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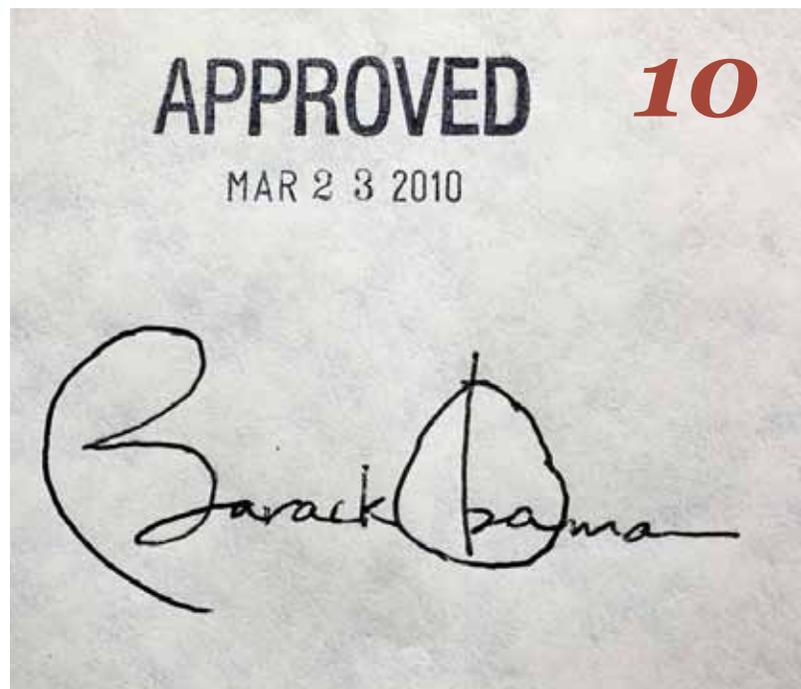
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

This issue marks the first anniversary of the Georgia Political Review, which is hard to believe considering the organization has grown from an idea mentioned in a dorm lobby to a growing part of the University of Georgia community in only a year. In the past 12 months, we have doubled our staff, expanded our business and design teams and have had the honor of meeting a host of celebrated Georgia and national political figures. Further, partnering with the Alliance of Collegiate Editors has assisted in our development as we begin to serve as a nationwide model for political commentary.

In the age where information is transferred primarily online and the internet is leading revolutions, GPR embraced the opportunity to use media as a tool to enhance political engagement amongst our peers. Throughout the current Presidential election, our staff has live blogged debates and engaged in interactive chats with our readers. We've used our Facebook and Twitter as a forum to debate salient issues pertaining to a wide range of communities.

With the increase of staff members, our writers now represent the highest and varied of academic culture that UGA has to offer. GPR writers are involved with UGA Honors, Phi Beta Kappa, Center for Undergraduate Research Opportuni-

ties, Student Government, Roosevelt Institute, College Republicans, Young Democrats, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Demosthenian Literary Society and the Foundation Fellowship - the University's foremost academic scholarship.

This issue features a breadth of articles as diverse in penmanship as they are in topic. On campus, we examine the role religion has played at UGA and the impact of the Tate preacher. At the state level, we highlight contentious redistricting and immigration debates that have occurred at the Capitol. On the national stage, we focus on the current presidential election - analyzing the candidates not solely on platform but rather on their varying personalities. Also, we look at the controversial health care case at the Supreme Court and feature a conversation with Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. On the international scale, we cover the upcoming Brazilian World Cup, developing changes in Africa and varying matters in the Middle East with analysis from psychologist Noam Chomsky. Our culture section examines the evolution of gangsta rap in America and movements by Russian counterculture bands.

GPR strives to spark discussion that voices a fresh take on pertinent issues. In one year, we have already achieved so many of our goals



Stephanie Talmadge and Onica Matsika

and know we hold the potential to become more than a biannual magazine. Please join us on our mission to become a nationwide model for articulate, timely commentary on politics and foreign affairs and connect with us at www.GeorgiaPoliticalReview.com, "Like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter/[@gapolitical](https://twitter.com/gapolitical). *Georgia Political Review: Join the conversation.*

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Gerrymandering is Best Left to the Politicians



Jonathan Klein
Associate Editor

Under the gold dome of Georgia's Capitol, Democratic Senators pointed forcefully to colorful redistricting maps, arguing loudly that Republicans' newest redistricting attempts would disenfranchise minority voters. Democrats would eventually argue that Republicans' new map violated the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965. This was the scene less than a year ago, when the General Assembly debated the boundaries of Georgia's newest Congressional and state districts.

Despite controlling the governorship, the state Senate, and nearly holding a supermajority in the House, Georgia Republicans were unsure whether they'd actually be able to implement their preferred redistricting plan. The biggest barrier to implementation? Section 5 of the VRA, which requires either the Justice Department or a federal court in Washington, D.C. to approve the new boundaries. Although the controversy over Georgia's redistricting ultimately ended with the Justice Department accepting the legislature's map, the same issues of disenfranchisement and minority rights have arisen in other Southern states – yet the Justice Department hasn't been nearly as willing to approve those maps.

Section 5, often called the "preclearance requirement," was passed against the backdrop of 1950s and 1960s era disenfranchisement. Before Congress addressed this problem, states used a variety of tools to prevent minorities, mostly blacks, from voting. Section 5 sought to remedy this problem by requiring covered jurisdictions to "pre-clear" any changes to the electoral process with either the Attorney General or Washington, D.C.'s federal district court. Covered jurisdictions, mostly cities and states in the South, must show that voting changes do not have the purpose or effect of discriminating on the basis of race. Underlying Section 5 is the outdated theory that covered state legislatures will discriminate against minorities in the redistricting process, and because the judicial process moves slowly by design, minorities will have no recourse to address constitutional concerns until after Election Day.

Unlike Section 2 of the VRA, which prohibits any government entity from engaging in electoral discrimination, Section 5 has always been controversial. Its scope is limited mostly to Southern states and some critics argue that it punishes today's voters for discriminatory policies that were enacted 50 or 60 years ago. Until recently, these and other concerns about the relevancy of Section 5 were faux paus. Mainstream politi-

cians, especially Republicans looking to draw more minorities into the GOP, were reluctant to criticize the Act that some voters regarded as a major step forward for American society.

That reluctance to attack the Voting Rights Act, and Section 5 in particular, changed when Attorney General Eric Holder infused politics into the judicial process by refusing to approve new maps that would favor Republicans gains in 2012 and beyond. Rather than using Section 5 to ensure that minorities have access to the political process, the Justice Department has recently begun using it to ensure that minorities gain more representation in Congress and statehouses.

Attorney General Holder's interpretation of Section 5 is not faithful to the spirit of the VRA, which was intended largely to stop the blatant disenfranchisement of minorities. Even Holder recognizes the law's original purpose: In a speech delivered last December to University of Texas law students, he said the VRA was supposed to "[help] ensure equal access... to the ballot box." Rather than using Section 5 to "ensure access," as the law's authors intended, the Justice Department has used it as a hammer, blocking electoral changes it views as politically unfavorable. In a speech this January, Holder said, "We need... election systems that are free from discrimination, free from partisan influence, and free from fraud."

While the government should rightfully play a role in preventing fraud and disenfranchisement resulting from discrimination, Holder's use of Section 5 to remove "partisan influence" from an American electoral system grounded firmly in politics is misguided at best. Ultimately, Holder's comments underscore a broader point about the Justice Department's view of Section 5: Instead of protecting the negative right against disenfranchisement, Holder has used it to invent a positive right of representation for minorities.

The debate over enforcing Section 5 has also shifted from the political process to the courts, further complicating an already-messy redistricting process. Prolonged court battles over the scope of Section 5 have wreaked havoc on the electoral process in many states. In Texas, which gained four Congressional seats for the 2012 election cycle, candidates for the state's 36 Congressional seats are reluctant to spend limited campaign funds because they don't yet know in which district they'll be running.

This latest development comes after a year-long battle in which the Texas state legislature drew a map likely to net +3 Republican seats, a San Antonio federal court struck down that map and implemented a +3 Democratic map instead, and the Supreme Court finally intervened, putting the entire process on hold. Meanwhile,

Texas election administrators have begun telling voters – and candidates – that the primary election scheduled for April looks increasingly unlikely. To a lesser extent, the same confusion surrounding redistricting is playing out in some other states subject to the VRA's preclearance requirement.

Aside from the legal implications, there remain serious questions about whether the pre-approval requirement even protects minorities. In an effort to satisfy the requirement, some state legislatures must gerrymander districts more heavily than they otherwise would. The result is a map that satisfies nobody: The party controlling the Justice Department begrudgingly accepts the map because its gerrymandering does not rise to the level of egregious, and state legislators voice concerns that the federal government is infringing upon states' power to administer elections. Politically, the requirement that states not "retrogress", or weaken minority voting power, probably dilutes minority power by forcing state legislators to create "majority-minority" districts. These majority-minority districts necessarily strengthen Republicans' grip on other areas.

Even when state legislators try to comply with the VRA, confusion over the preapproval mandate sometimes leads to counterintuitive outcomes. Take, for example, Georgia's 1992 experience in redistricting. When the state applied for preclearance, the Justice Department rejected its map, noting the new lines would create only one new majority-minority district. Despite the fact that this new district would likely elect a minority, the Justice Department ostensibly preferred a map that would give minorities a less-than-great shot at winning three seats. That rejection didn't sit well with Democrats in the General Assembly, many of whom correctly argued their plan would essentially guarantee increased representation of black Democrats in Congress.

Rather than using a five-decade old preclearance system whose usefulness is increasingly being called into question by the Supreme Court, Congress should repeal Section 5 of the VRA. For those who point out that eliminating the preclearance requirement will facilitate gerrymandering, it's important to recognize that the courts are extremely reluctant to intervene in what is seen largely as a political, not judicial, question. Cutting the requirement that any electoral changes be cleared by the Department of Justice or the courts would likely reduce the number of contentious political cases the courts must consider. In light of the political significance of redistricting, this highly-partisan process should be left where it belongs: to politicians, not the courts.



Access to Institutions of Higher Learning: The Debate of the Undocumented Immigrant

Tyler Bugg and Kelsey Thomas
Associate Editors

In October 2010, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia issued a ban disallowing undocumented students access to the top five public universities and colleges in the state, effective fall 2011. Shortly after, in early 2011, Rep. Tim Rice (R-Norcross) sponsored and filed House Bill (HB) 59, seeking to ban undocumented students from the entire Georgia state university system, barring access to a total of 35 colleges and universities and 26 technical colleges. In February 2012, Sen. Barry Loudermilk (R-52) filed Senate Bill (SB) 458, a partner bill to HB 59, legislating the same ban.

The two bills and their ongoing passage through the state General Assembly have sparked heated partisan exchange about the state's policies regarding both illegal immigration and higher education, merging the two in a nuanced debate still occupying much of the state's legislative year. The following paragraphs examine both sides of the debate through a legislative lens.

The Citizenship Problem

Kelsey: Legislation banning the attendance of illegal immigrants in Georgia colleges and universities, such as HB 59 and SB 458, will benefit students in Georgia who are citizens or legal residents. The role of government is – or should be – to protect its citizens. For every illegal immigrant admitted to a Georgia public college, a seat in that entering class is filled. This means that, in many cases, Georgia citizens are being denied acceptance by public colleges in favor of illegal immigrants. Additionally, immigrants have a responsibility to apply for legal residency in order to access the rights our country offers before they are granted citizenship. Legislation prohibiting illegal immigrants from attending public universities dually protects the rights of our citizens to pursue higher education and the incentive system for legal residents to follow proper immigration procedure.

Tyler: The state's higher education infrastructure is not equipped – nor should it be – to serve as an immigration authority. While a comprehensive, reform-oriented approach to immigration legislation should be conducted the federal level, Georgia's delving into the issue is problematic, especially through the higher education system.

A majority of undocumented students pursuing higher education in the state are doing so by the same means legal residents do. An overwhelming amount of undocumented students entering the higher education system in Georgia did not immigrate to the state illegally; rather, their parents moved into the state and gave birth to the now college applicants within the United States. Even if undocumented, these students have lived in Georgia their entire lives and are as college-ready as legal residents. They

Photo/Josh Hallett



Terrell Hall houses the undergraduate admissions office at the University of Georgia. *Photo/Jack Fisher*

attended the same public schools, obtained the same high school diplomas, and earned the same academic achievements and qualifications as legal residents vying for space in an incoming collegiate class. Immigrants' applications and opportunities to do the same should be no different.

