

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 4 | FALL 2023

# *in*FOCUS

QUARTERLY

The Governance Issue



**Matthew Tyrmand** on Sovereignty and Liberty | **Larry P. Arnn** on Rising State Power | **R. Evan Ellis** on El Salvador's Gamble | **Amir Taheri** on the French Malaise | **Soeren Kern** on Immigration and Integration in Europe | **Jun Isomura** on Japan's Democracy | **Juliana Geran Pilon** on the Sweden's Political Reality | **Khaled Abu Toameh** on the Failures of Palestinian Leadership | **Barry Shaw** on Israel's Protests | **Shoshana Bryen** reviews *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*

Featuring **Madam Lu Hsiu-lien Annette**  
Former Vice President of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

# LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

If you ask Americans, the best form of governance is always and without question, “democracy.” But what is that and why is it always best? Ours is showing some signs of stress – as are the democratic systems of some of our best friends, France, Israel, and Sweden, to name just a few. The experiments with the trappings of democracy were a disaster for the countries of the Arab Spring. Is it American hubris that leads us to think that everyone wants what we want the way we want it? This issue is devoted to the how, why, and cultural imperatives, and their effect on governance.

The long-term impact on Europe of the Treaty of Westphalia is outlined by Matthew Tyrmand. A prescient 2021 consideration of threats to traditional American governmental norms comes from Larry Arnn.

Sweden, the summer riots in France, and the implications of immigration there and in Germany are the purview of Juliana Geran Pilon, Amir Taheri, and Soeren Kern respectively. R. Evan Ellis takes on the current condition of El Salvador. Khaled Abu Toameh explains what Palestinians need to begin a move toward consensual government.

Jun Isomura details the evolution of a uniquely Asian form of democracy in

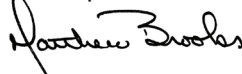
Japan and South Korea. We are honored to have Madam Lu Hsiu-lien Annette contribute our Centerpiece on the development of Taiwanese democracy. These three Asian allies are the cornerstones of American friendship and security in the Pacific; their evolution is important.

JPC adamantly does NOT comment on Israel’s judicial reform or demonstrations – but Barry Shaw brings us a side of Israel’s governmental stresses and strains you may not see in the mainstream media.

Shoshana Bryen reviews Yoram Hazony’s book, *Conservatism*, which defines precisely what makes traditional American standards – both societal and governmental – the underpinning of a society that has been extraordinarily successful for its own people and for those who chose to join the system. Whether the system survives is the question.

If you appreciate what you’ve read, I encourage you to make a contribution to the JPC. You can use our secure site: <http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/donate>

Sincerely,



Matthew Brooks  
Publisher



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# Freedom, Sovereignty, and Individual Rights

by **MATTHEW TYRMAND**

“Sovereignty” is what makes “freedom” and “individual rights” possible. Without recognized, respected, and fully upheld sovereignty, the entire premise of post-Enlightenment Western political practice, that is, modern representative democracy, is nullified.

This Western political tradition, which since 1648 has exalted nation state sovereignty as a tenet of legitimate government, produced more than three centuries of an unrivaled expansion in every social good, first in the West and then, ultimately, in the broader world. Science, technology, market development, hygiene, diet, health, wellness and longevity, reduced poverty, education access – in short, all standards by which quality of life for a human being is measured – measure better today and in every half-century or so sequential increment, than its antecedent one. It is not a perfectly straight line graphically, but the trend has been powerful.

## ■ *Treaty of Westphalia*

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia was reached with treaties ending the calamitous 30-Years’ War. It reordered the political operations of Europe away from war as first resort toward one of attempted diplomacy. The treaties were signed by 109 parties over five months. The territorial agreements by the nation states and imperial states of the Holy Roman Empire took five years to hammer out.

The lasting legacy of this accord, which settled many of Europe’s existent issues of the time, was the inviolability of borders and non-interference in the

domestic affairs of these now-recognized sovereign states.

This is the basis of the modern flourishing international order.

The classical liberals of the Enlightenment – Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, et. al. – saw delivering and securing liberty as the primary political ideal to be pursued by the governed. The social contract, legitimacy, individual rights, and representative democracy all had roots in the stabilizing of the European continental theater that the Westphalian Order delivered.

Of course, there were still wars, territorial disputes, piracy, imperialism, and all sorts of chicanery. But diplomatic engagement, bilaterally or multilaterally, changed the evolution of Western international relations, most notably with the 1815 Congress of Vienna.

World Wars I and II, with the developed world’s industrial-level technological capabilities, delivered death on a mechanized scale never before seen, primarily wielded and weaponized by one sovereign state actor – Germany – motivated by imperial nationalist ambitions. The deeply battered Europe that survived, albeit with new fault lines, such as the post-Yalta Eastern and Central European order, had many leaders who desired to remake the Continental political dynamic.

## ■ *Nationalist vs Socialist*

In this post-war period, where the philosophers were philosophizing over what went wrong, they seized upon the nationalist component of German Nazi philosophy as the catalyst for the attempt

at world domination. They ignored the socialist part of the Nazi platform as they were prone to subscribe to this economic philosophy themselves.

It is not coincidental that the thought leadership was weighted toward French philosophical schools of political and social thinkers, firmly ensconced on the left in the academy and the state’s political complex. These schools were close to Robespierre and the Jacobins’ “Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite” – which Edmond Burke had correctly predicted would later be reduced to the absurd during the statist tyranny of the French Revolution’s Reign of Terror.

In the 20th century, they were much quicker to condemn and blame nationalism than socialism.

They posited a “United States of Europe” built around human rights and democracy, rather than economics and trade, to combat the extreme nationalism that had just shattered the continent. Sovereign governments could choose to work together of their own volition, with no supranational authority.

However, by 1952, harmonization of political decision-making was not aligning quickly enough for some. So, the “fathers of the European Union” initiated the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with six original signatories. The ECSC was built expressly to devolve power from the sovereign state, initially on a voluntary basis, to supranational authority, and was meant to regulate coal and steel – the two necessary inputs to wage industrial level war. These also happened to be the two key industrial economic sectors of the time.

## ■ *The EU and the Euro*

And then, the European Union (EU) was born, with sovereignty ceded, not catalyzed by being on the receiving end of a tank or a gun, but ushered in democratically by free people with the goal of warless utopia, voting to devolve their statehood to a federation. The economics of a monetary union and a common currency would reduce transaction costs and tie peoples more closely together. After all, those who trade more, make war less.

This multi-generational age of integration did not abate for 60 years. In this more than half a century though, some curious byproducts of post-sovereign utopia manifested themselves.

The economics of the common currency could only work when there was continual growth in the real economy or nominal growth by adding more consumers and adopters of the currency, like a Ponzi scheme. Bernard Connolly, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's economist chosen to analyze how it would look to give up British sovereign currency for the common one, sounded the alarm. That this could eventually lead to ruin once growth hit a wall. He was suspended and slandered in EU headquarters at Brussels but did keep the United Kingdom from trading in its pounds for euros.

As we later saw, shocks and recessions and even destabilizing political episodes could, would, and did prove disastrous because there was no remedy for European policy makers to execute as guaranteed by the EU constitution that wouldn't be at odds with the national constitutions of member states.

Fiscal policy and budgetary constructions are definitionally domestic issues, and the monetary policy of the European Central Bank (ECB) would impact different nations differently. It is no surprise that action tended toward that which was beneficial for the biggest states – particularly Germany, with the biggest economy in Europe. Germany's was an economy that had been successfully rebuilt in the post-war era by factors

including the American-funded Marshall Plan, the prohibition on rebuilding its military (a big money-saver), and a culture whose industriousness has been heralded for centuries.

## ■ *Modern Days*

A particular byproduct of integration, monetary policy as a backdoor to fiscal policy control, led directly to the reduced national sovereignty of a member nation – Greece, during the Greek Debt Crisis of 2009. Greece was well over its skis with a highly leveraged sovereign balance sheet, financed by cheap money, as priced by the ECB, lent by highly leveraged German banks looking for profits with little regard for the systemic risk they were exacerbating with loose lending standards.

After the American recession of 2008 went global, the malinvestment into the debtor states of southern Europe by the lender states of industrial northern Europe, with their large banking and investment systems, came to the forefront

private component of the banking system of the supranational governance authority. Prime Minister George Papandreou was replaced by a former vice president of the ECB, Lucas Papademos, in a snap election where the pro-EU political and media voices weighed in dramatically about a falling sky should the Greeks not validate the steward Brussels had selected for them.

This is just one example, and up to that point it was the grandest in scale, of a single nation state's sovereignty so diminished by EU pressures or *diktats*. Greece might have come out of this economic crisis with different outcomes had it been allowed to return to its pre-Euro currency, the drachma. Or even exit the EU. But these options never had an honest chance. The departure of Greece from the federation could have had ripple effects with which the establishment was not going to experiment. It wanted more integration, not less, but it is clear that in this case, this diminished sovereignty led to a reduction in freedom for the Greek people.

The western political tradition...produced more than three centuries of an unrivaled expansion in every social good...

of global finance. There was potential for major banking collapses, which, like the Wall Street subprime mess in America, might have led to a global banking contagion and crippling global depression. Or not. But the political and financial establishment of Europe was not about to find out organically. Even if there could have been a reorganization of European financial institutions amidst southern European debt write downs, many large politically connected banks, mostly German, would have failed.

Greece, then, fully lost its sovereignty and became a debt vassal to the

What happened with Greece happened similarly in Italy a year later when an EU-aligned technocrat, Mario Monti, became prime minister with a threadbare mandate and installed a fully unelected technocrat government to implement austerity.

There were referenda in which the plans for deeper alignment and/or integration with the EU were rejected, as by the Dutch in 2005 and Irish in 2008; so, the results of rejection were duly rejected. Ballots were held again at times guaranteed to produce lower turnout and the "positive" outcome of "more Europe."



European Union flags outside of the EU Headquarters Berlaymont building in Brussels, Belgium. (Photo: Kyle Wagaman)

Also in Italy, the EU put its hand on the scale to encourage the scuttling of a populist, nationalist, conservative political party leader, Matteo Salvini. Salvini was a thorn in the side of the Eurocentric Brussels establishment over issues including borders, unfettered migration, and the sovereign decision-making capacity of his country.

## ■ **Brexit**

The UK, having been one of the great, and earliest proponents of codified rule of law, geographically apart from the continent, led the charge demanding return of its sovereignty. The Brexit movement had germinated for years and by 2016, the Brits decided they'd had enough and called the referendum.

There were so many issues on which the Brits felt they were getting the short end of the stick: balance of payments and basic economic cost vs. benefit; fishing rights to their ancestral waters; regulations on the electrical output of their tea kettles and toasters, and even discussion of outright bans; migration quotas and mandates; and a litany of

protectionist policies foisted on them by “the continentals.” The Brits wanted out. Or at a minimum, they wanted to see if their countrymen also wanted out. When they voted, the people spoke in favor of exiting the federation.

Eurocrats slow-walked attempted points of agreement for exit, ignored entreaties from democratically elected representatives, levied a punitive separation fine, and threats of spiteful treatment with regard to trade with British industry.

## ■ **Believing the Bureaucrats**

If one believes in the state and governmental bodies with a fervor that is bordering on religious, the EU can do no wrong. Establishment leftist and technocratic states believe they are the answer to what ails society, even after sovereignty is visibly shredded and broken.

But I believe there is a silent majority in every educated and developed society that instinctively knows when its freedom is being taken away. It is easy to see it and feel it when it happens by force—such as the Sovietization of Central Europe after Yalta. It is a lot tougher to feel it when

you are a frog in a pot and the water starts to boil. But 60-plus years of rising water temperatures have opened a lot of eyes.

In Central Europe, nations that exited the Iron Curtain remember what decades of lost sovereignty was like. It was a direct experience still current in their collective memories. This is true especially of Central Europe's economic anchor, Poland, and its oppositional (to the EU) political anchor, Hungary. They see EU *diktats*—most notably immigrant quotas and the insertion of oft-hostile Third World unassimilable economic migrants steeped in an Islamism that doesn't mesh with their Catholicism—tantamount to fiat law. There have been EU sanctions and censures to strip them of voting rights for doing what their people elected them to do—i.e., reform corrupt post-communist systems such as the judiciary in Poland. And foreign activist money and public battles over NGOs pushing hard-left ideals undermine conservative societies in the political debate.

These are basically politically pro-Israel countries – primarily Hungary and Poland – standing with Israel in

international institutions, including the UN, and against BDS (the anti-Israel boycott, divest and sanctions movement), an antithetical stance to that of the culturally relativist EU establishment. Ironically, THEY are the ones often labeled antisemitic. The weaponization of identity politics does not endear conservative and politically right-of-center societies to the EU.

The breakdown of freedom that has been the derivative effect of the breakdown of sovereignty has led to many of the same mental calisthenics Burke warned of this in his French revolution analysis. To achieve ultimate “Egalite” and

a word was uttered in 2018 when French President Emmanuel Macron turned the hoses on unarmed “yellow vest” protesters, the working-class masses who took to the streets to express economic dissatisfaction with a government ignoring their wellbeing as citizens.

### ■ **Recovering Westphalia**

All of these are the effects. The cause has been the disintegration of the Westphalian sovereign order in favor of supranational governance. But as with alcoholism and the 12-step program, admitting you have a problem is the first step. Where does that leave us? Not in a

Philosophers ... seized upon the nationalist component of German Nazi philosophy as the catalyst for the attempt at world domination. They ignored the socialist part...

“Fraternite,” “Liberte” must be hindered, and subdued, and even suborned. In this, the rights of the individual are made subservient to the state, or superstate. When one cannot express the honest truth for fear of legal retribution, whether it be hate-speech laws, or free press muzzles such as what happens with failed migrant and refugee assimilation and over the top Third-World ghettoization, the trust in the federation plummets.

### ■ **Science, Discovery, Rationalism**

European values for centuries were oriented around science, discovery and rational thought. They are the reasons Europe flourished as a competitive group of nation states. It was not mentally obtuse double standards that led to societal success. When a patriotic march was held on Poland’s annual mid-November independence day, Poles waved the Polish flag. The European political establishment called them “fascist nationalist” and “an affront to human rights.” But not

bad place. The integration pendulum has swung too far. And now there is a rise in the populist, nationalist anti-globalist, conservative, right-wing, Westphalian(!), patriotic cohort across Europe.

Central Europe led the way, not surprisingly given its experience with broken sovereignty and fiat rule foisted by far off mandarins, such as was their experience under the Soviet communist regime. Victor Orban of Hungary is vocal about sovereignty, borders, and culture – with the Hungarian people firmly behind him.

Poland, under the Law and Justice Party, is not *Eurosceptic* per se as it does believe in integration more than many these days, but strong on retaining sovereignty and protecting the country from leftist technocratic overreach. From Germany to the Netherlands to France to Sweden, changes are coming. Yes, there are ebbs and flows, but the trends are in favor of a slowing and even a cessation of devolution of sovereignty to the supranational governance beast.

