

# GPR

Winter 2011

GEORGIA POLITICAL REVIEW

## The Troy Davis I Knew

Why Multiculturalism is Failing

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Conflicting Views



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

**Y**ou have in your hands the beginning of a new movement vital to the continued health of American democracy.

When noted conservative William F. Buckley founded his influential weekly magazine *National Review*, he intended it to "stand athwart history, yelling 'Stop,' at a time when no one is inclined to do so." Buckley's great project was to yell "Stop" at the prevailing New Deal-era liberal orthodoxy, and his magazine's mission statement called for "the restoration of the two-party system at all costs."

Just as the one-party rule of the New Deal coalition was dangerous in Buckley's age, our own age demands an equally aggressive stand against a similarly pernicious issue. While the two-party system is inherently valuable, it becomes the source of the problem when the pendulum of power swings the opposite direction and there is too much animosity. *Georgia Political Review* is an emphatically non-partisan journal founded as a bulwark against the most damaging political problem of our time: the widening ideological gulf between the parties. Our existence yells "Stop" not just at bickering politicians but also at a media that frames our debate in inherently divisive terms.

It's invigorating to see Georgia's brightest students stepping up to promote a more civil and balanced political discourse. In these pages, you'll find insights from Center

for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) Apprentices, Foundation Fellows, Roosevelt Scholars, and members of SGA and Tate Society, all united in a passion to share their research passions with a broad, intelligent audience. Being inspired by this accomplished, energetic, optimistic staff is the singular highlight of our college careers.

Over the past few months, our writers supplied their commentary and analysis at [georgiapoliticalreview.com](http://georgiapoliticalreview.com). We published exclusive online interviews with Bush speechwriter David Frum, former congressman and presidential candidate Bob Barr, and retired four-star general Eugene Habiger. UGA connections and resources introduced us to these men, and two are Georgians. This edition's interview with former U.S. Senator and Ambassador Wyche Fowler continues this tradition of highlighting Georgians' accomplishments on the national stage.

The University of Georgia is an ideal setting for our new movement because we are part of a dynamic community of curious inquiry and we have unique access to a parade of national and international leaders speaking on campus. Our community of scholars gives our writers instant access to many of the leading minds in America. Indeed our university association ensures the only special interests we are beholden to are good thinking and good writing. By reaching people in their formative college years, we hope a non-partisan conversation like GPR



can help lead a generational shift toward a less divisive and more productive politics.

The *Georgia Political Review* is foremost a magazine, but it seeks to become far more. In the coming semester we will host speakers and forums. These are political discussions designed to bring people from across the spectrum together in a conversation about shared American values. Conversation and community are our main objectives, and in the coming years we will explore myriad ways of opening up the political conversation within UGA, throughout Georgia, and across the country.

We hope you will join us in our mission. Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter to join our community and help us return sanity to our politics.

Khalil Farah & Ryan Prior  
*Editors-in-Chief*

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*Jimmy Carter and Part of the GPR staff*

*The staff made a visit to Plains, GA and sat in on Carter's Sunday School class.*

## I Knew Troy Davis

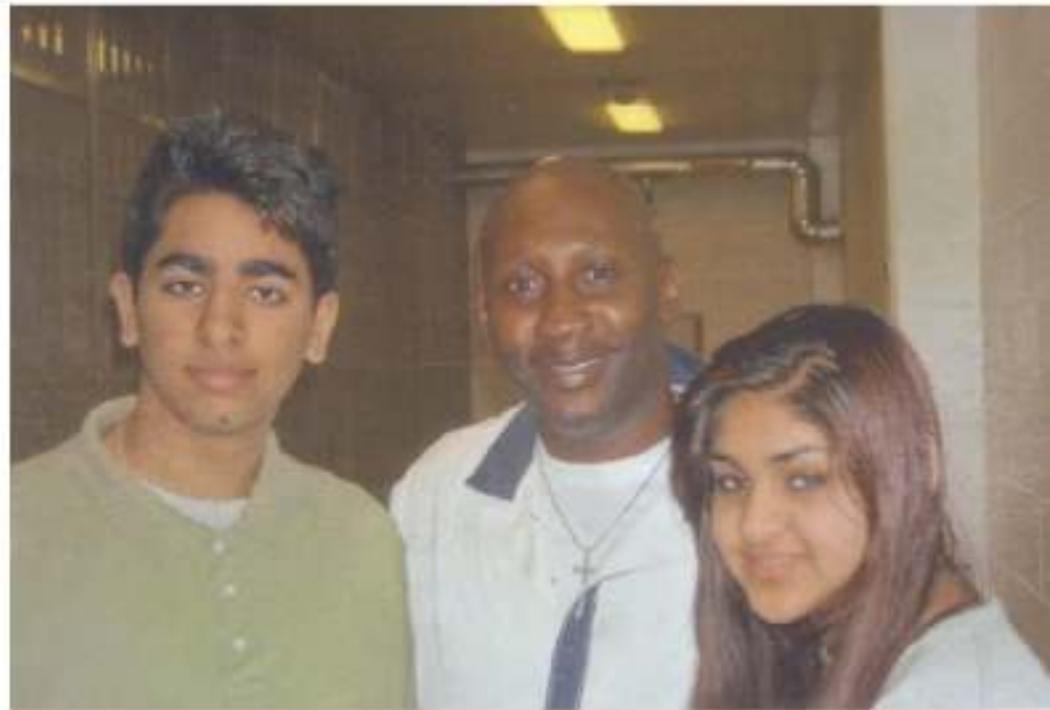
Gautam Narula  
Associate Editor

I first met Davis on death row on September 29, 2008, six days after he had come within 90 minutes of execution, and met him several times afterward, along with frequently speaking to him on the phone and corresponding through the mail. As he became America's most well-known death row inmate, more and more people would ask me, "What was Troy Davis like?"

First and foremost, Troy Davis the man never wavered on his innocence. The second time I met him on death row, he told an incredibly detailed account of what happened the day MacPhail was killed, and what happened in the ensuing days. His final words to the MacPhail family, given just minutes before his execution, were, "I know you all are convinced I'm the person who killed your father, your son, and your brother. But I am innocent."

Davis was also well aware of the details of his complex legal case. I recall meeting him shortly after his hearing in Savannah in June 2010, and seeing his frustration that his lawyers had failed to subpoena Sylvester "Redd" Coles, the primary alternative suspect, to the hearing, which had made much of the evidence they had intended to submit inadmissible. He was annoyed that despite having a whole team of lawyers working on the case, they had allowed such a simple thing to damage the possibility of a favorable outcome in the hearing. During our visits, he spoke of his appeals process and would mention how agitated he was that his lawyers had made many simple mistakes.

As a person, Troy Davis was warm and caring. He took a sincere interest in the lives of people who wrote to him or visited him. At his funeral, one speaker noted how Davis had created a calendar with the dates of important events, birthdays, and anniversaries of his friends and family. He often called my family, simply to see how we were doing in our personal lives and to inquire how my sister and I had been doing in school, and



*The author (left) and his sister (right) with Troy Davis (middle) after a visit.*

when I visited death row I learned that he hadn't been shy about telling other inmates and his lawyers about our accomplishments. He seemed well-liked on death row: every time I visited, both inmates and guards would warmly greet him and start conversations with him, which he would cut short so he could continue speaking to his visitors. Although he was soft-spoken, Davis loved talking to his visitors and would frequently smile and tell jokes. In our visits, he made it clear that among his goals were to help abolish the death penalty, so that there would be no more Troy Davises, and to mentor youth to make sure they did not make the same mistakes he did. At the end of visits, he always made sure to hug each visitor. After stricter visitation policies forced him to interact with visitors from behind metal bars and a plexiglass window, he would press his hand against the glass, as the visitor pressed his on the other side.

But above all, Troy Davis was a man of faith. He was always seen with a cross around his neck. In our conversations, he

would frequently mention his faith in God as his reason he was not angry, bitter, or afraid. Davis said he bore no ill will towards the MacPhail family, which had always been convinced of his guilt and had spoken in favor of his execution. He frequently quoted Bible passages in the letters he wrote me, and I still have a few religious texts he sent me, with the name "Troy A. Davis" neatly written in the front cover. When I asked him how he could not be angry at being imprisoned for nearly two decades, he said, "God hasn't failed me. He just isn't ready for me to come home yet." Before each of his four execution dates, he had refused his last meal, simply because he believed that meal would not be his last.

Given this conviction, it wasn't surprising that the very last words Davis ever said, minutes before his execution, were, "And those who're trying to...about to take my life, may God have mercy on all of your souls, and God bless you."

# Homegrown Hostility

## How Scapegoating Illegal Immigrants is Hurting Georgia's Economy

Emily Kopp  
Associate Editor

HB 87 saddles businesses with bulky bureaucratic procedures and places an unfunded burden on the shoulders of local law enforcement. The opposition movement has galvanized a patchwork coalition of strange bedfellows-- small town sheriffs, Amnesty International activists, plantation owners and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyers.

So why was it passed?

Ask some of the 113 representatives in the General Assembly who voted "yea," and they will likely explain that difficult financial times necessitate harsh measures to save American jobs and wrench the economy out of recession.

Examine the relevant economic literature, however, and this argument turns rotten, like a sticky sweet strawberry ripening unpicked in the glare of the blistering summer sun.

In 1980, brashly defying international law, Fidel Castro shipped 125,000 Cuban immigrants from the port of Mariel sailing to Miami, FL. The "Mariel boatlift" provided economist David Card with an invaluable gem rarely found in the social sciences--a controlled experiment. The immigrants inundated metro Miami, increasing its local population by 7% within a short span of time. Traditional economic thinking teaches us that such a shock to the labor market, by increasing available labor, would put downward pressure on general wages. However, in a seminal discovery for labor economists, the

Mariel boatlift did not hurt the existing labor force as anticipated, but in fact *increased* so-called "native wages." In other words, the arrival of Cuban immigrants actually augmented the incomes of longtime Miami residents.

One part of the equation that always eludes policymakers who calculate that deporting illegal immigrants will "save money" is that illegal immigrants shop at American department stores, fill up at American pumps, and eat at American restaurants. Of many explanations proffered for Card's unexpected correlation, the most common follows along these lines: the immigrants added to the city's consumer base, increasing market demand. The increased demand supplied firms with the extra revenue to invest in more capital. The supplemental capacity absorbed

the increase in the labor market, and the increased supply (produced by the extra capital and labor) and led to an increase in general wages. Everyone became wealthier—people's pockets got heavier, and state coffers grew from higher tax revenues.

Now, we turn our attention to another common objection, the immortal political platitude: "illegal immigrants steal American jobs."

HB 87 has triggered an exodus of illegal immigrants in the last couple of months, leaving many farm owners without the hands needed to bring in Georgia's crucial summer harvest. In response, Gov. Nathan Deal implemented a temporary employment program that hires probation workers to fill the vacancies left by Georgia's undocumented. Of the few that signed up for the first day of the program, 100% quit by midday.

Even in a grueling job market and facing record unemployment outpacing the national average, GA lawmakers might have predicted the new workers' dismay at the backbreaking farm work.

Labor economists like George Borjas would point to the concept of "relative skill level"—how the education and job training of a typical illegal immigrant stacks up to that of a native-born citizen. The average illegal immigrant in Georgia traveled to the US from Mexico, where heavily subsidized American grain post-NAFTA put small Mexican wheat farmers out of business. Unlike the probationers, these workers have made a living out of menial physical labor in a sweltering climate their entire lives, and thus compliantly accept the work. HB 87 compromises this ready workforce, crucial to agricultural productivity, without a feasible plan to replace it.

