a totally warped human anthropology that denies the natural basis of masculinity and femininity of the role of the family as the basic unit of society, without which we don't even have the propagation of the human species. But again, part of this new global elite is that the human being is, in a sense, the enemy of the ecology, the enemy of the environment, and therefore that's why they advance the idea of contraception and abortion and sterilization and reduction of human fertility as one of the greatest goods of this global governance movement.

R&L: The human person as the culprit for an exhausted Earth.

G: Right. It's the idea that human beings and population growth are the number one enemy to sustainable development and to the health of planet earth. And of course, this goes back a ways too, to those limits to growth concepts that emerged in the 1960s with Paul Ehrlich and his Population Bomb thesis. Unfortunately, Ehrlich seems to have some influence even to this day in Catholic circles.

R&L: Is it a coincidence that this demographic decline is occurring alongside a rapid secularization?

G: There's a cultural dimension of it and a political dimension of it. The political dimension is to get to the establishment of global policies by the global elites themselves and so-called experts who know better than the rest of humanity what's best for them and for the world at large. The vast majority of people who populate NGOs and the international civil servants at the U.N. and other agencies, the European Union being a prominent one, act as if they know better how to organize the world than families and local communities. The experts believe that if you obstruct the rule of experts, the world will fall apart.

Some years ago I was commissioned to do a multi-volume encyclopedia of events in the 20th century and was asked to edit older articles and provide suggestions for new pieces that could fill out the series. And it struck me as I read the predictions of experts how often, more often than not, they were wrong in their predictions. And most of my edits of earlier pieces concern just updating erroneous predictions that have been made by so-called experts.

R&L: In recent years, we've seen popu-

list surges in the United States and in Europe, on both the left and the right. Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Do you see a growing sentiment among voters that time is up for the rule of elites and their experts?

G: I do think so. These are all manifestations in a world where there is greater literacy, where people have freer access to information sources of their own choosing on the internet. We now have a discussion about some of the negative aspects of globalization that people are more broadly aware of. And you look at the coincidence, then, between what was happening in Britain on Brexit and the surge of uncontrolled refugee migration into Europe, which itself stimulated, perhaps, popular movements against this idea that Brussels was imposing rules and regulations on the whole of Europe in a way that was adversely affecting the security and well-being of populations in EU countries. People are only going to put up with that for so long before they just say, "Ok, we've got to put some new people in charge here to clean this up."

R&L: And the Sanders phenomenon rode the same antiestablishment, antiexpert type of wave?

G: Of course, but we're dealing with it very much on the left. On the left and the right are two different perceptions about who to blame. But with Sanders supporters, you saw some of the same uneasiness largely focused on Wall Street and elite establishment control of the economy. It's a similar kind of impulse in that everybody understands there's something wrong with the way things are playing out. **R&L**



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LUCRETIA MOTT (1793–1880)

Sarah Stanley

In January 1793, Lucretia was born to ship captain Thomas Coffin Jr. and his wife, a shopkeeper named Anna. The Coffin family were devout Quakers living in Massachusetts. Lucretia was first exposed to the concept of equality between men and women by the example of her mother's successful shopkeeping while her father spent long periods away at sea. She attended a Quaker boarding school, Nine Partners, where she first learned of the horrors of slavery and the Quaker teachings against the practice. She became a teacher there and met her future husband, James Mott. The two married in 1811.

Tragedy struck Mott in 1817 when her toddler son, Thomas, died. Though always religious, Mott discovered that this difficult time developed her spirituality and led her to become an official member of the Quaker ministry.

Lucretia was disgusted by the horrors of slavery and used her gift for speech to fight the institution. In 1833, she helped create and became president of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. When the Civil War ended and many abolitionists considered their work complete, Mott understood that the real war was hardly over. She continued to fight for black suffrage and advocated for the rights of newly freed slaves.