There are green shoots of growth that should engender optimism.

A few proffered quotes from a speech by a global leader speaking at the pinnacle of globalist conclaves should catalyze further hope for a world in which competitive sovereignties put their best foot forward and bring forth their comparative advantages in honest mutually beneficial collaboration, bilaterally or multilaterally, of their own volition, and with no coercion.

- *Our time is one of great contests, high stakes, and clear choices. The essential divide that runs around the world, and throughout history, is once again thrown into stark relief. It is the divide between those whose thirst for control deludes them into thinking that they are destined to rule over others and those people and nations who want only to rule themselves.*

- *The free world must embrace its national foundations... If you want freedom, take pride in your country. If you want democracy, hold on to your sovereignty. And if you want peace, love your nation. Wise leaders always put the good of their own people and their own country first. The future does not belong to globalists, the future belongs to patriots. The future belongs to sovereign and independent nations who protect their citizens, respect their neighbors, and honor the differences that make each country special and unique.*

- *Patriots see a nation and its destiny in ways no one else can. Liberty is only preserved, sovereignty is only secured, democracy is only sustained, greatness is only realized, by the will and devotion of patriots.*

The speaker? Donald Trump.

The venue? The floor of the UN General Assembly.

An uplifting moment for the Westphalian order.

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MATTHEW TYRMAND is a Polish Jewish American conservative political analyst and journalist who has extensively covered right-of-center nationalist sovereignty movements across Europe and Latin America. He splits time between the USA and Poland.

# The Way Out

by **LARRY P. ARNN**

*Ed Note: Read this outstanding speech as it was meant in its time – nearly two years ago. We bring it to you now for the clear warning it was and the sage advice it offered. Then read it as prelude to where we stand today as a nation.*

To establish despotism in a nation like ours, you might begin, if you were smart, by building a bureaucracy of great complexity that commands a large percentage of the resources of the nation. You might give it rule-making powers, distributed across many agencies and centers inside the cabinet departments of government, as well as in 20 or more “independent” agencies—meaning independent of elected officials, and thus independent of the people.

This much has been done. It would require a doctoral thesis to list all the ways that rules are made in our federal government today, which would make for boring reading. The truth is that very few people not directly involved know how all this works. Although civics education is practically banned in America, most people still know what the Congress is and how its members are elected.

Admittedly, this new kind of bureaucratic government would take—has taken—decades to erect, especially in the face of the resistance of the Constitution of the United States, which its very existence violates. But once it has been erected, things can happen very fast.

What, for example, if a new virus proliferates around the world? There have been procedures for dealing with such viruses for a long time. They begin with isolating the sick and protecting the vulnerable. But suddenly we have new procedures that attempt to isolate

everybody. This is commanded by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), an element of this bureaucratic structure, and by a maze of federal and state authorities, all of which see the benefit to themselves in getting involved. The result is that large sections of our economy were closed for months at a time, and citizens placed under the equivalent of house arrest. This has not happened before. The cost of it, and not just in monetary terms, is beyond calculation.

To set up a despotism capable of pulling this off you would need the media’s help. Those controlling the media today are trained in the same universities that invented the bureaucratic state, the same universities the senior bureaucrats attended. The media would need to be willing to suppress, for example, the fact that 50,000 doctors, scientists, and

never mind: their views do not fit the narrative propagated by the powerful. They have been effectively cancelled, ignored by the media, and suppressed by Big Tech.

You would need some help from business, too. As far as influence is concerned, “business” is dominated by large institutions—those comprising big business—whose leaders are also educated in the same universities that conceived bureaucratic government and trained the bureaucrats and media heads. This provides a ground of agreement between big business and the bureaucratic state. Anyway, agree or not, businesses are vulnerable to regulation, and to mitigate the risk of regulatory harm they play the game: they send lobbyists to Washington, make political contributions, hire armies of lawyers.

Nothing could be more fatal than for the government of states to get into the hands of experts.

medical researchers signed the Great Barrington Declaration. That document reminds people that you cannot suppress a widely disseminated contagious virus through shutdowns and mass isolation, and that if you try, you will work immeasurable destruction of new kinds—unemployment, bankruptcy, depression, suicide, multiplying public debt, broken supply chains, and increases of other serious health problems.

Some of the signatories to this Declaration come from the most distinguished universities in the world, but

Amidst the unprecedented lockdowns, imagine there comes an election, a time for the people to say if they approve of the new way of governing and of this vast, unprecedented intrusion into their lives. Then let us say that in several states the election rules and practices are altered by their executive branches—the people in charge of enforcing the law—on their own, without approval by their legislatures. Say this brazen violation of the separation of powers takes place in the name of the pandemic.

Finally, to sustain this new kind of

government, you would need to work on education. You might build a system of centralized influence, if not control, over every classroom in the land. You might require certification of the teachers with a bias toward the schools of education that train them in the approved way. These schools, poor but obedient coun-

and commerce, of education and communication.

Any elaborate system of government must have a justification, and the justification of this one cannot simply be that those in the ruling class are entitled on the basis of their superiority. That argument went away with the divine right of

*safer guide, than any vigorous direction of a specialised character. Why should you assume that all except doctors, engineers, etc. are drones or worse? . . . If the Ruler is to be an expert in anything he should be an expert in everything; and that is plainly impossible.*

Any elaborate system of government must have a justification, ... it cannot simply be that those in the ruling class are entitled on the basis of their superiority.

Churchill goes on to argue that practical judgment is the capacity necessary to making decisions. And practical judgment, he writes in many places, is something that everyone is capable of to varying degrees. Everyone, then, is equipped to guide his own life in the things that concern mainly himself.

### ■ **How to Defeat a Rising Despotism**

In our state, as in most places where the lockdowns were enforced, businesses were crippled or destroyed en masse. Restaurants were chief among them. One of our local restaurants is a 30-year-old diner called Spanglers Family Restaurant. Mitch Spangler is the proprietor. The business was founded by his

ins of the elite universities, are always up on the latest methods of “delivery” of instruction (we do not call it teaching anymore). These new methods do not require much actual knowledge, which can be supplied from above.

As far as content, you might set up a system of textbook adoption that guarantees publishers a massive and captive market but requires them to submit proposed books to committees of “experts,” subject of course to political pressures. You might build a standard approved curriculum on the assumption that everything changes—even history, even principles. You might use this curriculum to lay the ground for holding everything old, everything previously thought high and noble, in contempt.

Doing this, incidentally, deprives the student of the motive to learn anything out of fashion today. It is a preparation not for a life of knowing and thinking, but for a life of compliance and conformity.

This is by no means an exhaustive account of what it would take to build a thoroughgoing tyranny—for further instruction, read *Book Five of Aristotle’s Politics* or George Orwell’s *1984*. But it gives an idea of a mighty system, a system that seems unassailable, a system combining the powers of government

kings. No, for the current ruling class, the justification is science. The claim of bureaucratic rule is a claim of expertise—of technical or scientific knowledge about everything. Listen to Anthony Fauci on “Face the Nation,” dismissing his critics in Congress as backward reactionaries. When those critics disagree with him, Fauci said recently, “They’re really criti-

...for the current ruling class, the justification is science ... expertise... technical or scientific knowledge about everything.

cizing science because I represent science. That’s dangerous.”

The problem with this kind of thinking was pointed out by a young Winston Churchill in a letter to the writer H.G. Wells in 1901. Churchill wrote:

*Nothing would be more fatal than for the government of states to get into the hands of the experts. Expert knowledge is limited knowledge: and the unlimited ignorance of the plain man who knows only what hurts is a*

late father, and Mitch was purchasing the business from his mother. The payments to his mother depended upon the revenues of the business, and his mother’s retirement depended upon the payments. The life’s work of two generations was at stake. Mitch was also helping to support a daughter in college.

This is not to mention the more than 20 employees whose livelihoods are dependent on Spanglers. Mr. Spangler was not prepared to surrender all this. When a second lockdown was ordered





A voter is seen through a window at a polling location for the midterm elections at Loudoun County High School in Leesburgh, Virginia. (Photo: Kevin Dietsch/UPI)

by Michigan's governor, he kept his restaurant open.

He put a sign on the door and posted on Facebook to make clear, among other things, that he was acting out of necessity for the sake of his business and the livelihoods of all those dependent on it; that precautions would be taken, including the installation of an electrostatic fogger that would disinfect the air; that he understood the thinking of those who would choose to stay away from his restaurant, but that he hoped they would understand his own thinking. "If you cannot support us, we understand," he wrote, "but please allow us to have the freedom to do what we have to do."

Spangler was fined and threatened with forcible closure. But he persevered, never backing down, and his business did well. On a typical weekend, not only locals but supporters from the neighboring states of Indiana and Ohio lined up outside to show their support.

Mitch Spangler is our kind of fellow, and the College gave him some help organizing his legal representation.

This may not seem on its face a big story, but it is a most important story. It is important because it is a story about the nature of human beings and of citizens and of our rights. The nature of a thing is the essence of a thing. One aspect of the nature of a human being is that he must eat to live. In condemnation of slavery, Abraham Lincoln loved to say that every man was created with a head, hands, and mouth, the implication being that the head should guide the hands in the feeding of the mouth. Because we are made to live this way, we are also determined to live this way. The alternative is dependence, which does not make us happy.

It should not therefore be surprising that, if you try to destroy the business of a man whose family has spent over 30 years building it, he will resist. Trying to strongarm people like Mitch Spangler

is not a good idea. There are millions of them, and they have always made up the core of this greatest of free republics.

### ■ Loudoun County Parents

This second story, set in Loudoun County, Virginia, is about parents and children.

In schools throughout Virginia, including in Loudoun County, children are being subjected to critical race theory (CRT). This involves lecturing children, especially those belonging to the non-preferred races, about the "structural evils" of which they are told they are part.

Amidst statewide controversy over the teaching of CRT, the Loudoun County School Board also adopted a broad policy of recognizing "transgender" students in preference to their "biological sex" (excuse the redundancy). Even before this, boys were permitted to use girls' bathrooms, in one of which there was an assault and rape of a female

student by a “gender-fluid boy.” The boy in question was then allowed to attend another school in Loudoun County, where he assaulted another girl. This

feel entitled to state their grievances. The Declaration of Independence itself contains a list of grievances against the King. And the people of Virginia react-

the nature of the human being.

These facts about nature were well known during the American Revolution, the very Revolution that is besmirched by the members of our ruling class today, just as it was besmirched by the ruling class at the time of the Revolution. It was the interference with the colonists’ natural rights by that former ruling class that led to the American Revolution.

In addition to the right to make a living and the right to raise our children, we have the right to participate in our government, even if we are not experts, and the right to look to the heavens and not to our ruling class for guidance. We have these rights because we – every single one of us – were born with them sewn by God into our nature, and we cannot find our earthly fulfillment without them.

If we put these facts together as a people, we will have recovered the understanding that produced the American Revolution. We will stop these current predations upon our rights. We will bring this overwhelming government back where it belongs, under the control of the people.

Citizens, especially one hopes American citizens, feel entitled to state their grievances. The Declaration of Independence itself contains a list of grievances against the King.

first girl’s parents were understandably outraged and, at the risk of being called narrow-minded, went so far as to complain to the school board.

Groups of parents who had already been protesting CRT and policies promoting transgenderism joined in the complaint. There was no violence at the school board meetings with one exception: law enforcement was summoned, and the outraged father of the assaulted and raped girl was bloodied and dragged out of one meeting. It is true, however, that voices were raised.

ed in a way reminiscent of the American colonists: they defeated the candidate for governor who took the position that parents should have nothing to do with their children’s education.

### ■ **National Rights**

In both stories we see reactions against violations of our rights, rights that we have by nature as human beings.

...we have the right to participate in our government, even if we are not experts...

### ■ **Calling the FBI**

US Attorney General Merrick Garland intervened, instructing the FBI to investigate these parents and others around the country. The FBI’s Counterterrorism Division has reportedly deployed tools and resources normally reserved for terrorist threats against parents who are angry at school boards for what is occurring in their children’s schools. All this provoked massive support, across Virginia and around the nation, for the parents of Loudoun County.

This support is not surprising. By nature, parents love their children and feel responsibility for them. Citizens, especially one hopes American citizens,

The story about Mitch Spangler is about our right to work and to store up the product of our labor so that we and our families can eat and thrive. The American Founders put this in terms of our natural right to property. The story about the parents of Loudoun County is about the natural right of mothers and fathers to raise their children. To interfere with these rights is to interfere with

The signs of such a movement are emerging. Pray they are enough.

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LARRY P. ARNN, *Ph.D.*, is President of Hillsdale College. This abridged version of the November 2021 issue of *Imprimis*, a publication of Hillsdale College, is reprinted by permission. The unabridged version can be found here at <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/the-way-out/>

# El Salvador: Results Versus Norms in a Troubled Democracy

by R. EVAN ELLIS

El Salvador's charismatic young president Nayib Bukele has succeeded in achieving what seemed for many Salvadorans unattainable: freeing the country from two decades of extortion and violence at the hands of the gangs: Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio-18. The country's homicide rate has fallen from more than 100 per 100,000 to 7.8 per 100,000 last year, one of the lowest in the region. Small shops no longer have to pay extortion. Fear of being in public spaces has fallen, and public life has returned to Salvadoran towns.

Bukele has achieved these astonishing results by using a political supermajority to run roughshod over democratic procedures and human rights protections in the country. El Salvador had become disillusioned by decades of corruption, violence and insecurity, and the failure of democratically elected governments to address the problems afflicting citizens. In March 2021, they gave Bukele's "New Ideas" party and its allies an overwhelming majority of 61 of 84 seats in El Salvador's National Assembly. Bukele has used that legislative power to weed out opponents and install his loyalists in the judicial system that enforces the laws and interprets the constitution.

He used that authority to impose a state of emergency in March 2022, which he has continued to renew, and which gives the police, military and other government institutions extraordinary authorities. In this framework, Bukele has cowed the gangs into submission by imprisoning more than 71,000 Salvadorans, one percent of the country's population, on infractions such as

suspicion of gang membership. He has mounted an aggressive social media campaign, imposed harsh prison conditions to further intimidate the gangs, and is building a new 40,000 person mega-prison to indefinitely contain those his government rounds up. His government's new laws permit mass trials of up to 900 Salvadorans at a time, eliminating most paths for establishing individual innocence. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has documented 6,400 incidents of abuse, and 174 deaths in Salvadoran prisons since the crackdown.

After two decades of domination of the country by the gangs, the vast majority of Salvadorans prioritize the apparent good results Bukele has achieved over inconvenient issues of democratic process and the protection of rights. The young and charismatic Bukele, aided by his direct and quirky social media outreach to Salvador's equally young population, currently enjoys approval ratings of more than 90 percent, by far the highest in the region. In July, El Salvador's

running for two consecutive terms, Bukele can run again and be re-elected.

