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Can Labour return from the brink?

Roy Hattersley

OPINION

LONDON The British Labour Party faces the biggest crisis in its history, bigger than 1983 when it polled less than 28 percent of the popular vote and won only 209 seats in the House of Commons. Numerically, the result of the June 8 general election may not be quite as bad for Labour as it was 34 years ago. And, unlike in 1983, a clutch of despairing former Labour cabinet ministers have not chosen to found an unelectable fringe party. But the damage to the party's prospects today is far deeper.

In 1983, Labour moderates rightly believed that once the extent of the electoral disaster became plain, there would be a slow revival of enthusiasm for electable policies and an electable leadership. Indeed, some of us in the party were preparing the ground for the counterrevolution even before voting day.

For example, when I spoke in my Birmingham constituency, I explicitly rejected policies like nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from what was then the European Community — key elements in Labour's 1983 party manifesto.

Today, there is little sign that Labour will soon make its way out of the wilderness. According to some predictions based on recent polls, the party could be left with as few as 157 seats in Parliament (from its 2015 election total of 232). Members on the opposition benches of Parliament who should be mapping out the road to recovery show little inclination to lead the way.

Sensible Labour policies — more affordable housing and greater investment in the health service — are obscured by the party leader, Jeremy Corbyn's displays of inadequacy and incompetence. Conservative newspapers regurgitate his closest supporters' past associations with extreme organizations and bizarre ideas.

In 1983, the Labour Party suffered from three related, but transitory, problems. The first was Tony Benn, whose fantasy politics and messianic egotism appealed to romantics, and who was only narrowly defeated in his bid to become the party's deputy leader in 1981.

The second was Michael Foot, the party leader, who — through a distinguished writer and cabinet minister — was wholly unsuited to political leadership. HATTERSLEY, PAGE M



New apartment buildings in Pyongyang, North Korea. Estimates of the country's annual growth are comparable to some fast-growing economies unencumbered by sanctions.

Growth slackens a leader's grip

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

North Korea's economy is expanding, and that has opened minds to new ideas

BY CHOE SANG-HUN

Despite decades of sanctions and international isolation, the economy in North Korea is showing surprising signs of life. Scores of marketplaces have opened in cities across the country since the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, took power five years ago. A growing class of merchants and entrepreneurs is thriving under the protection of ruling party officials. Pyongyang, the capital, has seen a construction boom, and there are now enough cars on its once-empty streets for some residents to make a living washing them.

Reliable economic data is scarce. But recent defectors, regular visitors and economists who study the country say nascent market forces are beginning to reshape North Korea — a development that complicates efforts to curb Mr. Kim's nuclear ambitions.

Even as President Trump bets on tougher sanctions, especially by China, to stop the North from developing nuclear-

armed missiles capable of striking the United States, the country's improving economic health has made it easier for it to withstand such pressure and to acquire funds for its nuclear program.

While North Korea remains deeply impoverished, estimates of annual growth under Mr. Kim's rule range from 1 percent to 5 percent, comparable to some fast-growing economies unencumbered by sanctions.

But a limited embrace of market forces in what is supposed to be a classless society also is a gamble for Mr. Kim, who in 2013 made economic growth a top policy goal on par with the development of a nuclear arsenal.

Mr. Kim, 33, has promised his long-suffering people that they will never have to "tighten their belts" again. But as he allows private enterprise to expand, he undermines the government's central argument of socialist superiority over South Korea's capitalist system.

There are already signs that market forces are weakening the government's grip on society. Information is seeping in along with foreign goods, eroding the cult of personality surrounding Mr. Kim and his family. And as people support themselves and get what they need outside the state economy, they are less beholden to the authorities.

"Our attitude toward the government was this: If you can't feed us, leave us



In allowing private enterprise to expand, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un undermines his government's central argument of socialist superiority over South Korea.

alone so we can make a living through the market," said Kim Jin-bee, who fled North Korea in 2014 and, like others interviewed for this article, uses a new name in the South to protect relatives she left behind.

After the government tried to clamp

down on markets in 2009, she recalled, "I lost what little loyalty I had for the regime."

Ms. Kim's loyalty was first tested in the 1990s, when a famine caused by floods, drought and the loss of Soviet aid

Births slow in Southern Europe as crisis lingers

ATHENS

Austerity measures extend even to the cradle, raising worries for future growth

BY LEZ ALDERMAN

As a longtime fertility doctor, Minas Mastrominas has helped couples in Greece give birth to thousands of bouncing babies. But recently, disturbing trends have escalated at his clinic.

Couples insisting on only one child. Women tearfully renouncing plans to conceive. And a surge in single-child parents asking him to destroy all of their remaining embryos.

"People are saying they can't afford more than one child, or any at all," Dr. Mastrominas, a director at Embryogenesis, a large in vitro fertilization center, said as videos of gurgling toddlers played in the waiting room. "After eight years of economic stagnation, they're giving up on their dreams."

Like women in the United States and other mature economies, women across Europe have been having fewer children for decades. But demographers are warning of a new hot spot for childlessness: on the Mediterranean rim, where Europe's economic crisis hit hardest.

As couples grapple with a longer-than-expected stretch of low growth, high unemployment, precarious jobs and financial strain, they are increasingly deciding to have just one child, or none.

Approximately a fifth of women born in the 1970s are likely to remain childless in Greece, Spain and Italy, a level not seen since World War I, according to the Wittgenstein Center for Demography and Global Human Capital, based in Vienna. And hundreds of thousands of fertile young people have left for Germany, Britain and elsewhere in the prosperous north of Europe, with little intent of returning unless the economy improves.

Birthrates in the region have slid back almost to where they were before the crisis emerged in 2008. Women in Spain had been averaging 1.47 children per household, up from 1.24 in 2000, but those gains have all but evaporated. In Italy, Portugal and Greece, birthrates have reverted to about 1.3.