The Tax Problem

Kelsey: These bills are also favorable for Georgia taxpayers. While illegal immigrants in Georgia's public colleges have always been required to pay out-of-state tuition, many have slipped through the cracks unnoticed. In 2010, it was discovered that Jessica Colotl, an undocumented student, was receiving in-state tuition rates at Kennesaw State University. Incidents like this prove regulations enacted by the Board of Regents are ineffective at dealing with illegal immigrants and, in turn, have led to the need for state legislation.

Regardless of what tuition rate our schools offer to illegal immigrant students, tuition and fees do not fully cover the cost of operating public colleges and universities. State funds, as well as federal grants and earmarks, have all been major portions of college and university budgets in the past. Because of this, Georgia has a duty to ensure taxpayers that their dollars are not being used to benefit non-citizens receiving higher education.

Tyler: The perception of undocumented immigrants' lack of contribution to the tax base in the state in a widespread misconception. Studies by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute and the Perryman Group, a respected economic analysis firm, find that state, local, income, property, and sales tax contributions by undocu-

mented families in the state exceed \$200 million every year. Without their contributions, the state would face significant losses in expenditures, output, and income per capita. Their presence in Georgia tax revenue isn't missing, and neither is their support of the systems of higher education they aspire to attend.

Regardless of their tax contributions to the state, higher education for any person wishing to pursue higher learning, undocumented persons included, should be lauded for its benefits to the economic and social well-being it will bring Georgia. It's no surprise that higher education leads to higher income and less reliance on public assistance programs, which in turn leads to higher tax revenue; employees with college educations earn 62% more than those with only high school diplomas. Should the state bar students committed to contributing to its development solely based on the immigrant statuses and living situations that lie out of their control? The answer is clear.

The Implementation Problem

Kelsey: The federal government has been largely ineffective at dealing with the problem of illegal immigration in our country. Because of this, state governments have been forced to stretch a finite amount of state dollars and resources to provide for illegal immigrants. If the federal government is not going to relieve the states of this burden, then it becomes necessary for the states to do it themselves. HB 59 and SB 248 are fully constitutional within the context of federal law. They are within the means of the state to enforce, and they will undoubtedly benefit the state of Georgia. Consequently, these bills are a necessary next step in reforming the issues

stemming from illegal immigration, as well as addressing our federal government's inability to enforce its own laws.

Tyler: Attempting to address the "illegal immigration problem" will not fix the budgetary and economic strains on the state's higher education system. Of the 310,361 students enrolled in Georgia colleges, universities, and technical schools, a mere 501 incoming students, less than half of one percent of the state's entire student population, are classified as "undocumented". Further, only 29 are currently enrolled at the five targeted institutions of House legislation. An overwhelming rush of ridding our schools from undocumented immigrants would, in effect, cost more money than advocates of legislation espouse it would save.

Not only is the need in addressing the "problem" almost nonexistent, doing so isn't served by a legislative method. The University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby says that current (non-legislative) policies are adequate; by paying out-of-state tuition, they are not unjustly receiving a state public benefit in attending public colleges and universities in Georgia.

But even that policy is too restrictive and unproductive. Immigrants remain an integral part of the fabric of American society, and their profiling and marginalization by the state will in no way compel a more legally cooperative immigration system or a stronger educational infrastructure in Georgia. In excluding the half of one percent it affects, the demographics of college and university campuses would barely change, and any change that does result would be at the detriment of educational and state demographic diversity, an invaluable benefit to both.

A Personality Approach: The 2012 Presidential Election



Wes Robinson, Alex Sileo and Stephanie Talmadge
Associate Editors

It's that time again - Americans are feeling hyper-political, and a sense of civic duty is weighing heavily on their shoulders. In a few short months, Americans will choose their next commander-in-chief after what has been a decidedly indecisive primary season, with all of the GOP candidates sporadically earning their glorified 15 minutes.

More noticeably, voters are picking their president based on a not-entirely identifiable 'electability' factor. This electability encompasses a variety of different things for different people. For Obama, it was hope and change. For Bush, it was a strong moral character. Electability has become less about a candidate's political package and more about his/her general approach to life. Political scientist James David Barber recognized this back in 1972 when he authored *The Presidential Character*, a book that outlined four basic personality types that correspond behavior during a presidential term. The types deal with what a candidate does [active-passive], and how he feels about those actions [positive-negative]. While broad, these personality classifications can predict a good deal about presidential success

and behavior, and by profiling candidates in this relatable way, voters are able to better select a suitable president.

Barack Obama

President Barack Obama exemplifies an active-positive presidency. His first term has been filled with several challenges at the international level and countless disputes at the domestic level. He has responded to these problems swiftly and shown a willingness to engage with both parties in Congress. Obama took a leading role in foreign policy issues as in the military intervention of Libya and the death of Osama bin Laden. Obama and his administration were also heavily involved in the negotiations of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 and the Budget Control Act of 2011. He has also compromised in the recent contraception debate, proving that he is not afraid to concede some ground, unlike past active-negative presidents like Lyndon Johnson.

Obama's meteoric rise since his 2004 speech at the Democratic National Convention reinforced his positive outlook on politics that influences his campaign rhetoric and policy preferences. Other than an unsuccessful bid for a House of Representatives seat in 2000,

Obama has been accustomed to victory and success. His entire presidential campaign was run on the message of hope, change, and how the government can be transformed into a productive environment of bipartisanship. Although Obama has experienced some criticism from allies who view him as too moderate and from enemies who view his stimulus as wasteful spending, he boasts more than enough successes to have a positive view of himself and his first term.

Ron Paul

Ron Paul will institute a passive-negative presidency resulting from his disdain for federal government and his libertarian ideology. Past passive-negatives include George Washington and Dwight Eisenhower. He will direct less energy towards the presidency by emphasizing state and local government. Paul argues that the presidency only has certain powers granted by the Constitution, and that these procedures will restrict his role in domestic policy greatly. He also maintains a strictly isolationist foreign policy that emphasizes abandoning foreign wars and significantly reducing the number of military bases overseas. He will also promote free trade while limiting agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he calls



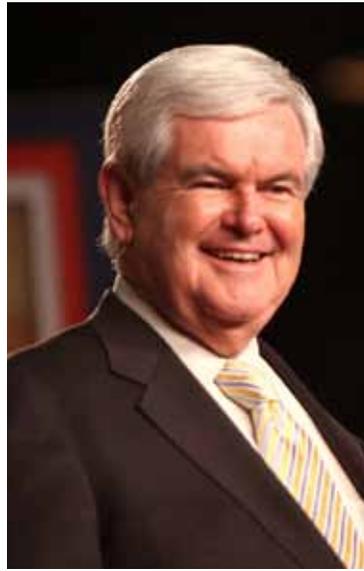
Barack Obama

44th President of the United States



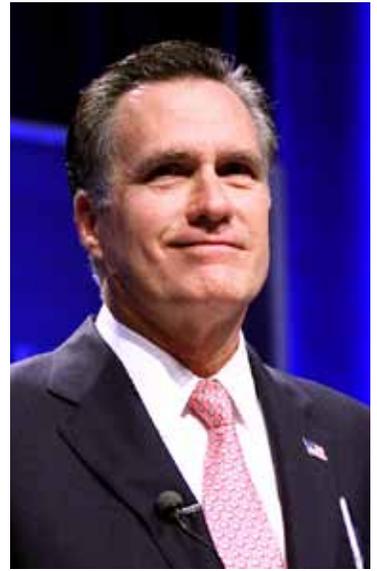
Ron Paul

U.S. Representative of Texas



Newt Gingrich

Former Speaker of the House



Mitt Romney

Former Governor of Massachusetts

“managed trade”.

Paul would also be a negative president. He would still enjoy the presidency, but he will not be primarily focused on reaching compromises and participating in negotiations. He would focus more on his interpretation of the presidency and the powers that are specifically granted to his role as such, rather than how to comfortably reach a consensus that is agreeable to all parties in an effort to be liked. Passive-positive presidents, like Madison, seek attention and praise through agreements. Passive-negative presidents, like Ron Paul, feel constrained by procedure and see their office as duty, not pleasure.

Newt Gingrich

Former-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich falls under Barber’s active-negative character type. According to Barber, these men are power driven and hyper-ambitious with a sense of aggression in their business conduct. These attributes certainly fit Gingrich upon looking at his past. Perhaps of greatest significance in assessing Gingrich’s character is his role as Speaker of the House—in particular, his eventual resignation from this post. The 1998 midterm elections were a tipping point of sorts. When Republicans lost seats to maintain a slim majority in the House after the ’98 elections, Gingrich was blamed for being at least partially responsible for these losses. However, Michael Nelson writes in a summary of Barber’s work that active-negative candidates have a difficult time conceding error, because “to have conceded error would have been to lose their sense of control”. This is precisely what Gingrich appears to have done after the midterm losses. As PolitiFact quoted The Washington Post in an interview with a GOP pollster over Gingrich, “There was no sense of personal responsibility”.

If Gingrich is in fact an active-negative character type, what does this mean moving

forward? Although active-negatives are characterized as being overly stubborn, unable to concede error, and tend to progress even if they are going down a disastrous path, this character type is not necessarily a bad one. Barber has characterized many great presidents as being active-negatives including John Adams, Woodrow Wilson, Lyndon Johnson, and Abraham Lincoln. The character flaws in an active-negative president do not necessarily lead to a bad presidency; rather, he tends to be a “riskier” candidate as to whether or not his term as president and his policies will be successful. For instance, Richard Nixon has been categorized as an active-negative president. After observing Nixon’s behavior through the Watergate scandal, one may predict what can occur when an active-negative takes office and falls short.

Mitt Romney

Former Governor Mitt Romney would be categorized as a passive-positive candidate. These men are essentially affection-seekers. Presidents who Barber has categorized as passive-positive include James Madison, William Taft, Warren Harding, and Ronald Reagan. Michael Nelson summarizes Barber’s passive-positive character type as being obsessed with preserving the goodwill of those around them and quotes Barber’s description of this type stating that their life is, “a search for affection as a reward for being agreeable and cooperative”. These men have a tendency to stick with the status quo. For this election, Romney’s opponents have largely characterized him as the “establishment” candidate and he touts a long list of endorsements largely supporting this claim. As Aaron Blake of The Washington Post put it, leading up to the 2012 election Romney, “has become the next-in-line, inevitable choice” candidate after his unsuccessful 2008 bid. However, it is not just his status quo mentality

that constitutes Romney’s passive-positive character type. There is nothing wrong with obtaining new experiences and information that may shift your worldview on policy issues over time.

However, the extent of Romney’s changes on certain policy positions raises certain questions in terms of assessing his character type. In 2002 Romney said in a gubernatorial debate that he was dedicated and devoted to maintaining a woman’s right to choose. Now, and in 2008, Romney has switched his stance stating that abortion should only be allowed in instances of rape, incest, and when the life of the mother is being threatened. Or, when you look back to Romney’s run against Ted Kennedy in a failed attempt for United States Senator in 1994 you can find Romney trying to distance himself from Reagan and Bush while campaigning in the liberal state of Massachusetts. In the present election Romney looks to channel the messages and ideas of Reagan. This is not to say that Romney doesn’t believe what he’s saying, rather it appears that in many cases Romney has very visibly shifted his message to attract a different electorate depending on the seat being sought. Romney is looking to appease and not rock the boat too much. Moving forward, if Romney captures the nomination and ultimately the presidency, what is to be expected of his passive-positive character when in office? According to Barber, Romney would enjoy the office immensely and serve with zest. However, his policy positions would largely stay completely in-line with the party and would seldom make controversial or rash decisions. Like Gingrich’s active-negative characterization, this does not mean an unsuccessful presidency or one without significant changes. Romney would be constantly concerned with the public’s image of him and would likely take few controversial policy positions. Ultimately, he will try to please his party as much as possible.

A SHAKY PROGNOSIS

Health Care at the Supreme Court

Nathaniel Ament-Stone
Associate Editor

The year 1937 was an uneasy one for the United States Supreme Court. Following a record-setting 1936 reelection landslide for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President and his emboldened supporters turned to shaking up an antagonistic Supreme Court. In that vein, Roosevelt announced in his February 5, 1937 fireside chat that Democratic leaders in Congress would soon propose the Judicial Procedures Reform Act, expanding the Court's membership from nine to 15 and thus allowing the President to appoint replacements for the six Justices over age 70 – a group which, favorably, included all of the Court's reliable conservatives.