While the substantial reduction of gang influence, extortion and murders is a laudable achievement for Salvadorans, Bukele's successes carry enormous risks for the region.

## ■ *Risks of Success*

In El Salvador itself, the perpetually renewed state-of-emergency has created a *de facto* police state, with authorities continuing to round up thousands on suspicion of gang membership, from having a tattoo to being denounced or simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bukele's crackdown has already extended to media restrictions and threats of criminal investigations of news media outlets such as *El Faro* that question his actions. Numerous journalists have felt obliged to leave the country. Most Salvadorans seem disposed to "keep their heads down," enjoying the increased security, while reassuring themselves that the authorities are not after them, but others who "had it com-

Despite the many legitimate concerns over the path that Bukele is taking... it would be counterproductive for the US to concentrate its response on criticizing or sanctioning him and his government

Supreme Court, filled with Bukele loyalists, adopted a highly questionable legal position that, although the country's constitution forbids a president from

ing to them."

Over the long term, as occurred with the first "Mano Dura" (iron fist) approach to then newly-emerging gangs in

2004, repression and incarceration risks transforming those targeted into something even more dangerous. If the prior generation of repression accelerated gang recruitment in prison and national level coordination, the current abandonment of civil liberties risks incubating a generation seeking vengeance against an authoritarian state that killed or abused their gang “brothers,” and with little compassion for collateral damage to the population that stood by as it happened.

Beyond El Salvador, Bukele’s policies threaten to both expand gang violence, and encourage authoritarian solutions in a region already profoundly skeptical of the ability of democracies to deliver results. Bukele’s gang crackdown has already displaced gang members to neighboring countries such as Honduras, where they arrive embittered, and with profound economic needs.

At the same time, Bukele’s perceived success and associated popularity has attracted widespread attention across the region from countries suffering from their own problems of violence and insecurity. Xiomara Castro’s Libre government in Honduras has followed Bukele’s lead, imposing her own state of emergency and gang crackdown in 162 Honduran cities since September 2022. In Ecuador, where drug-fueled violence between the Choneros and rival gangs has exploded both in prisons and in the streets, a high profile candidate in that nation’s August 20 snap elections, Jan Topic, has advocated a Bukele-style crackdown. In Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Chile, among others, the Bukele model for responding to violence has become a significant theme of public discourse.

### ■ *Relations with Washington*

Bukele’s trajectory also continues to adversely impact US relations. The young president, buoyed by his self-perceived success, popularity and political empowerment, has become increasingly non-cooperative, and harsh and defiant in his rhetoric against the United States

and its expressions of concern over violations of human rights and civil liberties. Bukele’s actions feed into a broader trend in a region under great socioeconomic stress, of regimes on both the left, such as Nicaragua, and the right, such as Guatemala, leveraging their control of institutions to suppress democratic voices and checks and balances and perpetuate themselves in power. It also reinforces the appeal of the People’s Republic of China, which is not only advancing its commercial position and political and security engagement with the region, but whose own approaches to government and technology put the achievement of security and other results over individual rights and democratic expression.

### ■ *Beyond the Gangs*

While Bukele’s popular support will almost certainly catapult him to an unconstitutional second consecutive term in El Salvador’s February 2024 elections, it is then that his ephemeral recipe for success may begin to unravel. Beyond eliminating the impediment of gangs and insecurity, and leveraging cryptocurrency and surfing tourism,

sanctions, as it has against Bukele officials in the past.

Bukele’s courtship of the PRC as an alternative to the US, including multiple infrastructure projects, will not do much to put food on the table for Salvadorans if the country’s access to US markets weakens. While the country has expanded sugar exports to the PRC in recent years, its capabilities to grow traditional exports to the PRC market as an alternative are limited, including the China knowledge of its export promotion organization Proesa. A study by the Central American Integration Bank (BCIE) highlights the persistent inability of Central American states to substantially benefit from trade with the PRC, even after establishing diplomatic relations.

Ironically, as Salvadorans become accustomed once again to safe streets, if the president’s thus far vaguely defined concepts for developing the nation’s economy under deliver, security will no longer be enough to buoy Bukele’s popularity. How Bukele leverages his continuing domination of Salvadoran institutions and authoritarian impuls-

As El Salvador’s improved security situation makes the country increasingly attractive to investment and economic activity, the US should step up with support for economic and developmental planning,

Bukele’s roadmap to sustain and transform El Salvador’s economy is remarkably ambiguous. He is more noted for his integration of family, rather than economists and other technocrats, into his government. El Salvador’s dollar-based economy is heavily reliant on the United States through both trade and remittances—something that could become a vulnerability if the US imposes

es against his next opponent (whether the press, Salvadoran businesspersons, Washington or someone or someplace else), will define the next chapter in his legacy in a form likely much less positive than the current one.

### ■ *The Path Forward*

Despite the many legitimate concerns over the path that Bukele is taking

in El Salvador, it would be counterproductive for the US to concentrate its response on criticizing or sanctioning him and his government. Doing so would be ineffective and counterproductive. Other governments in the region, perceiving Bukele's success, would see such a US response less as a beacon of democracy, but more as US bullying and evidence that policy proscriptions from the relatively wealthy and secure US were not relevant to their problems.

Such a posture would also likely make Bukele even more defiant and push him into closer cooperation with the Chinese and other authoritarian actors. By contrast to regimes in the region with a more explicitly leftist-populist, anti-US orientation, Bukele—with as much as a quarter of El Salvador's population living in the United States and propping up the economy through sending remittances—does not necessarily seek to move the country in an anti-US direction. Nonetheless, his combination of perceived success, popularity, and youthful arrogance means that he will probably move in that direction if pushed.

The United States should recognize Bukele's successes, and their benefits to the Salvadoran people, both liberating the country from two decades of gang violence and insecurity, and in creating the foundation for future development.

The United States should focus its engagement with the Bukele government on five axes: (1) minimizing the deleterious effects of the current approach to gangs on the rights of Salvadorans, (2) strengthening Salvadoran democratic institutions, (3) working with the country on “what comes next,” (4) representing the lessons of El Salvador's experience, and (5) positioning the US more strongly as the engine for Salvador's future.

To minimize the harms arising from the country's current approach, with the Salvadoran government's concurrence, the US can provide additional resources to strengthen El Salvador's judicial system, prison capacity and management, other government institutions, and the

capabilities of the news media and civil society. Doing so implies navigating a fine line between not endorsing actions that violate civil liberties, yet being seen by the Bukele government as seeking to reduce the harmful byproducts of his successes, not undercutting him.

In a similar fashion, the US should strengthen Salvadoran democratic insti-

The US should work respectfully with Salvador ...  
grounded in respect for democracy and human  
rights, even when extraordinary circumstances may  
temporarily require exceptional measures.

tutions more broadly through expanded training and technical resources for government administration, planning and other government institutions, balanced with greater support to civil society programs including those of the media and NGOs. As with the approach to the judicial system, such support should seek to preserve a plurality of democratic voices in El Salvador, while not being perceived as funding an opposition to Bukele and his programs.

As El Salvador's improved security situation makes the country increasingly attractive to investment and economic activity, the US should step up with support for economic and developmental planning, respectful of Bukele's prioritization of areas such as cryptocurrency where it may have concerns, seeking to reduce risks and make innovative concepts viable wherever possible. Doing so will also help channel China's own contributions in productive ways, so that the country's developmental agenda is not hijacked for PRC benefit.

As with other “success stories” such as Colombia, the representation of the lessons of El Salvador's triumph over gangs and security will be strategically important for the US and the region, as much as for El Salvador itself. Again,

the US must walk a fine line. Bukele's interest in working with the US to have a common narrative is driven by his interest in having the hemisphere's major power amplifying, not contradicting his claims. To that end, the US should work respectfully with Salvador to both understand and explain what happened in the country, emphasizing the balance

between innovative approaches and lessons learned, grounded in respect for democracy and human rights, even when extraordinary circumstances may temporarily require exceptional measures.

Finally, the US should work with El Salvador to leverage reduced tariff access for Salvadoran goods into the US through the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), and the role of the US as El Salvador's main source of remittances, to promote further Salvadoran development and prosperity through expanded trade flows, supporting investments and financing.

El Salvador, bound to the US by ties of commerce, family, and geographic proximity, has achieved remarkable progress against gangs and insecurity. It is a story of success but with great hidden costs. The US, through a respectful, balanced approach to the country, can help shape whether that story ends in triumph, or mutual recrimination and tragedy.

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# French Malaise Strikes Again

by AMIR TAHERI

Judging by France's recent history, the month of June should be a quiet moment when people prepare for summer holidays in exotic places. Protest marches, riots and even revolutions usually take place in the spring, with May being the hottest month for political gesticulations. The baccalaureate exams are over, the annual bonuses are paid, and the fruit-picking is finished. Thus, the riots that produced mayhem in Parisian suburbs and a dozen other places across France came like bolt out of the blue.

"Race riots shake France," was one headline in British newspapers. "Muslim youths on the rampage in Paris suburbs!" was a German newspaper's shorthand account of the events. These included the burning of over 100 public buildings, including city halls and schools, the torching of scores of buses and trams, and hundreds of cars, the looting of countless shops, and, more dramatically, the ransacking of Bibliotheque Alcazar, Marseille's iconic public library.

## ■ *It Wasn't a Race Riot*

So, what is going on? What we witnessed was certainly not a race riot. In fact, though France has its own share of bigots, as a nation it's the least racist of all European countries. It had black African and Arab Muslim members of parliament and even cabinet ministers at least half a century before the US allowed its "visible minority" a side-chair in places of political power. For decades, France was a refuge for black American writers, musicians, human rights activists and "ordinary" citizens unhappy about racial discrimination.

These riots did start with the killing of a 17-year boy of Algerian ancestry by the police. But the killing was not racially motivated and, as protesters made clear, what was at issue was police brutality rather than racial hatred. The victim, Nahel Merzouk was of Muslim background and some of the rioters who went on the rampage did mouth militant slogans. But the root cause of the anger that provoked the riots was a deep dissatisfaction with the way the country is governed.

## ■ *A Failure of Governance*

The riots came as an unexpected prolongation of months of protests against President Emmanuel Macron's decision to increase the legal retirement age from 62 to 64 years. Interestingly, even some opponents of the change

device meant for use in highly exceptional cases.

France has never fully reconciled itself with representative democracy, always running its political life in two separate spaces, the parliament and the street. It has never managed to create political parties with a lifespan long enough to change the nation's political culture in favor of institutionalized politics. Between the parliament and the street where barricades can be erected the French also dream of a providential man – someone like Napoleon Bonaparte, Gen. George-Ernest-Jean-Marie Boulanger, Leon Gambetta or Charles De Gaulle-to transcend the two spaces.

As the state machinery has grown to a gargantuan size, it has suffered a degree of desacralization that has turned it into an unfriendly, if not actually hos-

...Because the [French] state controls more than 57 percent of gross domestic product, more than Poland and Hungary did even in the Communist era, it is seen as a pickpocket.

agree that the reform was necessary to shield the national pension fund from bankruptcy.

What caused deep anger was the fact that the measure, having failed to secure a majority in the National Assembly, was pushed through an extra-parliamentary

tile, presence in the eyes of many French. And, yet, because the state controls more than 57 percent of gross domestic product, more than Poland and Hungary did even in the Communist era, it is seen as a pickpocket that could also put some money in your pocket if and when you



People protesting in France. (Photo: Paul Gourmaud)

know how to persuade or force it.

A costly beast, the French state is built on five levels: communal, departmental, regional, central and European. With the ever-speedier changes in information, knowledge and technology, the beast is often behind events in real life. Until not long ago, it even had a Ministry of the Plan to establish Soviet-style five-year plans that would become outdated before they were even pub-

problem in a wide variety of often ingenious stratagems without waiting for Olympian deities to become generous.

### ■ *The French Malaise*

Almost half a century ago, the best-seller *The French Malaise* by Alain Peyrfitte spoke of a democratic deficit in the French system.

A Gaullist baron, Peyrfitte put the blame on the citizens who, being rebel-

Until not long ago, (France) even had a Ministry of the Plan to establish Soviet-style five-year plans that would become outdated before they were even published.

lished. Thinking it knows best, recently the state decided to distribute billions of euros to farmers to prepare for the latest fashionable “national concern,” climate change. The bureaucrats sent to distribute the money quickly found out that the farmers were already coping with the

lious by tradition, disobeyed their democratically elected masters, making it difficult to implement necessary reforms or keep good leaders, such as General De Gaulle, in power. Democracy, he argued could not solve problems in the manner an instant coffee is made and served. The

French leader needs time to do the great things he is destined to do for the nation. But time is precisely what the citizens don’t or cannot give the leader.

The same analysis has produced rumors about Macron looking for a way to seek a third term as president, something forbidden by the law. That, of course, could be done through a constitutional referendum and shady political deals.

However, the malaise that France suffers from is unlikely to be cured by such shenanigans. What has happened in France in the past five or six decades is a major change in the balance of power between the state and society. French society today is far better educated, self-confident, better informed and more enterprising than the French state, which has become costlier, less efficient and more arrogant.

The “cold monster,” as the French call the state, has lost its monopoly on information and seems unable to create new interfaces with society. Its old strategy of pouring money at problems, as shown by the latest “disturbances,” has proven ineffective.

The suburbs that burned are precisely the ones that the French state has invested more than 30 billion euros in “improving” over the past 20 years. The result has been the creation of a whole generation of “assisted” people whose ethnic and/or religious backgrounds are treated as heirlooms to justify government handouts in various guises.

But just as man can’t live on bread alone, he won’t be grateful and obedient by handouts alone.

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# Immigration without Integration

by SOEREN KERN

The urban riots that engulfed France in the summer of 2023, after a teenager of North African descent was shot dead by police during a traffic stop, showcased the decades-long failure of the French state to adequately integrate millions of immigrants — particularly those with origins in Africa and the Middle East.

Nahel Merzouk, a 17-year-old French citizen of Algerian and Moroccan origin, was killed when he resisted arrest and tried to run over a police officer with his car in Nanterre, a suburb of Paris. The 38-year-old officer, who said he acted in self-defense, was subsequently arrested and charged with voluntary manslaughter. The French judiciary will determine his fate.

Merzouk's killing, which was recorded on a cellphone video and widely shared across social media, unleashed eight days of extreme violence that left a trail of destruction not seen in France since similar migrant-related riots in late 2005. Police said they were "at war" with "savage hordes" of angry rioters with an "us-versus-them" mentality who destroyed police stations, schools, shops, banks, town halls and courthouses, and torched thousands of cars. The riots, which caused more than one billion euros in damage, were contained only after the French government deployed 45,000 security forces, who arrested more than 4,000 rioters.

Many media outlets and political commentators were quick to attribute Merzouk's death and the subsequent riots to police brutality and "systemic racism" within French law enforcement.