It adds to the growing concern about a demographic disaster in the region. The current birthrates are well under the 2.1 rate needed to keep a population steady, according to Eurostat, the European Union statistics agency.

Maria Karakliou, 43, a political poster in Athens, decided to forgo children after concluding she would not be able to offer them the stable future her parents had afforded. Her sister has a child, and Ms. Karakliou is painfully aware that her grandmother already had five grandchildren at her age.

EUROPE, PAGE 4

Germans embrace house of Rosa Parks

BERLIN

Saved from demolition, civil rights heroine's home gets second life in Berlin

BY SALLY MCGRANE

As twilight fell over Wedding, a working-class Berlin neighborhood, the curtained window panes of a small, dilapidated-looking backyard house began to glow. Yellow light spilled through the cracks in the wooden facade. Children playing next door looked up as the house started to vibrate with musical notes and otherworldly feedback.

Then came the strong, clear voice of the American civil rights icon Rosa Parks. She was talking about Montgomery, Ala., and her refusal to give up her seat in the front of a bus.

The house, where Ms. Parks lived, once sat in Detroit, and belonged to Ms. Parks's brother. But after it was



Ryan Mendoza, an American artist, with his son and his wife, Fabia, in front of Rosa Parks' house in Berlin. Mr. Mendoza moved the house from Detroit and rebuilt it.

threatened with demolition, the house was moved to Berlin, where it was opened to the public in early April.

Inside, Ryan Mendoza, a Berlin-based American artist, has been putting on half-hour-long sound performances, including excerpts from a 1957 radio interview with Ms. Parks conducted in this very building.

"It's my job to keep the house alive," Mr. Mendoza explained.

He added, "I try to make it loud enough to annoy the neighbors, but not too much."

So far, the neighbors do not seem to be annoyed. On the contrary, Berlin has embraced the little house from Detroit, which Ms. Parks moved to in 1957, and lived in with her brother's large family after fleeing death threats and employment problems in the South.

The house's unlikely second life in Mr. Mendoza's garden in Berlin has captured the city's imagination, making front-page news and, for some, symbolizing Germany's changing role in the world.

HOUSE, PAGE 2

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PAGE TWO

A vivid chronicler of the rich and famous

JEAN STEIN
1934-2017

BY RICHARD SANDOMIR

Jean Stein, a child of Hollywood wealth whose restless curiosity led her to produce oral histories about Robert F. Kennedy, the tragic Warhol star Edie Sedgwick and a group of people and families who transformed Los Angeles, died on Sunday in New York. She was 83.

Her daughter Katrina vanden Heuvel, the editor and publisher of The Nation, said her mother had died in a fall from her 15th-floor apartment on the East Side of Manhattan. She had been suffering from depression, Ms. vanden Heuvel said. The police said they were investigating the death as a suicide.

Ms. Stein, whose father was a founder of the entertainment giant MCA, found a vivid subject in Ms. Sedgwick, an heirless from a patrician family whose downfall came to define the perils of ephemeral celebrity. A beautiful and charming personality, Ms. Sedgwick turned to injecting LSD and speed and shoplifting before dying of an overdose at 28 in 1971.

"I felt that she symbolized the 1960s the way that Zelda Fitzgerald represented the 1920s," Ms. Stein told the interviewer David Rothenberg on the New York FM radio station WBAI in 1982, when "Edie: An American Biography" was published. "But what makes 'Edie,' the book, work is that she touched so many worlds — these different, alienated worlds in the 1960s — and the story is as much about all of those people as it is about her."



Jean Stein, whose books included "West of Eden: An American Place," in 1990.

Ms. Stein, who knew Ms. Sedgwick — and let her stay in her daughter Wendy's bedroom after a hotel fire — was aware by 1967 of her dissolution. "She was the quintessential poor little rich girl," Ms. Stein told Mr. Rothenberg. "She'd be wearing fur, but underneath it she was skeletal and wearing leotards and had anorexia."

For her most recent book, "West of Eden: An American Place" (2016), Ms. Stein spent parts of more than 20 years interviewing people about the influence of Hollywood (through her own family, the Warner brothers and the actress Jennifer Jones), oil exploration (through the Doheny family) and real estate (through the Garlands, especially Jane, a schizophrenic heiress) on Los Angeles.

"All the while, there are the voices you can't stop listening to," Maria Russo wrote in The New York Times Book Review. "As Stein's people rummage through their faulty memories, they talk the way human beings actually talk — heavy on score-settling, gossip and hearsay. It's at times almost unbelievable what they are willing to say."

Jean Babette Stein was born in Chicago on Feb. 9, 1934, the daughter of Jules Stein, who was an ophthalmologist before starting what became MCA, and the former Doris Jones. At the family estate in Beverly Hills, Misty Mountain, Ms. Stein would hear coyotes howling at

night, she said in "West of Eden." During World War II, her father built a secret room — a sort of bunker — behind the bar in case the Nazis attacked.

At a home where Hollywood stars were frequent guests, she and her sister, Susan, were "brought down to curtsy like little dolls in our dressing gowns," Ms. Stein said. When she was 16, her father's lawyer tried to set her up on a date with a young lawyer, Roy Cohn, who was part of the team prosecuting an economist, William Remington, for espionage and who would go on to notoriety as counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy. Ms. Stein went to watch Mr. Cohn in court, she said, "and within minutes my sympathies were with the victim." They never went out.

She attended Wellesley College and the Sorbonne but did not graduate. Gore Vidal, a close friend who was interviewed in "West of Eden," said that she had been "somewhat unfocused, not terribly interested in the academic world" of Wellesley, and he took her to literary events where she would meet interesting people.