Mott's passion for antislavery developed into a fight for women's rights. In 1837 in New York City, Mott organized and attended the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. Mott and other female speakers faced harsh criticism. Fellow abolitionists took is-



sue with audiences comprised of both men and women. Those who supported slavery were much worse; several times Mott was threatened by violent mobs. Mott, a pacifist, believed in fighting with words and never arms.

In 1840, Mott was denied an official seat at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London because of her gender. Instead of accepting this, she stood outside the conference and spoke in favor of equality for women. During this time, she met another pioneer in women's rights, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The two women organized the famous 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, the catalyst for America's women's rights

movement. During the convention, a Declaration of Sentiments was drafted that said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men *and women* are created equal." Those words caused a fury of controversy and led to the creation of the American women's rights movement.

Mott outlined her teachings on women's equality in her 1849 book *Discourse on Woman*. "There is nothing of greater importance to the well-being of society at large," the book begins, "than the true and proper position of woman." Society cannot function without equality of races and equality of genders. She was for not just equal economic opportunity, but she also supported women's equal political status, including suffrage.

Concerned that a lack of education for women, not any kind of biological flaw, was holding women back in society, Mott helped establish Swarthmore College in 1864. This Quaker institution was one of the first coeducational places of higher learning.

On November 11, 1880, Mott died near Philadelphia, surrounded by her children and grandchildren. Despite Mott's work, American women did not receive the right to vote until 30 years after her death when the 19th Amendment was ratified.

Lucretia Mott fearlessly fought injustice wherever she witnessed it. She did not see any difference between advocating for slaves or for women or for anyone else whose equality wasn't recognized. Beyond her official work, Mott was known for being an excellent hostess; she often entertained both black and white guests in her home.



He added in another manuscript, “Conscience understood in this way supplied a new basis for freedom. It carried further the range of Whiggism. The deeper Quakers perceived the consequences, Penn drew the consequences in the Constitution of Pennsylvania. It was the standard of a new party and a new world.”

The appeal was to conscience, a conscience which defied the laws of man in order to obey the law of God. It was but a step from an appeal to liberty in religion to an appeal to liberty in politics. The appeal to the higher law made by the framers of the Declaration of Independence was only a more abstract and universal conception of liberty than the appeal to conscience made in the name of religion. Acton noted, “America started with the habit of abstract ideas. Rhode Island, Pennsylvania. It came to them from religion and the Puritan struggle. So they went beyond conservation of national rights. The rights of man grew out of English toleration. It was the link between tradition and abstraction.”

The appeal to the higher law made by the framers of the Declaration of Independence was only a more abstract and universal conception of liberty than the appeal to conscience made in the name of religion. In his Cambridge University lecture (1901) on the American Revolution, Acton put the revolutionary shift from rights based on the fact that the colonists were Englishmen to rights based on a universal appeal to a higher law in this way:

Then James Otis spoke, and lifted the question to a different level, in one of the memorable speeches in political history. Assuming, but not admitting, that the Boston custom-house officers were acting legally, and within the statute, then, he said, the statute was wrong. Their action might be authorised by parliament; but if so, parliament had exceeded its authority, like Charles with his shipmoney, and James with the dispensing power. There are principles which override precedents. The laws of England may be a very good thing, but there is such a thing as a higher law.

Acton argued with great force that England’s colonial rule in America had been one of the mildest and most beneficent

Photo: Left: Declaration of Independence by John Trumbull (Wikimedia).

ESSAY

Observing the American experiment

The following essay is excerpted from *Lord Acton: Historian and Moralist* (Acton Institute 2017).

Stephen J. Tonsor

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton placed liberty in the forefront of all goods, moral and political. Many people are aware that the great uncompleted project of his life was the writing of a history of freedom. He saw the evolution of liberty as the work of Providence, as the consequence, as he put it, of Christ’s being “risen on the world.” Achieved liberty is the fulfillment of the divine plan. It is for

this reason above all others that Acton so valued the American experiment.