While lopsided NAFTA provisions certainly contributed to the surge in illegal immigration in recent decades, (a 300% increase since 1993, if we seek to quantify it), the phenomenon of laying America's worst jobs on the backs of immigrants from across the Southern border has a 70 year history.

In order to offset labor shortages during of the industrial boom spurred by WWII, the Roosevelt administration agreed with Mexico to implement a guest worker program. The temporary workers or "braceros" could apply for permission to assist in harvesting American crops according to seasonal demand. Although originally devised to expire after three years, the program survived for twenty. The market structure established by the Bracero Program, one reliant on cheap labor, set

a strong precedent for lax policies on growers that hired illegal immigrants in the years after it was rescinded.

In a recent *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* article entitled "Why American Wont Do Dirty Jobs," Princeton sociologist Doug Massey states that Americans' refusal to work as farmhands "has nothing to do with the job itself." Instead, the history of the occupation as "immigrant work" makes it "beneath"

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*Part of the equation that always eludes policy-makers who calculate deporting illegal immigrants will "save money" is that illegal immigrants shop at American stores, fill up at American pumps, and eat at American restaurants.*

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native workers. Europeans tag auto assembly work with a similar taboo, whereas in the United States being an auto worker remains a "native category."

The current labor crisis in Georgia's agricultural industry will organically ease as wages and benefits for difficult farm labor rise, but it remains to be seen what "price is right," if any, with regard to surmounting this

long-standing stigma.

Georgia's economy has already felt the effects of HB 87. A survey conducted by the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and the University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development estimated that the 11,000 job labor shortage in the harvest of seven Georgia crops resulted in the direct cost of \$75 million during the 2011 spring and summer seasons. It would be a mistake to extrapolate total economic losses from this figure alone. First, consider the study's scope. The surveyed farms in total spanned only 31,000 acres, a small tract compared to the 10.1 billion acres of farmland in Georgia. Second, as the authors note, this figure does not account for the missing "multiplier effect," in other words, the lost revenue in related industries such as retail and transportation. According to the authors, each \$1 million lost in agricultural revenue robs local economies of indirect costs equal to \$1.34 million. Such a traumatic blow to the economy can only have a detrimental effect on the state government's balance sheets.

All in all, in an attempt to patch a leak in Georgia's sinking budget, Gov. Deal has demolished a gaping hole in the side of a \$65 billion industry.

Stripped of its rhetoric of saving American jobs, and washed of its veneer of fiscal austerity, HB 87 is revealed as a simplistic, emotional response to a complicated and intellectually demanding problem. Meanwhile, the thousands of families who serve as the undeserving scapegoats for our economic crisis and crippling debt lose their entire livelihoods.

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## Q&A with *Former Senator Wyche Fowler*

*Recently, Khalil Farah of the Georgia Political Review got a chance to speak to former Senator Wyche Fowler. Fowler was born in Atlanta and received his bachelors in English from Davidson College and his J.D. from Emory University. After, he served as a city councilman until being elected to the U.S. House where we served from 1977-86 before moving on to a term in the Senate. After Congress, he was the ambassador to Saudi Arabia under President Clinton and then board chair of the Middle East Institute for ten years. He has also taught a class with the UGA at Oxford program. Here he speaks about getting involved in politics, Arab culture, and country music.*



**You got involved in politics at a fairly young age; do you have any advice for new graduates who are pursuing a career in politics?**

Well things have changed since I first got involved in politics, but still the best way for people who are interested in politics is to get involved is to volunteer while still in college. And I mean really volunteer, not just show up every few weeks and knock on doors for an hour but convince the campaign director that you can be relied on to show up every afternoon and do whatever needs to be done. In other words, you want the campaign to develop loyalty to you as you do to the candidates and the campaign. When those campaign directors get elected they will remember who were the hard and faithful [workers] during the campaign and will remember you when you are looking for a full-time job after college. When I was serving in the Army, I worked intelligence in the Pentagon, I used to go to my Georgia congressman after I got off duty at 3:30 and clip newspapers and sort them by subject.

**You were an English major in college; did you find that major helped in politics?**

Not so much, but no matter what major you are there is great value in reading widely. When you read widely you come across fiction and non-fiction which forms your political opinions. Also, the more you read, the better you write. Being able to write clearly is just as valuable in a political career as speaking clearly.

**I also hear you're a pretty good country music guitarist.**

I think you got a very old website (laughs). No, I started early when I was about six years old. I had these big hands so I could get them around the neck of the guitar and play chords. I started playing at birthday parties around Atlanta at age 6 or 7. I think I got about \$2 a party. I had a good time but now I strum at home mainly to myself.

**You ran for office while still in law school, what was that like?**

My first year I was in law school during the fall, and I looked around at my fellow law students and saw a lot of free labor. I recruited about 50 of them and we had a lot of fun pounding the pavement and knocking on doors. Before my first year was up, I was a law student and a city [councilman]. I couldn't have done it without those students.

**You wrote the Boland Amendment while in Congress [it banned the CIA from funding Nicaraguan contras], did your work at the Pentagon cause you to believe the CIA needed legislative oversight?**

Yes, Absolutely. My primary interest was foreign policy but I saw some things going on that were not legal under any circumstances. I thought one of the reasons was that Congress would enact these

programs, appropriate the money, and not provide any oversight to see if the intent was followed.

**It seems you still have an interest in foreign policy; you worked with the Middle East Institute for ten years. If you could dispel one myth about Arabs in the U.S. what would it be?**

I think if I had to pick one, I would say that people think that since Arabs are Islamic, their value systems are different than those of us who live in what we like to call a primarily Christian nation. People don't realize that we all worship the same God and that the wishes of parents for their children, whether they be in Athens, GA or Damascus, are no different. We all wish upon them education, good health, and community ties, but there is this myth that they are others and therefore aliens to our value systems and way of life.

**Did you see similarities in particular with the American Southern culture and the Arab one?**

Oh yes. That's why I got along with them so well. We both believe in putting family first, like the Arabs do. We care a lot more about our families than our governments, like the Arabs do. And there is this

sense that in the South we believe in hospitality and tradition and the ties between family and tradition. That's a Southern trait as much as it as an Arab one.

**While ambassador to Saudi Arabia, I heard a story about you taking a camel trip across the desert. How was it?**

Well [the Saudi government] didn't know about [my camel trip] and unfortunately the king was looking for me while I was out in the desert. My staff told him that I was gone and he couldn't believe it. He told my staff, "call him on the truck phone!" and my staff said, "well, he doesn't have a truck." Then "call him on the satellite phone!" And my staff said, "well, all he has is a camel." But the Saudis were just so proud that I went to see their desert and see the archeology and that I went to do it the old Bedouin way. I crossed the great Nafud Desert in the north. Beautiful desert with red sand, but I thought it was only going to take three days and nights, it took eight. The three men I was with and I did not see another person the whole time. It was winter so you had to alternate between walking through the knee deep sand to warm up and riding to rest your legs. It impressed them, though, that here is an American who was interested in their country, their culture, and their traditions and would get out from being the desk, take off the striped diplomatic britches, and get out so to speak.



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# Are Syringe Exchange Programs a Good Idea?

Becky Lowe | *Associate Editor*

**S**yringe exchange programs are private or government funded programs that provide clean syringes to people who do not have prescriptions. Organizations like Centers for Harm and Prevention adopt these syringe exchange programs, usually in inner cities, to give injection drug users access to untainted needles.

The benefit of these programs is that they significantly reduce the risk of spreading hematogenous diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C, by preventing people from sharing dirty needles. A common misconception is that these programs encourage more people to use drugs because of the decreased risk of contracting diseases spread through blood contact. Because of their association with intravenous drug use, these programs have become extremely controversial.



24% of people with AIDS in the U.S. contracted it from dirty syringes. Photo/Khalil Farah

According to John K. Watters, et al in *Syringe and Needle Exchange as HIV/AIDS Prevention for Injection Drug Users*, a study shows that 24% of people with AIDS contracted it using dirty syringes. In addition, tens of thousands more contracted AIDS from having sexual relations with an injection drug user. Thus, preventing dirty needle sharing protects not just injection drug users but their partners as well. With the adoption of syringe exchange programs, many questions arise such as: are these programs effective in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C? Are they cost effective for society? Do they encourage illegal drug use? Are syringe exchange programs legalized in the United States?

In comparison to other public health programs, syringe exchange programs have received substantially more criticism. For example, another public health program that serves to reduce HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C is the distribution of condoms to high school teenagers. This act is done all throughout the country and could be considered encouragement for minors to engage in sexual intercourse. While syringe exchange

programs have a higher shock value, they parallel the underlying goal of health promotion and should also be considered a benefit to the community. To address the question of whether or not syringe exchange programs encourage injection drug use, a study by Dr. van Ameijden looked at 996 injection drug users. His research showed that syringe exchange programs actually reduce the amount drug users injected. Further, the amount drug users under the age of 22 injected decreased drastically during the mid 1980's, as syringe exchange programs gained traction.

In terms of cost-effectiveness for society, the community would actually be saving money by instituting syringe exchange programs by not having to pay the hospital bills of the infected users, many who are disproportionately poor and unable to afford health insurance. One research study examined in *Cost-Effectiveness of Syringe Exchange as an HIV Prevention Strategy* shows that it was cost efficient in the state of New York to provide syringe exchange programs, indicating that the state of New York would save itself \$7.6 million dollars in medical costs per year. However, these programs

have been criticized as another form of social welfare, by providing services to individuals who are not giving back to society.

The current policy for syringe exchange programs dictates that local and municipal governments are responsible for determining whether or not syringe exchange programs should be implemented within their respective jurisdictions. With 186 syringe exchange programs in the United States, up from just 36 in 1993, these programs are becoming more and more common (Don C. Des Jarlias, *Doing Harm Reduction Better: Syringe Exchange in the United States*). It is disheartening that we have such a need for these programs; however, they have been effective in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis as well as increasing awareness about the spread of these diseases.

According to the CDC, the number of people in the state of Georgia with HIV/AIDS is approaching 30,000. Something must be done to cap the spread of this fatal disease and as long as syringe exchange programs are successful in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, they should be supported.

# THE RATIONALITY OF THE OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT

Kelsey Thomas  
*Associate Editor*

Rational decisions, in political and economic studies, refer to decisions that are optimal for achieving a goal or solving a problem. When an action is rational, it helps the decision-maker to reach their maximum expected utility (EU). For several weeks, the actions of the Occupy Wall Street protestors have been under the scrutiny of the media and passive observers. However, political scientists may scrutinize whether or not the actions taken by these protestors are rational, as we have defined rationality (lest we confuse our definition with the traditional sense of the word).

Although the Occupy Wall Street has no formally declared set of demands, the overall objective of both the main movement and its fringe organizations are important to identify in order to determine the group's maximum EU. *Adbusters*, the magazine where the idea of an occupation of Wall Street was first conceived, has set forth one goal, which is to move President Obama to "ordain a Presidential Commission tasked with ending the influence money has over our representatives in Washington<sup>1</sup>." The Occupy Chicago off-shoot of OWS recently approved a list of twelve demands through a General Assembly vote<sup>2</sup>. One OWS protestor's list of proposed demands on the group's forum has been widely reported<sup>3</sup> (read: mocked).

Before finding out if the actions of these protestors are rationally moving them toward this maximum EU, certain observations about the movement can be made. In their book *Poor People's Movements*, American sociologists and political scientists Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward analyze aspects cause protest movements to succeed or fail. Piven and Cloward would argue that the Occupy Wall Street protests are taking place at precisely the right time, as times of political uncertainty are when favorable action from politicians is most likely<sup>4</sup>. Considering the approval ratings of both the president and members of Congress, it is safe to say that politicians are currently uncertain about their electoral futures.