"I didn't see her for six months," he said, "and the next time I did, she was with Faulkner."

Indeed, in 1955, while she was in France, Ms. Stein interviewed William Faulkner for The Paris Review. When she asked if there was a formula to be a successful novelist, Faulkner told her it was 99 percent talent, 99 percent discipline and 99 percent work.

Ms. Stein worked for several years at The Paris Review for its editor, George Plimpton, before moving to New York City to be an assistant to Clay Felker, then the features editor of Esquire magazine. Later, her marriage to William vanden Heuvel, a lawyer who had been a special assistant to Robert Kennedy when he was the United States attorney general, helped give her entree to the train that bore Kennedy's body from New York to Washington after his assassination in 1968.

The journey inspired the structure of her book, "American Journey: The Times of Robert Kennedy" (1970), an oral history edited by Mr. Plimpton.

In Life magazine, Ben Bradlee, the executive editor of The Washington Post, described Ms. Stein as a "brilliant, non-obtrusive interviewer," writing that there was "new vital history in these pages, more than any review can hold." A review in The New Yorker said the book "mortalizes" Kennedy "by bringing his complex and contradictory character most vividly to life."

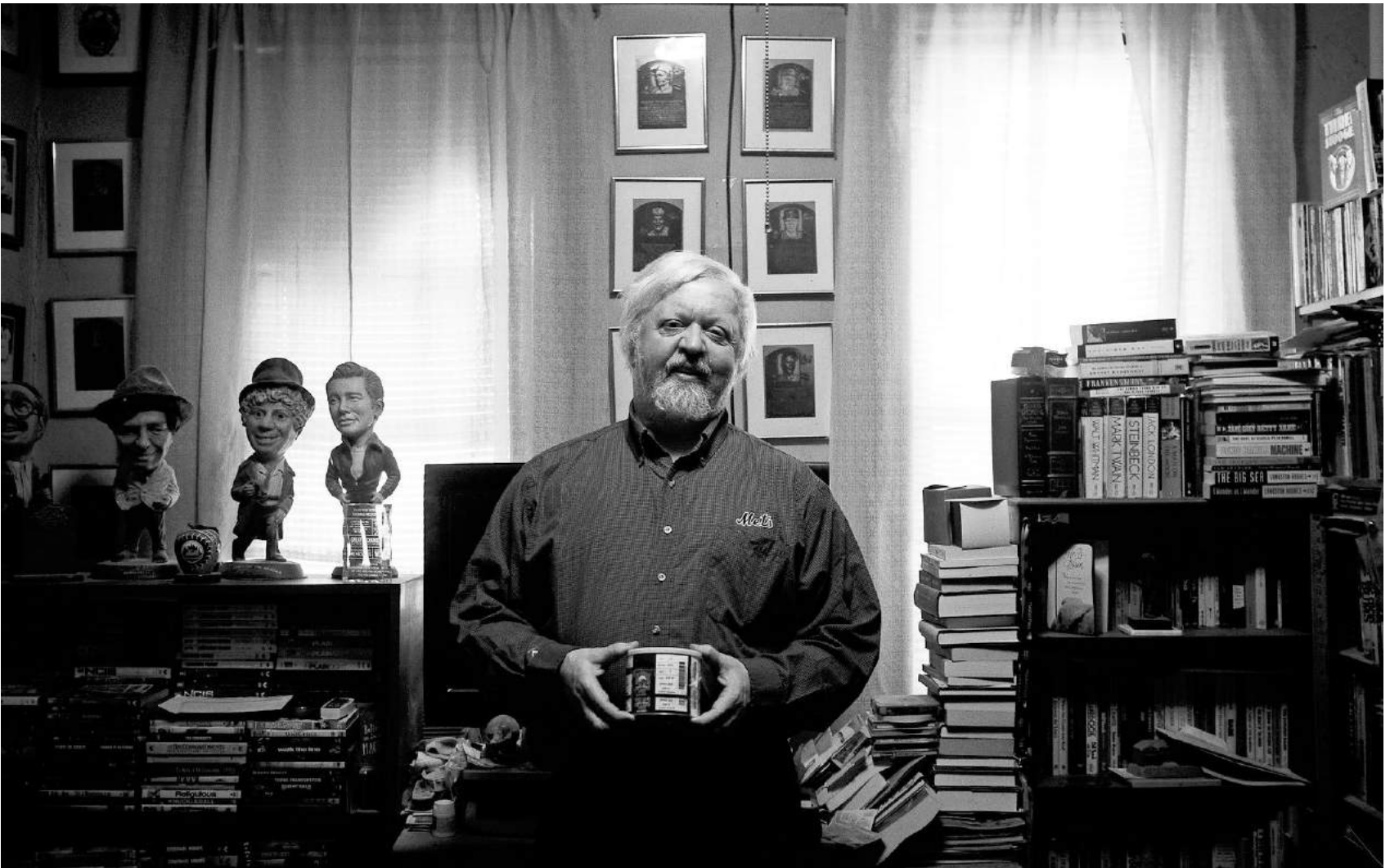
Shy and with a fluttery voice, Ms. Stein turned her former apartment on Central Park West into a salon for writers, artists, politicians and academics.

"She loved to gather people of all kinds," Katrina vanden Heuvel said on Tuesday. "She always had the most interesting writers mixed up with troublemakers. She had Daniel Ellsberg with Adlai Stevenson, or an ex-general with war protesters. Gore Vidal and Norman Mailer had a fistfight there."

Ms. Stein sought a similarly eclectic mix when she was the editor and publisher of Grand Street, a quarterly literary journal, from around 1990 to 2004.

"I am very interested in these different worlds coming together, so you're not only writing, you're not only art, you're not only science, you're bringing them all together," she told The Los Angeles Times in 1990. "And, in a way, I've lived my life in New York that way."