French President Emanuel Macron, apparently seeking to quell the violence, condemned the shooting as "inexplicable" and "inexcusable" and called for justice to be served. French police, he said, are required to do their job "within an ethical framework that must be respected."

Even if the riots were triggered by police misconduct, the hate-induced arson, looting, and vandalism on such an unprecedented scale point to a much larger failure of governance in France — especially regarding immigration and integration. For at least 50 years, successive governments have been unable or unwilling to limit mass migration or to properly integrate immigrants into French society.

## ■ *Myth of Return*

To better understand the immigration crisis gripping France and other European countries, it helps to distinguish between at least two different categories of non-Western immigrants.

millions of migrants from the Middle East and South Asia, as well as from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, have reached European shores. The migration flows accelerated in 2015, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the immigration floodgates and allowed more than one-and-a-half million refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and elsewhere into countries of the European Union.

On the other hand, there are the second- and third-generation immigrants who are European-born children and grandchildren of the so-called "guest workers" who arrived in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s when, in the aftermath of the Second World War, countries such as France and Germany faced labor shortages. The assumption was that the guest workers would eventually return to their countries of origin. Instead, in what is sometimes referred to as the myth of return, they stayed in Europe, became permanent residents, and set into motion endless chain migration.

For at least 50 years, successive governments have been unable or unwilling to limit mass migration or to properly integrate immigrants into French society.

On the one hand, there are the recent newcomers — sometimes loosely referred to as first generation immigrants. During the past two decades,

In France and Germany, non-Western guest workers hailed mainly from Turkey and from former French colonies in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.





Demonstrators at the annual al-Quds day march in Berlin. (Photo: Montecruz Foto)

Many guest workers lived on the margins of the host society and never properly integrated. In France, millions settled in so-called *banlieues*, working-class suburbs on the outskirts of large cities.

Over time, the *banlieues* turned into blighted and poverty-stricken slums with high rates of unemployment and runaway lawlessness. For the original guest workers, moving to the *banlieues* was a step up the economic and social ladder in comparison to the conditions they left behind in their homelands. For their children and grandchildren, living there — where youth unemployment commonly is above 50 percent — generally is a ticket to permanent despair.

The second- and third-generation migrants who grow up in the *banlieues* often are effectively stateless citizens. Although they technically are French citizens by virtue of birth, they frequently are regarded as second-class citizens by the rest of French society. Many have never left France and furthermore do not identify with the culture of their parents or grandparents. They constitute

a permanent underclass that numbers in the millions. Many of them abhor France and all symbols of the French state and are a powder keg ready to explode at a moment's notice. They are the ones largely responsible for the recent riots that laid waste to cities across France.

### ■ Multiculturalism

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the deadliest military conflict in human history, European policymakers concluded that nationalism was responsible for the carnage. They surmised that if social engineering could dilute what it means to be French or German, the chances of war in the future would be diminished. This dubious assumption led to five decades of policies promoting multiculturalism through mass migration to Europe from mostly Muslim countries. They permanently changed the ethnic composition of the continent.

These irreversible policies have eroded the social fabric of France, Germany, and many other European

nation states by introducing parallel societies in which ethnic or religious minorities separate themselves from mainstream society and remain segregated rather than become culturally integrated into their European host nations.

In France and Germany, mass migration from the Muslim world has fast-tracked the rise of Islam, as evidenced by the proliferation of Sharia courts, polygamy, child marriages, and honor violence. Mass migration has also fueled social chaos, including jihadist terrorism, and rising levels of crime, including mass sexual violence against European women, and runaway antisemitism. During the past decade, tens of thousands of Jews have emigrated from France to Israel due to record levels of antisemitism often perpetrated by Muslim immigrants.

Consider the so-called no-go zones — lawless areas where the state has effectively lost control, and where native Europeans increasingly fear to tread. In France, the government has identified more than 750 Sensitive Urban Zones

(Zones Urbaines Sensibles, ZUS), as they are euphemistically called, home to an estimated 6 million Muslims who are not integrated into French society. These areas have been referred to as “the lost territories of the French Republic.”

In Germany, police have identified at least 40 so-called problem neighborhoods (Problemviertel), areas where large concentrations of migrants, high levels of unemployment and chronic

replace Europe’s liberal democratic order with Islamic law. The purveyors of radical Islam — who oppose Western concepts of freedom of speech and equality of the sexes — relentlessly scout deprived neighborhoods in Europe in search of socially marginalized youths who feel disillusioned with their lives and for whom Islam fills a spiritual void.

Germany’s domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Office for

Republic,” has already been infiltrated by Muslim Brotherhood operatives opposed to the domestication of Islam in France.

FORIF is an integral component of an ambitious plan announced by President Emmanuel Macron in February 2020 to preserve the constitutional principle of secularism (Laïcité) and fight Islamist separatism by creating an “Islam of France” — an Islam rooted in French society and one that limits the role that foreign governments have in training imams, financing mosques, and educating children in France.

Meanwhile, European governments continue to allow Muslim countries, including Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, to increase their control over Muslims in Europe. This is done by building mosques, Quranic schools and makeshift prayer rooms that are heavily influenced by the national origin of the founder or president of a given mosque, to exert foreign control over Muslims in Europe and discourage integration.

“We are against assimilation,” Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared during a speech to the Turkish diaspora in Germany. “No one should be able to rip us away from our culture and civilization. Our children must learn German, but first they must learn Turkish.” He claimed that requiring Turks living in Germany to learn German was a “violation of human rights.”

In France, a group of retired generals recently warned in an open letter that the country is sliding toward a civil war due to the government’s failure to control mass migration and creeping Islamism in the country. The letter, which, according to polls, had broad public support, also warned against cultural Marxism, runaway multiculturalism, and the expansion of no-go zones in France.

## ■ **Demographics**

Europe’s immigration and integration problems are merely symptoms

## Germany’s domestic intelligence agency reports that Germany is home to more than 25,000 Islamists, nearly 2,000 of whom pose an immediate threat of attack.

welfare dependency, combined with urban decay, have become incubators for anarchy. “In Berlin or in the north of Duisburg, there are neighborhoods where police hardly dare to stop a car because they know that they’ll be surrounded by 40 or 50 men,” said Rainer Wendt, president of the German Police Union. “These attacks amount to a deliberate challenge to the authority of the state — attacks in which the perpetrators are expressing their contempt for our society.”

Similar situations are commonplace in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, among other European countries, where governments have failed to fulfil their constitutional duty to provide security and protect and defend citizens. The result is a vicious cycle in which many immigrants reject their host countries, and the host societies reject the immigrants, leading to permanent estrangement.

## ■ **Islamism**

The failure of European governments to integrate migrants from the Muslim world has been a boon for Islamist groups, whose objective is to

the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV), reports that Germany is home to more than 25,000 Islamists, nearly 2,000 of whom pose an immediate threat of attack. The largest Islamist movement in Germany is Salafism, an ideology that seeks to establish a global Islamic theocracy based on Sharia law and is civilizationally incompatible with Western society.

## ■ **Encouraging “Dialogue”**

Despite the growing threat posed by Islamism, Germany’s coalition government recently dissolved an expert working group on political Islamism — opting instead to fight “Islamophobia.” It commissioned a report about “Muslimophobia” that was produced with help from Islamist groups linked to Iran and Turkey and branded virtually all criticism of Islam or Islamism as “anti-Muslim hostility.”

In France, the French Islam Forum (Forum de l’Islam de France, FORIF), a newly launched Muslim “dialogue forum” established by the French government to fight Islamism and promote an Islam “faithful to the values of the

of a far more serious underlying root cause: demographic collapse. In 2022, every single one of the EU's 27 member states had sub-replacement fertility rates. Replacement level fertility refers

primarily a humanitarian gesture, but a calculated effort to stave off Germany's demographic decline and preserve the future viability of the German welfare state.

European policymakers appear to have concluded that rather than creating the economic conditions needed to promote increased fertility, it is easier to make up the labor shortfall through mass migration of largely unskilled single males.

to the average number of children born per woman at which a population replaces itself from one generation to the next — without immigration. In developed countries, the replacement fertility rate is around 2.1 births per female. In 2022, the EU's average fertility rate was 1.5 births per woman, continuing a decades-long trend.

When the fertility rate falls below replacement level, the population simultaneously ages and declines, which results in lower numbers of workers available to sustain overburdened social welfare systems. European policymakers appear to have concluded that rather than creating the economic conditions needed to promote increased fertility, it is easier to make up the labor shortfall through mass migration of largely unskilled single males.

Germany, for instance, will need to take in 300,000 migrants annually for the next 40 years to stop population decline, according to a recently leaked government report. The document revealed that the German government is counting on permanent mass migration — presumably from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East — to keep the current size of the German population (83 million) stable through 2060.

The report implied that Chancellor Merkel's decision to allow into the country some 1.5 million mostly Muslim migrants between 2015 and 2016 was not

If most of the new migrants arriving in Germany for the next four decades are from the Islamic world, the Muslim population of Germany could jump to well over 20 million and account for more than 25% of the overall German population by 2060.

“In Berlin or in the north of Duisburg, there are neighborhoods where police hardly dare to stop a car because they know that they'll be surrounded by 40 or 50 men,” said Rainer Wendt, president of the German Police Union.

### ■ **The Rise of Anti-Immigration Parties**

The unprecedented pace and scale of such ethnic change is a recipe for social chaos and is already fueling the rise of anti-immigration parties in Europe. In Germany, half of voter support for the populist party Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) comes from people who are not right wing but are concerned about mass migration, according to a recent survey by the Allensbach Institute. In France, Marine Le Pen, parliamentary leader of the anti-immigration National Rally

party (Rassemblement National, RN), is now the second-most popular politician in the country, according to a new Viavoice poll commissioned by the daily newspaper *Libération*.

Meanwhile, the migration flows to Europe show no signs of abating. EU officials expect at least 350,000 irregular migrants to enter Europe in 2023, on top of the 330,000 irregular entries in 2022. The actual numbers are certainly much higher as many migrants enter the EU undetected.

The UN Refugee Agency estimates there currently are 700,000 migrants in Libya and Tunisia (90 percent of whom are economic migrants), and up to one million in Sudan, many of whom want to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

The unrest in France may have subsided for now, but it can — and almost certainly will — flare up again at a moment's notice. The problems of mass mi-

gration, integration and demographic decline are not limited to France and Germany. They affect all countries in Western Europe, where governments — with the possible exception of Denmark, where the Social Democrats have implemented a raft of sensible measures to curb mass migration and promote integration — are denying reality and appear unable or unwilling to acknowledge that the multicultural model has failed. Europe's future hangs in the balance.

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SOEREN KERN is a Middle East Forum Writing Fellow.

# Taiwan's Miracle: Democratization without Bloodshed

## An *in*FOCUS centerpiece with LU HSIU-LIEN ANNETTE

Madam Lu Hsiu-lien Annette served as vice president of the Republic of China (Taiwan) from 2000 to 2008 under President Chen Shui-bian. Previously active in the *tangwai* movement, a loose confederation of opposition to the ruling KMT, she joined the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1990, when political parties were legalized. She was elected to the Legislative Yuan in 1992 and served as Taoyuan County Magistrate between 1997 and 2000.

During the 1970s, Lu established herself as a prominent feminist advocate in Taiwan, which included writing the book *New Feminism*. She was imprisoned in 1979 after speaking at an anti-government rally and was an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience. While serving nearly 5 ½ years in prison, she wrote a novel entitled *Three Women*. To evade surveillance in the detention facility, she wrote part of the novel on toilet paper, using a washbasin as a desk. The novel became a television program in 2008. We are honored to have her in this issue of *in*FOCUS Quarterly.

**A**mong the three Chinese communities, Taiwan distinguishes itself from the others through peaceful and bloodless transition to democracy. While people in Singapore enjoy democracy with little freedom, and Chinese on the mainland enjoy neither freedom nor democracy. It is only in Taiwan that freedom has been restored and democracy installed. This success was achieved at a high price and many freedom fighters were sacrificed.

After the Second World War, Taiwan was occupied by the forces of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek who, after being defeated on the Mainland by Mao Zedong's communists, fled to Taiwan to establish a "Free China," despite the fact that Taiwan was neither free nor Chinese.

### ■ 1947: The Feb. 28 Incident

With the arrival of Chiang's troops, there began a period of pillage, confiscation, rape, murder, and economic depression in Taiwan. The overwhelming enthusiasm of the native Taiwanese

to welcome their Chinese compatriots quickly cooled and a series of conflicts arose. On Feb. 27, 1947, a female cigarette vendor was charged with not paying the required tax. Her packs of cigarettes were seized, and she was shot.

At dawn on March 9, a week of naked terror began, when 13,000 troopers sent by Chiang Kai-shek arrived in Taiwan. People were bayoneted or robbed, and cities littered with the dead and wounded. People of influ-

Despite the KMT police state, political dissidents called for demonstrations and liberation beginning in the late 1950's. Their efforts ended with execution or imprisonment

When an angry crowd gathered, the agents fired wildly. The next morning, a crowd marched to Governor-General Chen-yi's office, where the army fired machine guns on the marching crowd. By late afternoon, military trucks roamed the city, firing now and then at random. This uprising is popularly referred to as the February 28 Incident.

ence – such as political leaders, lawyers, doctors, and rich businessmen – were tracked down. In all, an estimated 18,000–20,000 people were killed in this infamous March Massacre. Another 10,000 people were arrested and executed later. A whole generation of Taiwanese leadership was thus virtually wiped out. Others fled to Hong

Kong and Japan to strive for an independent Taiwan. A petition was sent to the United Nations and an appeal made to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, (then U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur), requesting an immediate occupation of Taiwan pending preparation of a plebiscite for independence.

Regrettably, both efforts were ignored internationally.

### ■ 1949-1987: Martial Law

Two years following the massacre, Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan with 2 million mainlanders. During the period of "Communist Rebellion," Taiwan was considered to be in a state of siege, and under a regime of martial law, in effect from May 19, 1949 through July 15, 1987, 38 years total. Under martial law, military courts would try persons accused of vague offenses said to "threaten the internal security of the state," or offenses against public order and safety. The government kept control over speech, teaching, newspapers, magazines and other publications. It also restricted religious activities, prohibited worker or student strikes and demonstrations, censored mail, and inspected personal property.

For the enforcement of martial law, the Taiwan Garrison Command and later the Investigation Bureau of the Judicial Administration Division were established. Military police, special agents, and secret informers were used to monitor meetings, tap phones, inspect mail, maintain surveillance, and more. Provocateurs were also recruited to break up meetings or create disturbances. In fact, the KMT's intelligence networks were among the best in the world. They were everywhere. In schools, the student informant network was set up by military training instructors to monitor students and professors. Off campus, many governmental branches and private enterprises were required to hire KMT cadres to spy on the employees.