Another factor to observe is the leadership and structure of these protests. Occupy Wall Street has no declared or formal leadership, but the main group has created General Assemblies<sup>5</sup> as a form of governing body to determine what actions the group should take. Again, Piven and Cloward would approve, as they argue that a major failure of many protests is that their leaders spend too much time drafting constitutions and forming committees rather than gathering momentum for their cause<sup>6</sup>.

A final crucial observation about Occupy Wall Street would be the



many fringe movements that have sprung up separate from the main organization. OWS protests have begun in nearly every major city in America, from Boston to Los Angeles. Protests have even reached the University of Georgia's sleepy college town of Athens. These protests range from a few casual sign-wavers to massive gatherings the size of the original OWS group. They act separately from OWS, not seeking counsel or consent before beginning their protests or taking a particular course of action. Piven and Cloward would most likely approve of this course of action, given that they believed protest leaders should work to rouse indignation among the populace to garner momentum for their respective causes<sup>7</sup>.

Although all of these factors would appear to culminate in a way that is positive for the Occupy Wall Street movement (at least according to two political scientists), they may not be entirely successful in accomplishing the goals of the movement. For instance, one could suppose that in order to bring about any sort of lasting change, protestors would want to go beyond being recognized by politicians to having a dialogue with them. However, the Atlanta General Assembly of OWS recently refused to allow Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) from speaking to their group<sup>8</sup> (a refusal through the use of elaborate hand signals, no less).

There are additional obstacles between the OWS movement and their goals. One of these is the lack of a united front, meaning the lack of stated official goals toward which each protestor is working. Instead, protestors are largely operating under their own agendas. This is possible because of the leadership structure (or lack thereof) present in the movement. OWS has been unable to strike a balance between having too much formal leadership (which could hinder the momentum of the movement with needless regulation and organization) and too few leaders (which lacks the necessary organization to communicate effectively with policy makers).

From a game theory perspective, the proposed goals that we have listed before should be analyzed separately to determine if their respective actor is behaving rationally. To do this, we will assign payoffs (in the form of utility) to the desired outcomes of different OWS actors and compare this with their probabilities. The proposed

goal of Adbusters, a presidential commission to end Wall Street influence in politics, would certainly be an acceptable goal for the majority of OWS protestors, although it may not go far enough for many. In this article, we designate that goal with the variable X. This goal, as it is not far-fetched nor necessarily overly demanding, may have a 50% chance of being reached. Therefore, determining the expected utility (EU) of protestors following the Adbusters model of occupying Wall Street would have a formula of:

$$EU = (.50)X = .5X$$

The formula, simplified, is that the protestors have a 50% chance of getting something they value at X. Typical theory claims that this option is then worth .5X (or half an X).

The demands of Occupy Chicago go farther than those of Adbusters, meaning they are likely to please protestors more. We could then assign them a payoff of 1.5X (as this would be a roughly 50% higher payoff than that of the Adbusters goals). However, because this list of goals is more numerous and pointed, it may have only a 20% chance of being successful. Our formula would then look like this:

$$EU = (.20)1.5X = .3X$$

Because these demands have a 20% chance, the greater payoff is offset by the lower probability, hence the course of action is only with .3X

Lastly, the list of demands posted on the OWS organization's website by Lloyd Hart, which has arguably received the most media coverage of all proposed demands, may have the highest payoff of all. As it would go farther than the goals of either Adbusters or Occupy Chicago, it may please even more protestors, giving it a payoff as high as 2X, double the reward as the original formula. However, due to the lack of logic surrounding some of these goals (i.e. a \$20 minimum wage), the likelihood of success may be as low as 5%. The formula for determining the EU of Hart's goals would then be:

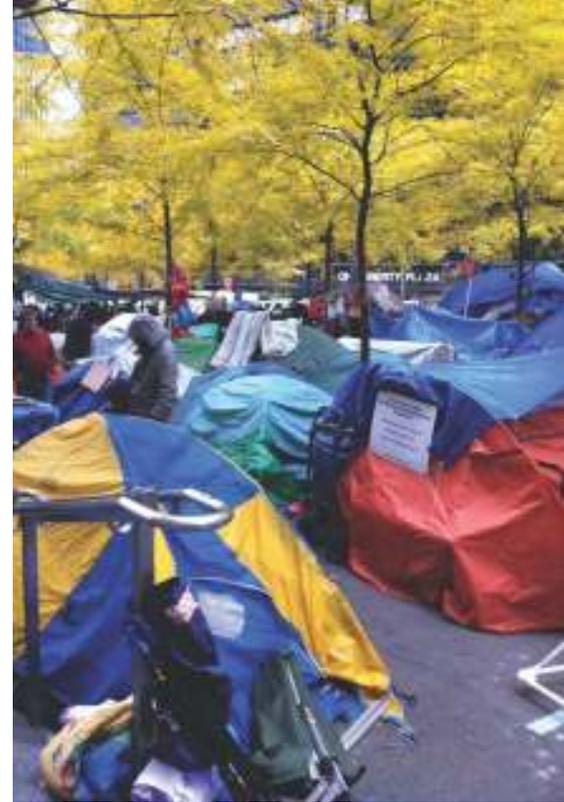
$$EU = (.05)2X = .1X$$

Despite the highest payoff, this course of action is theoretically worth only a fifth of the more modest first course due to its low probability of success.

It could then be argued that Occupy Wall Street would only be considered rational if they were working towards the goals of Adbusters, as acting towards any other goal could not result in reaching their maximum expected utility. The EU of the Adbusters goal is higher than that of Occupy Chicago or of Lloyd Hart. Because of this, actions toward goals more extreme than those of Adbusters may not, in fact, be rational. However, other factors may need to be accounted for.

Despite the hindrances to achieving their broad goals, we still have not conclusively answered the question of OWS's rationality. In order to find our answer, we must know what specifically rationality, concurrent with the expected utility model, truly represents. Jenkins and Klandermans make the point that the EU model operates under the pretense that individual participate in protests if their expected reward from participation outweighs their costs and negativities of participation<sup>9</sup>. Despite the rather low likelihood of certain demands – such as those posted to the OWS forum and those approved by Occupy Chicago – being met, the rewards and payoffs of participation by each protestor may not be completely dependent upon the success of their movement. Some may experience a payoff from participating in something bigger than themselves, a sort of civic duty payoff. These payoffs, not directly correlated with the general success of the protest movement, may outweigh the costs of participation (such as lost wages or the opportunity costs relevant to time spent protesting).

The question remains: are the actions of the Occupy Wall Street protestors rational? The answer, it would appear, is two-fold. The general actions of the main OWS organization appears to be rational, as the original New York chapter appears to be acting in such a way that may help them to achieve their maximum expected utility. However, the fringe movements – and the individuals within these fringe groups – may not be acting rationally. Groups such as Occupy Chicago are not behaving rationally as the actions they are taking will not allow them to reach their maximum expected utility, which could be reached if they worked towards goals closer to those of Adbusters than their own. It is these actors who are not necessarily working in a way that is conducive to the overall success of the movement. By



New York's Zuccotti Part with Occupy Wall Street protester's tents. Photo/Molly Roy

proposing demands that are extreme in nature, they are insuring that their actions will be largely ignored or even mocked by politicians and Wall Street elites alike. It is, then, these individuals, acting collectively, who ultimately will make-or-break the argument for rationality of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and possibly even its success or failure.

Although the OWS movement's current goals are arguably not likely to be implemented, there are changes that could be made to increase the likelihood of maximum payoffs in terms of EU for the organization. One would be to strike a balance of leadership levels that could move forward the views of the movement without handicapping its momentum. Another would be to reign in the individuals and fringe movements to move with the OWS main organization toward collective goals more like that of Adbusters than those of Lloyd Hart (goals that are ultimately more achievable). This means of collective action would only work if the organization can agree on demands that are both salient and legitimate. If their demands are too extreme, they will largely be laughed off by the elites who might affect the types of changes OWS is seeking. If the demands don't have teeth, the elites may make these small concessions in order to make OWS sympathizers complacent and force the end of the occupations through "normal politics."

# The Next Arab Spring... ...*in America?*

Stephanie Talmadge | Associate Editor

Sitting outside Starbucks in scenic downtown Athens, one is always subject to a healthy array of sights and sounds, but as of late, there's a frequent and unmistakable burst of noise as cars pass by the Occupy Athens movement. The group has set up camp adjacent to the university's renowned arches where drivers honk at the protestors as they pass by, occasionally letting out an accompanying yell.

The original Occupy movement began officially on September 17th on Wall Street, and since then, smaller demonstrations have sprung up across the country. The dissenters have emulated the Arab Spring tactics to bring about change from the bottom up, protesting on street corners and invoking social media tools to distribute their message. The Twitter hashtag #ows (Occupy Wall Street) has flooded the popular social media website. Like the revolutions in the Middle East, the demographic of the protestors is mostly comprised of young individuals proficient in new media skills, which they have leveraged to their advantage.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a white protest sign. The sign features the word "THIS" in large, bold, hand-painted letters. The letters are colored in alternating blue and red. To the right of "THIS", the letter "L" is partially visible, also in blue. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting at night or in low light. The person holding the sign is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt.

THIS L



David Cummins, 28, owner of a local coffee shop protests in front of the University of Georgia's iconic arch. Photo/Isaac Lind



I visited with a few of the Occupy Athens protestors personally. One was Adam Lasilla, a twenty-five year old graduate student in his second year of Spanish linguistics studies here at UGA. He acknowledged that many of the activists have been young people and that it's partly due to the fact that they have more free time. He also posits other reasons. "Our generation ... is so tired of people calling us apathetic, [but] there are things we believe in." Namely, "Our government is not doing a good job of representing us or the people of this country in general. There's a lot of cynicism in the older generation. They think they can't do anything to change it, whereas we ... say we can, we just have to do something about it.

Occupy Athens has not exactly received a warm welcome from the entirety of UGA's student body, though. In accordance with other critics of the movement, many think that the protestors are jobless bums merely killing time. Lasilla disagrees. "A lot of us [are employed], despite the fact that people are always yelling at us 'Get a job!'"



Protestor signs rail against executive bonuses (top) and Occupy Athens protestors are undeterred by the rain (bottom). *Photos/Jason Lind*

While it's true that some of the Occupy Athens proponents are unemployed, others "have two or three jobs," says Patty Freeman-Lynde, fellow protestor and wife of a professor in the geology department at UGA. "Personally I'm unemployed, and I would love to have a job.

So contrary to popular belief, these people are not united by joblessness. So is there an underlying factor that has brought them together? Yes and no. While the activists involved in the Occupy movement agree that they want to see a fundamental, long-term change in the system, they champion a spectrum of different causes. Critics of the movement use that fact to debilitate it, claiming that Occupy's lack of a centralized goal renders the movement unorganized and ultimately futile.

However Lasilla does not see this as a shortcoming at all. "If we really want to represent the 99% of people that are affected badly by the current system, we can't just advocate one specific proposal like raising the minimum wage. That's great! I agree with that –"

"But that's only part of the problem," adds Freeman-Lynde.

Lasilla continued, "If we want to, we could say 'yes we do have one goal.' Our goal is to make a better, fairer system that works for more Americans. Of course that's vague, so you can break that down into smaller, more specific policy goals. It's not fair to the movement to demand that it have really specific policy goals, especially at the beginning, when it's about talking to as many people as we can. We want as many people to be a part of this as possible ... It's about dialogue. Join the conversation."

Even the political ideology of the protestors spans across the board. "We're not anti-conservative. We're not really a liberal movement. We're a movement to get corporate influence out of government, whether government is big or small," says Lasilla.