New Deal detractors characterized the bill as a court-packing plan. Opposition grew in Congress throughout the spring and the bill more or less died with Senate Majority Leader Joseph Robinson, its chief legislative shepherd, who passed away on July 14. But if Roosevelt lost this single high-profile battle for control of the Supreme Court, he most certainly won the greater war. Mere weeks after the bill's introduction, swing vote Justice Owen Roberts began siding with the Court's three liberals and Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes to produce rulings more sympathetic to the New Deal. Conservative Justice Willis Van Devanter would soon be replaced by a Roosevelt ally, Senator Hugo Black of Alabama. Through the Roosevelt Presidency's remaining eight years, the President would appoint another seven Justices, and

the Court retained a liberal constitutional orientation for decades.

It is with this history in mind that the Supreme Court considers the constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, the statutory behemoth known variably as "health care reform" or "Obamacare." Like the Social Security Act and other such legislative milestones of the 1930s, the Affordable Care Act was passed within the context of an ailing national economy and Democratic dominance on Capitol Hill. Though many of the Act's most contentious regulations will not take effect for nearly two more years, Americans have already begun to feel its effects in the creation of high-risk insurance pools, limits on insurers' ability to rescind coverage, and a rule allowing children to remain on their parents' insurance until age 26.

A Supreme Court decision broadly striking the Affordable Care Act as unconstitutional would represent a short-term blow to President Obama's legacy as well as a major galvanizing factor for activists on both sides amid an election year. Lower court rulings on the law have differed; in the cases that reached the Court for oral argument from March 26-28, bundled as *Florida v. Department of Health and Human Services*, Solicitor General Donald Verrilli defended the constitutionality of the Act's individual mandate provision, which requires nearly all Americans to purchase health insurance by 2014 or pay an annual penalty for not doing so. At the U.S. District Court level, Judge Roger Vinson held that the mandate was not "severable" from the rest of the Act, that to strike down that requirement was to strike

down the entire law. The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, but still nullified the mandate as unjustified by the Interstate Commerce Clause of Article I, the constitutional umbrella under which federal economic regulations have been placed since the New Deal itself. An affirming opinion in the Supreme Court could call this traditional framework into question and represent the greatest judicial victory yet for those hoping since Roosevelt's day to reverse the historical tide of government intervention in private commerce.

Oral argument offered some insight into the nine Justices' views of the individual mandate. In his first question, Justice Anthony Kennedy asked Verrilli, "Can you create commerce in order to regulate it?" and later questioned the government's reasoning that an otherwise healthy individual failing to buy insurance posed a threat to the overall health care market. Justice Samuel Alito, a more reliable conservative, compared the mandate to a hypothetical requirement that healthy young people invest in their future burial services; Justice Antonin Scalia likened it to the government requiring people to buy broccoli. The four more liberal Justices offered Verrilli more generous lines of questioning while challenging Florida's co-counsel Michael Carvin. Justice Sonia Sotomayor noted the wide reach of government regulation in the contemporary American economy and asked Carvin why the mandate represented any kind of radical departure from previous understandings of interstate commerce.

Observers note that the current Court retains a five-Justice conservative majority



and an arguably strained relationship with a White House which publicly denounced the landmark *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* decision in 2010. Yet as many lower court rulings have green-lighted the insurance mandate (known in judicial circles as a minimum coverage provision) as have negated it; and in evaluating the constitutional muster of such mandates, the Court will consider a number of its own contemporary Commerce Clause precedents. These precedents include *Gonzales v. Raich* (2005), which upheld Congress's authority to ban marijuana even where states approve its use for medicinal purposes, and *United States v. Lopez* (1995), the first Supreme Court ruling since the 1930s to invalidate a congressional act for exceeding Commerce Clause limits.

Even the most casual Supreme Court observers will probably look to Justice Kennedy as a barometer for these and other issues surrounding *Florida v. HHS*. Kennedy has established himself since Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's 2006 retirement as the federal judiciary's linchpin on issues as diverse as campaign finance, abortion, gay rights, and environmental policy. Generally considered a moderate conservative, he voted with majorities skeptical of Commerce Clause application to *Lopez* and *United States v. Morrison* (2000), but also with the ideologically mixed pro-Congress majority in *Raich*; O'Connor, a centrist with federalist inclinations, dissented. In this term, Kennedy is expected to serve as a swing vote in high-profile affirmative action and immigration cases, and many would consider it out of character for him to seek an expansion of the 11th Circuit's ruling in *Florida v. HHS*. That opinion concerned itself almost exclusively with the minimum coverage provision and steered clear of rejecting the Affordable Care Act in general. Yet Kennedy seemed quite critical of the mandate during oral arguments, while skeptical of Florida's charge that the mandate

and broader legislation could not be severed (considered separately). Thus, if a landmark Supreme Court ruling emerges from the case, it will likely involve the constitutional power of Congress to control insurance purchases by private citizens, not its authority to impose medical care, cost, or other such regulations on insurers.

Particularly given public distrust of insurance companies, even the Court's conservatives may shy away from issuing a decision that could be seen as overbroad. Media discussions of the Supreme Court often neglect that the Court is not a partisan institution, and Justices are especially sensitive to charges of partisanship. The Court must evaluate the Affordable Care Act as the work of Congress, not of a Democratic Congress or the Obama White House, and must lay down a case law precedent on the Commerce Clause that can feasibly be applied to other statutes in the future. As such, the case does not and should not boil down to Justices' personal desires to affirm or strike down health care reform.

Yet *Florida v. HHS* still offers Justices left, right, and center a once-in-a-judicial-career opportunity to affect future generations' understanding of Interstate Commerce, and of the law's role in health care. The Court under Chief Justice John Roberts has proven bolder than its predecessor in asserting conservative jurisprudence, but it cannot be seen as overeager to engage in political combat with the White House lest that perception should rob the decision of future legal salience and the Supreme Court itself of public trust. Similar conditions allowed Roosevelt to politicize the Court in 1937 and subsequently redirect its jurisprudence for generations. That history should give pause to those hoping for a sweeping anti-regulation majority opinion in *Florida v. HHS* as the Court term's ends in late June, and to those waiting to capitalize on such overreach at the ballot box.

a conversation

★ *with* ★

CLARENCE
THOMAS

In March, GPR staff members had the opportunity to meet with Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and ask him questions about his judicial career and ideology.

With a glint in his eye and a fire in his voice, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas proclaimed before an audience of 17 University of Georgia students, “I have little value for people who have strong opinions and haven’t done their homework.”

Thomas’ declaration came in response to one student’s question regarding his choice to remain silent during Supreme Court proceedings, a rare feat among today’s Justices. A member of the Court since 1991, Thomas spoke of how, as of late, cases have involved too much talking and not enough listening. This theme, according to Thomas, has manifested itself throughout society and contributed to the heated, often empty political rhetoric of this election year.

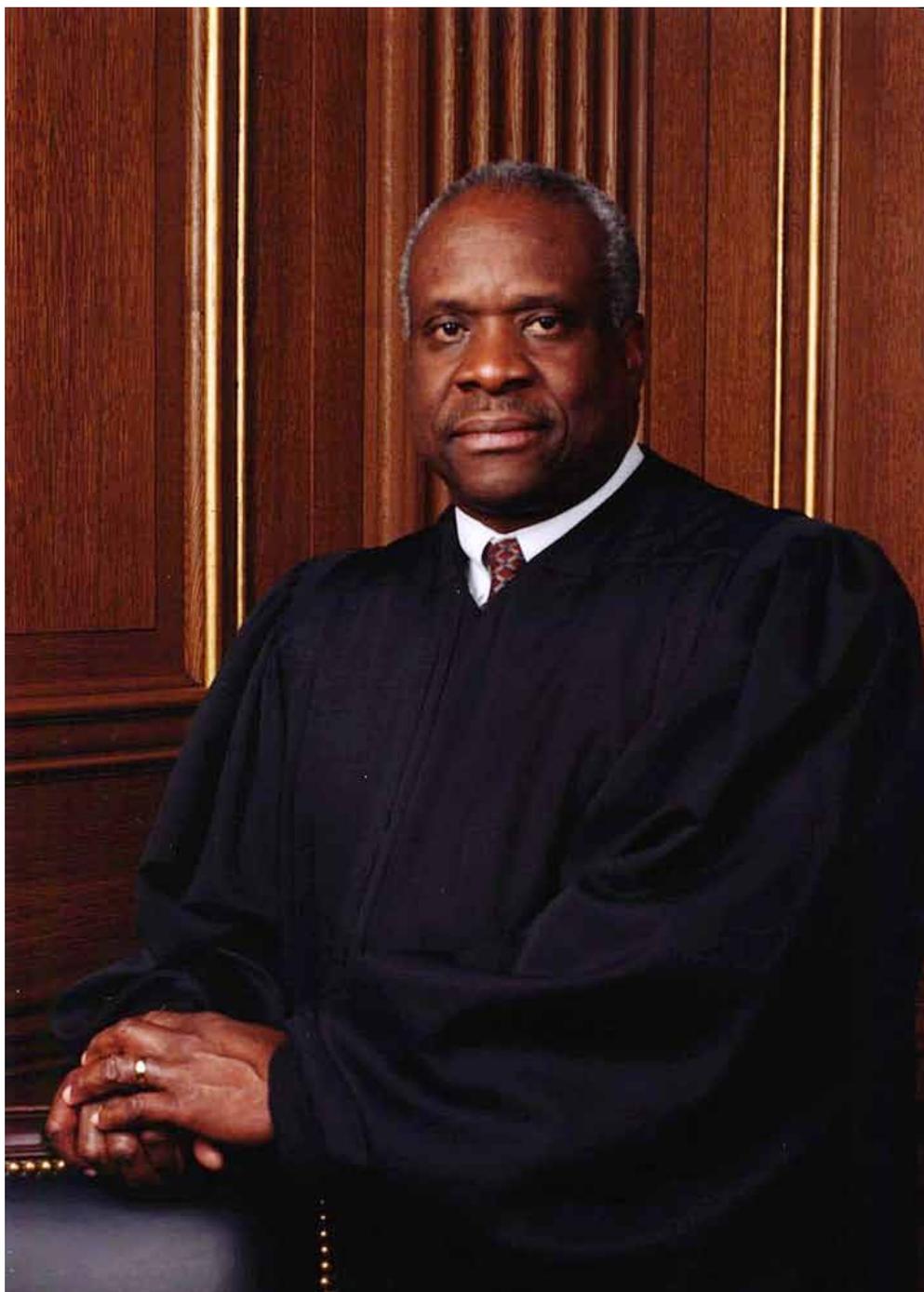
During the two hour discussion inside a private room in the Supreme Court building, the phrases “do your homework,” and “it’s not enough to stay at the Holiday Inn Express” appeared again and again. Whether he was talking about the Commerce Clause or his NCAA bracket, Justice Thomas made a point of reminding the students that in order to form an informed, well-developed opinion, they must thoroughly research a topic. For Thomas, this often means sifting through thousands of pages of information spanning several decades before reaching a decision.

When students attempted to spar with Thomas over his recent opinions, notably the Troy Davis case and *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association*, he quickly reminded them of the extent of his research while inviting them to conduct investigations of their own.

Nonetheless, he took every opportunity to flex his conservative values. A strict interpretation of the Constitution was his guiding theme; “The most important time to be principled is when principles lead to an outcome contrary to [my] personal beliefs. Too many people would first choose the outcome they wanted and then work backwards to find the reasoning”. Instead of basing decisions on whether or not laws should be in effect, he considered whether or not they could be established under the auspices of the Constitution.

One of the most anticipated questions concerned the upcoming oral arguments for *Florida v. United States Department of Health and Human Services*, in which the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. How influential could the oral arguments be in the outcome of the case? Justice Thomas argued that in the vast majority of cases, oral arguments had little impact on the final decision. However, the oral argument is symbolically important.

“It is very important that if you feel your rights have been violated, you can make your case in front of the highest court in the country,” Thomas argued. “If you can’t speak your piece here, then where else can you go?” That symbolic importance is yet another reason why Thomas, unlike many of his colleagues on the Supreme Court,



chooses to stay silent during the arguments.

“Have you ever been in a class where a student keeps asking questions that have answers that are in the book?” Thomas asked, once again reminding the students of the importance of doing their homework. “The answers to most of the questions asked in the oral arguments can be found in the briefs.”