Because such monitors acted in



Lu Hsiu-lien Annette

secret, a pall of fear and a sense of paranoia impeded open political discussions, and even social activities. For instance, I began to be harassed as early as in 1972 when I initiated the Feminist Movement. The manager of the House of Pioneers, a café that served as women's activities center, turned out to be a secret agent sent by the Investigation Bureau. An editor of the Pioneer Publishing House, which I ran for the publication of books on feminism, was required to report on my daily life. In addition, a number of my most enthusiastic supporters were later proven to have special missions. Note that they began to put their dirty, secret hands on my shoulder six years before I began political involvement.

Despite the KMT police state, political dissidents called for demonstrations

and liberation beginning in the late 1950's. Their efforts ended with execution or imprisonment. It is estimated that approximately 200 - 300 executions were carried out and more than 6,000 years of imprisonment handed down to dissidents under Chiang's martial law regime. However, combined with the general dissatisfaction of the middle-class, a desire for democracy began to be pervasive throughout the island.

### ■ 1979: The Kaohsiung Incident

The efforts of the democracy fighters came to a head on Dec. 10, 1979, in Kaohsiung, the second largest city in Taiwan. That was the year that the United States broke diplomatic ties with Taiwan to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC). To

commemorate International Human Rights Day, democracy activists organized by *Formosa Magazine* held a rally to call for democracy, human rights, and the right to self-determination for Taiwan's future.

*Formosa Magazine* was published monthly by opposition leaders to discuss political reforms and human rights issues, including the sta-

spontaneously to speak on stage. Roughly 70,000 people stood on the street, listening to me with tears and applause. All of a sudden, a long line of anti-riot trucks with strong lights was approaching from the far end of the street toward the rally. Then tear gas was released. At first, people were so frightened that they attempted to escape. But soon they came to realize that

the key leaders were court-martialed on charges of sedition. Altogether we were sentenced to 201 years and one month of imprisonment, in addition to one hundred years of deprivation of our civil rights. As for myself, I was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment but was released after 1,933 days—a little more than five years—due to heavy pressure from the international human rights community, especially Amnesty International. It adopted me as one of its “Prisoners of Conscience” and launched a global rescue campaign to get me out of jail.

Of the eight court-martialed on charges of sedition, two were women. For the first 290 days, we were imprisoned in the Military Detention House, where living conditions were poor, and food was unsanitary. There I was subjected to daily interrogation sessions. Later, we were moved to a Benevolence Rehabilitation Center with better living conditions.

The Kaohsiung Incident was the democratic turning point of Taiwan's politics. It created opportunities for women to get into politics, as wives of the convicted activists ran for the legislature two years later.

Four were elected to Parliament. The people of Taiwan voted for them as a way to protest the unfairness of the system. By voting for these women, the Taiwanese in fact voted for democ-

... the 2000 peaceful transfer of power from the KMT to the DPP [ended] 50 years of single party autocratic rule in Taiwan without violence...

tus of Taiwan versus PRC, and was critical of Chiang's national policies. The then-martial law regime authority “Garrisons Command” banned and confiscated each edition of the magazine quickly after its publication. However, additional copies were widely distributed through underground access to readers. In fact, the more pressure, the more distribution. Thus, the *Formosa Magazine* group was not only empowered, but enriched. Members began to think about founding an opposition party. The then-President Chiang Ching Kuo decided to crack down on the opposition movement to prevent the opposition party from being born.

Before the human rights rally was held, the KMT authorities had set a trap to hunt for the opposition. Police and troops were recruited in the city and gangsters were ordered to attack the police. There were casualties. Nearly all the activist leaders were gathering at the rally site, making it easy to have a mass arrest.

As deputy director of the magazine and well-known feminist movement leader in Taiwan, I was requested

it was the KMT that was attacking the people. Full of indignation, they began to defend themselves against the security forces with bamboo sticks, iron bars, bricks, anything they could find. This was one of the few times that violence was met with violence in our long struggle for democratization.

Both the people and the security forces suffered injuries. Soon after, 152 activists were arrested, and I was the first one. The authorities accused me of

half of the responsibility for the incident because my speech was so inciteful and appealed to people's hearts. Eventually, 51 people were indicted, and eight of

racy. The wives of the victims carried the torch we lit for Taiwan. And the achievements of the wives of political prisoners was also a milestone for the

Many women regarded my victory as their own victory to break through women's glass ceiling. Taiwan was 20 years ahead of the US to have its first female vice president!



A female voter casts her ballot at polling station in Taipei (Photo: Daniel Ceng Shou-Yi/ZUMA Press Wire)

feminist movement launched by me as early as 1971 in Taiwan.

### ■ 1986: Birth of the DPP

On Sept. 28, 1986, the opposition politicians defied martial law and established Taiwan's first opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Its platform called for a general parliamentary election as well as the presidential election. It also claimed the right of "self-determination" for the future of Taiwan.

To everyone's surprise, on July 19, 1987, Chiang Ching-Kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, took no action against the party. Years later, rumors were spread that the DPP was born of Chiang's plot to earn compliments from both domestic and international commentators and to compensate for his wrongdoing in the past. Gradually

the authoritarian government of Taiwan became more liberal, more democratic. The efforts of the freedom fighters had finally paid off. In 1988, Chiang Ching-Kuo died and was succeeded by Vice President Lee Teng-Huei, a native-born Taiwanese. The middle class, the liberals, and the freedom fighters all came together and pushed for democratization.

To be honest, we were the catalysts, but the efforts of liberal KMT members and the general public also had their roles.

### ■ 2000: Peaceful Transfer of Power

If Nelson Mandela's victory in 1994 was a miracle made in South Africa, the 2000 peaceful transfer of power from the KMT to the DPP to end 50 years of single party autocratic rule in Taiwan

without violence certainly was another.

This miracle was brought about by the youngest among the 15 defense lawyers for the Formosa defendants at the martial law court, Chen Suei-Ben and me, one of the "seditionist elements" convicted. Simply by shaking hands with people and speaking on the campaign platform we earned support from the people and were elected as president and vice president. We were inaugurated on May 20, 2000, a historic day for Taiwan.

One reason for our victory was women who used to vote for the KMT ruling party voted for us because of my decades of struggle for them and for Taiwan. Many women regarded my victory as their own victory to break through women's glass ceiling. Taiwan was 20 years ahead of the US to have its first female vice president!

# The First Democracy in Japan

by JUN ISOMURA

The definition of democracy is not clear and it is not uniform. Japan and South Korea have the fundamental structures of democracy, including free elections, a multiparty system, and freedom of assembly. However, the software of their democracy looks different than that of Western countries.

“Cherish the harmony among people” was the first article of the 17-article constitution of Japan enacted by Prince Shotoku in 604 AD. In other words, to hold discussions until everyone is satisfied and decides unanimously. Of course, in that era, Prince Shotoku wouldn’t have any idea about democracy, but his thinking, the principle of consensus, might be essential to democracy.

The principle comes from Confucianism, also known as Ruism, a system of thought and behavior originating in ancient China, stemming from the teachings of Confucius (551–479 BC). Confucianism is the veins of the people and key to democracy and society in Asia. It is even key to understanding mainland China, ruled by the Chinese Communist Party, and North Korea under the Kim dynasty and its Communist Party.

The philosophy of the 17-article constitution is still alive in Japanese democracy. Prince Shotoku’s portrait was used for Japanese banknotes from 1930 to 1986, with seven kinds of banknotes. A ruler 1,400 years in the past is still widely recognized.

## ■ *Turbulent Times*

The history of democracy in Japan and South Korea is deeply related to

their turbulent history, especially since the 19th century. To understand the background, look briefly at the history of the Far East before World War II.

The Meiji Revolution in Japan ended the Samurai warrior-feudal society structure in 1868. It also called for restoration of Imperial rule and “civilization and enlightenment.” European countries, especially the United Kingdom, strongly influenced those Meiji-era movements, and the Japanese people believed that copying Western style would equal the modernization of Japan.

They not only copied clothes and hairstyles, but also got firm advice about having a strong military. Japanese learned that democracy, militarism, and colonialism were keys to the modernization of their country.

Moscow and Tokyo battled over influence in Manchuria and Korea. Japan attacked the Russian naval base at Port Arthur (now Lüshun, China) and won several naval and land battles. International observers believed Russia was winning, but Japanese victories on land—the first by an Asian power over a European one—and in the decisive sea battle of Tsushima Straits that shattered Russia’s Baltic Fleet, confirmed a new reality. Through these two wars, Japan aimed to create a modern state after the Meiji Revolution and show a new power in Asia.

However, although Japan felt it had won both wars, it lost in the negotiations with China and Russia. Japan’s treaty with China was unacceptable to Russia, France, and Germany (known

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As a function of the struggle among European powers for influence in Asia, they sold Japan warships, cannons, and other military equipment. The Sino-Japanese War over the control of Korea broke out in 1894, and Japan defeated China gaining power over of Korea, Taiwan, and the Penghu Islands. In 1904, the Russo-Japanese War erupted.

as the Triple Intervention of 1895). They pressured Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China, fearing Japanese expansion in Manchuria. Japan reluctantly agreed to do so in exchange for an additional indemnity from China. At the same time, Japan felt humiliated and resentful toward the three and, in addition, faced resistance from the Taiwanese





*The House of Representatives chamber of Japanese National Diet (Photo: Fotokon)*

people who did not want to be ruled by Japan. The Treaty of Shimonoseki was a mixed blessing for Japan, as it gained some benefits but also posed challenges and frustrations.

In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt mediated the Treaty of Portsmouth. Signed in New Hampshire, the treaty forced Russia to recognize Japan's interests in Korea and southern Manchuria, and giving Tokyo the lease on Port Arthur and the Liaodong Peninsula.

But Japan wanted more, including a large indemnity from Russia. American intervention persuaded Japan to drop that demand. Japan also wanted recognition of its exclusive rights in Korea, but the treaty only stated that Russia would leave Korea and respect Japan's "paramount political, military, and economic interests" there.

Japan felt that it did not get enough compensation and that Washington favored Russia. There were riots against the treaty in Tokyo and other cities. The Treaty of Portsmouth, for which Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize, managed to be both a partial diplomatic victory for Japan, but also a source of ongoing dissatisfaction and frustration.

### ■ **Democracy and Militarism**

The democratic era in Japan is often said to have begun in 1905 and lasted until the end of the Taishō era (1912–1926), the so-called "Taishō Democracy." On the other hand, Japanese militarism refers to the ideology of the Empire of Japan, which advocated that militarism dominate the political and social life of the nation and the idea that the power of a country is equal to the strength of its military.

Japan introduced parliamentary democracy as the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, which was modeled on the Constitution of the German Empire in 1890 and also advanced military power from Europe through government initiatives. This democracy was introduced by the government as a necessary condition for modern style governance without any ideological or conceptual thinking about democracy.

However, the establishment of popular sovereignty and the parliamentary democracy based on it came only in 1947 at the initiative of the United States, which then occupied Japan and wrote its post-war constitution. Defeat in World War II had collapsed all pre-war and wartime governmental institutions.

### ■ **The Korean Conundrum**

Tokyo long considered the Korean Peninsula a key strategic area and conflict between the two goes back to the 13th century. In 1274 and 1281, the Mongolian Yuan dynasty and Korea attacked Japan twice, but failed to conquer it. In the 16th century, Japan attacked Korea twice, without either victory or defeat.

At the same time, Korea was a relay point for trade and the importation of Chinese culture to Japan. Korea also had its original arts and cultures that China influenced. As one example, many Korean pottery makers were brought to Japan.

Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and ruled there until the Japanese surrender of 1945. Its colonial policy of dominance and its lack of experience in Korea not only led to several conflicts but also left emotional damage between the two.

### ■ **After 1945**

The Tripartite Pact was signed between Germany, Italy, and Japan in September 1940. Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and the Independent State of Croatia signed the pact individually. The pact ended on May 7, 1945 with the surrender of Germany to the Allies. Japan surrendered on August 15.

Released from the war they had launched, the Japanese suddenly faced miserable lives. General Douglas MacArthur and his counterpart, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, were successful in helping people rebuild their lives and in introducing American-style democracy based on the new Japanese constitution. At the same time, communists openly and rapidly expanded their activities. During the 1932 – 1945 era of militarism, their movement was underground and oppressed.

Communist activities rapidly expanded during the occupation, and many returning Japanese soldiers from the concentration camps in Siberia were activists as they were educated in

communism there. They wrote an “appreciation letter” to “His Excellency Generalissimo Joseph Stalin” with their signatures and sealed with their blood.

Twice, in 1960 and 1970, revisions to the security treaty between the United States and Japan stimulated intense opposition to the agreement treaty by communists and others on the extreme left wing. They called for “democracy,” but simply used the demand to justify their riots. Their activity, especially on the extreme left wing, peaked in the 1970s.

The Japanese Communist Party, founded in 1922, faces decreasing membership and approval ratings today.

### ■ *South Korean Democracy*

Japan and South Korea are democratic countries in today, but they have distinct historical and cultural contexts that have shaped their respective systems.

As a defeated country, Japan had to accept American policy and direction, including American-style democracy. The story of democracy in South Korea was not as simple.

The annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 ended with the end of World War II, releasing the people of the Korean Peninsula from colonial suppression. But Soviet occupation forces established a communist regime in the north, while the United States backed an anti-communist military government in the south.

From 1950 to 1953, the Korean War featured Chinese Communist backing of the North’s Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), established on Sept. 9, 1948 by Kim Il Sung, and the South’s Republic of Korea (ROK), established Aug. 13, 1948 by Syngman Rhee, supported by the United States as head of the United Nations’ forces. Beijing and Washington with their allies, deployed hundreds of thousands of troops to Korea.

The Korean Armistice Agreement was signed between the United Nations Command, North Korean leader Kim Il

Sung, and China in 1953. South Korea never signed because ROK President Syngman Rhee refused to accept that he had failed to unify Korea by force. The Korean Peninsula is, technically, still at war under the Armistice Agreement today.

South Korea was a dictatorship with a president from its establishment in 1948 until 1987, its path to democracy marked by periods of authoritarian rule and pro-democracy movements. During the 1980s, the country experienced several military coups and authoritarian regimes. However, in 1987, widespread

played a crucial role in pushing for democratic reforms in South Korea. The June Democracy Movement of 1987 marked a turning point, leading to significant political change and establishing a more democratic system.

• **Competitive politics:** South Korea has a multiparty system with various political parties competing in elections. The Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) and other parties have been prominent in the political landscape.

It is important to note that both Japan and South Korea have had unique challenges and issues related to democ-

To maintain the soundness of democracy, independent opinions, insights, and discussions based on individual self-establishment are indispensable. Democracy is vulnerable and needs constant maintenance.

protests and actions pushed for democratic reforms. ROK introduced a direct presidential election, released political prisoners related to the democratization movement, and guaranteed freedom of speech. It was just one year before the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul and the country’s leaders, pushed by the public, found it necessary to introduce democracy to hold the Olympic games.