In addition to her daughters, Katrina and Wendy vanden Heuvel, Ms. Stein is survived by two granddaughters. Her marriages — to Mr. vanden Heuvel and to Torsten Wiesel, a Swedish neurobiologist who was a co-recipient of the 1981 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine — ended in divorce.



Tom McDonald at his home in New York, with the peanut can in which he keeps a portion of the ashes of his lifelong friend and fellow Mets fan, Roy Riegel, who died in 2008.

Honoring a baseball buddy

A Mets fan memorializes his plumber friend, one ballpark bathroom at a time

BY COREY KILGANNON

The New York Mets were leading the Philadelphia Phillies, 2-1, after two innings when Tom McDonald stood up from his upper-deck seat at Citi Field.

Nature was calling, and so was his obligation to his childhood friend and fellow Mets fan Roy Riegel, whose death nine years ago left Mr. McDonald, 56, vowing to honor their baseball bonds in an unconventional way: by disposing of Mr. Riegel's ashes in ballparks across the United States.

Even more unusual was his chosen method: flushing them down public restroom toilets in the ballparks between innings.

"The game has to be in progress — that's a rule of mine," Mr. McDonald said one recent weeknight before entering a Citi Field bathroom, holding a little plastic bottle containing a scoopful of Mr. Riegel's ashes.

He stepped into a bathroom stall and sprinkled the ashes into the toilet with as much decorum as the setting allowed. A couple of flushes later and Mr. Riegel's remains were presumably on a journey through Citi Field's plumbing.

"I took care of Roy, and I had to use the facilities myself," Mr. McDonald said, emerging from the stall with the empty container. "So I figure, you know, kill two birds."

"I always flush in between, though," he added. "That's another rule of mine."

The key here is that Mr. Riegel was a plumber, so how better to honor him than by pumping his essence into the plumbing, Mr. McDonald said, adding that he has flushed Mr. Riegel's ashes at 16 stadiums so far while keeping journals of his trips.

"I know people might think it's weird, and if it were anyone else's ashes, I'd agree," he said. "But for Roy, this is the perfect tribute to a plumber and a baseball fan and just a brilliant, wild guy."



Mr. McDonald displaying a picture of his deceased friend. The two grew up a block apart in New York and attended countless Mets games together at Shea Stadium.

Mr. McDonald, who also goes by Porky, is a recently retired New York City Transit Authority office worker who has written about 3,000 poems, most of them about baseball, often traveling to ballparks across the country for inspiration.

With no college education or formal instruction as a writer, he has cultivated an accessible, regular-fan style that owes much to his knock-around childhood in the Astoria section of the borough of Queens, not far from where the Mets play — which, it should be said, is in a neighborhood called Flushing.

Mr. McDonald and Mr. Riegel grew up a block apart and attended countless games together at Shea Stadium, which closed in 2008. As adolescents, they raced jubilantly onto the field when the Mets beat the Cincinnati Reds in Game 5 to win the National League pennant in 1973. They also suffered through many losing seasons.

A watery send-off had not occurred to Mr. McDonald when he asked Mr. Riegel's family for a portion of his ashes shortly after his 2008 death. He originally had planned only to scatter

them in ballparks and other poignant spots.

But scattering the ashes at some stadiums posed problems. Mr. McDonald's first attempt, at a Pittsburgh Pirates game in 2009 at PNC Park, was met with a gust of wind, recalled Adam Boneker, 46, a friend who has accompanied Mr. McDonald on many of his trips to ballparks to dump the ashes.

"It was awkward," Mr. Boneker recalled, adding that they resolved to try it at a Minnesota Twins game at the Metrodome in Minneapolis but, once there, realized that an indoor stadium was not an appropriate setting.

Afterward, at a nearby Irish pub, a frustrated Mr. McDonald excused himself to use the bathroom. He returned smiling and declared triumphantly, "I just took care of Roy," Mr. Boneker recalled.

Mr. McDonald had flushed the ashes in the bathroom.

"Right there, it hit me," Mr. McDonald said. "After that, it just took on a life of its own."

In Cleveland, Mr. Riegel's ashes were flushed at both Progressive Field and at

the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, because Mr. Riegel was a devout rocker. In Chicago, Mr. McDonald flushed them at a White Sox game but not at a game of the Cubs, the Mets' old nemesis.

"It's funny — not in a joke way — but funny that it was exactly like Roy would have wanted it," Mr. McDonald said.

Mr. Riegel was "a major partyer," Mr. McDonald said, and "walked that tightrope between genius and insanity."

The fast life caught up with him, and he died at age 48 on April 8, 2008, the day of the home opener of the Mets' final season at Shea. Mr. McDonald attended the game without Mr. Riegel and returned home to find out his friend had died.

He sat down and wrote "A Final Opener, Indeed," a poem about how the start of each baseball season would renew their childhood friendship.

"Each April, we were once again, boys in constant, cool connection," wrote Mr. McDonald, who will read his poems next month at a symposium at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

In Mr. McDonald's Astoria studio apartment, filled with baseball and other memorabilia, he keeps Mr. Riegel's remaining ashes in a Planters peanuts can next to a set of World Series highlight videos and Mr. McDonald's collection of 149 autographs of baseball Hall of Famers.

For each trip, Mr. McDonald spoons some ashes into an empty Advil bottle from the can, whose exterior is wrapped in old Mets ticket stubs.

He said he had enough left for one more tribute, which he plans on doing at Durham Athletic Park, the former minor league ballpark in North Carolina where the 1988 movie "Bull Durham" was filmed.

Mr. Riegel's youngest brother, Hank Riegel, of Waterloo, N.Y., called Mr. McDonald's method of ash scattering appropriate, given his brother's offbeat outlook on life.