Perhaps the most heated portion of the discussion centered on the prestige given to Ivy League law schools. All nine current Supreme Court justices attended an Ivy League law school. “Students of the University of Georgia and other state schools should be outraged by the Ivy League favoritism in the selection of Supreme Court justices and clerks”. He lauded the competence of the Georgia School of Law and its dean, Rebecca White, and implored the group to attend law school at the University of Georgia, instead of opting for Ivies. Keeping the best brains within the state”, argued Thomas, “will go far in increas-

ing UGA’s prestige”. Although he did not attend the University of Georgia, the institution holds a special place in Thomas’ heart. A Savannah native who attended Holy Cross College and Yale Law, Thomas is the Southeast’s sole representative on the Supreme Court.

As the discussion began to wind down, the conversation moved from legal issues to how Thomas spends his free time, which inevitably led to a discussion of the NCAA March Madness. Although he maintains warm relations with his fellow Justices, Thomas much prefers spending time at home watching basketball with his wife. As for his bracket lineup, Thomas confidently proclaimed that North Carolina would defeat Kentucky in the championship game, and informed the group that he would soon be heading home to spend the rest of his day off watching a full slate of games.

“I do have my priorities.”

Christian Realism and the Obama Doctrine

Ryan Prior
Associate Editor

In 2007, New York Times columnist David Brooks interviewed campaign-weary Senator Obama who only obligingly answered his questions. On a whim, Brooks asked Obama if he had read the great 20th century Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Suddenly Obama was interested, and his staccato answers gave way to articulate, multiple paragraph-length answers. “I love him,” Obama said. “He’s one of my favorite philosophers.”

Niebuhr was an historian, theologian, and political thinker who learned to adapt his early pacifistic utopian socialism to cope with a world in which violence was the only recourse to halt the inexorable Nazi march. In 1943, Niebuhr published the most mature expression of his political philosophy, *Children of Light and Children of Darkness*. Niebuhr positioned Christian philosophy in the Augustinian tradition as the meeting point between well-intentioned naivete of the “children of light” (Mill, Marx, Locke) and the cynical wisdom of the “children of darkness” (Thucydides, Hobbes, Machiavelli).

Niebuhr believes that we should strive toward the idealistic world that the children of light want. However we should not be so naïve to think that their vision is possible, or that their methods are effective. As the same time, we should be very aware of the serpent-like wisdom of the children of darkness. When we can balance the wisdom of the cynics with the vision of the idealists, we can make progress toward peace without leaving ourselves vulnerable to attack.

Christianity therefore becomes the middle ground between the two poles. It acknowledges original sin, the idea that we are selfish creatures born into a fallen world. Hobbes (in *Leviathan*) and Machiavelli (in *The Prince*) would concur. Yet also, Christianity avoids the children of light fantasy of believing that humanity is born good while at the same time offering a path toward the better, more peaceful world for which the children of light strive.

Niebuhr, who had originally opposed U.S. involvement in World War II, would eventually become an eloquent advocate for entering the war because he knew that killing could be excusable if done to prevent a greater evil. Obama knew as well as Niebuhr that an ascetic pacifism isolating itself from the world could never achieve its own idealism: the only way to reach the goal of the children of light is to use the tools of the children of darkness. The only way to achieve peace is to step up and try to fight for it.

Commentators have written that 2009 Obama’s Nobel Prize speech is a classic Niebuhrian statement. The context is powerfully ironic, exhibiting paradoxes straight from the soul of Niebuhr. In the same month that Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize, the avowedly anti-war candidate shocked his supporters by ratcheting up the U.S. role in Afghanistan as one of the first major foreign policy decisions of his term. As he received a peace prize, Obama

openly defended war:

To say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism - it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason. I raise this point because in many countries there is a deep ambivalence about military action today, no matter the cause. At times, this is joined by a reflexive suspicion of America, the world’s sole military superpower.

The conservative Catholic writer Andrew Sullivan praised it as “a remarkable address—Niebuhr made manifest. What strikes me about it most of all...is that it was an address by a deeply serious Christian.” Sullivan went on to argue that the bellicosity the neoconservatives applauded in the speech had been lurking in all of Obama’s rhetoric—an ever-present sharp edge in the vision of a president who after all had argued against the Iraq intervention, saying, “I’m not against all wars. Just dumb wars.” As David Brooks argued:

In other words, when Obama is confronted by what he sees as arrogant unilateral action, he argues for humility. When he is confronted by what he sees as dovish passivity, he argues for the hardheaded promotion of democracy in the spirit of John F. Kennedy. The question is, aside from rejecting the extremes, has Obama thought through a practical foreign policy doctrine of his own — a way to apply his Niebuhrian instincts?

In 2009 the American Enterprise Institute’s Michael Laconte didn’t see enough evidence to argue for or against the influence of Niebuhr in Obama’s foreign policy: “Based on what? Not on any concrete foreign policy successes...It remains blazingly uncertain whether Barack Obama possesses the requisite beliefs and moral clarity to challenge the latest manifestations of the diabolical will to power.”

Of course the presidency is slave to the unpredictability of world events. It’s impossible to demand Obama deliberately think about Niebuhr when making a practical decision in a rapidly changing international world. And it’s impossible to demand that every single foreign policy action would fit into this framework. However, it is realistic to believe that Obama’s overall disposition is informed by Niebuhr and that the president may well be channeling the great theologian’s spirit in his decisions.

Obama consciously extended specific Bush foreign policy initiatives such as the Patriot Act, the war in Afghanistan, and keeping Robert Gates as Defense Secretary. However, there are several contrasts with Bush policy: the surgical special forces strikes that crippled al-Qaeda and killed bin Laden, the cautious internationalist coalition that toppled Qaddafi, and the harsh economic sanctions recently imposed in Iran. Each action reflects a certain circumspection about the excessive use of power, reflecting the tension between the children of light and the children of darkness.

After Obama’s Nobel Speech, David Brooks

wrote, “his doctrine is becoming clear. The Oslo speech was the most profound of his presidency, and maybe his life.” If we are to characterize these foreign policy actions into the Niebuhrian Obama Doctrine that David Brooks saw emerging in 2009, we should contrast them with the neoconservatism of the Bush Doctrine. Gary Dorrien, who holds the Reinhold Niebuhr chair at Union Theological Seminary, said in an interview, “We can only wish that the neocons had absorbed even half of [Niebuhr’s] realism.” Dorrien’s critique of the fantastical idealism of Bush’s wars to impose democracy dovetails with columnist Joe Klein’s, who wrote in 2008, “Neoconservatism in foreign policy is best described as unilateral bellicosity cloaked in the utopian rhetoric of freedom and democracy.” Obama’s specific departures from neoconservatism suggest an understanding that, “the possession of power,” Niebuhr would say, “creates responsibilities which must not be evaded, even though it is known that they cannot be fulfilled without some egoistic corruption.”

Niebuhr argues that cultural arrogance is inevitable for foreign policies that combine power with idealism. A sincere recognition of America’s many follies abroad from the Bay of Pigs through Vietnam and into Iraq should lead to an understanding of the American place in the ironies of history, and to a more careful and thoughtful realism in how we exercise power going forward. Writing during World War II, Niebuhr’s insights into the British national character would do well to reveal something about the post-Vietnam and post-Iraq foreign policy that Obama has inherited.

Britain has certain advantages over America in this realm... Britain has had longer experience in wielding power in world affairs than America, in which it has learned to exercise critical restraint upon its power impulses.

As a fresh, idealistic America took up the superpower role in the post-War era, our innocence abroad led to many foibles, similar to those that Britain had experienced following the American Revolution. Our own similar post-War innocence was not helpful. “Relative innocence or inexperience in wielding power is no guarantee of virtue,” Niebuhr wrote. “It is on the contrary a hazard to the attainment of virtue.”

Niebuhr can also help us understand major criticisms of the president’s foreign policy. Most conservative critiques rally around the idea of Obama’s apologetics and whether he endorses the idea of American exceptionalism. In the words of Mitt Romney, we have a president “with an apology on his lips and doubt in his heart.” In Niebuhr’s terms, Romney’s critique seems that Obama is not sufficiently a child of light, that Obama does not believe fully enough in America’s unique ability to shape a more peaceful world, that Obama is not eager enough to assert American power for these purposes. The doubt in Obama’s heart, if we believe Romney, comes from his understanding of the ironies of history. Even if Romney’s statement is taken seriously, it is only half the truth.



Park MacDougald
Associate Editor

If you thought that America's economic recovery meant that the storm was over, think again. Europe's ongoing sovereign-debt crisis is likely the world's most important economic issue since the financial market collapse of 2008, yet most Americans understand little about it. Some might know that the wave of cheap credit in the early to mid-2000s led to a buildup of government debt, aided and abetted by fraudulent accounting practices learned from Wall Street.

Many Germans and other northern Europeans have blamed the "lazy Greeks" for refusing to work, while some conservative American analysts have warned that America is descending down the same path with increased government spending and the introduction of the Affordable Care Act. What's really going on across the pond, what does it mean for us, and can it happen here?

To start with: It can't. One of the major causes of the debt crisis lies in the nature of the euro itself. As a single currency used by 17 of 27 European Union member states, the printing of the euro and setting of monetary policy falls to the European Central Bank (ECB) and affiliated national central banks (NCBs) rather than the individual nations of the eurozone. If an indebted eurozone nation, such as Greece or Italy, is facing a deadline to pay off creditors, they cannot

simply run the printing presses until they have enough money to fulfill their contractual obligations. They must borrow from other nations or the ECB, raising their debt levels. This in turn leads to a downgrading of debt (measured by the likelihood of a state to pay off its debt), making it more difficult to borrow and eventually leading to default. Contrast this with the United States, which prints its own currency. To use an extreme example: if the United States owes China \$1 trillion in American dollars, it can simply print \$1 trillion. Although this would in theory lead to inflation, it makes default practically impossible.

Another driving factor behind the crisis is the presence of persistent trade imbalances that unduly favor certain countries over others. The structure of the euro is such that it is worth the same in each eurozone nation, regardless of that nation's economic performance. Under the old, multi-currency system, any nation experiencing rapid economic growth akin to Germany's over the last four years would simultaneously experience an appreciation of their currency. For an economy such as Germany's, which is heavily reliant on exports, this would cause the value of German products in other nations to increase, thereby decreasing exports and slowing growth. The same principle applies to southern European countries like Spain, Italy, and Greece – albeit in reverse. Under the old system, the poor

performance of the Greek economy would have caused the drachma to lose value. This would stimulate demand for cheap Greek products, creating jobs within the country and fostering economic growth. Instead, Greece was stuck with an expensive euro and chronically uncompetitive economy while Germany rode high on the wave of cheap exports. As a result, it seems especially jarring to the Greeks that the Germans are demanding austerity in the midst of a recession, an almost surefire way to enter a depression.

So, it seems clear that the Europeans have gotten themselves into trouble. But why should we care? Just as the European economy slumped when the American financial crisis hit, our economy is susceptible to international financial contagion. The ease of international borrowing and lending has long been touted as one of the advantages of the globalization of finance. However, one of the downsides of this is that the bonds of the now-struggling PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain) have spread all across the global banking system. American direct exposure to the PIIGS countries is around \$641 billion, with an additional \$1.2 trillion in exposure to German and French banks. The driving force behind the Greek bailouts is a fear that the collapse of Europe's weakest economy could be the start of a domino effect that would be devastating for the European and global economy. While it was once unthinkable that a country with the

size and economic performance of France could default, its sovereign debt was recently downgraded by ratings agencies, and the leading candidate for the presidency, Francois Hollande, promises to increase government spending and essentially force capital flight by imposing a top-level income tax of 75%. Many economists now worry that France could be at the heart of the next eurozone shock.

Although Americans may be content to look at the crisis in Europe as a cautionary tale of the welfare state run amok, it is important that we understand exactly what is going on in the Old World. A Greek collapse might be manageable, but it would set a dangerous precedent for countries exiting the euro. An exit by Italy or Spain would be far more damaging to the global economy, likely destroying any hope of a Western economic recovery within the next decade. And the consequences of default by France could trigger worldwide depression not seen since the 1930s. It is also critical to understand how this problem differs from ours. Calls for drastic spending cuts in the United States that cite the example of Greece misunderstand the problem. The lesson we can take from Greece is that too much austerity in a fragile economy can have disastrous results. The lesson Americans need to know from Europe's debt crisis is that what happens there can affect us whether we like it or not.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Lauren Anderson and Sami Jarjour
Associate Editors

Arguably America's most prominent public intellectual, political activist and esteemed linguist Noam Chomsky has dedicated much of his life analyzing U.S. domestic and foreign policy. In a short correspondence with GPR Associate Editors Lauren Anderson and Sami Jarjour, he discussed contemporary issues on the Middle East.