Eliminating corporate influence from our government may be an unrealistic goal. We naturally assume that anything corporate has no place in a democratic government. Many big businesses support campaigns and contribute to philanthropic causes. Lobbying firms also can make us uncomfortable; the idea that a company receives money to advocate a specific ballot seems anything but democratic. But is there any way that that this can truly be eliminated? And do we really



Athens protesters ask by-passers for minute of their time to explain the occupy cause. *Photo/Jason Lind*

want it to be? In defense of lobbyists, their campaigns can function like public service announcements, shedding light on issues that would have been otherwise ignored. These are questions that Occupiers may have to answer in the coming weeks.

Considering the varying opinions and goals Occupy represents, one may think it would attract students from all walks of life, which is what the protestors want. Lasilla remarked, "We know there are students who support us, and obviously there are going to be apathetic students... But we want those students who do support us to come out and join us and make their presence felt, even if it's for ten minutes a day [or] an hour once a week."

Lasilla contends that students should be concerned with the protest because in a few years as they enter the labor force, they will begin to understand its relevance. "We want an economy that functions so that there will be jobs after [students] get their degrees ... There are people who get degrees in real fields where they can contribute to society, but there just aren't jobs available."

As the Occupy movement drags on, the Athens dissenters seem unfazed by the passage of time; they intend to stay put as long as it takes. "We're at least going to be here as long as they are on Wall Street," says Lasilla, "And at least until our permit expires on January 1st. But I mean, indefinitely really."

Besides the controversy surrounding the protest itself, there have been several reports of police using unnecessary force to control the activists; there are several

YouTube videos illustrating protestors crying out after being maced and displaying scars after being beaten. Locally, over 50 protestors were arrested during the Occupy Atlanta movement in Woodruff park, one of whom being state Senator Vincent Fort (D). According to an 11 Alive News report their "charges include violating park hours." Some critique the encampments for housing drunks and homeless, while others theorize that police departments are trying to sabotage the movement by sending vagrants to the campsites.

2011 has certainly been a year for revolution, and as the Occupy movement continues to grow, it likens itself more and more to the Middle Eastern uprisings. Some of the more extreme dissenters claim a similar revolution is their ultimate goal. Though they probably lack the manpower needed to create an upheaval of the Middle Eastern scale, the resemblances are impossible to ignore.

There have also been similarities drawn between Occupy and the Tea party, concerning their mutual ambiguity. The Tea Party has enjoyed great success in simply raising awareness though, which should provide hope to the Occupy proponents.

The notion of the 99% is a little frightening in itself. Is America truly becoming a caste-based society of haves and have-nots? One thing's for sure, as the next presidential election draws nearer and the voter pool becomes angrier, Obama will have to re-double his efforts if he wants to retain any hope of staying in office another four years. **CPR**

# Multiculturalism IS DEAD

*Why Warm  
Welcomes Weaken  
the West*

Wes Robinson  
Associate Editor

Multiculturalism, as a term itself, comes off appearing as a rather benign idea. Yet German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the former prime minister of Australia, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, ex-premier Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, British Prime Minister David Cameron, and the Netherlands have all recently denounced the policy of multiculturalism or taken measures to reverse their past policies. To be clear, the multiculturalism that I speak of is not the same thing as the multicultural fairs seventh-graders everywhere attend; sampling everything from Panamanian ceviche to Thai lemongrass soup. Rather, multiculturalism as a policy position is based on the theory that any, and all, cultures have the right to live within a state while maintaining a subscription to their cultural practices and livelihood with no state intervention. Another way it has been defined is that every culture is morally valid and no one culture has the right to impose its values on another. It sounds simple enough; let Culture X live side-by-side with Culture Y in a given state. The nations mentioned above had previously taken this "hands-off" approach towards those with different ethnicities and cultural differences. It is important, and even essential, for one to maintain a sense of their heritage regardless of where they are geographically. However, it will be ultimately detrimental for the multiculturalist state should this person make no effort, nor be required to, assimilate into their new society. As multiculturalism took root, the leaders of these states cited problems such as, a loss of national identity, polarized social and political structures, violence and extremism,

social friction, and increased racism, according to interviews they have each given.

Significant academic research has even predicted these negative externalities that have been cited by the leaders of the denouncing nations. It is important to understand the notion of social capital and its effects on a democracy. Social capital,

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*Nowhere else in the world other than the liberal democracies of the West, will you find the adherence to multiculturalism that we currently see.*

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as defined by Dr. Francis Fukuyama, is "an informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more people." This expands to say that social capital bridges unlike people together to accomplish a common goal or promote some sort of civic action. Social capital serves as the backbone for any civil engagement and is therefore essential to any of the Western liberal democracies that have since denounced multiculturalism. Dr. Robert Putnam engaged in a study where he found that high social capital is necessary for any successful democracy. However, in a later study that took place in the United States, Putnam found that more ethnically diverse areas are less likely to have social

trust and therefore they have lower social capital. This is not a divide among one group towards another; rather it is degradation in social capital as a whole; as social trust is lower even among the same ethnic group. Therefore the social polarization and increased social frictions, which the leaders cited, were to be expected as ethnic divisions erode social capital which will, in turn, strain the overall political system.

In effect, the principles of the multiculturalism practiced in these states are counterintuitive to the Lockean sense of the social contract that has helped to establish so many of these modern day democracies. For one, Locke assumes that people are moral beings and will ultimately come together to create a moral state. However, the moral relativism that serves as an essential pillar to multiculturalism refutes the ability for this moral state to exist. There are ample examples available to illustrate this moral relativism and the inequities in the application of law that it produces. Take, for instance, an incident that occurred in California. A woman was caught attempting suicide after she first drowned her two children. One would likely assert that this action is certainly immoral and should be punishable with the utmost severity. However, this woman was a Japanese immigrant. She claimed defense in her practice of the "parent-child suicide" of her native country and spent only one year in jail (which was the year she was on trial). Another example presented by Dr. Sarah Song, of the University of California's Berkeley campus, notes the case of a Chinese immigrant who beat and killed her wife for having an affair. An anthropologist testified that this behavior was quite regular against unfaithful women and he ultimately served no jail time and only five-years of



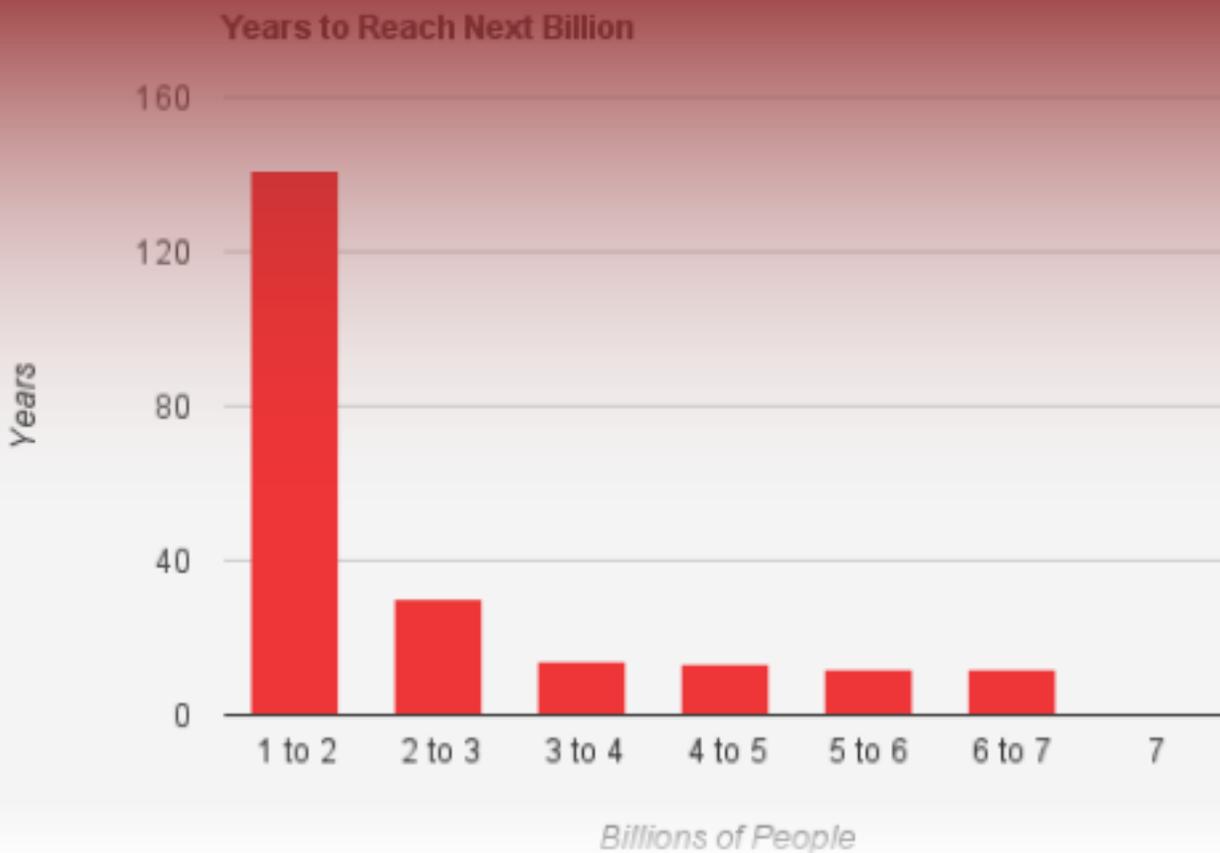
probation. While these are just two examples, they illustrate the impracticality of moral relativism. This relativism denies the ability for a state to exist as a moral one when it allows certain crimes of this nature to go largely unpunished when the rest of the general population understands the consequences of such egregious actions. Additionally, in the case of the second example, it completely refutes the value in gender equality. Gender equality is an absolute value in just about any of the Western democracies, yet it is a value that many of these nations yield in favor of unlimited cultural sensitivity.

One could argue that the immigrants which move into these nations are free-riders in the tacit consent problem. Tacit consent is explained as informal consent between the government of a country and an inhabitant. These Western democracies seemingly accept tacit consent as a viable form of consent into each of their social contracts. While the notion of tacit consent is perhaps one better saved for a debate on political theory, it does have relevance in the case of multiculturalism. Although they do not state it explicitly, the countries that have denounced multiculturalism are beginning to deny tacit consent as a viable form of consent to be a member of their society. These countries are beginning to require certain assimilation standards into their immigration practices to ensure that immigrants understand the norms and culture of the society to which they are relocating. They are pressing the idea that certain cultural practices acceptable in their native country may no longer be permissible in their new country. From the Netherlands proposing language requirements to France enforcing specific dress codes it is clear that these countries are attempting to do more than allow tacit consent

by requiring specific assimilation standards to ensure immigrants understand better the society to which they are relocating.

Writer Mark Steyn once said, "The interesting thing about multiculturalism is it is a unicultural phenomenon." Nowhere else in the world, other than the liberal democracies of the West, will you find the adherence to multiculturalism that we currently see. Nicolas Sarkozy stated, "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him." It is important to understand that the full practice of multiculturalism is having detrimental effects on the states which employ it. Multiculturalism is so sensitive to cultures that it, in effect, alienates the group further from the at-large society. If multiculturalism encouraged a mixing of cultures and a more homogenous "global-culture", as those who initially subscribed to it probably expected, that would be one thing. But that is not what can be observed as actually happening. Instead, multiculturalism has promoted divisive grouping with detrimental effects on the social capital of a state and inequities before the law. The rejection of multiculturalism is not ethnocentric, xenophobic, or racist. Rather, it is a basic understanding that the values of their country are being compromised. It is not in the best interest of the immigrant to live in a society where alienation is almost guaranteed due to the divides multiculturalism creates and it is not in the best interest of the nation to allow the legal exemptions required by multiculturalism while their society becomes increasingly fragmented. Multiculturalism, as it was, has failed according to these world leaders. It will be interesting to see what the long term costs of this failure will be in each of these nations.