"He'd be like, 'Oh, yeah, do that,'" Hank Riegel said. "He would definitely approve of it. Never once did Roy follow the rules."

Berliners embrace house of Rosa Parks from Detroit

HOUSE, FROM PAGE 1

The project came about last year, when Rhea McCauley, Ms. Parks's niece, met Mr. Mendoza in Detroit. As part of an art project that explored his own sense of home, as well as the American subprime mortgage crisis, Mr. Mendoza successfully transported an abandoned house from Detroit to Europe, winning the trust of Detroit community members along the way. Ms. McCauley told him she had managed to buy back the family house for \$500, but she could not find anyone interested in helping restore and preserve it.

Mr. Mendoza, who makes his living as a fine-arts painter, agreed to help. He raised a little over \$100,000 by selling some of his paintings, and set out for Detroit. There, he worked with a local team to take apart the house, which had fallen into extreme disrepair.

He then shipped the wooden exterior to Berlin, where he spent the winter painstakingly rebuilding it, mostly alone, by hand. "It was an act of love," he said.

That the house had to be shipped to Berlin to be saved is extraordinary, said Daniel Geary, a professor of American history at Trinity College Dublin, given



Rosa Parks riding on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1956. Her refusal to give up her seat on a bus in that city resulted in a boycott that lasted more than a year.

that, "in general, in the U.S., with public heroes, there is an attempt to preserve anywhere they lived."

Mr. Geary said that to him, the neglect of a house like this one speaks to a contemporary American unwillingness to deal with racism's legacy.

"People like to remember Rosa Parks for one moment, when she wouldn't stand up on a bus," he said. "They don't really want to grapple with the rest of her life. The death threats, the fact that she had to leave Alabama and go to Detroit. It's a more complicated story with

a less happy ending. She suffered for her decision."

For many here, Germany provides a strong counterexample when it comes to approaching painful aspects of a nation's past.

"With our history, we have so many years of guilt and a culture of practicing not forgetting," said Deike Diening, a journalist for Berlin's Tagesspiegel newspaper, who wrote about the project. "Now, it might be a healing process to be able to turn it around, to give refuge to others. It feels good."

But some said it was the timing of the project that accounted for its extraordinary resonance. "I think Berliners, even more than Germans in general, are really deeply concerned about what is going on in the U.S., with Trump," said Gero Schliess, culture correspondent at Deutsche Welle, Germany's international broadcast service.

The United States has long been a model. But now, he said, "the political discourse in the U.S. is not really reflecting democratic values."

"I'm proud to have the house here," said Mr. Mendoza's wife, Fabia, who grew up in Berlin and has made a documentary about the project. The couple,

who have a young son, live in a small, white cube-shaped house right next to the newly erected clapboard one. They hope that Ms. Parks's house will eventually find a more permanent home.

For now, Ms. McCauley, Ms. Parks's niece, is very happy the house is in Germany, tucked away behind a 1960s-era apartment building. Traveling to Berlin for the unveiling on April 8, Ms. McCauley was impressed with what she described as the outpouring of love she encountered. "I was amazed to find more knowledge of Auntie Rosa's legacy there than here," she said.

Ms. McCauley was also pleased with Mr. Mendoza's decision to leave the facade in the condition he found it. "This house has been through everything," she said. "I'm glad it's not painted nicely, with flowers and a picket fence. We're not talking about a fairy tale, there's no Hansel and Gretel here. We're talking about a lady who sacrificed so much, who suffered."

Mr. Mendoza has listed a series of opening hours — during which the couple welcome the public to their garden, often with live music and an open mike — on his website. However, some 50

people ring their bell each day, Mr. Mendoza said. If the couple are at home, they usually let them in.

"We're getting a little worried," he said with a laugh. "But it's O.K. This was an act of love, and we want to start a discussion."

The house is partly visible from the street, so people can get a glimpse of it even if the Mendozas are not at home. Visitors are not allowed inside the house, for insurance reasons, but also as a sign of respect. "This house was abandoned, people came inside," Mr. Mendoza said. "I want it to have its dignity." On a recent Saturday, a dozen visitors dropped in. "It's surreal that it's here," said Norberto Romero, a photographer who lives in the neighborhood.

"It's strange no one wants it in the U.S.," said another visitor, Marcus Kelch, who works with handicapped children, and looked up Ms. Parks on the internet to find out who she was.

Mr. Kelch and a friend, Dennis Lumme, were silent, as they considered the transplanted house's peeling paint and battered wooden boards. "Berlin is definitely the right place for this house," Mr. Lumme said after a moment. "Every meter you walk is full of memory."

World

Yellow fever plea: Don't kill the monkeys

RIO DE JANEIRO

Blamed for outbreak in Brazil, primates can help contain the disease

BY SIMON ROMERO

As fears spread in Brazil over the resurgence of yellow fever, health officials are issuing a warning: Stop killing the monkeys.

Some assailants clubbed monkeys to death in panicked reactions to Brazil's most alarming outbreak in decades of a virus that haunted the country in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The authorities found other monkeys dead with fractured skulls after having been being attacked with stones. One monkey was burned to a crisp.

Infectious disease specialists say people are taking aim at the wrong target. Mosquitoes, not monkeys, are actually the vector for the virus, and the monkeys are dying from yellow fever in much higher numbers than people in Brazil. Those who kill the monkeys are making matters worse by depleting primate populations that serve as beacons for where yellow fever is spreading, epidemiologists said.

"They're putting human beings at greater risk by killing the messenger," said Renato Alves, an official in Brazil's Health Ministry who is tracking the outbreak. "Monkeys are a crucial alert mechanism that we monitor to deploy vaccines and prevention efforts to the right places."