Q In a recent meeting in which Israel's Netanyahu visited the White House, he and President Obama focused much of their discussions on a nuclear Iran, putting further talks concerning the Israeli-Palestinian peace, at least temporarily, on the back burner. How might an Israeli strike on Iran affect the Middle East Peace Process, specifically Israel's international legitimacy, a legitimacy that which is already waning in regards to its persistent settlement policies? Do you foresee a more dogmatic Israel as consequence?

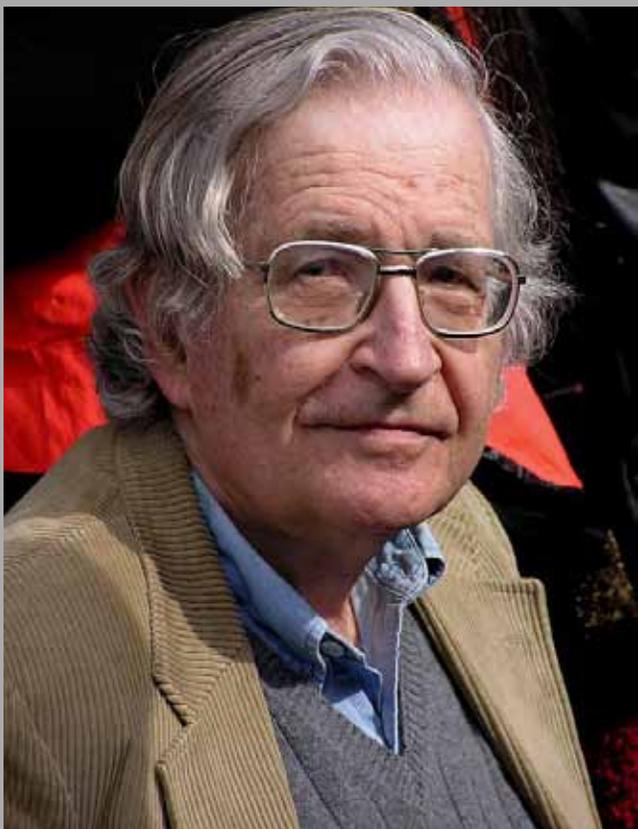
A The Middle East Peace Process will continue to be dormant as long as the US and its Israeli ally, which have blocked the international consensus on a two-state settlement for 35 years, insist on their preconditions for negotiations: (1) that the process should be

under the aegis of the US, which makes about as much sense as suggesting that Iran mediate Shia-Sunni conflicts in Iraq; and (2) that Israel must be free to continue the expansion of its illegal settlement and infrastructure programs in the West Bank, which the US oppose in words but supports in practice. Israel is indeed acting in ways that undermine its international legitimacy, and an attack on Iran would doubtless carry its self-inflicted decline further. There is almost universal opposition to such an action. It is sometimes claimed that "the Arabs" support such actions, but that is a reference to the alleged stands of the US-backed dictators. Public opinion polls by US and Arab institutions reveal consistently that an overwhelming majority regard the US and Israel as the main threats they face, while very few regard Iran as a threat. And though Iran is far from popular, opposition to US policy is so strong that a majority (in some cases a large majority) believe the region would be more secure if Iran had nuclear weapons. In Europe the public regards Israel as the major threat to world peace. Apart from unpredictable and possibly dire regional consequences, an Israeli attack would be likely to intensify – and might even initiate – an Iranian quest for nuclear weapons capability. Contrary to standard commen-

tary, it seems that Israel's 1981 attack on the Iraqi reactor had exactly that effect, a conclusion based on immediate on-site inspection by Harvard nuclear physicist Richard Wilson and by Iraqi defectors, confirmed by Wayne White, Iraq analyst for State Department intelligence at the time. The more Israel isolates itself, the more reactionary and unpredictable it is likely to become, not an unfamiliar process.

Q In an article entitled "The Cairo-Madison Connection" for Truthout last year, you wrote about the "intertwined" nature of the labor movements in the U.S. and Egypt, pointing to the differing trajectories to which both were heading ("toward gaining rights in Egypt and defending rights under harsh attack in the U.S."). Concerning Egypt, since ousting Mubarak, the country continues to experience political and economic instability, which has prompted it to seek additional financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund. In a movement grounded, at least in part, by intense labor struggles, how do you think the legacy of the Egyptian revolution will materialize under a potential IMF plan?

A In Egypt, the struggle continues, and the legacy remains unclear. There have been significant gains:



“Israel is indeed acting in ways that undermine its international legitimacy, and an attack on Iran would doubtless carry its self-inflicted decline further.”

freedom of speech, labor rights, and much else. However, the old regime is still pretty much in place, and the openings for parliament have favored those who were able to organize in the past under tacit arrangements with the dictatorship: the Muslim Brotherhood, which is generally acceptable to the US-UK. They have never had problems with radical Islam, as long as it does not break ranks. After all, the most extreme radical Islamic state in the world has long been a valued ally (Saudi Arabia). The MB pretty much accepts the “Washington consensus” on the international economic order, and its more recent manifestations. An IMF plan is quite satisfactory to Washington (which dominates the IMF).

For quite obvious reasons, the US and its allies continue to be deeply concerned about the threat of authentic democracy in Egypt or elsewhere in the region, and are doing what they can to prevent it.

Q What is Syria’s relevance to the US and what kind of role do you see the US playing in the Syrian conflict? What role do you think the United States has played thus far?

A I doubt that the US has played a very significant role. It appears to be on the sidelines, like Israel, unsure whether an alternative to Assad might be more harmful to their interests, though of

course both would prefer to see the end of an ally of Iran and Hezbollah. I rather suspect that Washington was relieved at the Russian-Chinese veto. It offered an opportunity to pontificate hypocritically for a domestic audience, and to refrain from acting on the pretext that the veto prevented it; a pretext, as history clearly reveals.

Q The state of Libya seems very precarious post-intervention. Has it turned into post-invasion Iraq and what do you think are its future prospects?

A Most of the world opposed the decision of the imperial triumvirate – UK, France, US – to immediately disregard UNSC 1973 and join the rebels as their air arm. Africa, the BRICS countries and others, also the major NGO (International Crisis Group), supported the call for a cease-fire in 1973 and advocated efforts at diplomacy and negotiations to head off a likely humanitarian crisis, which took place, particularly at the end with the attack on the base of the Warfalla, Libya’s largest tribe (which has since retaken it and declared semi-autonomy). One naturally wishes Libyans the best, but the prospects are quite unclear. An East-West break-up is not impossible, with the richest oil-producing areas joining in a semi-independent Cyrenaica.

THE US-ISRAEL



SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Cody Knapp
Associate Editor

Without doubt, a special relationship still exists between the United States and Israel that is surpassed in depth and “specialness” only by the U.S.–British alliance. In light of the recent unrest in the Middle East, we have witnessed a seemingly primal reflex among American politicians of every brand – reaffirmation of the U.S. commitment to Israel’s security. Whether the question is surrounding Iran or Palestine, Syria’s Assad or Gaza’s Hamas, American interests, as articulated by our politicians, seem to invariably align with Israeli interests. This is a direct result of both the powerful Israel lobby in the United States and the American political establishment’s inability to articulate a cohesive post-Cold War grand strategy. I question whether this American commitment to Israel is truly wise or as vital as it seems. Many policies previously pursued as a

“The two states’ actions align, but their rhetoric and interests seem divergent.”

function of this special relationship now threaten to jeopardize U.S. national security interests. As such, a national conversation should be had in order to delineate the future parameters of this relationship.

First, it is important to note that the special relationship is not an intrinsic quality of

American–Israeli interactions. The U.S. political establishment was not always so solidly in the Israeli camp; in fact, George Marshall, one of the greatest American diplomats of the 20th century, once argued militantly against Truman’s recognition of the Jewish state in 1948. Rather, the strength of the American–Israeli special relationship has its roots in the Cold War, as Israel was the only truly reliable U.S. ally in the Middle East region. Nearly all of the Arab states maintained solid diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and were somewhat less than democratic. Meanwhile, many of the new Jewish state’s leaders were Western Jews and spoke English. The confluence of these and other circumstances during the Cold War rendered Israel a crucial strategic asset for the U.S. both culturally and militarily. Over the years, the partnership grew exponentially, and a pro-Israel lobby emerged in Washington, D.C. that gained influence disproportionate to its constituent



President Barack Obama meets with Israeli President Shimon Peres in the Oval Office. *Photo/ Pete Souza*

segment of the American demographic. Today, in spite of the two nation's diverging interests, this lobby has exerted its influence to keep the U.S. international policy tethered firmly to Israel.

As is the case with many of America's Cold War alliances, current events are bringing this special relationship to a crossroads. In truth, observing the relationship in its current form feels somewhat like watching a person with a split personality. The two states actions align, but their rhetoric and interests seem divergent. Despite unprecedented cooperation, particularly on the military-to-military level, points of stress have emerged between the two governments. This strain is perhaps most evident in the personal tension between President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which has been well documented by the press, but it also extends to more substantive policy issues. The two states differ significantly in their approach to both Iranian nuclear ambitions and Palestinian statehood. This is a symptom of the contrasting changes both states are currently experiencing at every level.

Demographic shifts in Israel have created a nation that is very different from the one America has backed for decades. While political power in Israel has typically been wielded by liberal, English-speaking Israelis of Western origin, Russian-speaking Jews from the Eastern bloc nations and the ultra-orthodox Jewish community have grown in number. Increasingly,

they have begun to assert their political voices and opinions, which tend to be more conservative. The result has transformed Israeli domestic politics. While the leftist Labor Party once served as a strong counterpoint to Likud, the right wing, hawkish party, the entire Israeli left has collapsed in recent years. From the vacuum a new counterpoint has risen – Kadima, a center-right party led by former members of Likud. The result has been a more conservative Israel, one that views its interests more narrowly than the U.S. and feels a need to reassert them independently. Meanwhile, the American public has become increasingly isolationist, disillusioned by wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that have decreased America's standing in the international system. Israeli politicians, who have long bragged about their ability to understand and appeal to American voters, can no longer count on the unconditional support of the U.S. populace.

Upon evaluating both states' real interests in the region, it becomes apparent that the tradition of the "special relationship" merely masks increasingly differentiated policies between the nations. While the U.S. sees opportunity in the Arab Spring, the Israelis see only trouble and instability. While the U.S. seeks to definitively solve the Palestinian issue and merely manage the Iranian crisis, Israel desires the opposite. These differences, which will only become more pronounced in the foreseeable future, are exposing the need for a serious reevaluation.

If this reevaluation leads the U.S. to officially distance itself from Israel and to pursue closer relationships with some of the Arab states, the benefits to both parties could be enormous. Besides tempering the Israeli desire to attack Iran and preventing the U.S. from being drawn into yet another war, diplomatic distance between the two states could push the Israelis to more seriously address the Palestinian issue. The U.S. could serve as a more impartial mediator for the peace talks, better representing American values and further improving relations with the increasingly democratic Arab states. At the same time, Israel would regain some standing and legitimacy in the international community from this diplomatic realignment, as it would be forced to adhere to international norms to a greater extent than it does now. This could reverse the trend towards international isolation for Israel, an occurrence that is in the interest of both states.

Regardless of its outcome, reevaluation is both necessary and healthy. U.S. policy cannot continue to be guided solely by a biblical and historical commitment to the Jewish state. Israel is in no real danger of ceasing to exist and many of its actions, with U.S. protection and endorsement, have only undermined stability in the region. If America still needs a strategic partnership in the coming decades, Israel will certainly be a natural and willing partner, but perhaps the time for the "special relationship" has passed.

THE LONG WINTER

WHY THE RUSSIAN SPRING

WILL HAVE TO WAIT

Kaitlyn Walker and Megan White
Associate Editors

The rhetoric had been silenced, the polls closed, the votes counted.

On March 4, 2012, with 64 percent of the vote, Vladimir Putin earned his third term as President of Russia. In May, he will begin his 12th consecutive year in power.