# SOLUTIONS FOR **7** BILLION



## *Politics of a Planetary Population Problem*

In 1789, an English priest named Thomas Malthus wrote a sensational essay that would influence academics for years to come: *Essay on the Principles of Population*. In this work, Malthus introduced the idea that the population will necessarily grow faster than the food supply, unless it was checked by war, famine, or other natural disasters. “The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man,” Malthus argued, “that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race.” His argument was a stern warning to the estimated 1 billion global citizens of the day that the population couldn’t possibly continue to soar without serious, and deadly, natural repercussions.

For the next two centuries after Malthus declared that the population couldn’t possibly grow larger, that’s precisely what it did – exploding in unprecedented and unpredictable leaps and bounds. Crops from the New World, the advent of fertilizers, and development of vaccinations and sanitation initiatives helped foster the population’s increase to 2 billion in 1930. It only took another 30 years to reach 3 billion, then 14 more years to reach 4 billion, 13 more to reach 5 billion, 12 to reach 6 – and then another 12 years to reach 7 billion, which the UN estimated occurred on October 31. By 2050, the UN estimates the earth will house a total population of over 9 billion; by 2100, the population is estimated to exceed 10 billion. The growth rate is astounding. In 1930, our world only housed 2 billion people; in 2011, the world’s population has more than tripled in size.

But perhaps Malthus’s arguments have some merit. While the population is growing, the planet isn’t, and worries that humanity is getting too large to be supported by the earth’s scarce resources are widespread. The Global Footprint Network warns that humanity is already living beyond Earth’s capacity to regenerate resources; if population growth estimates prove accurate in 2050, we’ll need two planets to maintain our consumption rates. Each additional global citizen requires food, water, and energy, and finite resources mean that the more citizens there are, the less each individual gets.

Humans are already placing undue pressure on the world’s environment. Glaciers are melting, water tables are steadily falling, and ocean fisheries are depleted. Fresh water

is scarce, and conflicts over water rights are increasing in frequency and intensity. Suggestions of human-influenced climate change stem from rising temperatures and increased frequency of severe weather. Species are rapidly facing extinction, and rainforests are being cut down to make way for farms. More people means more pressure, but push as we might, the earth can only yield so much before it has nothing more to give. Keep up our current rates of consumption and population growth, and we’re buying a one-way ticket to environmental catastrophe.

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*Surviving, and thriving, in an uncertain world will require sacrifices and commitments on the individual level that may not always be easy*

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An increase in population introduces challenges beyond the environment. Population density will increase with the population, accompanied by challenges of health, hygiene, and waste disposal. Today, 2.6 billion people lack any sanitation systems, and untreated sewage kills one child every 20 seconds. With sewage systems, even in the US, that aren’t adequately designed to handle waste at present levels, future population growth ensures public health crises.

Economic challenges are equally daunting. Currently, the highest rates of population growth are in the poorest countries. These families, often dependent on agriculture to survive, have many children (in order to complete household chores and to serve as an insurance policy against high rates of child mortality). Girls are often unable to complete high school, instead marrying at a young age and bearing children early. Parents often don’t have access to contraception, and are unable to provide health care, nutrition, and education to their children, unintentionally fostering and passing on a vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy to future generations.

So when the seven-billionth global

citizen entered the world, his/her birth was a cause of both celebration and concern, raising crucial questions about our – and his/her – future. How can our planet continue to develop in light of the population explosion? Can the upward trend in population growth be stopped in a humanitarian way? And finally, are we destined for failure, or are there policies that we can pursue to protect ourselves and our planet?

The good news: we’re not doomed.

The less-good news: surviving, and thriving, in an uncertain future will require sacrifices and commitments on the individual level that may not always be easy, but will certainly be worthwhile.

In order to alleviate stress on the earth’s resources, the world needs to make the transition from fossil-fuel-dependent technology to sustainable and renewable energy sources. To do so, we need to make substantial investment in research and development of new technology. However, we need more than new technology – we need a new mindset. The number of people in the world does contribute to climate change; however, the way these people consume resources matters far more. This ideal requires individual commitment on the part of every global citizen to leave a smaller footprint.

Curbing the global population growth isn’t impossible either. High-income and some middle-income countries are already seeing a decline in fertility rates; this reduction should be encouraged in developing countries as well. Providing access to family planning services and contraceptives in developing countries is a relatively inexpensive, but incredibly effective means of curbing the birth rate. Also, pursuing policies that discourage or outlaw child marriages will help to curb birth rates. Education, particularly of girls, has proven particularly effective in lowering birth rates and postponing the average age of marriage. Creating incentives for parents to send their daughters to school, and keep them in school, will help to create a better future, not only for the planet, but also for countless individuals.

The stresses of population growth on the earth will cause serious problems. Though we shouldn’t underestimate the impacts of our growth, it’s equally important for us to recognize that our situation isn’t unsolvable. As a global population, we need to take responsibility for our circumstances, and address the problems we face in order to protect our planet and provide for our posterity.

# U.S. Troops in Uganda



## and How to Ensure a Diplomatic Victory

Tia Ayele  
*Associate Editor*

In January 1987, Uganda saw the first acts perpetrated by Joseph Kony, when he attempted to overthrow the National Resistance Army (NRA) of Uganda. Hiding behind Christian rhetoric and claiming to possess divine revelations, Kony formed the Lord Resistance Army, an armed guerrilla movement, whose stated mission was to overthrow the Ugandan government and to rule based on the Ten Commandments. Although allegedly based on “Christian” values, the LRA has commanded a series of acts of brutality against civilians for almost two decades, consisting of mass abductions, mutilations, and pillaging of villages across Uganda and neighboring nations. Among the numerous crimes against humanity committed by the LRA, the most notable of all is the mass abduction of children, in which the LRA forces young boys to become child

soldiers, giving way to the term “Invisible Children”.

The Obama Administration has recently decided to enter Uganda under a “responsibility to protect” doctrine. Under this doctrine, the U.S., as a global provider of public good, has an obligation to protect weaker states, such as Uganda, who face attack and who cannot otherwise fend for themselves. Consequently, President Obama has sent 100 Special Forces to defeat Joseph Kony and his Lord’s Resistance Army, covering bases in Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Alexander Vershbow, has even stated that stabilizing peace in Uganda is a U.S. interest: “it is in the interest of the United States to lend our support to partners in Africa so they can address threats to their citizens and help achieve the conditions necessary for regional security and broad-based development”.

However, Vershbow’s statement breaks from the past theme of U.S. intervention policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, the United States government has avoided intervening in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, even repudiating the Rwandan genocide of 1994, and failing to intervene until 800,000 Rwandans had been killed. The “Responsibility to Protect” mandate, which was the basis of entering Kosovo under the Clinton administration, is a new tune to U.S. diplomacy towards Sub-Saharan Africa. For countries like Uganda, for which the United States has no direct national interests, U.S. intervention is something that would normally be unlikely.

Although there are no clear national interests in Uganda, and the U.S. mission appears to be solely based on the U.S.’s “responsibility to protect” doctrine, there are several ways that this humanitarian effort can transcend into a negative backlash. Looking back on previous peace keeping missions,

most recently in Afghanistan, it is important to note that the situation in Uganda could quickly become worse if not handled correctly by the U.S. government. Poor U.S. policy would not only harm Uganda, but would also have negative implications for its neighboring countries, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic. More obviously, the U.S. diplomatic image is at stake, which cannot afford to be worsened at a time, when terrorist threats are at the forefront of national security issues.

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*Looking back at previous peace keeping missions... it is important to note the situation in Uganda could quickly become worse if not handled correctly by the U.S. government.*

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The United States has attempted to combat the LRA before, under the Bush Administration in 2008. Although there was not military intervention, the Administration provided crucial intelligence support for Operation Lightning Thunder, a Ugandan-Southern Sudanese-Congolese campaign to attack the LRA (*Foreign Policy*). However, the mission was unsuccessful because of weak regional alliances and poor operational planning on the part of the United States. This failure caused the LRA to intensify its campaign in the region, causing a dramatic increase in the number of civilians killed.

The Obama Administration appears to be looking at the situation in Uganda with a different eye. The government is taking a more direct approach this time around, having already deployed 100 troops to militarily advise Ugandan soldiers and its neighboring troops. The government has yet to disclose the specifics regarding the mission's duration or its military tactics. Though Alexander Vershbow did tell House Foreign Affairs Committee members that "We will pull back, and we hope regional allied forces will be able to continue with this training and finish the job" (*The New American*). Vershbow's statement is one that may be seriously flawed, as it describes reliance on Uganda's "regional allied forces". Seeing that Uganda's regional alliances have proved to be weak in the past, Vershbow's approach to defeating the LRA might not be so effective.

Weak regional alliances attributed much to the failure of Operation Lightning Thunder in 2008. The Ugandan-Southern Sudanese-Congolese troops were for the most part underpaid and under-trained foot soldiers. This made for an unenthusiastic army, one that allegedly plundered and victimized the very citizens that they were paid to protect. Additionally, the conglomeration of troops was weak in its very coalition. There was a lack of unity between the troops, in part due to the absence of a common language, which made for a crippling alliance. In order to prevent weak regional alliances in the future, U.S. military advisors should first recognize that the various African troops are different in their cultures and behaviors, and then work to overcome these differences by promoting cooperation. In addition, the military advisors should hold their troops accountable for any crimes that they commit during the course of operations so as to prevent human rights violations (*The Christian Science Monitor*).

Also, military advisors must be willing to stay in Uganda for the long haul. In the interest of the Ugandan people and their safety, the U.S. troops must remain on the ground until every possible threat from the LRA is eliminated. In April 2010, The International Crisis Group advised that any U.S. attempt to defeat the LRA should focus on "civilian protection" rather than just hot pursuit (*Foreign Policy*). The LRA has abducted and forced an estimated 66,000 children to fight for them, and has also forced the internal displacement of over 2,000,000 people since its rebellion in 1987. If it is in the United States' intention to get rid of these numbers all together, the U.S. must focus on policies that will create lasting peace in the region. It is of the utmost importance that the U.S. mission be focused on sustaining peace and promoting development, rather than on a go-in, get the job done, and get-out approach.

Ultimately, the defeat of the LRA is dependent on the U.S.'s propensity to learn from its past mistakes. In order to effectively combat Joseph Kony and the LRA, the government must examine the failures of Operation Lightning Thunder and learn from them. Reliance should not be placed heavily on regional allies, who themselves have countries that are conflict-ridden. Additionally, U.S. military advisors should promote the unification of regional armies that may be untrusting of each other due to cultural divides. Lastly, U.S. troops must be ready to stay in Uganda until all threats have given way to make certain of civilian protection. Despite Obama's recent track of diplomatic successes, a careful eye must remain on the situation in Uganda. The defeat of the LRA could mean much for the United States; it will be a rare occasion that the U.S. military enters Sub-Saharan Africa and succeeds in sustaining peace. Hopefully, the Obama Administration will prove successful and ensure another diplomatic victory in the case of Uganda.



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# The **D** Bomb

Kaitlyn Walker  
Associate Editor

In a recent interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation, Senator John McCain dropped the veritable “D” bomb. The eight letter word that strikes fear into the hearts of illegitimate leaders everywhere: *dictator*. The victim of McCain’s “D” bomb was none other than Forbes Magazine’s second most powerful man, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. While a stalwart of the American military pinning a scathing title on a Russian political figure is something of a tired cliché in geopolitics, the Senator brings to light a question that may haunt the world in the aftermath of Russian presidential elections. Although Russia is figuratively a democracy, free elections are no guarantor of democracy. Putin’s return to the presidency would solidify his image as a dictator, and remove any taboo the western world has on calling him such.