Key features of South Korea’s Democracy include:

- **A presidential system:** The president is the head of state and government and is elected through a direct popular vote.
- **The National Assembly:** South Korea’s legislative body is the National Assembly, a unicameral legislature. Members of the National Assembly are elected through direct elections.
- **Civil society and protests:** Civil society organizations and mass protests

racy, ranging from political corruption to regional tensions. However, they have made substantial progress in building and maintaining institutions that allow citizens to participate in the political process and make decisions that impact their countries.

The June 29 Declaration, officially titled the Special Declaration for Grand National Harmony and Progress Towards a Great Nation, was a speech by Roh Tae-woo, presidential candidate of the ruling Democratic Justice Party of South Korea, in 1987. Roh promised significant concessions to opponents of the incumbent authoritarian regime of Chun Doo-hwan, who had been repressing democracy. Roh went on to win the open presidential election held that year, the first since the October Yushin of 1972. The Yushin was a self-coup by President Park Chung Hee of South

Korea, in which he abolished the constitution and assumed dictatorial powers.

## ■ Japan's Responsibility

There is no "if" in history. However, there are still several questions that arise about the history and responsibility of Japan under its militarist ideology and leaders.

Japan repeatedly has made statements of self-review and apologized for what the country did during WWII. However, the statements have been seen as grudging and partial by many in the countries Japan had occupied before and during the war and, as a result, have not reached the hearts of people in Asia.

Most Japanese had little actual information or experience about what Japanese forces did outside the country during the war. Their personal experiences were losing their sons or husbands on the fronts, or heavy so-called carpet bombings all over Japan by the US forces, including the atomic bomb destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and memories of the more than 600,000 Japanese soldiers who were interned in the Soviet Union and Mongolia and worked in labor camps as POWs under pitiless conditions. Almost 10 percent of the prisoners died.

Therefore, most Japanese people want to be perceived as victims of World War II-era militarism, or at least want depression and wartime Japan to be seen that way. This even though they should recognize that they were/are perpetrators. It might be that psychologically, they want to escape their heavy obligation.

On this subject, a historic speech by Richard von Weizsaecker, President of Germany, delivered in 1985 at the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II should be remembered:

*When the unspeakable truth of the Holocaust became known at the end of the war, all too many of us claimed they had not known anything about it or even suspected anything.*

He spoke of the danger of forgetting and distorting the past.

*There is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt is, like innocence, not collective but personal. There is discovered or concealed individual guilt. There is guilt that people acknowledge or deny. All of us, whether guilty or not, whether young or old, must accept the past. We are all affected by the consequences and liable for it. We Germans must look truth straight in the eye—without embellishment and distortion. There can be no reconciliation without remembrance.*

His speech was based on the philosophy of his elder brother, Carl von Weizsaecker. The key point of his remarks was the importance of telling the truth and conveying historical experience to young people who will be responsible for the future so they do not repeat past mistakes.

## ■ Collective Democracy

Democracy as an institution and the behaviors of people who live in a democracy are different. A question might be considered as to whether democracy is individual or collective. The feature of democracy in Japan and South Korea might be that of a collective democracy.

Democracy fundamentally demands self-establishment for people's responsibility for its functioning. However, people in Japan and South Korea aren't aware of self-establishment. That might be the fundamental and significant differences between democracy in Europe and Asia. It might come from a historical background of individualism and the establishment of the self. It is also an issue between individuals and groups; Japanese and South Korean people feel secure belonging to a group, but collectivism increases the vulnerability of democracy. The practice or principle of prioritizing a group over each individual could produce

results similar to militarism, communism, and socialism.

## ■ Democracy and Individualism

Confucianism is an underlying norm in Asia, even in mainland China and North Korea, and it appears not to be contradictory to democracy or communism. A system of thought and behavior originating in ancient China, it is variously described as a tradition, philosophy, (humanistic or rationalistic) religion, theory of government, or way of life.

People establish their own thinking through the practical process of studying Confucianism or its religion, including ascetic practices. There seems to be a similarity with the self-establishment of individualism.

To maintain the soundness of democracy, independent opinions, insights, and discussions based on individual self-establishment are indispensable. Democracy is vulnerable and needs constant maintenance. There are several examples of groups using democratic forms in non-democratic ways today. Democratic institutions require constant maintenance to maintain their integrity, and it is necessary to take a broad perspective not bound only by arguments asserting individual interests or those of the collective.

Finally, as a hint and a warning, understanding even a small part of Confucianism will be key to understanding and negotiating with China and North Korea, since Confucian traditions underlie their cultures as well, even in their subconscious.

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# Political Reality Check for Sweden

by JULIANA GERAN PILON

The Sweden Democrats' (SD) remarkable success in last year's general election, becoming Sweden's second-largest party after winning more than 20 percent of the vote, and its rise, have come while other parties have stagnated. The results alarmed the left, which predictably saw them as the vanguard of an authoritarian, ultra-nationalist, neo-fascist backlash.

## ■ *The View From the Left*

Indeed, there is no doubt that the party's neo-Nazi past cannot be forgotten or forgiven. Writing in *The New York Times*, novelist Elisabeth Asbrink declared, "As a liberal democrat I will never approve of a party that celebrates its success with references to Hitler's Nazi ideology." Her evidence was a 27-year-old SD member's exuberant exclamation "helg seger," which in Swedish means "weekend victory." Asbrink, however, stated, "It's the sound: One letter away from 'hell seger,' the Swedish translation of the Nazi salute 'sieg heil' and the war cry of Swedish Nazis for decades."

Asbrink dismissed the SD's aggressive efforts over the past two decades to purge its extremist wing. For example, in 2001, the party's most extreme faction was expelled, leading to the formation of the more radical National Democrats. The purge continued through the 2000s, with the ousting of extremist members, banning both foreign and Swedish extreme-right activists from membership and party events and revisions to the SD's policy platform. That's all show, Asbrink contended. In fact, she wrote, "The Swedish far-right has profited from

the country's growing inequalities, fostering an obsession with crime and an antipathy to migrants."

Asbrink's opinion echoed Gothenburg University professor Andrej Kokkonen's comments in *The Washington Post*, quoted by writer Ishaan Tharoor, that SD members "channel social unrest to their advantage by reheating identities of race, religion and ethnicity, and retailing myths of national greatness." And it's working. Anders Borg, Sweden's former finance minister, regretfully admitted to *The Post* that accommodation with the far-right is now the only "viable election strategy."

## ■ *Crime as a Factor*

But *The Post* and *The Times* could have turned, as Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* did, to another Gothenburg professor, Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson, who tends to cite actual facts. According to Oscarsson, polls held on the eve of the election showed that a whopping 41 percent of those surveyed said that law and order is the most important issue in Swedish society. This is not a surprise. On Aug. 22, 2022, an article by Peder Jensen published by the Gatestone Institute noted the tectonic effect of "a wave of violent crime that is unprecedented in modern Scandinavian history. For the first time,

"In just two generations," wrote Jensen, "Sweden went from being one of the safest countries in the world to being one of the most dangerous countries in Europe."

Tharoor concluded, "That is the narrative surrounding other ascendant far-right parties in Europe, including [Giorgia] Meloni's Brothers of Italy. Meloni angrily rejects accusations of fascism and has cast herself as part of the political mainstream—cooling her Euroskepticism, supporting sanctions against Russia and prioritizing, at least for now, economic relief for Italians over a hysterical culture war."

crime tops the list of voters' most important concerns in the run-up to the elections." A few days earlier, even the BBC admitted that "Sweden has one of the highest rates of gun killings in Europe."

"In just two generations," wrote Jensen, "Sweden went from being one of the safest countries in the world to being one of the most dangerous countries in Europe." He cited political scientist Patrik Öhberg saying, "This is the



Jimmie Akesson, Chair of the Sweden Democrats, at a rally in Gothenburg, Sweden. (Photo: Johan Nilsson/TT)

first election campaign in modern times where [crime is] so high up on the agenda that all parties, whether they want to or not, have to discuss the issue.” Jensen reflected, “This could benefit the Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats or the Sweden Democrats. On the other side of the political spectrum, it could be detrimental to the Left Party, the Greens and the ruling Social Democrats.”

Why? Because for years, the Swedish left has been unwilling to address the complex reasons behind the skyrocketing crime rate.

### ■ **Importing Antisemitism**

The conspiracy of silence and complicity surrounding this collapse of law and order in Sweden also exists on the issue of antisemitism. “In recent years,” distinguished Israeli scholar Manfred Gerstenfeld wrote, “Sweden has taken in the highest number of migrants in western Europe as a percentage of population. Most immigrants come from Muslim

countries where societies are permeated by extreme antisemitic prejudices. The authorities there promote Jew-hatred as national policy.” He put it bluntly, “Sweden can thus be characterized as a major importer of antisemites out of humanitarian motives. But antisemitism in Sweden is not limited to Muslims and neo-Nazis.”

This has been the case for decades. “The country’s best known postwar prime minister, the Social Democrat Olof Palme, was one of the very few leaders of a democratic country to openly compare Israel’s acts to those of the Nazis,” Gerstenfeld noted. True to her party’s tradition, in 2018, Social Democratic Foreign Minister Margot Wallström asked for an investigation into the killing of terrorists by Israel. That she made no such request of any other country goes without saying.

But what do Jews themselves have to say? Unlike in the US, ethnic identities are not noted in Swedish polls, so we

do not know how Swedish Jews vote. We have to ask them directly.

### ■ **A Jewish View**

I did so and received a thorough response from my old friend Peter Stein, a prominent Jewish economist.

After he noted that “many, especially on the left and center-left, have tried to invoke Jews in their agenda by using them as shields in their campaign against the Sweden Democrats when pointing to that party’s neo-Nazi past,” he explained that the truth “is much more complex and multifaceted. There are indeed many Jews who are afraid of the Sweden Democrats and see their rise and the electorate’s acceptance of that party as a sign that vigilance towards neo-Nazism and antisemitism is eroded even within the mainstream. But there are other legitimate opinions as well.”

“Many Jews would point out that the biggest threat to Jewish life in Sweden has been in the city of Malmö, which has

long been a Social Democratic stronghold,” he pointed out. “It took a long time before the Social Democrats admitted the existence of left-wing antisemitism within their own ranks or the threat posed against Jews by Islamist activists, mainly by people with roots in the Middle East.”

Not all its members have abandoned the Islamists – notably Malmö’s member of parliament Jamal El-Haj, who has Palestinian roots. But fellow-parliamentarian Nima Gholam Ali Pour has castigated the continuing dependence of the Social Democrats on Arab votes which accounts for El-Haj’s participation in the European Palestinian Conference held in Malmö in May – implicitly ignoring the Conference’s known connection with Hamas. Yet Ali Pour concedes that several MPs from Sweden’s Green Party, Left Party and Social Democratic Party had also been scheduled to attend. And while they eventually withdrew, one by one, they did so “notably, without distancing themselves from Hamas.” This despite Hamas’s classification as a terrorist organization within the European Union and therefore inside Sweden.

Small wonder that, according to Stein, “many Jews are not afraid of the Sweden Democrats because of the party’s strong pro-Israel platform and the fact that it was long seen as among the few that spoke up against antisemitism originating from Islamist extremism.”

Like most Swedish citizens, Jews have finally had enough of obfuscation and gaslighting.

### ■ **The Battle of “Narratives”**

The reasons are best explained by former Left Party member Claes Wallenius: Swedish politics have been reduced to a battle over “narratives.” By attacking the motives of the opposition, the pusillanimous establishment has managed to avoid addressing the country’s problems head-on. Wallenius’s diagnosis is worth noting, not only for the lessons it offers to Sweden but to progressives around the world and particularly in the US.

Writing in the Oct. 1, 2022 issue of

*Dagens Nyheter*, Wallenius recounted his personal experience, saying, “I myself served on the Left Party’s party board from 2008-2012. At that time, the party’s communicators had been on a course. There they had learned that it must formulate its ‘story.’ And in our ‘story,’ immigration would not be described as a problem... We would not endorse the SD’s ‘problem description’ and we would not ‘normalize’ the SD by inviting them to any debate at all,” he explained. “Politics was thus reduced to a struggle between different ‘narratives,’ with a party or movement being advised to avoid talking about issues where it did not have popular or easy answers. The ‘narrative’ became the important thing—not the reality.”

Wallenius is anything but anti-im-

largely to Soviet-era disinformation long embraced by the left and its Islamist fellow travelers. But narratives can only go so far. Eventually, reality asserts itself through the fog of spin.

For at the same time as the European Palestinian Conference was spewing its antisemitic venom, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen was visiting Stockholm. It was the first such visit by Israel’s top diplomat. And members of the Swedish Democrats made an unofficial visit to Jerusalem, “seeking to build friendships with the Jewish state.” On August 28, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with a delegation of Swedish parliamentarians from the Christian Democratic party with these words: “I am glad to see there is a change

Like most Swedish citizens, Jews have finally had enough of obfuscation and gaslighting.

migrant. “The group we call ‘immigrants’ is a very heterogeneous group,” he said. “They differ from one another in many ways. They have different countries of origin. They have migrated for different reasons. They come from different social classes, have different levels of education and so on. So, there is not one truth about the immigrant. There are many.”

### ■ **The Results**

The truth is that the effects of immigration have also been mixed—some good, some bad, and some very bad indeed. Changing the terms of the debate is a tall order. Over half-a-century, “liberalism” has mutated from its classical and Hebraic origins to its opposite: progressive statism. At the same time, the libels “fascist” and “Nazi” are routinely hurled against Israel and the US, thanks

in Swedish policy.” The meeting focused both on the ongoing struggle against antisemitism and on plans for increased cooperation between the two countries on technology and artificial intelligence.

Added Netanyahu: “This is an important beginning.” Perhaps it is also a major turning point for Sweden and perhaps – one can only hope – for Europe itself. B’ezrat HaShem – God willing.

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# What the Palestinians Need

by **KHALED ABU TOAMEH**

Under the kleptocratic Palestinian Authority (PA) and the theocratic Hamas regimes, Palestinians have no freedom of speech and no independent or free media.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip live under two regimes that crack down on critics, and imprison and intimidate journalists, human rights activists and political opponents. Those who dare to criticize the Palestinian Authority or Hamas often face various forms of punishment, including torture and incarceration.

Take, for example, the case of legal expert Dr. Mohammed al-Talbani, who was forced to sign a pledge not to offend Hamas or its government on social media. The move came after he criticized death sentences issued by Hamas courts in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Talbani told the Palestinian news website Amad:

*I received a call in which they [Hamas] asked me to come to the Shejaiya police station – the Cybercrime Investigation Department. There was a complaint against me for comments I made on my Facebook page about executions in the Gaza Strip. They had taken a screenshot of these comments, and considered them as a mockery against Hamas.*

Al-Talbani said that the interrogators also delivered a “veiled threat”: He had better not write anything against Hamas or else he would be summoned again.