Among whirling accusations of voter fraud and corruption, few were surprised by Putin's solid victory. State-controlled media, an unusually high voter turnout (63 percent) and allegations of carousel voting left almost no chance of success for Putin's leading opponents: Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party (17 percent) and Mikhail Prokhorov, an independent (8 percent).

As the election results trickled in, opposition groups braced themselves and immediately began planning protest rallies. An outraged Zyuganov described the elections as "unfair and unworthy," declaring that Mr. Putin "would not be able to rule like he used to."

Amidst increasing public anger and an ever-present atmosphere of protest, however, Putin remains startlingly popular amongst the majority of Russia's population. During a victory celebration in Moscow, a teary Putin appeared before tens of thousands of flag-waving supporters. His voice rife with emotion, Putin declared to the cheering crowd, "I promised you we would win, and we won. Glory to Russia! We have won in an open and honest battle."

Though the battle may have been neither open nor entirely honest, Putin very may well have won the Presidency fair and square. Golos, an independent election watchdog, stated that the elections could not be called fair, just or open, but still estimated that Putin legitimately

took over 50 percent of the vote – more than enough to win the election. Generally viewed as a dangerous tyrant by urban Russians and the international community, Putin maintains a heroic, savior-like image among uneducated Russian farmers and manufacturers. An

Putin simply needs to convince his constituency that the alternative is a quagmire of hardship and uncertainty. ”

entically charismatic figure from humble beginnings, Putin easily portrays himself as a champion of the average post-Soviet Russian.

Putin ascended to the Russian Presidency on December 31, 1999 following the unexpected resignation of Boris Yeltsin. As Yeltsin's handpicked successor, Putin inherited an office that had drastically changed since its beginnings at the fall of the Soviet Union. Riding a wave of popular support, Yeltsin had drafted a

new constitution, established an entirely new parliament and greatly expanded the powers of the president.

Over the course of the next nine years, Putin further expanded these powers. By the end of his second term in 2008, he had gained the right to appoint and dismiss provincial governors at will and placed heavy restrictions on media freedom within the country.

Though the terms of the Russian Constitution barred him from a third consecutive term, Putin held onto power for another four years by serving as Prime Minister to his puppet successor, Dmitri Medvedev.

Under Putin's watchful eye, Medvedev further fortified the office of the President, extending the term from four to six years.

With his recent return to the Presidency, Putin will now remain in office until 2018, when he will then have the option to run again. If he chooses to do so, the results could be disastrous.

Given the popular resistance to Putin's victory, many wonder if a "Russian Spring" may soon befall the newly elected president. There are a myriad of parallels between conditions in Russia, and that of Tunisia (the originator of the Arab Spring).

Tunisia under former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was considered an illiberal, or unconsolidated, mixed democracy. Like Putin's Russia, its government consisted of a president, prime minister, and parliament. Both leaders established regimes that allowed for repression of their people. Each has been accused of political repression, violation of freedoms, and fraud. The crucial distinction between the two leaders lies in how they came to power. Ben Ali wrested the presidency from his predecessor in a coup d'état whereas Putin won his seat in an electoral victory. This gives Putin a claim to



After Vladimir Putin noted that white ribbons protesting election outcome looked like condoms, protesters adapted the symbol. *Photo/Negve*

legitimacy that the leaders toppled by the “Arab Spring” did not have, and could lead to the reluctance of Russia’s people to oust him.

News reports depicted furious protesters descending upon cities across Russia. The image is a powerful one, but not wholly representative of the will of the Russian people. The overlooked yet critical feature of these protests is scope.

Russia’s two largest cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, are the two hotbeds of Putin opposition. Moscow, a city of 10.5 million, drew a crowd of 20,000 people, or less than 0.2% of the total population of the capital city.

Granting that every revolution requires a starting point, the combination of a minute percentage of Russians engaged in protests and Putin’s convincing win in the March race for the presidency suggests overthrowing Putin is not the will of

the majority, at least not yet.

Reluctance to topple the president can be attributed to the pragmatism of the Russian middle class. Mikhail Dimitriyev, economist at the Center for Strategic Research in Moscow, identified the paradox facing Russia when he said, “We have sociological evidence which indicates that resentment of the system and Putin personally is increasing and it’s getting more tense and aggressive. This is somehow paradoxically combined with the intention to vote for Putin in the elections because people are even more concerned with the prospect of the complete disorganization of their country.”

Stability is the essential component to Putin’s longevity. The status quo need not be ideal or even acceptable; Putin simply needs to convince his constituency that the alternative is a quagmire of hardship and uncertainty. If he

acts immediately, Putin should have no difficulty proving his case. His smoking gun: a leaderless opposition.

Salesman Alexander Greshnov voiced the concerns of his contemporaries, in that “people still think that Putin is a criminal and a thief, but the opposition has not offered us any alternatives to oppose him. I think that this movement will get real strength only when we choose a united leader.”

Until Putin’s rivals identify a leader to rally around, there can be no truly unified opposition. A lack of leadership relegates the Russian resistance to a cluster of disorganized protests, hardly the solidified movement necessary to overthrow one of the premier statesmen of his generation.

A world in which the opposition succeeds in designating a resistance leader could spell disaster for

Putin’s continued rule. Russians who ordinarily would not speak out against the President may be emboldened to do so because the perceived risk is lower. While it may appear unreasonable to oppose Putin in the name of a nondescript resistance movement, the addition of a leader to the opposition makes the prospect of voicing dissent more palatable.

Even in a scenario where the opposition succeeds in adopting a leader, the effect would ultimately be most effective at dissuading Putin from running for re-election in 2018. The six-year term should be spent priming a viable alternative to Putin if the resistance hopes to evict the Kremlin’s overstayed house guest.

At long last, the veneer of Vladimir Putin is beginning to crack. The road to a Russia post-Putin, however, is still long and winding.

the
Role
of
Tribalism
in
Africa.

Tia Ayele
Associate Editor

When we hear the word “tribe” in the context of Africa, which is almost always the context, we cannot help but have a particular image in our heads. The picture of tall, dark, naked, or partially covered figures gripping spheres and inhabiting huts is what immediately comes to mind. But what is a tribe, besides the stereotype that we often materialize? By definition, a tribe is a social group organized on the basis of kinship existing before the development of, or outside of, states. The problem with this definition is that it arbitrarily groups a community of people together based on “kinship”, which could mean a number of things. The term “tribe” does not specifically identify a group of people based on their genealogy, ethnicity, religious traditions or cultural practices. Thus, the term has no useful distinction in African studies. Using “tribe” to describe an African community misrepresents African society by portraying Africans as primitive and perpetuates racist notions of African culture and history.

It can be argued that the term “tribe” is a Western creation, stemming from the “divide and conquer” strategy used by Western imperialists during the colonial era. Almost all cases of tribalism or tribal conflicts apparent today have deep rooted histories related to colonial powers. This is even evident in one of the most tumultuous tribal conflicts in African history, the strife between the Hutus and Tutsis of Rwanda. Before the colonial period of the Belgians, the Hutus and Tutsi lived peacefully amongst each other with no recorded conflicts. The two dominant tribes shared the same culture and language and possessed miniscule differences, mainly regarding shared ancestry. Due to the norm of inter-marriage prior to colonialism, Hutus and Tutsi had little, if any, distinguishable differences. Yet when the Belgians invaded in 1916, the two tribes were divided for the purpose of conquering Rwanda. Through propagating false racial identities between the tribes, the Belgians decided that the Tutsis would be the ruling population and that the Hutus would be made socially, politically, and economically inferior to their Tutsi counterparts. The marginalization of the Hutus led to disputes between the two tribes that eventually culminated in a genocide.

The Hutus and Tutsi are but just one example out of the many ways in which colonial powers influenced and promoted tribal divisions in Africa. Historical divisions between the Yoruba and Ebo tribes of Nigeria and the Amhara and Tigray tribes of Ethiopia also share strong connections to Western influence. Although it is uncertain whether or not the term “tribe” is a Western creation, there is no question that colonization perpetuated the usage of this term and contributed to the derogatory elements that are embedded in the meaning of the term.

Throughout history and even in the modern era, the term “tribe” has been used to propagate the image of savage-like Africans. Although Westerners also have their own cultural and ethnic divisions, these divisions are not classified as “tribes”. For example, the Slavic and Germanic peoples are not perceived as belong to tribes, they are described to hold varying “ethnic identities”. The term “tribe” is designated for the African, the inhabitants of huts, and the uncivilized.

We can see then that “tribe” is directly correlated with primitiveness. Using the term “tribe” reinforces the notion that Africans are stuck in a fixed society that is not advancing socially or progressing economically. Hence, a “tribal” state is one that reflects timelessness. The term is arbitrary in characterizing African communities because it does not identify a shared regional area, religious tradition, common language, or cultural practice of a group of people. Thinking of Africa in a tribal context is an extremely dismal outlook on African society because it essentially says that there is no future for African advancement. However, these ideas of Africa are nothing more than myths and ethnocentric assumptions. Labeling Africa as tribal is grievously misleading; Africa

is a continent of thriving economic growth and continuous social progression.

We should all be mindful of our use of this term conversationally and maybe even consider removing it all together from the pedagogical studies of Africa. The term is irrelevant to African studies because it does not effectively describe its own definition. Those who would argue that the word “tribe” is useful in characterizing ethnic identities are wrong, because ethnic identities are a completely separate paradigm in African history. Dismantling the usage of the word tribe will put more emphasis on ethnic identity, a term that more effectively describes the mosaic of cultural varieties in Africa.



loose CANNON *turned* CATALYST *for* CHANGE

Virginia McNally
Associate Editor

Julius Malema, the president of the African National Congress Youth League in South Africa, is a loose cannon in the field of South African politics. After a period of suspension beginning in November, Malema was expelled from the ANC for violating the party constitution.

Malema did not simply diverge from his party stance on public health care or tax policy.

He suggested supporting an armed conflict in Botswana and nationalizing mines. He also taunted foreign journalists and has been accused of hate speech. Even more serious is his suspected aim to turn the explicitly non-racial ANC into a black nationalist movement by gaining support from the youth in the country. His membership in the ANC, the party known for overthrowing Apartheid and bringing South Africa into the global community, scared foreign investors and party members. Party members could not afford to have a loose Malema cannon damaging party unity in the lead up to the next presidential election. National leadership could not let him scare away foreign investment in times of economic fragility. He had to be expelled from the party.

While Malema's ideas and policies will certainly not benefit South Africa as a whole, his role as a loose cannon may be the beginning to the solution of a problem in South African politics: the lack of healthy democratic competition. Though there are other parties in South Africa, none of them have ever held power in the post-Apartheid era. Elections are free and fair, but many have found it difficult to move away from the party associated with the end of Apartheid and the much revered Nelson Mandela. Many worry that the lack of healthy democratic competition will lead to weaknesses in South Africa as a state. A lack of competition can result in stagnation, corruption and a host of other flaws.

South Africa does certainly have its flaws. They mainly result from a limited budget and an economy experiencing slow growth. Jacob Zuma, the current president, has recently suggested creating jobs by increasing public works and labor intensive projects. This New Deal type plan emphasizing construction of infrastructure has received criticism because the government's budget is currently very limited, and money to fund the projects is scarce. Meanwhile, experts have suggested that it is not the public sector but the private sector which must experience growth in order for the economic growth to

pick up speed. In fact, it is the high salaries of government employees which scare private investors.

South Africa's youth jobless rate is around 70 percent, which explains this push to create jobs by any means possible. There are often giant crowds of students hoping to get last minute spots at public universities. The *New York Times* reported in January that one person was killed and many injured in a wild rush to enter the University of Johannesburg after a mile-long line

Zuma must repair the damage done by Malema while proposing a plan that will please both voters and international investors. ”

formed outside the gates on a final admission day earlier this year. There are simply not enough spots in public universities for qualified students, so many are forced to choose other options or remain unemployed.

Although the government has tried to push enrollment in technical schools or career-specific training, many employers do not accept these degrees, according to students. This level of unemployment and dissatisfaction is a dynamic common to Arab Spring countries, which all experience an incredibly high rate of unemployment among younger citizens.

It is this wave of frustration which Julius Malema rode to the top. His support among the youth of the ANC is remarkable, and given his popularity among an important demographic his expulsion from the party is significant. The party was clearly confident that it would not face a major challenge from Malema after expelling him. In fact, many note that his expulsion meant a clearer road for Zuma, who will be up

for another election in 2014 and is seeking the endorsement of the ANC campaign. It is almost guaranteed that Zuma will win that election if endorsed and without Malema's wild remarks and behavior, things should go off without a hitch as the party tries for yet another victory at the ballot box.