The authorities' pleas to stop killing monkeys in Brazil, which has the richest primate diversity of any country, comes amid widespread concern over the new-found vigor of a virus that ranked among the largest public health threats here before mass vaccination programs began in the 1940s.

Yellow fever, which can include symptoms like jaundice, high fevers and multiple organ failure, has killed at least 240 people in recent months, the Health Ministry said. The disease, normally found in parts of the Amazon River Basin, has spread to the country's most



DADO GALDIERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ROBERTA DE OLIVEIRA RESENDE



DADO GALDIERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Joaquim Santos de Oliveira, top, survived yellow fever, but his brother Watila dos Santos died. The disease is killing monkeys like the golden lion tamarin, above, in high numbers in Brazil. Left, a monkey underwent a necropsy.

Hamas chief ends his reign

DOHA, QATAR

New political document seeks to end global pariah status of militant group

BY DECLAN WALSH

In the violent flux of the Middle East, Khaled Meshal is one of the great survivors. Down the years other senior figures in Hamas, the Islamist militant group that violently resists Israel, have died in hotel rooms at the hands of Israeli assassins or been crushed by laser-guided missiles during the wars in Gaza.

Mr. Meshal, who spent his career shifting from one Arab capital to another, had his own close scrape: In 1997, a year after he became the leader of Hamas, Israeli spies sprayed poison into his ear on a street in Jordan, sending Mr. Meshal into a coma and setting off an angry diplomatic showdown between Jordan and Israel that ended with the delivery of a lifesaving antidote.

Now Mr. Meshal is stepping down as the senior leader, ending a 21-year reign during which Hamas grew into a formidable military force and also joined politics to rule Gaza for the past decade. Yet it has become an international pariah for its attacks on civilians.

Mr. Meshal's parting shot is a new political document, released at a luxury hotel in Doha on Monday, that he is pitching as an attempt to pull Hamas from its isolation by presenting a friendlier face to the world.

A big part of that is its watering down of the anti-Semitic language of the original Hamas charter in 1988, with its talk of war between Arabs and Jews. "We are making it clear that ours is a liberation project — not about religion or the

Jews," Mr. Meshal said in an interview on Tuesday in Doha, his latest home.

His offer found few takers. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel immediately rejected the overture as an exercise in insincerity. "Hamas is attempting to fool the world, but it will not succeed," his spokesman said Monday. Hamas is loathed in Israel for bombings and rockets launched indiscriminately into civilian areas.

It was also greeted with silence by Western countries, a reflection of the fact that Hamas failed to bend on any of the factors that have caused it to be branded a terrorist organization — and has not even formally repudiated the 1988 charter, with its talk of "obliterating" Israel and creating an Islamic State on "every inch" of historic Palestine.

"Ours is a liberation project — not about religion or the Jews."

The failure to achieve even that cosmetic gesture offers a telling indication of how Hamas is hamstrung by its own deep-seated ambivalence toward reform, said Nathan Thrall, an analyst with the International Crisis Group who is based in Jerusalem. He noted that the original charter has long been a source of quiet embarrassment among more reform-minded Hamas leaders.

"On one hand, they are attempting to appeal to hard-liners by not giving up their core principles," said Mr. Thrall.

"On the other, people like Meshal were hoping the document could lead to openings with Sunni Arab states and the West. It attempts to please everyone, and in so doing pleases no one."

Yet the attempted rebranding of Hamas comes at a moment of sudden change in the Middle East. Mahmoud Abbas, the leader of the rival Palestinian

Authority, was scheduled to meet with President Trump in Washington on Wednesday.

Mr. Trump has spoken of his desire to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but his interlocutor, Mr. Abbas, who is 82, is seen as politically depleted, and his rivals have started maneuvering to succeed him.

Hamas is changing, too: Secret elections now underway will decide who succeeds Mr. Meshal as leader in the next two weeks. That in turn raises the question of what Hamas might become.

Mr. Meshal said the document — the product of four years of dialogue among leaders in Gaza, in prison and in exile — at the very least showed that Hamas was open to changing its ideas.

In recasting itself as a national liberation movement, rather than as part of a wider Islamist struggle, Hamas appears to be distancing itself from the Muslim Brotherhood, which was conspicuous by its absence from the text.

That omission has been interpreted as an attempt to curry favor with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, whose troops control part of the border with Gaza and whose intelligence service determines when and which Hamas leaders can leave Gaza.

Just as important, Mr. Meshal said he hoped the document would bring Hamas closer to Saudi Arabia, which, like Egypt, is staunchly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood. "We already hold dialogue with Western parties, and if we do so with the West, we might as well be doing this with our Arab brothers," he said.

Yet in the next breath, Mr. Meshal acknowledged that such a rapprochement could be tricky with Hamas's main arms supplier, Iran, which is engaged in proxy wars against Saudi Arabia in the region's most explosive conflicts.

"We are keenly aware of the amount of anger toward Iran because of the burning conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen," Mr. Meshal said. "Our priority is to serve our own cause without getting tangled in internal disputes."

Looking back over his time in charge, Mr. Meshal lists sheer survival as one of his greatest achievements. "It gives me pride that the people of Gaza have remained steadfast under Hamas despite three devastating wars," he said.

Doggedness comes with a price, and Mr. Meshal is trying to balance that toughness with the need to open up, in a reflection of the shifting political landscape — and just maybe tilt toward more expansive politics that might one day bring Hamas out of the cold.

The favorites to succeed Mr. Meshal are Ismail Haniya, a Hamas leader in Gaza, and Abu Marzouk, who is said to be living in exile in Cairo. It is widely assumed that Mr. Meshal will take another senior role in Hamas after stepping down. Typically tight-lipped, he said only, "A resistance fighter never retires."



HATEM MOUSSA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Khaled Meshal, waving, during a visit to the Islamic University in Gaza City in 2012. He said a new political document showed Hamas was open to changing its ideas.