Acton repeatedly noted that the Protestant Reformation and the wars of religion led to the establishment of absolutism rather than toleration and freedom. Royal power and bureaucratic administration, whether Catholic or Protestant, was substituted for the imperatives of conscience. Established churches used the power of the state to coerce the consciences of the subject. The Puritan revolution in England appealed to the higher law of conscience but then sank back into intolerance and repression. It was the sectarians, at first in England and then in America, who justified religious nonconformity by an appeal to conscience.

In one manuscript, Acton wrote: “The theory of conscience was full grown. It had assumed in one of the sects, a very peculiar shape: the doctrine of inner light. The Quakers not originally liberals. But the inner light struggled vigorously for freedom. In the very days in which the theory of conscience reached its extreme terms, Penn proclaimed conscience as the teaching of his sect. And it became the basis of Pennsylvania—Voltaire’s best government.”

colonial regimes in history. Americans were not rebelling against oppression. The American course was justified solely on the basis of our appeal to a higher law, justified solely by an appeal to the rights of political conscience. These were arguments Acton understood, approved, and applauded.

The foundation of the American republic was, Acton rightly understood, not completed with the successful termination of the American Revolution. The American Revolution created a political society in which the unchecked will of the people was paramount, state governments in which the tyranny of the majority would, sooner or later, lead to anarchy. The second great act of the founding, the making of the Constitution, was a conservative act which made the creation of a republic possible. The creation of the Constitution had two great objects in view, the prevention of the tyranny of the majority and the dispersion of centralized power. The framers of the Constitution achieved these objectives not through the enunciation of any new principles but by compromising contending tendencies and forces. The structure of the Constitution was like the structure of a medieval cathedral in which countervailing forces were employed in such a way as to hold the whole structure aloft. None of the great questions were resolved: states rights, federal power, the tariff, slavery. American federalism, which Acton reckoned one of the great inventions of the age, was based upon compromise rather than principle. From the beginning this structure of republican liberty threatened to collapse. In spite of their great achievement, Acton viewed the work of the founders as incomplete and the Constitution as an imperfect instrument.

It is my considered judgment that Acton was the most knowledgeable foreign observer of American affairs in the nineteenth century. As a very young man he had made a trip to the United States and had traveled widely, but the mature Acton's knowledge of America was based upon books rather than direct personal experience. No American, with the exception of Henry Adams, who was nearly his exact contemporary, knew American history more thoroughly than Acton. It is a pity that American historians so rarely read him.

Stephen Tonsor is a professor emeritus at the University of Michigan. [RSL](#)

FILM

Using a love story to tell the world about the Holodomor

A review of the 2017 film *Bitter Harvest*.

Rev. Anthony Perkins



Most Americans are familiar with the Holocaust and revile the regime that committed it. Its symbols and racist ideology evoke a visceral reaction so strong that ideologues use them against their enemies in hopes of tainting them. Knowing that this genocide really happened helps keep us on guard against allowing it to happen here. Outside of rightly vilified hate groups, no one promotes the evil and antiscientific racist ideology that drove the Germans to the “final solution.” Even those who deny the genocidal animus behind the Holocaust are vilified. This is all to the good.

The irony is that another genocide was committed in Europe and has escaped notice. The regime that committed it was no less totalitarian and its ideology no less evil and antiscientific, but its symbols and ideas evoke no widespread visceral reaction. Furthermore, the regime's defenders and sympathizers—not to mention those who actively deny the genocide it created—receive no condemnation. This genocide is known as the Holodomor (literally, “murder by starvation”), and it was committed against Ukrainians by the Soviet regime. The USSR was committed to the creation of a “New Man” and the destruction of everything and everyone that stood in its way. This included not only the bourgeois but also the freedom- and independence-loving nation of Ukraine. Yes, Communism was a blight on all 15 of the Soviet republics, but what the Communists did in Ukraine was especially brutal. Between 1932 and 1933, four to 10 million Ukrainians—men, women and children living in the “breadbasket of Europe”—were intentionally starved to death.