However, Zuma has a long "to-do" list that must be addressed to remain a credible leader in his party and in his country. He must repair the damage done by Malema while proposing a plan that will please both voters and international investors. He must also face a serious problem of corruption and graft that is present in all of South Africa's provinces. These issues are worst in Malema's home province of Limpopo. Malema's ties with this province are certainly frightening and it is understandable that the ANC expelled him given his own personal record of shady financial deals. Limpopo is known for pipes that run dry as government officials graft money from the budget which often results in massive overspending and fraud. One example comes from the Department of Education where there were 200 "ghost teachers" who received salaries in Limpopo but did not actually exist.

Malema's popularity and threat to the party is a sign of the weaknesses in the ANC and the need for healthy democratic competition. Challengers need to come in the form of leaders who propose realistic and rational plans to improve current conditions. While many of Malema's plans are attractive to the young and jobless, they are certainly not the pillars of an electable platform that will also make South Africa better off. An electable and beneficial platform will address unemployment and economic development while also addressing health initiatives, public education and widespread corruption. However, if conditions worsen many voters will turn to extremes in order to achieve change. This is already happening among Malema's loyal supporters.

It is time for the ANC and Zuma to get serious about improving the economy and education. Although party decisions have not been met with much outside competition, Malema's expulsion should provide some incentive to come up with effective plans for change. Malema's misfires could be the beginning of healthy democratic competition, which will produce better results for South Africans and ultimately the continent as a whole. South Africa's most dangerous political figure will hopefully be the state's most effective catalyst for change, ending the era of mile long-lines for university hopefuls and the dry pipes running to schools with ghost-teachers.

How the World Cup is Changing Brazil

Sam Kinsman
Associate Editor

People all around the world are preparing to watch the 2014 FIFA World Cup, which will be hosted by Brazil, South America's largest country. Soccer is the world's most popular sport, and the World Cup is estimated to be the most widely viewed sporting event on the planet. Brazil was selected to host the 2014 tournament at a dynamic time for the country's globalization. Its economic growth, rising middle class, strong regional influence, and growing global importance made Brazil a natural choice in 2007 by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the governing body that regulates international soccer tournaments. The enormous popularity of the tournament allows host countries to promote their country to the world and to benefit from the huge economic impact of millions of visitors, players, coaches, and corporate sponsors. With so much to be gained, countries vigorously compete to host the event. The honor of hosting the World Cup though, comes at a price. Host countries subject themselves to the intense scrutiny of the international community, specifically the surprising influence of FIFA. Brazil's unique development has been boosted by investment since being chosen to host the World Cup. But the world's passion for soccer and the challenges of supporting FIFA's demands is changing Brazil's culture and violating the country's sovereignty.

Brazil was chosen to host the 2014 tournament in 2007 during a time of significant economic growth (growth that remains strong today relative to developed economies). By that time, the BRIC group had officially named Brazil as one of the four most important emerging economies along with Russia, India, and China. After being chosen to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in the country's cultural capital city, Rio de Janeiro, then current CEO of IBM, Samuel Palmisano, predicted this decade will be the decade of Rio and Brazil in much the same way the last was the decade of Beijing and China. Seeing the potential for Mr. Palmisano's prediction to come true, Brazil's government has jumped into action to invest in new stadiums, transportation, and energy infrastructure projects that will support the influx of World Cup visitors and Brazil's future needs as it continues to flourish. The federal government's Accelerated Growth Program allocated over \$800 billion in public funding to infrastructure and energy development from 2008 to 2013. Brazil's national development bank and private investors have focused on funding



President of FIFA Joseph Blatter announcing 2014 World Cup will be held in Brazil.
Photo/Ricardo Stuckert

transportation-related projects including roads, airports, and ports. These investments, such as the \$18 billion construction of a high-speed train linking Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, will simplify transportation for the tournament and have lasting effects on the country's capacity for continued growth. Further government efforts to decrease public corruption and strengthen its capital markets have attracted foreign investors looking to find a share of the country's massive economic opportunities.

Less visible but no less important are the cultural impacts that the soccer tournament has had on Brazil. The strength of the culture surrounding soccer is in no way foreign to the South American country. In contrast, Brazil is known as a world leader in producing soccer players of the highest quality and "exporting" them to the best soccer clubs in Europe. The cultural impact of hosting the 2014 World Cup comes primarily from the unusually strong influence of FIFA. FIFA (which has more signed member states than the UN) has demonstrated its power to control the World Cup with heavy demands to change traditional Brazilian law and threats to move the event elsewhere. It maintains that Brazil's efforts to develop its infrastructure do not go far enough to support the tournament's visitors, and its officials have publicly criticized the Brazilian government's commitment to the event. It has refused to yield its position of allowing alcohol sales in and around the soccer stadiums and said it will not negotiate on absorbing the costs for reduced ticket prices for students and seniors (both of which contradict current Brazilian law).

With only two years remaining until the first match, the cultural clashes show no signs of weakening. Brazilian congressmen are calling FIFA's demands "attacks" on Brazilian

sovereignty. Tensions rose so high in recent months that the Brazilian sports minister announced his country officially no longer recognizes FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke as a legitimate representative after his rude comments about Brazil's preparation for the World Cup. The billions of dollars of investment, hundreds of thousands of new jobs, and millions of expected visitors are promoting visible changes in cities around the world's fifth largest country. These physical changes to Brazil may be small though when compared with the lasting cultural change and accelerated globalization felt by Brazil's 200 million people. FIFA, an organization with no stated political or military power, is demanding changes in the sovereign nation and regional leader. The source of power behind its demands comes not from political ties or advanced weapons, but from the incredible strength of soccer culture around the world.

Countries should weigh this "football effect" by reexamining the control they have given to FIFA to regulate international soccer. As Brazil is now seeing, soccer can boost an economy at the expense of scrutiny from FIFA. With modern communication technology bringing the World Cup to more televisions around the world, the tournament's pressures will carry both welcomed and unwarranted change. Soccer's international popularity and FIFA's importance are not likely to diminish in the foreseeable future. However, countries can revisit their priorities when dealing with the hundred-year-old institution. Stronger resistance to FIFA will send the signal that international soccer association should embrace local traditions rather than force unwanted cultural change as a negative externality of hosting the event.

Have Religious Politics Become Too Antagonistic?: The UGA Tate Preacher Phenomenon

Tucker Green and Ronnie Kurtz
Associate Editors

University of Georgia students know the sound well. On a clear day, it's audible from the fringes of North Campus. Science students hear it as they descend Ag Hill. Even freshmen can piece it together as they amble from the residence halls. The sound, of course, is the boisterous and aggressive ranting of the "Tate Preachers."

At Tate Plaza, the heart of UGA's campus, a free speech zone exists that guarantees the free and unfettered expression of a number of speakers. It is put to good use. On any given day, students who walk by are offered handouts from clubs, solicited food by charitable organizations, and recruited by campus causes. It has become the social rallying point of the entire University.

Yet there is one mainstay in the rotating circus of advertisements and applications so omnipresent in Tate Plaza: a number of outspoken, evangelical preachers bent on spreading what they perceive to be the Christian message. We refer to this body of Christian speakers collectively as "Tate Preachers." To be fair, the Tate Preachers are difficult to typify broadly. Some are amiable and agreeable, stopping to talk to students politely on their way to class. But overwhelmingly, UGA students recognize the Tate Preachers as an aggressive, combative bunch who preach a fire-and-brimstone Christian message. They shout at students for what they wear, believe and consume. It is common to hear a Tate Preacher warning students who don't believe in Christianity that they will "go to hell." Students join in on the fray as well. Passersby will often notice non-Christians, non-believers, and even Christians themselves engaging in heated back-and-forth debate with Tate Preachers about disagreements in theology or attitude. The

Tate Preacher phenomenon is an unavoidable aspect of life at UGA.

At a certain level, we would expect that an institution with a high number of religious students of varying beliefs and passions would spark a lively scene for religious debate and discourse. And yet, the Tate Preacher phenomenon constitutes a deeper, more confrontational type of debate. Vitriolic, belligerent, and antagonistic, the Tate Preachers treat (and are treated by) students as enemies in some kind of spiritual tug-of-war. Tate Plaza has turned from a free speech zone into an arena for battle between a specific type of Christians and what they perceive as an assembly of heathens.

Before our eyes, the 2012 campaign has made American politics look more and more like Tate Plaza. Now more than perhaps ever before, religion is a source of division and confrontation rather than peace and community. It is a sad development that has not only alienated moderate voters, but has led to a growing outcry over the fusion of religious dogma and politics.

Take, for example, the recent birth control battle, which should have been, in its purest of forms, a discussion on whether or not the government has a right to infringe of the religious practices of a group. Yet, taking advantage of the religiously charged environment in today's politics, members of both sides began to posture on a battlefield of religion. Opponents of the outspoken and openly Catholic Rick Santorum began to circulate videos of the candidate proclaiming that birth control is "harmful to women" and "harmful to society"—a normative debate that has little to do with the actual crux of the issue.

In fairness, the religious right has helped set the stage for such attacks by consistently returning to increasingly vitriolic statements. In 1960, John F. Kennedy's proclamation that "I do not speak for

my church on public matters; and the church does not speak for me" was heralded as a reaffirmation of American values and a hallmark of 20th century political rhetoric. Today, Rick Santorum finds such a fundamental statement so offensive that he "wants to throw up." Rush Limbaugh, the voice of millions of Conservatives across the nation, feels it prudent to label a young woman on the other side of the birth control issue a "slut"—thereby encouraging his substantial followers to adopt a similar viewpoint.

Such divisive religious politics have the immense capacity to diminish both religion and politics. Firstly, the antagonism espoused by Tate Preachers and hard-line social conservatives betrays the loving, open message of Christianity at the very core of its appeal. Such an attitude dispels people from religion rather than inviting them to it.

Secondly, a close-minded, faith-based approach to politics contradicts Jesus's famous answer to the relationship between Christianity and secular authority: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Central to Christian doctrine is the belief that there is a possible balance between the government and heavenly spheres. As Mark Dever, a senior pastor in Washington D.C., argues, "Confusion over gospel ensues when the church wields the sword that belongs to the state...All the state can offer is fleeting glory."

Finally, the rise in religious antagonism in politics has created a political environment wherein it seems the Republican who sounds the most Christian will get the most votes. In this way, politicians are treating religion like an interest group rather than an intimate belief system. As David P. Gushee, professor of Christian ethics at Mercer University, says, "Some conservative Christians are tempted to look for the candidate who is

(or appears to be) most clearly a member of their religious-political tribe — rather than focusing on the candidate's résumé, skills, foreign policy proposals or more full domestic agenda."

Instead of political debates being about ideological differences, we are seeing a culture war, an "us vs. them" battle pitting religious ideologues against their secular opponents. Discussions over things such as birth control and pornography have devolved from issues of Constitutionality to issues of religious morality. Under such auspices, compromise on policy becomes compromise on dogmatic beliefs and principles. And for a country that traces its origin to a series of compromises and still lauds "the Great Compromiser" in history books, it is such a vilification of compromise that puts our very political system in danger.

So where does this leave Americans as a whole? Religion and politics have been intertwined for nearly as long as they have existed; this will never change. Yet if America continues down the rabbit hole toward further antagonistic speech and "us vs. them" bickering, we are likely to witness a new kind of civil unrest. Americans have already expressed serious discontent about the heavy consideration of social issues this election cycle. In the heart of an economic crisis, Republican debates have been marked by lengthy debate over social issues and norms that many people thought were resolved decades ago. Imagine the discord, unrest, and inefficiency of a government that makes such polarizing issues its main concern.

At Tate Plaza, one can feel the difference when Tate Preachers take the day off. The bullhorns are gone, and other student organizations enjoy their spotlight as students walk to class undisturbed. It's a kind of peace the American voter would have to see to believe.



Islamophobia

Jacqueline Van De Velde
Associate Editor

After a long morning of lessons at an English language school in Tombland, England, 26 year-old Amal Albuliahi and 28 year-old Ameera Al Busafar walked together into the city center to get lunch. As the two women admired a shop window, an old man strode up to them and asked Ameera why she was wearing a veil. When she, shocked, didn't answer, he barked, "You are in England now. Take it off." Another woman crossed in front of them and yelled "Bomb!" The two women now are afraid to walk alone.