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WORLD



Maria Karaklioumi, 43, a political pollster in Athens, with her niece. She decided to forgo children after concluding she would not be able to offer them a stable future.

Births slow in Southern Europe

EUROPE, FROM PAGE 1
Although she has a good job and master's degrees in politics and economics, "there's too much insecurity," Ms. Karaklioumi said.
Unemployment among women stands at 27 percent in Greece, compared with 20 percent for men.

"I don't know if I'll have this job in two months or a year," Ms. Karaklioumi added. "If you don't see a light at the end of the tunnel, how can you plan for the future?"

Whether the demographic decline slows ultimately depends on the financial fortunes in the south of Europe, where most countries suffered double-dip recessions. Without significant improvement, the region is trending toward some of the lowest birthrates in the world, which will accelerate stress on pension and welfare systems and crimp growth as a shrinking work force competes with the rest of Europe and the world.

While dwindling populations threaten all of Europe, "the really serious problem is that some of the weakest countries are the ones with the least favorable demographics," said Simon Tilford, the deputy director of the Center for European Reform in London. "Lower birthrates in the south will mean weaker growth and productivity, holding the birthrate down and producing more fiscal problems."

Over time, he added, "it suggests that the already divergent economic performance between Northern and Southern Europe may become structural rather than cyclical."

The lower birthrates have been aggravated by fiscal pressures that have constrained countries from offering robust family support programs. Whereas France offers a monthly family benefit of 130 euros, or about \$140, per child after the second child, Greece provides €40.

Countries have recognized the problem and recently snapped into action. Spain appointed a so-called sex czar in



Anastasia Economopoulou, 42, pushed back her dream of having several children because she feared losing her job as a saleswoman at a retail branding company.

February to forge a national fertility action plan and address population declines in rural areas. Italy increased bonuses for having babies and backed labor laws granting more flexible parental leave.

Greece, as the weakest economic link, does not have the same options.

Struggling to manage a recovery after nearly eight years of recession, the government cannot make the fertility drop a top priority. Child tax breaks and subsidies for large families were weakened under Greece's austerity-linked international financial bailouts. State-financed child care became means-tested and is hard to get for women seeking work. Greece now has the lowest budget in the European Union for family and child benefits.

Grandparents have traditionally been the primary source of child care in the south of Europe, but Greek austerity policies have reduced pensions so much

that the family safety net is unraveling, said Dimitrios Karellas, the general secretary of the Labor and Social Welfare Ministry in Greece.

"We need to allocate more money to create the services needed for families and children," Mr. Karellas said. "But it's hard to do amid the crisis."

The situation is not likely to improve anytime soon. On Tuesday, Greece and its international creditors reached a preliminary deal allowing the country to receive a bailout payment of about \$7.6 billion in exchange for promises to raise taxes and to further cut pensions and social spending.

Demographic challenges are not confined to Southern Europe. Germany has battled a population drop since the 1970s, when higher education and new career opportunities for women lowered fertility rates. After Communism, birthrates in Central and Eastern Europe also fell.

In the new millennium, an economic expansion was helping to reverse those dynamics. But the financial crisis "hit Europe when birthrates in many countries had just started to rise again," said Michaela Kreyenfeld of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany.

The economic issues also amplified existing trends. Working women were already postponing childbirth. As the recession dragged on, they delayed even more for fear of jeopardizing work opportunities, a situation that has exacerbated fertility problems.

Progress on gender equality eroded in Greece during the crisis, according to the European Parliament. Women reported being regularly rejected for jobs if they were of childbearing age, or having contracts that were involuntarily converted to part time if they became pregnant.

As the crisis persisted, Anastasia Economopoulou, 42, pushed back her dream of having several children. She was fearful of losing her job as a saleswoman at a retail branding company after managers said they did not want women who would get pregnant.

For a country like Greece, some see the shifting demographic trends as a blessing in disguise.

"As long as Greece has high unemployment, it may be good luck that there's not a baby boom," said Byron Kotzamanis, a demography professor at the University of Thessaly.

"If there was," he added, "we might have more problems right now."

But such optimism won't make up for the frightening consequences for countries struggling to replenish people.

"If we don't fix this, in 20 years we'll be a country of old people," said Mr. Karellas, the welfare official. "The fact is, it's a disaster."

Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens, and Rachel Chaundler from Zaragoza, Spain.

China students have eye for home market

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Tens of thousands living in Australia help satisfy cravings for foreign goods

BY JACQUELINE WILLIAMS AND XIUZHONG XU

Zhang Yuan's business started with favors for relatives: an aunt who wanted baby formula, a cousin looking for Uggs boots. She was a college student here in Australia, and every dollar helped, so she mailed the items back to China and charged a small commission.

But then, through word of mouth, her business just kept growing. Between classes, she would shop for whatever was popular that week: vitamins, brand-name jewelry, a fake erectile dysfunction drug called Kangaroo Essence. And when she could not find a more lucrative job after graduation, she stayed in Melbourne and in the booming market for selling Australian goods to Chinese consumers.

Her business now employs two buyers, two packers and two people in customer service, with offices in Melbourne and Hangzhou, her hometown in eastern China. Taking orders online, she sells mainly to health-conscious and well-to-do women and says she makes more than \$300,000 a year.

"The Chinese have always had blind adoration for foreign things," said Ms. Zhang, 25. "So rather than paying for expensive, made-in-China products that might lack safety, why wouldn't they buy high-quality Australian ones at lower prices?"

Even as the world has come to rely on Chinese products, Australian goods have become hot commodities in China, and tens of thousands of young Chinese who are students at Australian universities or recent graduates have built a cottage industry to meet that demand.