*They asked me to sign a pledge so that the complaint would not be*

*transferred to the Public Prosecution and become an official case,” he recounted. “I agreed to sign the pledge that I will respect the Palestinian law and not offend the [Hamas] movement and the government.*

In another incident in the Gaza Strip last May, Hamas security forces questioned songwriter and composer Massoud al-Draimli and five other people after they produced a video clip without receiving prior permission from the authorities. The video clip included

*about the participation of a girl in singing. They said that this is forbidden and that I did not obtain a permit to film the song.*

The situation under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank is not any better. There, Palestinian security forces continue to arrest, harass and intimidate political activists, university students and academics.

In only a few weeks, the PA security forces arrested and threatened a number of Palestinian political activists who

By turning a blind eye to the violations, the international community and media effectively incentivize the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to continue their repressive measures against their own people.

a female singer – Hamas was furious.

Al-Draimli and his friends were forced to delete the song and sign a pledge not to perform any lyrical work without the approval of Hamas. Al-Draimli later said:

*I posted the video of the song on Facebook on Thursday, and an hour later, the [Hamas] General Investigation Service called me and ordered me to delete the video. They summoned me for interrogation*

called for reforms.

On November 7, Palestinian security officers broke up a press conference held by the activists in Ramallah.

Palestinian activist Omar Assaf said that the security officers cut off the electricity to stop the conference, and then used force to prevent him and his friends from completing it.

Fakhri Jaradat, another activist said:

*The security forces raided the headquarters of the People’s Alliance for*

*Change when the press conference started. They cut off the electricity, detained some participants. They also forced the journalists to stop covering the event.*

A few days earlier, the Palestinian Authority security forces banned several activists from participating in a video conference organized by a group called the Palestinian Popular Conference (PPC) to protest against PA President Mahmoud Abbas's hegemony over the Palestinian leadership and refusal to share powers.

Omar Assaf, the political activist, was arrested by Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian NGO Network and the Council of Human Rights Organizations also denounced the Palestinian Authority crackdown and said that peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are rights guaranteed in the Palestinian Basic Law.

"The principle of the rule of law is the basis of governance in Palestine, and all authorities, agencies, bodies, institutions and persons are subject to the law," the two groups said.

*We consider that prohibiting and preventing the holding of peaceful activities and gatherings, especially those calling for reforming the*

*and to hold private meetings...*

*"The commission again calls on law enforcement and official authorities to respect freedom of expression, and to stop prosecuting or harassing opponents for expressing their opinions.*

For the fifth time since 2019, Israel, on November 1, voted in yet another national election. Their Palestinian neighbors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip can only watch with envy as Israelis practice a basic democratic right to elect their own leaders.

There are two reasons why, under the current circumstances, the Palestinians cannot hold elections.

First, the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip due to the ongoing dispute between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. The PA fears that Hamas will not allow a free election in the Gaza Strip, especially in light of Hamas' crackdown on its opponents there. Similarly, Hamas fears that the PA will not allow a free election in the West Bank, especially in light of the continued security crackdown on Hamas members there.

Second, the high probability that Hamas would win.

The last Palestinian presidential election took place in 2005, when Mahmoud Abbas was elected for a four-year term to succeed Yasser Arafat. Nearly two decades later, the 87-year-old Abbas remains in power – although his term in office expired in 2009.

During this period, Abbas saw nine Israeli prime ministers and presidents come and go through free and democratic elections.

The last Palestinian parliamentary election was held in 2006. It resulted in a victory for Abbas's rivals in the Islamist movement Hamas.

A year later, Hamas expelled Abbas's Palestinian Authority from the Gaza Strip through a violent coup. Since then, the Palestinian parliament, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC),

## The PA fears that Hamas will not allow a free election in the Gaza Strip, especially in light of Hamas' crackdown on its opponents there.

security forces while he was on his way to prepare for the conference.

The Palestinian security services subsequently arrested another activist, Bashar Takrouri and confiscated the mobile phone of a third activist, Jamileh Abed. A number of journalists who came to cover the event were also detained by the security officers.

The PCC said that the crackdown is aiming to "silence the voices calling for the reform of the PLO." It condemned the detention of the political activists and journalists and remarked that the crackdown "reinforces the national need to rebuild the PLO on democratic foundations to allow the revival of the Palestinian political system and preserve the rights and dignity of the Palestinians away from the hegemony of the security services."

*Palestinian political system, is a very dangerous step for the future of the existing Palestinian political system and for the social fabric. The continued restrictions on peaceful activities and assemblies harm the image of Palestine at the international level, and place Palestine in the company of violators of human rights.*

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) condemned the crackdown, as well:

*The commission considers that storming a closed meeting and depriving attendees of completing their press conference constitutes a violation of the citizens' right to express their opinions freely, a violation of their right to political participation*





*Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas delivers a speech during a rally marking the anniversary of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's death in the West Bank city of Ramallah. (Photo: Fadi Arouri/Xinhua/Sipa USA/TNS)*

has been paralyzed due to the (ongoing) dispute between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

By contrast, Israelis have since 2006 held nine elections for their parliament, the Knesset.

Just when it seemed that the Palestinians were finally headed toward holding parliamentary and presidential elections last year, Abbas decided to call off the vote.

Although he cited Israel's alleged refusal to allow the Palestinians to include Jerusalem in the electoral process, it is widely believed that the real reason behind the decision was his fear that his corruption-riddled and fragmented Fatah faction would, as widely predicted, lose the elections to Hamas.

While one can understand why it is not a good idea to hold elections that would help Hamas extend its control to the West Bank, there is no reason why Palestinians should be arrested and intimidated for demanding freedom of expression and an end to corruption.

Unsurprisingly, violations committed by Palestinians against Palestinians are virtually always ignored by the Western media and the international community. Such abuses are of no interest to Westerners because they cannot be blamed on Israel. By turning a blind eye to the violations, the international community and communications media effectively incentivize the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to continue their repressive measures against their own people.

Sadly, it does not look as if the

Palestinians are coming any closer to freedom of speech or freedom of assembly – unless it is to denounce Israel. Rather, as their corrupt and incompetent leaders clearly do not care about their well-being, it looks as if they are going in exactly the opposite direction.

While, literally across the street, the Israelis have free debate in newspapers, quarrelsome programs on television and protests, the Palestinians continue to find themselves arrested, silenced and terrorized for daring to demand the freedoms they see every day next door.

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KHALED ABU TOAMEH is an award-winning journalist based in Jerusalem. This article is reprinted with permission of the Gatestone Institute.

# A Tale of Two Israels

by **BARRY SHAW**

*Ed. Note: The JPC has been adamant about not entering a discussion of Israel's proposed judicial reforms or any other internal Israeli issue. This article, written by an Israeli, however, is meant to show a side of the stresses in Israeli society that are not appearing in the mainstream media.*

**W**here to begin to describe the origins of Israel's current woes?

In the United States, rule of law is based on the Constitution. Israel does not have a constitution. It has what are called Basic Laws and a self-appointed Supreme Court that some would say is undemocratic and occasionally hands down mandates on a government that are politically biased against a Likud government but never against a left-wing government.

The problem began with a political judge, Aharon Barak, who became the President of the Israeli Supreme Court in 1995 and began to dictate against decisions and laws of Likud-led governments.

## ■ **The Courts**

For clarity, we need to understand how Supreme Court judges are selected and elected in Israel. Judges are replaced when they die or retire. Traditionally, the court's president proposes a replacement, and the judges vote that nomination into office. A majority of seven of its nine members must support a successful candidate.

The current Israeli government's position is that the current method allows judges too much power over the composition of the judiciary, arguing that the system today gives the public a minority in the committee, which gives unelected officials the power to have a self-perpetuating court.

In almost every other democratic

country, the system gives the power to the ruling majority to appoint judges, as in the United States, where justices are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. In Canada, the prime minister appoints judges. Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand are the same.

Owing to the Israeli system, judges on the Israeli Supreme Court are overwhelmingly white Ashkenazi males. Rarely do Arabs sit on the Supreme Court bench, and on those very rare occasions they have been exceptionally talented judges. The same goes for Sephardi or Mizrahi judges. It is fair to say that Israel does not and has not had a Supreme Court that reflected the Israeli population.

When Aharon Barak ascended to the presidency, he struck down decisions made by successive Likud governments leading to claims that he was a politically biased judge who interfered with Likud governments causing economic, security, and diplomatic damage to the country.

When questioned, Barak intro-

duced the excuse that his judgment was based on "reasonableness," which, until Barak, was an unknown legal concept in Israel.

grant an Israeli and a French company an exclusive contract to extract natural gas from Israel's territorial waters in the Mediterranean, because it eliminated competition. It took the government years to convince the Supreme Court that the contract had been granted in that form in order to compensate the companies for years of exploration and the heavy costs of manufacturing the rigs and the equipment expended as part of that search before coming to the decision that there were sufficient quantities to make the development profitable.

Had Barak not delayed the government with the imposition of his "reasonable" block, Israel might have provided Europe with the energy it desperately needed last winter given its shortage as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war.

A second example may resonate with Americans. Barak delayed a Likud government decision to construct a border fence between Israel and Islamic Jihad terrorists – as well as weapons and drug smugglers – were freely crossing into Israel from a then-Muslim Brotherhood-led Egypt. Adding to the lawlessness of

Judges on the Israeli Supreme Court are overwhelmingly white Ashkenazi males ... It is fair to say that Israel does not and has not had a Supreme Court that reflected the Israeli population.

duced the excuse that his judgment was based on "reasonableness," which, until Barak, was an unknown legal concept in Israel.

## ■ **"Reasonableness"**

For example, it was "unreasonable," the court said, for the government to

this open border was the increasing flood of African economic migrants who trekked across Egypt in the tens of thousands and into Israel – overwhelming the poorer neighborhoods, depriving them of employment by working for less, and housing by cramming into properties at rental prices beyond the ability of

poor Israelis. The migrants also brought with them problems of drugs and crimes not experienced before their arrival.

Despite these dire concerns, Judge Barak imposed a judgment that it was unreasonable to construct a border fence because, perhaps, some of the migrants crossing the border may be refugees fleeing persecution.

Again, it took years before a Benjamin Netanyahu-led government convinced Barak's Supreme Court to drop its unreasonable objection. Israel is still paying heavily for this imposition.

This explains the "reasonable" claim that a self-elected Israeli Supreme Court is undemocratic and does not reflect the needs of the people in judgements that often reflect a political bias and is in dire need of judicial reform.

### ■ **Reform**

The first major action taken by the new Likud-led coalition in late 2022 was to address the reasonable clause and to discuss the people's rights to select and elect future judges and decide on the structure of a selection committee to do so.

One would think these were "reasonable" causes for judicial reform, but not to the losing parties in the November national election. They went on the rampage, raising nightmare scenarios, in their words, of a "racist" government, led by a "criminal," leading Israel into an "undemocratic, fascist dictatorship." Based on that assessment, anything was justified to bring down this government.

### ■ **The Demonstrations**

And so, the organizers of mass demonstrations began to impose other measures to further their cause. Some, from the wealthy world of Israeli hi-tech, decided on a campaign to withdraw investments from Israel by transferring huge sums of money abroad. An estimated 50 start-up companies moved at least \$4 billion out of the country. One recipient was the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) which declared bankruptcy shortly after

receiving Israeli investment money. The CEO of billion-dollar startup Papaya Global ended up thanking Bank Leumi and other Israeli financial institutions for rescuing some of the funds sent to SVB and for stepping into the breach.

The message was clear to the majority in Israel. These people were prepared to bankrupt Israel in the name of democracy.

The government opposition is overwhelmingly based in the rich neighborhoods of northern Tel Aviv, as opposed to the poor neighborhoods of southern Tel Aviv, with a support base in the kibbutzim. The Tel Aviv noise you see on your TV represents the dying cries of the political left in Israel. They are the white Ashkenazi elite who, despite their degrees, their wealth, and their influence in driving Israel to the forefront of the modern world, know they are a growing demographic minority.

Their cries are the cries of political frustration. They feel they should lead the country because they know better than the rabble majority who they despise. However, in the last election and subsequent polls, Labor and the once-Communist Meretz party are disappearing off Israel's political map. Meretz, in fact, did disappear in the last national election and the Labor Party, the founding Zionist Party of David Ben-Gurion,

government even though Netanyahu has not been found guilty of anything and, as much as we can judge from his various trials, the cases against him are collapsing through lack of evidence.

The irony of the "Crime Minister" signs is that former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is regularly seen whipping up the crowds. Olmert served a sixteen-month prison sentence on convictions of accepting bribes and for obstruction of justice. Now Olmert has inserted himself onto CNN and BBC screens trashing Israel.

In Israel, as in America, it is less about justice and more about a political coup to remove the man standing in their way.

### ■ **Bibi's Trials & Israel's Elections**

There have been five national elections in the past five years: two in 2019, and one each in 2020, 2021, and 2022. After years of political malaise marked by unstable coalitions, continuing efforts to remove Netanyahu through a series of legal charges exacerbated by the failure to govern to the satisfaction of the voters, the November 2022 Israeli election returned Netanyahu to power by his Likud Party forging a coalition with the various religious and other right-wing parties.

[The protesters] feel that they have a to rule ...  
because they know better than the "masses."

barely made it across the threshold for representation in the Knesset.

Therefore, you see huge signs of "Crime Minister" in their Kaplan Street protests every week. Accusing the prime minister of being a criminal is one of their justifications for bringing down his

Much of what drove voters to return Bibi to power was the sympathy of the voting public who watched as the cases brought against him floundered on the rocks of troubling and possibly illegal methods employed by the prosecution and the police. People with a traditional

sense of justice believe a person is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The fact is that Netanyahu has not been proven guilty on any charge.

The Israeli left, mainly the parties of Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz, had the opportunity of linking with Likud to create a balanced left-right government but they refused. Their distaste for Benjamin Netanyahu overruled a more dispassionate reasoning.

The result has been street protests, wild accusations of the end of democracy in Israel, and actions that are deeply troubling to the silent majority of Israelis.

We witnessed in the body of the Tel Aviv protesters their outrageous signs and theatrical political performances such as the silent procession of hooded, red-robed women performing a dystopian version of the characters in *The Handmaids' Tale* which, in the fictional story, depicts the enslavement of fertile women to the ruling elite into become their sex slaves.

But far from being slaves to the ruling elite, they are the elite, and they are upset at no longer being the ruling elite.

The Kaplan Street protesters are not the hard-working Israeli majority. They are not the Mizrahi or Sephardic Jews that fled the persecution and deportation from Arab and Muslim lands. They are not the Ethiopians and Yemenites that also fled persecution in their native lands as they struggle to build new lives in Israel. They feel, however, that they have the right to rule over them because they know better than the “masses.” These are the commanders who gave orders to the foot soldiers and are now ordering them not to serve.

They feel deeply that they are entitled to rule the country and that one man is stopping them – Benjamin Netanyahu. The November election results made them realize that they must try to depose him by all means possible – going beyond demonstrations – and they will not make a pact with the Likud Party if he remains the favored leader of

the country.