The trick with ascribing the term dictator to Putin is to prove that, in the twelve years since ascending the presidency, he has not relinquished his executive power of the country. Critics of using such strong language to describe Putin’s leadership are quick to point out that he, indeed, did relinquish his power to another President, Dmitry Medvedev. This view, although literally true, glosses over how Medvedev earned his position to begin with. In accordance with Russian law, Putin withdrew from the presidential seat after two consecutive terms, but he used his considerable power to attain a spot for Medvedev as United Russia’s presidential candidate.

A valid argument in the case against

calling Putin a dictator is that a true dictator would have simply used his considerable resources to stay in power after his term ran out, rather than running the risk of trusting a successor. Such an assumption, however, is insulting to Putin’s considerable intelligence and political savvy. The Prime Minister simply borrowed from the playbooks of historic absolute rulers who were keenly aware that successful absolute rule is rooted in legitimacy. Putin needed Medvedev to succeed him in order to ascribe legitimacy to the “democracy” he spent eight years crafting. For the Romanovs, it was the divine right, for Putin, it is the democratic process.

Ironically, it is his quest for legitimacy that exposes the dictatorial qualities of Putin’s rule. His regime has a history of employing unorthodox methods to eliminate his opponents. Russian oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a committed donor to Russian minority parties, was arrested under Putin in 2003 on charges of fraud. Almost a year prior to a guilty verdict, Putin froze the assets Khodorkovsky’s multi-billion dollar petroleum company, effectively cutting off his opposition funding mechanism.

A more serious indictment against the Putin regime is the case of former police lieutenant colonel Igor Konygin. After refusing to help his station falsify documents in order to receive more federal funding, Konygin was dismissed. He appealed his dismissal, and after winning his job back, was subsequently arrested for stealing money. The \$200,000 he was charged with stealing was the exact amount the police station had hope to embezzle. The case would not implicate Putin had Konygin not been responsible for depicting the Prime Minister as Dracula in Halloween festivities that same year.

It is arguable that human rights abuses similar to those experienced by Khodorkovsky and Konygin occur in states that are not lead by a dictator, but rather it is ultimately Putin’s authority over the state that reveals him to be a dictator. While there is a legislative branch in Russia, it is largely composed of pro-Putin legislators. Of the 450 available seats in the Russian Parliament, the Duma, 315 are occupied by Putin’s Party, United Russia. The figure rounds out to a 70% majority, a majority controlled directly by Putin. A legislative body of similar size, such as the US House of Representatives, has 435 members. The majority Republican party holds 242 seats, a majority of on 55%, or slightly over half of the voting power.

Given all of the evidence against him, did Putin ascend to power with the intention of consolidating it so absolutely? Putin’s story reads something like a tragic love story. He was the champion of the first democratic transition of power in Russia, and somewhere along the way the romanticism of a democratic Russia receded into the reality the country faces today. Maybe he inherited a bureaucracy full of Yeltsin’s cronies, and his power consolidation is an attempt to choose the lesser of two evils. Maybe a “transitional” democracy was the only viable solution available to him. Or maybe his repressive actions are some kind symptom of KGB-induced post-traumatic stress. Whatever his intentions, it is clear Putin believes himself to be beneficial to Russia.

Despite the negative connotation associated with dictators, they are often the most efficient leaders in terms of state organization and regulation. Is it possible that Putin’s strong leadership is holding Russia together at the seams? Superficially, it is reasonable to argue that Putin has managed to streamline his country’s large citizenry and land area. He has been responsible for expanding Russian energy exports and stabilizing its economy. The real conundrum is how to weigh the relative stability his leadership has brought against the relative lack of civil liberties that come with this stability.

The question of security versus liberty is reminiscent of Cold War lore. The United States and Russia have never been able to truly convince one another that their values are the preferable ones. If there is any lesson to be gleaned from the Cold War, it is that a system that does not work will inevitably fail, so there is no need to impose a specific value system in a country like Russia. Russia may not have the level of democracy that the US regards as acceptable, but if the US value system holds true, such obvious infringements of civil liberties will eventually topple Putin if the people deem him a failure.

The Russian people are the real measure of Putin’s legacy. Perhaps security is preferable to his people in uncertain economic times; The citizens’ consistent votes to re-elect him (although the legitimacy of these elections is questionable) indicate that on some level, Putin’s system is working in the short term. Only time will tell if Putin will be considered a dictator by the international community, yet even with time, dictator or not, is all in the eye of the beholder. **OPR**

# AFRICA NEEDS DICTATORS

## *Leadership in Africa: Gaddafi, Mugabe, Mandela, and Zuma*

Virginia McNally  
*Associate Editor*

Sometime after Muammar Gaddafi's bloodied body was dragged out of that ruinous storm pipe in Sirte, Robert Mugabe boarded a plane to Singapore to be treated for prostate cancer, according to some cables recently published by WikiLeaks.

So goes the life of the dictator. Gaddafi could not escape his fate as Libyans he had once oppressed as an autocrat were supported by countries that had been targeted by his campaign of state-sponsored terrorism. Suspected genocide in the 1980s and decades of political intimidation and violence worked to consolidate power for Mugabe, but now that power is slipping from his grasp. Mugabe and Gaddafi, like other classic dictators, over-

stayed their political welcome, violated *jus cogens* norms, and parasitically sucked the life blood of nations that have great potential.

But, there was a time when these two comrades were in much better shape, when Africa needed them. From the top of the continent, Gaddafi spread goodwill through his role in the African Union (AU) and by building mosques in Mali and Uganda. He even supported the African National Congress in South Africa during the struggle to end Apartheid. Recipients of Gaddafi's goodwill are not about to join in the chorus of rebels rejoicing over the dictator's demise. Many Africans say they will miss him and his contributions. He served as a continental leader and made connections with many ordinary Africans as he travelled throughout. The continent needed him as it embarked

on a journey out of colonialism and into the international community.

Down below, in the narrow tip of the continent, Mugabe, known by his critics as Bob, survives because of the propagated memory of his glory days as an independence leader. The memory lives on, or rather it is nursed along, much as the old crocodile's frail body is doped up every time he makes a public appearance. Mugabe has served as a regional symbol of pan-Africanism. His role as leader of independence not only from the white Rhodesian minority but also from all of the West will not be forgotten after his death, which many anticipate. His face is equated with the independence celebrations of Zimbabwe, where the other Bob, Bob Marley, performed an original song for the occasion. The world rejoiced along with Zimbabweans as a

new country was born and the legacies of colonialism faded. As much as Zimbabwe needed Mugabe, it seems that the world needed him too.

At times, these two needed each other. Gaddafi invested financially in Zimbabwe, and particularly during his last days, there were rumors that he had fled to Zimbabwe to escape unrest in Libya. There are now rumors that one of his sons has fled to Zimbabwe from where he is indirectly negotiating with the International Criminal Court about a potential surrender.

Now the time has come where the West has no need or desire for this type of leader, and parts of Africa certainly do not - just ask the rebels in Libya and the MDC members in Zimbabwe what they think of tyrannical overlords. So how did these two come to power in the first place? They did not simply barge their way into African politics and create a place for themselves. They rose up in situations where there was a call for leadership and a need for unity. Nobody needs a violent tyrant, an egotistical headman, or a diabolical commander, but it appears that independent Africa needs dictators, or needed them at one time. Dictators began as symbols of unity, independence, freedom, and stability. Doubtless, Africa needs these things. Simply put, while dictators are certainly not good, they are not all bad.

The converse to the argument that Africa needs dictators comes in the form of Nelson Mandela, who was close with his supporter Gaddafi. The opposite of a dictator, Mandela was able to throw the ugly burden of Apartheid off South Africa's back and enjoy general domestic popularity while remaining friendly with the West. Mugabe and Mandela do not stand on friendly terms; Mugabe often saw Mandela as his competition for influence in the Southern region.

The West reveres Mandela as a George Washington figure for South Africa, while Mugabe and Gaddafi are seen as pure evil. In Africa, these legacies are more complex. Some see Mandela as a symbol of pandering to the West, while Mugabe and Gaddafi exist as symbols of African independence and self-determination. Which does Africa crave more, then - men like Mandela, or men like Mugabe and Gaddafi?

President Zuma appears to be walking the line between these two extremes. His economic interests lead him to cooperate with the West, but his political interests lead him to make moves such as opposing the NATO airstrikes in Libya. As president of South Africa, Africa's most successful government and economy, he is automatically a continental leader. Zuma is aware that his popularity depends on both the success of South Africa's economy and his relationship with Western leaders. His predecessor, President Thabo Mbeki, lost much respect from the West as he denied that HIV causes AIDS and discredited many important prevention methods. At home his popularity waned as people perceived him as an aloof intellectual, unwilling to dance at political rallies.

Earlier this year Zuma took on Mugabe directly in a South African Development Community (SADC) conference that addressed the status of the power-sharing agreement in Zimbabwe between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC. Mugabe, ailing at the conference and subsequent meetings, is said to have called Zuma

"Mandela" and then fumbled to correct himself. Conference attendees speculated that Mugabe sees the relationship between Zimbabwe and South Africa as a contest for regional influence and reputation. Will Zuma be able to command the same respect and exercise the same authority as Mugabe? He is overseeing the most successful economy in Africa, while just above him sits stagnant Zimbabwe, the former breadbasket of Africa overturned by Mugabe's faulty economic policies. What about measuring up to Mandela's renown friendliness towards the West? Can Zuma make a name for himself in Western circles that evokes awe and reverence? What about Gaddafi's continental goodwill missions? Can Zuma establish a following outside of South Africa while keeping his country satisfied?

More importantly, what is the point of this discussion? These men, who have worn out their self-appointed thrones and committed deplorable acts in the name of power consolidation and security, are more complicated than meets the Western eye. They leave legacies that need to be accounted for in future foreign policy. The establishment of the African Union and the pan-African movement prove that

Africa needs continental and regional leaders in addition to national presidents. The most successful future leader will strike a perfect balance between friendliness to the West and defense of African identity and independence.

As Gaddafi's sons come out of the woodwork, and Mugabe makes a few more trips to Singapore, maybe a continental leader will rise up who has learned the lessons of the past. Africa desperately needs a leader, but dictatorial leadership results in disaster and ruin, not only for the leader, but also for the nation and continent. **GPR**

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*Dictators began as symbols of unity, independence freedom, and stability. Doubtless, Africa needs these things. Simply put, while dictators are certainly not good, they are not all bad.*

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# NARCOS & SAINTS

## *The Contest for Authority in Modern Mexico.*

Tucker Green  
*Associate Editor*

In Mexico, a land mired in a vast and violent drug war, Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are never too far away.

In 2006, several high-ranking members of the Los Zetas gang were indicted on a number of drug-related charges; in their trial, they were reported to have taken blood from victims as offerings to Santa Muerte.

In the town of Culiacán, humble and innocent Mexican citizens flock to Jesús Malverde's chapel, flooding his shrine with petitions and gratitude. Thank you, Malverde, for saving me from drugs, one of them says. Thank you, Malverde, for not having to lose my arm and leg.

And in that same town, the leader of the mighty and dangerous Sinaloa Cartel, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán, shuts down the streets so he may come to pray at the Jesús Malverde chapel undisturbed.

Clearly, these are not your average saints.