One reason for our ignorance and apathy about this epic tragedy is ideological; leftist such as Walter Duranty worked with Soviet propagandists to cover up the cause and severity of the famine. Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow* (1986) and the documentary *Harvest of Despair* (1984) helped publicize what Ukrainian immigrant communities have long known: the intentional starvation of Ukrainians was the worst chapter in the long history of Muscovite imperialism in and against Ukraine. What remains is for the Communist regime that committed the Holodomor, along with its ideology and symbols, to work their way into our imaginations so deeply that they too become the automatic objects of our hatred. Recent academic work such as Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010) will help, but to affect the imaginations of most Americans, movies like *Bitter Harvest* (2017) will help even more.

The most memorable images from *Bitter Harvest* portray Ukrainian country folk in bright, embroidered clothing singing and dancing as they work and play; it may be overly romanticized, but it is beautiful. The depictions of the midsummer feast of “Ivana Kupala” (i.e., St. John the Baptist), with its mix of Orthodox and pagan customs, are idyllic and authentic. Scenes of the courting and wedding rituals are especially bucolic and joyful. None of this beauty survives the brutality of Stalin's regime, personified by the Commissar Sergei (played by Tamer Hassan). He beats up and eventually murders the village priest, turns its church into a prison and puts an image of Stalin up in the church where the patron icon of St. George had hung. The presentation may seem too cut-and-dried for sophisticated audiences, but all atrocities shown in the movie represent common occurrences in the Soviet Union.

But Sergei is not just in Ukraine to use force to implement common Soviet policy; he is there to use hunger and starvation as a means of subjugation, and if not subjugation, then annihilation. The main policies the Soviets used in the Holodomor were unsustainably high grain quotas and requisitions, bans on any kind of gleaning and prohibitions on travel (i.e., escape) and aid. Sergei and his soldiers are shown demanding more from the farmers than they can provide in the hopes of forcing them to give up their lands and homes and move to the collective farms. The movie also shows how ready the Soviets were to use violence.

The movie also does a good, if overly romantic, job of showing the hardships suffered during the starvation. Nataalka (Samantha Barks), the movie's heroine, is tempted to consider prostitution. She dresses herself up as best as she can, even going so far as to paint her lips with her own blood, and visits Sergei seemingly to exchange her body for food. She ends up resisting his advances, but the audience cannot help but think of how often this sort of scene must have happened in real life, often to different and more tragic results.

Another scene that especially highlights the terrible reality of the Holodomor occurs when some soup is shared in the village. When Nataalka asks what is in the soup, the answer is "nettles and grass." The mind is drawn to consider the despair of people who filled their soup pots with things that were never meant to be consumed.

Many of the movie's images are more direct; we are shown men, women and children dead and dying in the streets. This is no exaggeration. At the height of the famine, 30,000 people, many of them children, were dying every day from starvation.

The post-occupation scenes in the village are not the only ones juxtaposed with the Edenic early scenes of village life; Kyiv becomes a nightmare of beggars, poverty, occupation and betrayal. Again, it is overdone, but the story arc of Mykola (Aneurin Barnard), the hero's best friend, is archetypal. He is the political idealist who sees Communism as a way to bring education and prosperity to the nation he loves. He remains committed to Ukrainian nationalism and becomes the leader of the Communist party in Kyiv. However, he soon realizes that the Soviet plan does not allow for the continued existence of his beloved nation. He ends up taking his own life out of despair for himself and Ukraine.

The movie is far from perfect. For instance, I am not convinced it provides enough information about the Soviet regime and its policies for its actions and motivations to make sense to most viewers. Moreover, many will be turned off by the movie's style. The acting is solid, but the characters are intentionally exaggerated if not caricatured. However, it could have been worse. In other hands, there might have been an attempt to sympathize with or even excuse the totalitarian Communist regime and the men who worked to enforce its evil policies. My hope, like that of its creators, is that *Bitter Harvest* will help make the tragedy of the Holodomor more well-known and the ideology and symbols of Communism better understood and reviled.