This, in a nutshell, is what all the noise is about. All the rest, as Hillel once said, is commentary.

How do I prove that? With their own words.

## ■ *Behind the Movement*

The most vocal and active opponent of Netanyahu is former Prime Minister Ehud Barak. He helped finance the protest movement which he sees more as a coup attempt than an attempt to remove judicial reforms from the government's agenda.

In a July 2020 Zoom event, Barak addressed a closed Forum 555, a group of retired air force pilots and navigators, detailing his covert master plan to take over the government that included:

- Deliberately igniting civil disobedience.
- Highlighting a false representation of the dangers to Israeli democracy of a Netanyahu government because, according to Barak, the grievances and slogans are catchy, they speak to everyone, and they are the fuel that can ignite a civil war.
- Barak stressed the need to invest a lot of money in promoting and developing a mass protest movement, listing equipment, flags, banners, stages, hiring or buying audio-visual equipment, etc., required to stage a major coup.

In this Zoom event, Barak talks in gruesome terms of Jewish corpses floating on the Yarkon River in Tel Aviv, slaughtered by other Jews.

The video ends with Barak telling his Zoom audience that he is the only person who can save the nation, as he outlined his coup attempt.

Barak appears at every anti-government protest rally and in every foreign television studio using the most untamed political language heard in this country in decades. He savaged Prime Minister Netanyahu and anybody to the right of him as “dark and dangerous ultra-nationalists who are undermining the foundations of Zionism and Israeli

democracy.”

In one speech, Barak hurled the epithet “fascist” at Netanyahu three times, “dictator” at Justice Minister Levin four times, and “apartheid” three times at Jews living in Judea and Samaria.

He portrayed Israelis to his political right as wearing Nazi-style “selection eyeglasses” while calling for subversion of the IDF through mass refusal-to-serve by Israeli soldiers and reserve duty officers.

Others in Barak's circle admitted – including in an interview with a *Ha'aretz* journalist – that the plan to sow internal conflict was hatched in mid-December 2022, three weeks before the government was formed.

In other words, the riots, protests, acts of political violence and intimidation that have swamped Israel since January were not spontaneous responses to the government's legal reform proposals. They were planned and financed weeks before Justice Minister Yariv Levin was appointed to his position and well before the government took any position on anything.

It is important to reiterate that the original impetus for the protests and actions against Netanyahu was not his government's judicial reform agenda, nor any other policy the government has launched. Rather, the protests were a preconceived program to paralyze and destabilize the government, even to undemocratically overthrow any government headed by Bibi. The anti-judicial reform banner was attached to the protest movement after his latest coalition government was formed and this became its first major initiative.

It is surely time they step back from the brink but, as of the time of writing this report, there is little sign they will do so.

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# What is it worth to you?

## ***Conservatism: A Rediscovery***

book by **YORAM HAZONY**

review by **SHOSHANA BRYEN**

**T**his is the political philosophy class you didn't take in college; actually, it's probably better than the political philosophy class you didn't take in college.

*Conservatism: A Rediscovery* by Yoram Hazony provides lots of information, draws very disconcerting conclusions, and asks disturbing questions – much of it politically incorrect by today's definition. Which is the point. Hazony, chairman of the Edmund Burke Foundation and president of the Herzl Institute, is an unabashed proponent of British political philosophy and its conservative American extension, leading to the sort of representative democracy we have, and disdainful of American political liberalism.

And that's OK, he posits. Politically incorrect thesis here: democracy is not for everyone. There is no "one size fits all" government – not democracy, not tribal rule, not theocracy, not royal rule – and so, to believe our British/American heritage works best for us is simply drawing a conclusion from his evidence.

The first two chapters are key – The English Conservative Tradition and American Nationalism. A deep dive into British history, governance, and political philosophy are essential to the American concept of government and the governed. That's Chapter I.

Anglo-American traditionalists are those "who regarded national identity as rooted in the particular traditions of a people and expected newcomers to adopt these traditions as a prerequisite to becoming citizens." "Traditions" are taken from the British and "groupness"

is fundamental. That's Chapter II.

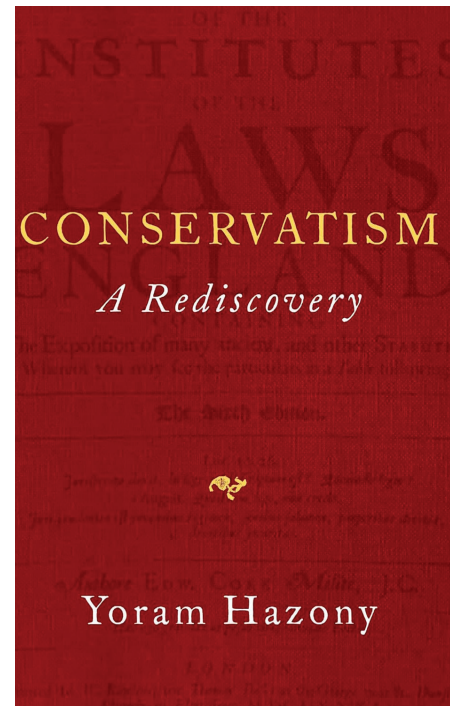
Hazony makes two points: The Federalists – traditionalist, conservative in the sense of wanting to conserve the best of what came before them – believed that feeble government allowed the rise of despots because human society always stands at the edge of a precipice. And "at the time of the next great threat they will invariably cry out for the energies of the executive to be unleashed." Hence the separation of powers – an executive hemmed in by the legislature and the Supreme Court – but holding the key to action in a crisis.

The "Confederalist vision," called "democratic republicanism," became the Democratic Republican Party of Thomas Jefferson and Tom Paine. It opposed the British model of centralized government, believing society was "founded on the virtue and natural rights of the consenting individual, who owed little or nothing to national and religious tradition," therefore relying primarily on local government except in times of emergency. It was a largely agrarian view, taking little account of people living closely together. Jefferson believed "the sum of good government" was to "restrain men from injuring one another" and otherwise leave them alone.

Hazony's paradigm:

- Liberalism = individual liberty, equality, consent, and reason.
- Conservatism = nation and tribe, mutual loyalty, honor, hierarchy, cohesion and dissolution, influence, tradition, and constraint.

Liberalism appears easier, but in



the US, the traditionalists won. For a while. For a long time, actually. There was a national standard, assimilation of immigrants, and traditions rooted in the Protestant ethic imported from

Jeffersonian intellectual hegemony, and “democracy promotion” the result of what he calls “a liberal world order” in which liberals “have assumed that the various rights and liberties associated

world order,” a universalist position, and the “conservative paradigm,” with its roots in the particularism of the British, is the central theme of Chapter III. The first believes that all individuals will come to the 10 Commandments and democratic principles by themselves; the second believes that without community, teaching, and discipline across generations, both will disappear.

Hazony spends a lot of the chapter on the obligations of citizens – which look a lot like the 10 Commandments (which he calls the Mosaic Ten Principles). “Honor,” as in “Honor your father and mother,” is huge and includes teachers and other community leaders.

“Not everyone is equal in deserving honor.” This is heresy in today’s society, in which “an insatiable egalitarianism of choices” makes all choices equally valid. Egalitarianism posits that the choices of people who marry, raise a family, work hard to support that family, serve in the military, don’t steal, don’t commit adultery, don’t lie, and/or do perform religious duties are not necessarily deserving of more honor than other choices, including shoplifting, urinating in the streets, drug use, tent-pitching, drug

## Politically incorrect thesis here: democracy is not for everyone. There is no “one size fits all” government...

England. Their success was due to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Many Americans today can trace their immigrant arrival (whether as slaves, free people, or refugees) and can tell the assimilation story of their parents, grandparents, or earlier ancestors. But fewer can explain assimilation as necessary to a unified grouping of states under one government. Hazony can.

That’s us. But for the first of the disconcerting questions, “What about the rest of the world? Wouldn’t it benefit from ‘democracy promotion’ as proffered by both the Bush (43) and Obama administrations? Wouldn’t everyone benefit from political parties, parliaments, presidents, and prime ministers?” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called freedom a “yearning in every human heart.” The Obama people wanted to “atone” for what they thought was white – and American – colonialism.

The American wrecking crew across Iraq, Afghanistan, and the so-called “Arab Spring” countries of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, should be the answer. American policy in Lebanon, during the Syrian civil war, Central America and more are add-ons. Coups and wars in Africa cement Hazony’s point that the British-generated, American modified form of government is not for everyone. And that is not necessarily a criticism of those others or their interests.

The failures, according to Hazony, were the result of a reemergence of

with the traditional Anglo-American constitution, developed and inculcated over centuries, are, in fact, dictates of universal human reason and will be recognized as desirable by all human beings.”

Not really. In fact, as the book progresses, Hazony shows far more respect for different people, different cultures and different religions than the “liberals.” WE think our way is better, but other people have communities, teachers, religions, and beliefs that THEY think are the best for ensuring the survival of their societies. They don’t have

Hazony shows far more respect for different people... cultures... and religions than the “liberals.” WE think our way is better... THEY don’t have to believe [that]. And they don’t.

to believe ours are better. And they don’t. And why should they? There are people around the world who were appalled by American governmental institutions flying “pride” flags while much of the gay rights agenda is illegal in their countries and inimical to their religious/cultural patrimony. Want to judge them? Go ahead. They will judge you equally.

The underpinnings of the “liberal

and hormone “therapy” for children, and failure to prosecute crimes on the assumption that the criminal will figure it out and become a law-abiding citizen.

Discipline, personal and governmental, is a key to freedom and democracy. The list of obligations for a citizen in actual “democracy promotion” is long. Have we lost the discipline the Founding Fathers believed necessary

to hold a country together – or even to hold a society together – or even to hold a family together? Hazony is not a defeatist, but he recognizes that those who choose the “conservative” route will end up working harder. But the conservative empiricist – one who takes lessons from those/that which came before “are not less concerned with truth than their rationalist detractors. Indeed, they are better equipped to go about finding it.”

His recommendation is the restoration of religion, Chapter IV. Again, particularism rules. “After a certain point, we must leave off investigating what is

no standing government ...” The “state” or government “is a traditional institution under which a permanent alliance has been established among rival loyalty groups...This form of government commands a professional army and police capable of suppressing violence... and a professional bureaucracy capable of systematic taxation.”

That last bit may account for corruption in many, many places that had been unused to governments with standing bank accounts they could access – this may include our own country.

Hazony doesn’t go there – he is

Hazony is not a defeatist, but he recognizes that those who choose the “conservative” route will end up working harder.

true of all human societies and turn to the investigation of ideas and institutions that are the inheritance of certain nations and tribes.” Ours. This one is a good, deep dive into what is commonly called the “Judeo-Christian” ethic, the role of congregations, and the role of families within them.

But the book is not about religion, it is about governance. So, Chapter V.

The split: Liberals historically had believed the role of government was to be an overarching protector so that individuals could do what individuals wanted to do. The assumption being that they would do the right thing. Conservatives historically gave the government a role in keeping the tribes/states together. Some things do change.

People have always been governed. “They possessed customary law and traditional institutions such as councils and assemblies, which met intermittently to make political decisions and resolve rival claims and conflict. But they had

more concerned with the mechanism for ensuring the continuance of the government: tradition. “If appropriate traditions are not intensively and successfully cultivated, then the alliance among these rival tribes will end, and both the state and the government will cease to be.” That may account for wars in many parts of the world – but may include America’s possible national nervous breakdown as well. And Israel’s.

And, oddly, that of El Salvador.

What does one do with El Salvador? The president was democratically elected but proceeded on a wide-ranging arrest of criminals and gang members with nary a thought of their “rights.” His nationwide dragnet caught up tens of thousands – and also freed the law-abiding citizenry from a reign of terror with the highest murder rates in the Western world and an economy based on payoffs to drug lords. The people of El Salvador give very, very high marks of approval to their less-than-human-rights-or-prisoner-rights-oriented

president. Now others in the region want to emulate him. The US is considering sanctioning El Salvador over its lack of democracy, but the citizens appear to care less about the government’s adherence to a set of rules imposed by the North and more about the rights of the people oppressed by criminals.

If the point is to defend the institution of “democracy,” there is one set of obligations. But if the point of government is to protect the people, there is another. Will the gangs and drug lords discover and embrace the Mosaic Ten Principles while killing, extorting, and stealing?

Chapters VI and VII bring the conversation into the 20th and 21st centuries. The rise of Adolf Hitler, Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “directly challenge(s) three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion. IT is the source of the other two – democracy and international good faith.” Moving to the post-War period, into Reaganism and Thatcherism and out of it to “the end of history,” Hazony believes the liberal view has prevailed. The current challenges of Marxism – post-Soviet Marxism – gets (and deserves) a chapter to itself.

The last section (“Some Notes on Living a Conservative Life”) is Hazony’s description of himself, his family and his intellectual as well as physical journey from the United States to Israel. OK.

This is a fairly long and deep review of a very long and deep book. Be prepared. But do it – wherever you fall on the liberal/conservative spectrum, you will find yourself wanting to argue with Hazony. A better idea would be to take the principles of Conservatism and argue them with your friends and especially your political adversaries in search of that common ground that has held the United States together for nearly 250 years. And, perhaps for the next 250.

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■ *The Last Word ...*

## What is the Point of a National Government?

Can a government serve its people if it is not democratically elected? Do Western sanctions help the people, or make them hungrier? Do sanctions provide a wider opening for China? Can the US help a government become more democratic?

Consider the coup in Niger.

In June, Omar Touray, president of the 15-nation West African consortium ECOWAS, reported to the UN Security Council that there were more than 1,800 terrorist attacks in ECOWAS countries in the first six months of 2023, resulting in nearly 4,600 deaths, creation of half a million refugees with nearly 6.2 million more internally displaced. Thirty million people need food right now; 12 million more face the possibility.

US deputy ambassador Robert Wood told the UN, “The United States remains gravely concerned by democratic backsliding across the region.”

Coastal West Africa is not “backsliding.” It never was a secure, democratic region. In the last 10 years, there have been 15 coups and 33 attempted coups – some countries had multiples, including Niger. Mr. Touray said “terrorism, armed rebellion, organized crime, unconstitutional changes of government, illegal maritime activities, environmental

crises and fake news” were responsible for the region’s problems.

But Mr. Touray is confusing symptoms with the disease.

ISIS, uncontrolled and well-armed, is wreaking havoc across the region. And the junta in Niger and the ones that took over in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Gabon make a further point – civilian governments have proven incapable of controlling the security issues created by ISIS.

According to the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, the juntas are correct.

ISIS has declared war on the region and all the other issues are weapons in its arsenal. The war must be won because the other, civilian, issues require physical security and stability.

It is not an “American problem,” and the West has not proven effective in counterinsurgency warfare, but there is an enormous question for the US: What is the point of government? If it is to defend the concept of “democracy,” there is one set of obligations. But if it is to protect the people, there is another.

The Marshall Plan didn’t start in 1942.