Since the 1970s and the proliferation of the drug trade, a growing number of Mexicans—both criminal and law-abiding—have taken to worshipping two prominent "folk" saints: Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde. Santa Muerte is a female personification of death of mysterious origins, most often represented as a robed skeleton holding a scythe in the right hand and a set of scales in the left. Jesús Malverde, portrayed as a sleek and handsome bandit, also has nebulous origins, his history and image an amalgam of a number of historical

Mexican vigilantes. According to lore, he stole from the government and aided the poor until he was betrayed by a friend and assassinated. Both Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde have grown devoted followings from people who seek help in seemingly all areas of life. At their shrines—located all around Mexico and increasingly in the United States, but concentrated in Mexico City and Culiacán, respectively—Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are given offerings by devotees in exchange for all kinds of favors: help with addiction, deliverance from poverty, healing, and more. Petitions at their shrines are as likely to have to do with a school project as they are a drug shipment. People both criminal and innocent alike pray to them because they are grittier and more personal than other, more traditional saints. Unlike official Catholic saints, Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde cast miracles for the just and unjust alike. Interestingly, these kind of folk religious devotions are nothing new to Mexican, and to a larger extent Latin American, society. Central to folk saint worship is the idea that downtrodden people throughout society seek protection and miracles from figures that are more personal to them than traditionally religious (i.e. Catholic) figures. Devotees flock to folk saints because they perceive a lack of security from traditional institutions; they think the rest of the world has failed them. "Folk saints flourish in contexts of meaninglessness, hopelessness, corruption, and despair," said Hispanic scholar Frank Graziano. "They rise up out of these ashes." Of course, in today's Mexico, there is plenty of despair

to go around. The Mexican drug crisis is a sweeping, transnational issue that impacts and endangers the lives of millions. Mexico is under the stranglehold of several well-organized cartels—including the Sinaloa, Gulf and Juárez organizations—that have turned the drug trade into a lucrative business venture. As the top supplier of marijuana to the United States and a major source of heroin and methamphetamines, Mexican traffickers generate \$13 to \$38 billion in illicit drug sales per year. While these cartels jockey for power and leverage in the trafficking business, Mexico has dipped into a climate of violence and bloodshed. The number of deaths in Mexico attributed to drug violence has grown steadily since 2005, with over 9,000 drug-related deaths in 2009 alone. Further, the Mexican government has made over 58,000 drug-related arrests in the last two years. By any measure, Mexican drug trafficking is an extensive and complex problem. Some believe this downward-spiraling drug crisis is the precise reason for Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde's booming popularity. Legal authorities seem to believe that Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are cultural outcroppings of a violent Mexican "drug culture." In a crime bulletin, the FBI warns that Santa Muerte tattoos and iconography are clear indicators of drug-related crime. (They back this up with data. Some 80% of Mexican inmates in a Bakersfield, California prison examined in 2006 were said to possess some kind of Malverde paraphernalia.) Images of Santa Muerte and Malverde have been used in court to establish probable cause of Mexican

gang activity. Indeed, many deem the folk saints “narco-saints” or “patron saints of crime,” associating the embracing of the folk saint devotions by Mexican drug cartels with the adoption of gangster rap music and culture by the Bloods and Crips in the United States. In fact, criminological literature and discourse from Mexican and U.S. government officials seem to leave little room for the idea that anyone outside of the criminal world could possibly worship either of the folk saints.

Not surprisingly, the Catholic Church has its fair share of problems with the folk saints as well. At a church in Chicago, the Reverend Esequiel Sanchez talked to reporters about how folk saints distort Christianity.

“I’m concerned about [folk saint worship] because it’s an aberration,” Sanchez said. “It’s a misunderstanding of faith. It’s taking a Catholic concept and personifying it with this skeletal figure.”

Church officials say Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are “pseudo-religious” and get in the way of a true relationship with God. Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church has rejected the entrance of these folk saints into the Catholic tradition, and is opposed to the perceived corruption and perversion of faith that their followers bring to the table.

Yet, to the everyday devotees of Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde, these condemnations miss the point. To many, the folk saints fill a deep need for protection and inspiration. Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde have been called “magnets of collective faith” that attract all kinds of people by offering a kind of sustenance through violence or loss. Many scholars believe their association with the criminal world is exaggerated and too easy an explanation. Clearly, there are a great number of links between drug traffickers and folk saint worship. But whatever the case, it’s certain that far from all Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde followers take to their shrines to pray for criminal behavior.

Take, for example, Latino hip-hop star Jesús Martínez-González. Growing up in the Coachella Valley, Martínez-González listened to his mother, a Mexican immigrant, tell regaling stories about the Jesús Malverde legend. He has since taken on the stage name “Malverde”, crafting his image after his boyhood hero.

“I’m involved in major nonprofits and community education,” Martínez-González told CNN. “And they see someone in me who has overcome being in the barrio. To me, that’s Malverde. The experience of instilling that hope. If Malverde was alive right now, I try to think what would he be doing?”

Clearly, there is a heated and intriguing conversation occurring in Mexico about what Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde really mean. Are they violent saints who oversee the criminal acts of drug traffickers? Are they cult-like distortions of Christianity? Or are they benevolent intercessors who help people when the state and church can’t?

The answer is, well, not that simple.

The many vastly disparate perspectives on the two modern Mexican folk saints are evidence enough that a simple definition of them does no good. Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are not mere benevolent healers; there exist too many connections to criminal deeds and organizations for that to be true. Likewise, Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are not simple aspects of the drug culture; there exist too many innocent, non-criminal devotees for that to be the case. Instead, Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde exist as symbolic areas of contention where law enforcement, the Catholic Church, and the Mexican people seek to identify legitimacy in a society wrought

with instability, corruption, and violence. Many Mexicans have lost faith in the Catholic Church. They lament its inability to provide spiritual security and are disgusted by widely-reported links between the Church and the laundering of drug money. Further, Mexicans are increasingly losing faith in their government—an institution so corrupt that Mexican cartels have infiltrated nearly every part of it and the U.S. Joint Chief of Staffs have warned of the possibility of it becoming a failed state. As such, Mexican citizens flock to Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde—saints that can intercede on their behalf, but won’t judge them for their deeds. If the Church and government cannot help them, Mexican citizens will find other means of protection, worship, and encouragement. They are filling a vacuum left behind by traditional sources of legitimate authority. Of course, neither the Catholic Church nor the Mexican government takes too kindly to this; both are extremely vocal in their condemnations of Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde. These kind of public denunciations are a bold power play. By belittling Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde and turning them into villains, traditional authorities defend their own legitimacy and hope to win back the people’s trust and confidence. But Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are not simply villains, and their growing influence has significant policy implications for how Mexico must be viewed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Much of the media, no doubt influenced by government literature and law enforcement bulletins, grasp onto the idea that Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are representations of a perceived Mexican drug culture. As such, basic journalistic accounts all the way from *The New York Times* to local Mexican newspapers promulgate the idea that Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde are overwhelmingly drug lords. But this is a misreading of the current situation in Mexico, and in their efforts to lump Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde into a criminal culture, critics demean their real importance and, by doing so, harm the world’s understanding of Mexico.

Mexico is at a critical time in its existence; of this, there can be no doubt. Like the period of reform and upheaval in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mexican citizens are at a loss of who to worship, who to follow, and who to respect. And until an institution steps forward and asserts itself as the dominant source of authority, worship of these folk saints is unlikely to decline. The existence of Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde does not merely suggest that Mexico has a fanatical, superstitious criminal underground, as some would argue. Instead, it proves that Mexican citizens are weary of corruption and incompetence in the Church and government and clearly desire the kind of leadership that could fix the woes caused by an out-of-control, violent society.

But, of course, this is what Mexican citizens have been saying all along. The entire Santa Muerte and Jesús Malverde movement is a complicated story woven into the fabric of the modern Mexican existence. It’s a story someone like Doña Tere knows all too well.

In his book *True Tales From Another Mexico*, journalist Sam Quinones tells the story of Tere, who prayed to Jesús Malverde for her cancer to be cured. A resident of Sinaloa, the headquarters of Jesús Malverde’s shrine, she chose to put her faith in Malverde rather than the Church or government. And somehow—whether due to miracle or coincidence—her cancer was cured.

“I’ll tell you,” Tere said. “More people come [to the Malverde shrine] than go to church. If you go to church asking for food, the priest will give you advice.

“But if you come here asking for food, you’ll get food.” **GPR**

# OBAMA

## AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Sami Jarjour  
Assistant Senior Editor

In his 2006 work *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, Noam Chomsky observes that the “image of righteous [American] exceptionalism” seems to have become a universal truth that has contributed to “the responsibility of the educated classes to endorse with due solemnity the sincerity of the high-minded principles proclaimed by leaders, on the basis of *no evidence* apart from their declarations...” (my emphasis). To avert this fate that the “educated classes” have been plagued with, it is important to detach ourselves from the state, which I attempt to do in evaluating Obama’s policy towards the Middle East. John Quincy Adams once commented, “The historian must have no country.” And this is pivotal if we want to understand our past and present, so as to create a better future.

President Obama has stated that US policy in the Middle East is that of promoting “democracy,” “human rights,” and so on. There is a major problem with these claims, namely the actual record. So what does the record show? It certainly does not show US support for democratic movements or uprisings in the Middle East. Quite the opposite, it shows American support of brutal and repressive dictators, which continues right to the present, e.g. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt (Mubarak was supported by the US right to the end). Graham E. Fuller, former CIA station chief in Kabul and vice-chair of the National Intelligence Council, explains that “Washington finds it more efficient to support

a range of dictators across the Arab world as long as they conform to U.S. foreign policy needs.” And this certainly is not a recent phenomenon. In 1958, the National Security Council also explained that in “the eyes of the majority of Arabs the United States appears to be opposed to the realization of the goals of Arab nationalism [Arab unity]. They believe that the United States is seeking to protect its interest in Near East oil by supporting the status quo and opposing political or economic progress...” The NSC goes further, critically informing that “If we [US] are not to accommodate to Arab nationalism” due to the “many disparities between our interests and the demands of radical Arab nationalism [Arab unity]”, then “we must face the probable necessity of continued deployment of troops in the Near East, with the likelihood of increasingly serious incidents and the resultant risks of war.” Judging from this assessment, which direction in policy does it seem the United States decided to take (more correctly, continue) in the Middle East? One that is, as Obama says, “...essential...to people’s hopes” and therefore accommodating to “radical” Arab unity (not such a horrible notion it would seem), or one that is unaccommodating, requiring “continued deployment of troops” and “the likelihood of increasingly serious incidents and the resultant risks of war”? Not a question requiring a Ph.D. in International Relations to answer. Yet according to President Obama, “America’s interests are not hostile to people’s hopes [in the Middle East], they’re essential to them.” For some strange reason, Arabs don’t seem to think this. In the most recent Brookings poll of Arab public opinion in the Middle East

(2010), 77% of Arabs believe the US is the greatest threat to them and 88% think Israel is the greatest threat. But this is all irrelevant, because Obama’s claim is in accordance with “American exceptionalism,” which naturally makes it a truism, despite the lack of evidence supporting it and a historical record showing otherwise. One may interject by referring to the intervention in Libya. If the United States and NATO intervened in Libya on account of the brutality of the government, then why did it not suggest intervention in the case of Egypt when its fate was still uncertain (though its fate still is uncertain)? Why has the US not intervened in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, or Bahrain, which are also ruled by repressive dictators? That’s because the US supports these governments; therefore one cannot claim the reason for American intervention in Libya is due to the pain inflicted on the people of the country by an oppressive government. In fact, both the US and UK have only until recently supported Qaddafi. His final undoing was his unreliability. A US State Department cable explained that he had “threatened to dramatically reduce Libya’s oil production and/or expel...U.S. oil and gas companies”. And this brings us to a very relevant piece of information: “Libya has some of the biggest and most proven oil reserves — 43.6 billion barrels — outside Saudi Arabia, and some of the best drilling prospects” (Washington Post). To consider these facts unimportant in the reasons for intervening in Libya considering the record would be ignoring reality. And just as the US position in supporting brutal dictators in the Middle East has not changed, with the requirement that “they conform to U.S. foreign policy needs”