Rev. Anthony Perkins is a priest in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and a professor at St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary. [R&L](#)

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Photo: Right: "The Parable of the Rich Fool" by Rembrandt (Public Domain)



while racial intolerance has diminished, racial segregation is becoming the norm in those areas of the country that are booming economically. Cowen says this happens because “the rich and well educated are keener to live together, in tight bunches and groups, than are the less well educated.” The irony in this is that “it’s these groups—the wealthy, the well-educated, and the creative class—who often complain about inequality and American segregation with the greatest fervor.”

Moreover, when we look past words to deeds, we see that as the “self-selection process” runs its course, “no matter how ostensibly progressive their politics,” the “affluent and well educated in America” who live in large urban areas or centers of technological innovation “may be especially out of touch” with most Americans. Living in their comfortable bubble, the most successful among us don’t understand how, for all their good intentions, they have helped create a divided society where racial segregation and income inequality are becoming more common.

Nevertheless, Cowen sees technology and the matching culture as fundamentally good things. Like many of us, he uses Spotify and Pandora to find music he likes. Software to match “college roommates” or “executives and employees” are socially and economically beneficial. “The bright side” of all this is that matching technologies can make possible “encounters with people who truly have different outlooks than we do and who can communicate that to us online or later maybe even in a personal meeting.”

But wealth production, technological innovation and a free society share a common foundation in human and Christian virtue. Forgetting this, as Cowen’s book illustrates, makes us vulnerable to the dark side in matching culture.

We are experiencing “a fundamental shift of societal energy away from building a new and freer world and toward rearranging the pieces in the world we already have.” For Cowen, “There was something to be said for less-compatible, more challenge-laden accidental pairings with all their conflicts and messy resolutions.” Discomfort, dissatisfaction and disappointment—whether acute, chronic, moral, social or economic—can spur the kind of innovations that have made the free market so successful in creating and distributing wealth.

BOOK

When our success threatens our success

Book Review of *The Complacent Class: The Self-Defeating Quest for the American Dream* (St. Martin's Press 2017).

Rev. Gregory Jensen

T Tyler Cowen addresses the economic and social harms that arise from, as he says in *The Complacent Class: The Self-Defeating Quest for the American Dream*, “decisions that are at first glance” in our “best interests.” As our decisions play out, they can prove to have consequences “at the societal level” that, while “unintended,” are “not always good.”

Technological advances have created a “new culture of matching” that has improved the quality of life for many of us. At the same time, our ability to get exactly, or almost exactly, what we want also allows us to avoid the disappointments and dissatisfactions that inspired people to pursue the innovations that make matching possible. Paradoxically, getting what we want when we want it has “made us more risk averse and more set in our ways.” Our success threatens our success.

Socially, the matching culture is “more segregated” by education, economic status and especially race. This isn’t, as he stresses throughout the book, necessarily intentional. But



In Cowen's view, discomfort is also what fosters flexibility, compromise and other "error correction mechanisms" that are at the heart of a free society. On this he approvingly quotes Churchill: "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing—after they've tried everything else." Our comfortable way of life has robbed us of the irritation that motivates us to try new things. Complacency has "sapped us of the pioneer spirit that made America the world's most productive and innovative economy. Furthermore, all this has happened at a time when we may need American dynamism more than ever before."

Reading *The Complacent Class* reminded me of the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). In his commentary, St. Cyril of Alexandria asks, "What does the rich man do, surrounded by a great supply of many blessings beyond number?" Wealthy though the man is, "He speaks words of poverty." The man is gripped by "distress and anxiety" because he has not "raise[d] his eyes to God" and does not "cherish love for the poor or desire the esteem it gains."

Instead of charitable self-sacrifice, the rich fool pursues a life of self-satisfaction in which he, not God, will determine "the length of his life, as if he would also reap this from the ground" as he does wheat (*Commentary of Luke, Homily 89*). "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" (Luke 12:19 NKJV)."