It's not an isolated incident, nor the worst of them. Discrimination against Muslims – termed Islamophobia – has been on the rise in Europe, spreading from country to country, through people and into policies, causing a division between Western countries and their Muslim populations. Blogs and hate groups make snide comments and online posts about their Muslim neighbors. Right-wing political parties such as the English Defense League in Great Britain regularly hold rallies to decry the Muslim presence in Europe, even going so far as to throw bacon on unfortunate Muslim bystanders. Now, most shockingly, governments have joined in the chorus of persecution too. Burqas and niqabs have been banned in France and Belgium, as well as in part of Germany; many European countries have curtailed the distribution of mosque-building permits; and immigration and asylum policies have been tightened and restricted across the continent. For a Muslim, Europe isn't the best place to live at the moment.

And therein lies the irony. In the past fifty

years, the Muslim population in Europe has exploded. In 1960, the European Muslim population was only in the tens of thousands. However, after World War II, Western Europe opened its borders to aid in rebuilding efforts. In the wake of looser immigration policies, Asian and African populations flooded into Europe. Citizens raised issue with the influx, concerned about job protection and not unaware of the racial edge to their complaints. Countries began to secure their borders in the 1960s; however, family reunification, asylum, and normal population growth have ensured a still swiftly-growing population. Today, there are 16 to 17 million Muslims in Europe -- approximately one out of every twenty-five Western Europeans. By 2030, Europe is projected to host somewhere between 25 to 30 million Muslims. The largest percentages reside in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The number of Muslims in Europe is high, but the number of Muslims who are well-integrated into European culture is low. Muslims are more likely to live in predominantly ethnic neighborhoods with high crime rates. They tend to be more frequently unemployed than their non-Muslim ethnic minority counterparts. According to a 2007 Gallup poll, they are also more likely than the general public to identify themselves by religion instead of nationality – in contrast with proudly secular Europeans.

Islam has become highly politicized over the last decade in the wake of 9/11, the terrorist attacks in 2004 in London and 2005 in Madrid, the 2006 Danish cartoon crisis, and the infamous murder of Theo van Gogh. The "old" Europeans have seen this influx of

religious immigrants as tied to an increase in terrorism. They don't make a distinction between conservative Muslims, like Ameera and Amal, and radical Muslims. Therefore, normal citizens have found themselves supporting hard-handed persecution and state-forced secularization – with the thought being, wipe out the religion and you wipe out the problem. Right?

Wrong. European efforts to de-Islamify their populace are having the opposite effect. Immigrants, without a national identity to cling to, hold their religion even more dear; when the states deny them their right to practice, they become even more rooted within it so as not to lose themselves. A good example? Women in France started wearing the burqa *because* it was banned. Now that Ameera and Amal won't leave the house, how can they be expected to integrate into European society? The only voices they will hear will be those of other Muslims; there will be no balance to the rhetoric they are given. Defiance paves the way for extremism. By denying citizens' their religious freedoms in order to prevent terrorism, the government is instead handcrafting its own radicals.

Discrimination and anti-Muslim rhetoric will further polarize an already-polarized group. If the European countries hope at all to assimilate their Muslim citizens, then their strategy needs to drastically change. Rather than forcing Muslim immigrants to be more European, the European states need to let them be Muslims. Then, with full religious freedoms, they will be able to keep their religion while embracing a new culture, rather than having to choose between the state and their god.



OF REAGANOMICS and RAP

Khalil Farah
Associate Editor

Popular American music has always been a product of the underworld. Oppressed groups, usually Blacks, were willing to go outside the accepted musical forms and in doing so, drove American music forward. The politics of the time and the music which emerged are correlated. Gangsta rap, which emerged in the '80s, is certainly no exception.

Let's first look at the decade. The civil rights movement had culminated in the '60s and since segregation was over, many Blacks expected their social and economic position to improve. Unfortunately, almost twenty years later, conditions for urban Blacks had deteriorated. Frustration was at an all time high. Blacks felt they were living in a society which had oppressed them for centuries and yet had not made any effort to help uplift them afterwards.

The situation deteriorated under the Reagan administration, which set the country on a policy of supply side, or "trickle down," economics accompanied with an increase in Cold War defense spending. The spending reductions of these policies led to cuts in the few programs urban Blacks relied upon to help with their rising poverty, like education spending and federal welfare programs. Throw in the crack epidemic, and the most accessible method to wealth for those in urban poverty came not from education but from drug dealing. Unsurprisingly, the drug trade was not an easy way to survive. The

homicide rate for Black males between 14 and 24 doubled between 1984 and 1994. In the rough gang world an exhibition of masculinity, in the form of toughness and physical strength, was part of a person's success. These frustrations imbued gangsta rap with the characteristics of a gang culture. One often criticized negative example of this phenomenon is the prevalence of misogynistic or homophobic lyrics in gangsta rap. These lyrics stem from the focus on masculinity, which was a component of the gang culture.

N.W.A.'s first album *Straight Outta Compton* was the first complete gangsta rap album. It is a raw boast of the masculinity of the group's members, and the lyrics are embedded with a deep resentment towards the government. Song titles like "Gangsta Gangsta," "F--- the Police," and "Parental Discretion iz Advised" all portray the rappers as not only physically strong but also lyrically adept. They also cement the connection between a rapper's lyrical and musical ability and his gang-related abilities. On the title track, MC Ren proclaims:

*I'ma make my snaps
If not from the records, from jackin the
crops [slang for marijuana].*

The implication is that a true street warrior can make money either through art or the violent drug trade. In some ways it is reminiscent of the medieval hero who was expected to be not only the most brutal man on the battlefield, but also the most skilled in creating poetic "boasts" out of verse.

As time progressed, the music became more nuanced, with artists like Biggie Smalls taking the music further in new directions. He complained about the growing divide between upper class NYC crowd in Manhattan and the impoverished and gang-ridden Brooklyn. In "Notorious Thugs" he raps:

*[you are] up in restaurants with
mandolins and violins.
We just sittin' here tryin' to win, tryin not
to sin...
So much smoke need oxygen, steadily
countin them Benjamin's*

Here the lyrics invoke the image of an oppressed and downtrodden Brooklyn, suffocating under the excess and opulence of nearby Manhattan. In addition to the complex image, the meter and rhyme becomes more complex with time. The repetition of the "-in" endings multiple times is combined with a style which gives three heavy syllables in each line. The song becomes accusatory but at the same time an assertion of one's own poetic skills.

The understanding of gangsta rap is incomplete unless one sees its beginnings as a product of the economic plight of urban Blacks. It is a somewhat reckless assertion of power and masculinity, but these traits only come about as a result of the bleak outlook many faced combined with the belief that there was little if any assistance to help escape from the poverty-stricken ghettos of the inner city.

Russian Grrl: Women Protest Putin

Emily Kopp
Associate Editor

Made famous by their guerrilla performances on the streets of Moscow, the women of the band Pussy Riot unleash political protest punk in neon minidresses.

“Egyptian air is good for the lungs!” they yell. “Let’s make Tahrir in the middle of the Red Square!”

Revolutionary lyrics do not usually receive a warm reception in President Vladimir Putin’s Russia, which placed below Ethiopia and Singapore on Reporters Without Borders’ Freedom of Information Index in 2010. But from behind the veil of their neon toboggans, the women of Pussy Riot have leveraged their anonymity to spew withering political critique. In December, a Pussy Riot show ignited a protest that brought hundreds of thousands of demonstrators to Red Square. The band has played an important role in Russia’s burgeoning opposition movement. Despite the most widespread public protests in Russia since the decline of the Soviet Union, Putin won four more years at the helm of Russian politics in early March. These protests have dampened in recent weeks because of a fierce government crackdown. Indeed, two members of Pussy Riot face seven years in prison on charges of “delinquency” for performing a song criticizing the Orthodox Church’s support of Putin in a Moscow cathedral.

Unlike the forefathers of punk, they do not seek anarchy, but simply democratic reform and accountability. Admittedly, anti-government rhetoric delivered through a blow horn, accompanied by the whine of a guitar with the amp turned up, is an unlikely clarion call for civil and representative government. Pussy Riot’s blend of cheeky femininity mixed with unflinching calls for revolution might make the band an unusual vanguard for Russia’s protest movement. But this unique brand of political activism has caught hold in Russia, perhaps reflecting the increasing importance of women in the Russian’s demands for fundamental change.

In an interview with *Vice Magazine*, Pussy Riot cited Riot Grrrl, a feminist genre that emerged in the U.S. in the 1990s, as a source of inspiration for their sound. In the Riot Grrrl song “Male Model,” Carrie Brownstein of the band Sleater-Kinney cries out, “It’s time for a new rock n’ roll age/History will have to find a different face.” With regard to the preponderance of women calling for the end of the Putin regime, it’s not just his face they’re sick of—they’re sick of looking as his bare chest.

Putin’s reliance on a “macho” persona for popular support is wearing thin on Russia’s increasingly educated and career-oriented women. Last week a blogger exposed Putin’s apocryphal take-down of an Amus tiger as a stunt, and his “discovery” of Greek artifacts in a scuba dive last year was met with similar skepticism. Even before he announced his intention to run for president, the Kremlin launched the “Putin’s Army” campaign, which asked women to strip in their support of the Russian prime minister,



Punk rockers Pussy Riot are facing years in jail after a protest against Vladimir Putin in a Russian Eastern Orthodox church. *Photo/Igor Mukhin*

offering up an iPad for the sexiest video. The demand that women bare their bodies to express their political opinions rather than, say, vote or write, indisputably left some ladies miffed. Last spring, the Kremlin recruited women in bikinis and high-heeled boots to display mattresses with Colonel Gadhafi’s face brandished across the front in protest of the war in Libya. The women claimed to belong to FEMEN, a group of women in the Ukraine known for protesting topless. FEMEN denied any affiliation, and most dismissed the protest as a government-sponsored political ploy. The differences are unmistakable: FEMEN employ their femininity in an empowering way to call attention to real issues—most recently, Putin’s fraudulent election to a second presidency. The mattress protest, as well as the “Putin’s Army” campaign, both reek of state-sponsorship and an utter disrespect for women.

Not only is Putin’s PR patriarchal, his policies also reflect an unfair bias against women. Russian maternity wards suffer from notorious underfunding, and Russia’s political offices are padded with men. One of the Russia’s most well-connected government officials is Yana Lapikova, a former model and Putin’s personal photographer, largely believed to have been chosen for the position simply because of her stunning looks. Critics have often faulted Putin and Medvedev for failing to adequately address rampant sex trafficking, or the sometimes brutal treatment of women in Chechnya.

Unlike the ladies of Pussy Riot, Ksenia Sobchak has been empowered to speak out against political corruption not by her anonymity, but by her public prominence. Dubbed by American press as “the Russian Paris Hilton,” Sobchak has in many respects lived up to that dubious distinction and all it connotes—the sex scandals, the media overexposure, and the lavish lifestyle. As the child of the Mayor of St. Petersburg

and a close personal friend of Putin’s, Anatoly Sobchak, Ksenia was born into the spotlight. As she grew into her twenties, she posed in scandalous spreads for men’s magazines, and hosted a reality show condemned by socially conservative deputies in the Moscow City Council for quietly encouraging contestants to have sex on camera for the chance of winning a house.

But lately, Sobchak has traded in her lingerie for dark-rimmed glasses. She has made speeches to thousands of anti-Putin protesters in recent months, to the dismay and derision of some, who view Sobchak as a symbol of exorbitance and elitism, or simply an extension of her politically well-connected father. While Sobchak has not shied from discussing politics in interviews, she has always stopped short of pointing the finger at her powerful family friend. Since protests against Putin began in earnest in October though, Sobchak has demonstrated a personal and public relations transformation. It seems that even the most profitable benefactor of Russian state-controlled media’s hyper-sexualized image of women has had enough. At a rally in March, Sobchak said, “We know who we are against. We need to show what we are for.” Late last year, she targeted the Minister of Youth Affairs by videotaping him spending lavishly at a high-end restaurant. His spokesman responded by labeling her a “cheap prostitute.”

Not that applying such sexist rhetoric to the opposition is limited to middling bureaucrats. In a 2004 interview, Putin boldly said, “Authority, like a man, must always try, and the press, like a woman, must always resist.” Connotations of sexual assault set aside, Putin may be on to something-- the largest cracks in his “he-man” cult of personality may come from a sector of society he never bothered to fully size up.



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