(Graham E. Fuller), the US position in the Israel-Palestine conflict has remained steadfast since the early 1970s. This of course refers to supporting Israeli expansion (contrary to exotic rhetoric), in violation of International Law. UN Resolution 242, emphasizing “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war” in the preambular paragraph, was clear in its intent. The nature of the Arab-Israeli 1967 war, meaning whether it was defensive or offensive, is totally immaterial under International Law. As well, no one seemed to put forth the idea that France should conquer Germany after World War II to compensate for “security.” Furthermore, Moshe Dayan, former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces and later Defense Minister, had no trouble in conveying in 1968 what UN Resolution 242 meant: “it means [Israeli] withdrawal to the June 4 [1967] boundaries... but we [Israel] are in conflict with the SC [Security Council] on that resolution.” Moreover, Article 49 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention is explicit: “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” There are presently over 120 settlements and approximately half a million settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem (B’Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories). Expressed unanimously by the International Court of Justice and US Judge Thomas Buergenthal (in his separate declaration), the settlements are illegal. In all of the rhetoric on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Obama continuously fails to address the need for Palestinian security as well as Israeli security (although Israel could have security if it simply adhered to International Law). Benny Morris, one of Israel’s main “New Historians” who challenge traditional interpretations of Israel’s history, comments on the nature of the Israeli military occupation as follows: “founded on brute force, repression and fear, collaboration and treachery, beatings and torture chambers, and daily intimidation, humiliation, and manipulation.” This judgment is affirmed by, in addition to many other studies and analyses, a 2008 report by John Dugard of the UN Human Rights Council, which states that Israel “has maintained and expanded the instruments that most seriously violate human rights – military incursions, settlements, the separation wall, restrictions on freedom of

movement, the Judaization of Jerusalem and the demolition of houses.” The report additionally informs that while “Palestinian terrorist acts are to be deplored, they must be understood as being a painful but inevitable consequence of [this] colonialism, apartheid or occupation”. So the million dollar question has been raised once again: how do we put an end to Palestinian terrorism? The answer can also be found in the words of John Dugard: by bringing the occupation “to a speedy end”, which (the occupation) going hand in hand with its expansionist program (settlements and security “fence”), is creating a “human disaster” and in turn shaping the Palestinians “into a sullen community, hostile and nurturing a desire for revenge” (Meron Benvenisti, former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem). The cause of Palestinian terrorism, specifically in the form of suicide attacks, can also be found in Robert Pape’s (American political scientist at the University of Chicago and director of the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism) work *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*: “The data show that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, or any one of the world’s religions.... Rather, what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic objective.” In sum, it is “an extreme strategy for national liberation,” as is the case when it comes to the Palestinians. But of course, terrorism is not simply limited to the Palestinians, as I’ve already revealed. The UN report by John Dugard also mentions (explicitly) Israeli terrorism: “the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are guilty of terrorizing innocent Palestinian civilians by military incursions, targeted killings and sonic booms that fail to distinguish between military targets and civilians.” This failing to “distinguish between military targets and civilians” is noted by Ze’ev Schiff, the “dean of Israeli military correspondents” (New York Times obituary), in which he points out the admission of former Chief of Staff of the IDF Mordechai Gur “...that the Israeli Army has always struck civilian populations, purposely and consciously” and “has never

distinguished civilian [from military] targets...[but] purposely attacked civilian targets even when Israeli settlements had not been struck.” However let us not forget the US is still “...pursuing Arab-Israeli peace,” as Obama asserts. Coming from our sincere leader, there is no question of the claim’s validity; therefore the burden of proof is lifted. Not to mention the boldness of the claim is truly astounding considering the main hindrance to peace is in fact the United States. For those of us who believe in such things as International Law should be aware of the constant US rejection (as well as Israeli rejection) of UN resolutions to the conflict, while the rest of the world has consistently voted in favor of them. The US rejection of UN resolutions (which still continues) allows the conflict to persist, and massive US aid to Israel for further illegal expansion ruins any possibility of a just two-state settlement. And concerning American aid to Israel, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt observe that since “the October War in 1973, Washington has provided Israel with a level of support dwarfing the amounts provided to any other state. It has been the largest annual recipient of direct U.S. economic and military assistance since 1976 and the largest total recipient since World War II.” With just this simple fact in mind, it is very difficult to see the US as a “fair broker” in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and further considering the rest of the record (some of which I’ve provided), it is obvious that the US is not. The nature of this so-called US-led “peace process” is best described by Gideon Levy, columnist for the Israeli newspaper Haaretz and former aide to Simon Peres: “It’s a joke.” The solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is quite simple. It can be found in the words of former president Jimmy Carter: “Peace will come to Israel and the Middle East only when the Israeli government is willing to comply with international law...” But this is only partly correct: peace will come when the United States, the conductor leading the orchestra (Israel), is willing to comply with International Law. So despite a new president in the White House, US policy towards the Middle East has not altered. Continuous support of repressive governments and an unwavering stance towards Israel (shielding it from compliance with International Law) is the essence; and this policy will not change without substantial pressure on the American government, which must come from the American public. **GDR**



## LADY GAGA *and* SOCIAL ACTIVISM

*A Thank-You to the Queen  
of Pop and All Those in the  
Struggle for Equality*

Cody Knapp  
*Associate Editor*

This October, Atlanta Pride 2011 was a sight to behold. It was a three-day celebration like none other and with a beautiful message: inclusion and dignity for all. My friends and I were savoring the moment. There was so much recent progress to celebrate, and, with October being LGBT History Month, it was the perfect time to consider both how far we've come as a society and the progress still to be made towards full respect and equality for the LGBT community. Scattered among the gorgeous men on parade floats and the constant refrains of "Happy Pride, y'all!" I was struck by three things: the abundance of supportive religious institutions, the numerous corporate sponsors, and, in particular, the ubiquity of Lady Gaga.

Not of her person, of course (though there were persistent rumors - hopes more accurately - of her presence in Atlanta), but of her music. It seemed that no matter where I went, I could hear the late Clarence Clemons' crooning saxophone from "The Edge of Glory" or the pounding beats of Gaga's ultimate gay anthem, "Born This Way." When her music wasn't playing, her name was on the tips of everyone's tongues; what would she do next? Would she appear at the parade? Or, isn't her newest love interest, Taylor Kinney, so cute?

This isn't just any normal "diva worship" by gay men; *Lady Gaga has truly earned this idolization from the entire LGBT community.* Through her activism, her vocal identification with the community, and her art, Lady Gaga has done more to advance the causes of the LGBT community than perhaps any other pop star of her stature.

In addition to being a gay icon on par with the likes of Cher, Madonna, and Liza Minnelli, Gaga is a constant champion for gay causes. Her activism is extremely visible, varied, and powerful. Gaga gives voice to the majority of our generations views on LGBT issues, as polls show that upwards of 70% of the 18-35 age group support full equality for gays. By demonstrating her support, Gaga claims to speak for an entire generation. From her keynote address at the National Equality March of 2009 in Washington D.C., which she described as "the single most important moment of [her] career," to the 2010 VMAs, where she brought as her personal guests four U.S. soldiers discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policies, Gaga has made it her mission to further LGBT equality and force politicians to act on issues impacting the community.

She also mobilizes action on behalf of other, less "sexy" causes which remain important to the LGBT community. A 2006 study on the homeless revealed that LGBT youth make up 20-40% of the youth homeless population, while they only comprise only 5-10% of the general youth population. In response to these sobering statistics, Lady Gaga launched a national campaign to help combat LGBT youth homelessness and bring attention to the issue, encouraging fans to get involved and matching every dollar of donations to her initiative. She has also promoted HIV/AIDS awareness in ways that range from glamorous to ridiculous: from dressing as a condom during a Good Morning America appearance to becoming the face of MAC cosmetics' Viva Glam campaign, which supports people living with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, during the recent string of LGBT teen suicides due to bullying, Lady Gaga moved to the forefront of addressing this issue,

joining the “It Gets Better” campaign and personally speaking with President Obama at a fundraising event about the suicide epidemic. Her attention isn’t short-lived, either; in public appearances, she consistently reinforces her support and identification with the LGBT community, linking her music and stardom with her social activism.

Lady Gaga defies social norms in almost every way, but particularly in the way in which she has attained and used her fame. Rarely do pop stars embrace prominent and divisive political causes before they have reached a solid level of fame, which some activism would not endanger. Even less common is a celebrity who will openly acknowledge his or her sexuality. Lady Gaga has done both. She advocates on behalf of the LGBT community at large and acknowledged her own bisexuality early in her career. She has linked her activism with her rise to fame, never allowing the public to wonder what her feelings are towards the gay community: from the beginning, she has thanked “God and the Gays” and described herself as a gay man trapped in a woman’s body. During a performance at Euro Pride this summer in Rome, she joked with the audience that “on a gay scale from 1 to 10, I’m a Judy Garland f\*\*\*ing 42.” She applies her theatre-style work ethic to both her music and her social activism, making Gaga an unprecedented figure in pop culture.

Through her art, Lady Gaga has managed to inject gay culture into the mainstream in a groundbreaking way, and this has helped to cultivate more tolerance and acceptance within society. While her stated mission is to make the world a better place, she once told OUT Magazine that she often jokes “the real motivation is to just turn the world gay.” This motive is present and apparent in the Lady’s performance art, music videos, and actions – nearly all of which are designed, in at least some small way, to help further LGBT acceptance. Her convictions have even crept from her actions into her lyrics. The true beauty of an anthem like “Born This Way,” in my opinion, is that it cannot be sung by any homophobic, or otherwise prejudiced person. By specifically calling out the entire LGBT community and other minorities, in contrast to the more general, feel-good messages of most songs, Lady Gaga has created a platinum single which can only be enjoyed by those who truly support its message:

“No matter gay, straight, or bi,



Lesbian, transgendered life,  
I’m on the right track baby,  
I was born to survive”

By constantly reinforcing that her popularity is tied to acceptance of the gay community, she has raised visibility and support among our straight allies.

Lady Gaga, of course, is not alone. The activism of countless people like Frank Kameny and Harvey Milk have helped us progress from a time when “sexual perversion” was grounds for firing a federal employee to the “out-and-proud” phase of today. They are the ones who set the stage for a popular figure like Gaga to come along and to be as supportive and open as she is. It is they who first blazed the path towards equality.

A week after National Coming Out Day, it is the celebrities and politicians like Harvey Milk, Barney Frank, and Lady Gaga that I would like to thank for “coming out” as activists and members of the LGBT

community. I want to thank our straight allies who have “come out” in support of the community. Above all, I want to thank all those who have simply had the courage to come out to society, showing their friends and families that gay isn’t something to be scared of, that it isn’t wrong, and that we, the members of the LGBT community, are real people: friends, neighbors, daughters, and sons. These activists, both famous and ordinary, are the ones who have motivated the corporate sponsors and church organizations, such as the ones seen at Atlanta Pride, to show their support. This encouragement is incredibly meaningful – to the community as a whole, and to me as an individual.

As a young gay man, I wish to extend my eternal gratitude to all of these individuals for getting us this far; and to Lady Gaga, who, to me, represents both how far we’ve come and how far we have yet to go - keep changing the world and inspiring us all. **GPR**

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