In a word, the rich fool is complacent. Resisting complacency doesn't mean forgoing productivity or planning for the future. In Proverbs, for example, we are told, "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (6:6 NKJV). To be wise

means, among other things, being productive and governing our lives without need of "captain, overseer or ruler" to compel us to plant crops "in the summer" and to gather "food in the harvest" (6:7-8 NKJV) come autumn.

Like the rich fool, Cowen's America is in the grip of that gentle and pleasurable idleness about which Solomon warns us:

A little sleep, a little slumber,

A little folding of the hands to sleep—

So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler,

And your need like an armed man.
(Proverbs 6:10-11 NKJV)

Whatever its short-term attractions, a pref-

several possible scenarios for America's eventual "return of chaos" as the complacent class loses its hold on the culture. Though only time will tell, I suspect he is right when he says the "current system is in some ways broken and that the complacent class, for all its good intentions, has in some ways failed America."

Whether this breakdown results in future innovation and economic growth or simply more chaos remains to be seen since. Though it may appear otherwise, the free market is fragile. Economic growth, technological innovation and a free society all depend on our willingness to endure and even pursue a relative degree of discomfort.

In other words, we must remember that the benefits of a free economy are not guaranteed; they depend on our personal and cultural willingness to cultivate virtue. As Cowen's work suggests, the



erence for complacency means in the long-term that more and more Americans will slide back into the material poverty and tribalism that characterized humanity before the rise of the market economy.

In the last chapter, Cowen implicitly acknowledges the close connection between complacency and a culture of moral and social decay. He lays out for the reader

crisis we face now is that our success has made us indifferent, and at times even hostile, to the moral foundation that makes success possible.

Rev. Gregory Jensen is the interim pastor of St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Madison, Wisconsin, and Orthodox chaplain at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. R&L

Photos: Left: Public Domain, Right: Inside Gharia Prison by Richard Gould (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

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The notion of shared values on both sides of the Atlantic has received new attention. Leaders like French socialist president François Hollande cite “democracy, freedoms, and the respect of every individual” as key values. But what about religious liberty, the breakdown of the welfare state, advancing secularism and the health of civil society? R&L Transatlantic will cover these issues here with new articles.

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BRIEF

FINDING ‘HAPPINESS’ IN A ROMANIAN GULAG

Translated by Gabriela Ailenei NICOLAESTEINHARDT.WORDPRESS.COM



Nicolae Steinhardt was a 20th-century writer and Orthodox hermit. He was arrested by the Communist Party of Romania in 1959 when he refused to testify against a colleague who was accused of being an enemy of the people. Steinhardt himself was accused of conspiracy against social order and was sentenced to hard labor. He spent 13 years in a gulag-like prison. There he met a Bessarabian hermit and was baptized Orthodox Christian.

After his imprisonment, Steinhardt joined the Rohia Monastery where he was a librarian and wrote prolifically. Most of his writings were published postmortem after the Romanian Revolution. This includes his most famous work, jurnalul fericii, “The Diary of Happiness.” Due to political censorship, many of Steinhardt’s writings were not published until after his death, including the diary. It gained fame when it was broadcast in a series of episodes on Radio Free Europe. The following is an excerpt from this work:

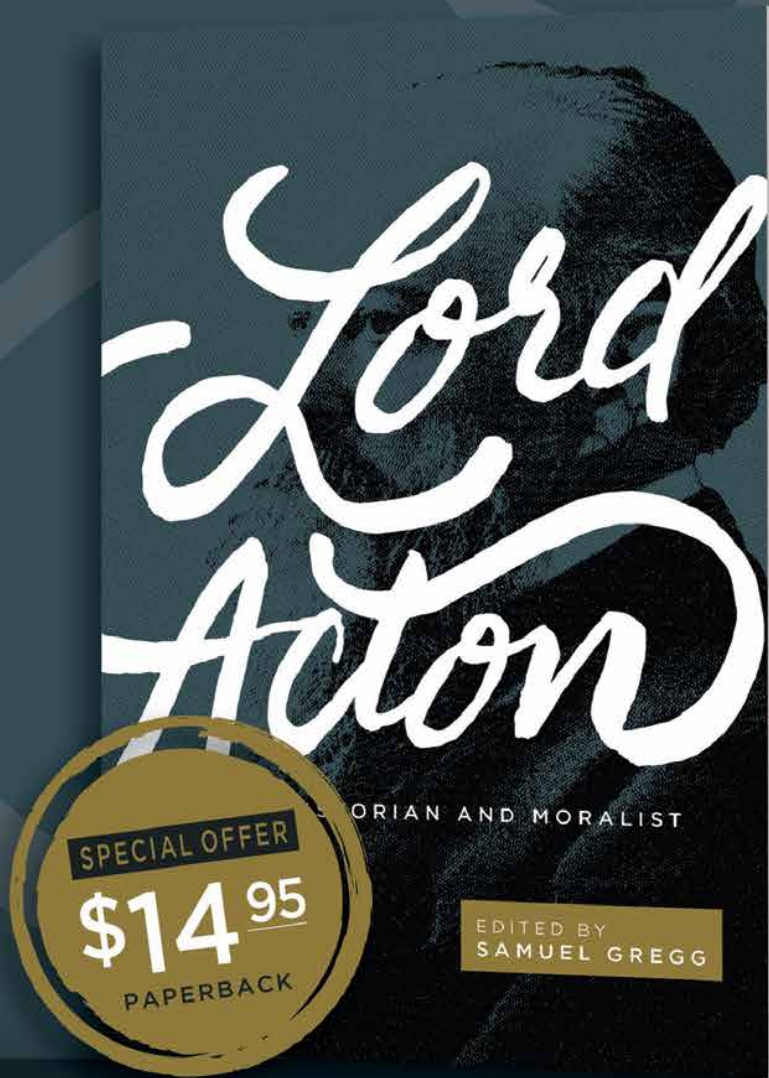
All those—scholars or ordinary folk—who are satisfied to accept, as answers to the big questions man asks about his purpose in the world, about the universe and life, about suffering and injustice, phrases like: the universe has and will always exist, life is a natural phenomenon, chance created everything, thought is the superior form of human consciousness, prove how very undemanding they are. These kinds of answers are stereotypical simplifications, and they’re the equivalent of: when you’re talking to me, you should shut up.

On the contrary, nothing is natural and everything is surprising and wondrous. Evolution is a mystery and a miracle. The questions that our conscience asks are mysteries. Nature and its implacable laws are a miracle. From all sides, mysteries besiege and assail us, uninterrupted and more persistent than cosmic rays.

And not even stupidity or indifference can constitute a strong enough magnetic field to protect us from them, the same way the earth’s magnetic field slightly amortizes the shock of cosmic mesons. Angst (or exaltation) will inevitably jolt every soul, even the most obtuse; in a prison cell, on the sick bed, at the moment of death, or all of a sudden on the street. Every event is anti-destiny.

Every work of art is anti-nature. Every decision is anti-nothingness. To love somebody is a mystery of faith. Love and forgiveness are not natural. Natural is the second principle of thermodynamics.

Shestov: the evolution of the universe is not in the least natural; it would be natural if there were absolutely nothing—no universe, no evolution. **R&L**



LORD ACTON: HISTORIAN AND MORALIST

EDITED BY SAMUEL GREGG

CONTRIBUTORS:

Josef L. Altholz, Christoph Böhr,
Owen Chadwick, Samuel Gregg,
James C. Holland, Russell Kirk,
Johann Christian Koecke,
Stephen J. Tonsor, Rudolf Uertz

PUBLISHED BY
ACTON INSTITUTE

PAPERBACK 190 PGS

ISBN 978-1-942503-49-1

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