The thriving trade — fueled by Chinese anxiety over counterfeit goods and product safety at home — reflects the growing economic interdependence between China and Australia, with all the opportunities and challenges that come with closer ties between a wealthier nation of 24 million people and a rising regional power of more than 1.3 billion. China is now Australia's biggest trading partner, and Chinese investment in Australia set a record last year.

The students, who call themselves daigou, or purchasing agents, are highly attuned to Chinese tastes and move quickly, sometimes creating spikes in demand in Australia and clearing out stores of specific products before shoppers know what hit them. Some analysts estimate that daigou sent as much as \$600 million in Australian products to China last year.

But their success has also drawn scrutiny, with officials in both China and Australia examining whether they are paying required taxes and complying with other regulations.

The business is in many ways a by-product of China's huge interest in a different kind of Australian product: international education, considered one of the nation's top exports, worth \$15 billion a year. Nearly a third of the 450,000 foreign students in Australia are from China, and the figure is growing.

Peter Cai, a fellow at the Lowy Institute, a think tank in Sydney, said the students had become a powerful force helping Australian products break into China. "Just through the daigou's own personal networks, they enable a new market for a small- and medium-sized business in Australia," he said.

"I think we're almost entering a new phase of the China-Australia economic relationship" requiring greater understanding of the Chinese market, he added, and the students provide that understanding.

Chinese purchasing agents first appeared in Europe, buying and shipping luxury goods like handbags for China's growing middle class. But the trade has shifted to Australia in recent years as the Chinese student population there has expanded and consumers in China have grown more anxious about food and product safety. Worries over infant formula, for example, surged in 2008 when six babies died and more than 300,000 children fell ill from drinking Chinese milk products that had been

tainted with melamine, a toxic chemical. Many in China turned to imported milk powder in response, but reports of distributors or retailers adulterating it with Chinese formula prompted consumers to directly seek supplies from overseas.

"There'd be huge amounts of infant powder, 900-gram cans, that were being bought off the supermarket shelves here and put in mailbags and sent to China via students," said John Droppert, a senior analyst at Dairy Australia, an industry group. "Pallet loads were just disappearing because people were putting it in the post and sending it to China."

Chinese students in Australia say that as many as eight in 10 of them are involved in the daigou business. Some are just trying to make ends meet with occasional sales. Others have managed to build significant export businesses. They mail their products to customers in China or ship them to Hong Kong, where traders can carry them across the border to avoid mainland tariffs.

"Shopping for others is like buying for myself; it gives me the same pleasure," said Uki Shao, 18, a business major in Melbourne who described herself as the "best daigou at my college." She sells brand-name items like Pandora jewelry, Michael Kors accessories and Aesop lotions and said her main challenge was persuading customers that her products were not fake.

"Sometimes, I have to take a video and post it on WeChat to show I'm in Australia," she said, referring to the dominant messaging app in China, which the students also use to process payments.

The trade has grown so fast that Australian companies now hold events to meet with Chinese students and show them their products. Many work with retailers in China, too, but they are careful not to bypass the daigou in Australia,

"Pallet loads were just disappearing because people were putting it in the post and sending it to China."

whose endorsements and personal networks they covet.

The students can often be found in the aisles of Chemist Warehouse, a major drugstore chain, with smartphones in hand, ticking off items on shopping lists while filling suitcases full of products such as concentrated cranberry extract, marketed by the Australian natural health company Blackmores as promoting urinary tract health.

Mario Tascone, the chief operating officer of Chemist Warehouse, said the daigou favored the company's stores because they offered competitive prices and could fill large orders. The chain also sells directly on the Chinese e-commerce platform TMall, but many customers prefer to place their orders with students.

"They trust the daigou more," said Scarlett Liang, 18, an accounting and economics student at Trinity College in Melbourne. "They want to be convinced of the authenticity of the product."

Express delivery companies that specialize in shipping to China are now dotted throughout major Australian cities. One of the more popular companies, Chang Jiang International Express, sends about 400 tons of products to mainland China each month, according to its operations manager, Lu Wang.

Because most payments are processed on WeChat and other Chinese platforms, the authorities in Australia rely on students to declare the income themselves. Some daigou also offer lower prices by evading Chinese import duties, and there are occasional reports of arrests in China.

"There's quite a few that have grown into quite substantial operations, and there'd be quite a lot where they're perhaps flying under the radar," said Paul Drum, the head of policy at CPA Australia, the national association of accountants.

But Ms. Zhang is confident that the market will continue to expand even as regulators catch up and Australian companies establish new channels to sell directly to Chinese customers.

"Everyone's got family and friends, and therefore their own customers," she said. "That's why there are so many daigou around."



Uki Shao, 18, buying goods at a Chemist Warehouse in Melbourne, Australia, last month.

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WORLD

Economic growth slackens a leader’s grip

NORTH KOREA, FROM PAGE 1
gripped North Korea. The government stopped providing food rations, and as many as two million people died.

Ms. Kim did what many others did to survive. She stopped showing up for her state job, at a machine-tool factory in the mining town of Musan, and spent her days at a makeshift market selling anything she could get her hands on. Similar markets appeared across the country.

After the food shortage eased, the market in Musan continued to grow. By the time she left the country, Ms. Kim said, more than 1,000 stalls were squeezed into it alongside her own.

Kim Jong-il, the father of the North's current leader, had been ambivalent about the marketplaces before he died in 2011. Sometimes he tolerated them, using them to increase food supplies and soften the blow of tightening sanctions imposed by the United Nations on top of an American embargo dating to the Korean War. Other times, he sought to suppress them.

But since 2010, the number of government-approved markets in North Korea has doubled to 440, and satellite images show them growing in size in most cities. In a country with a population of 25 million, about 1.1 million people are now employed as retailers or managers in these markets, according to a study by the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

Unofficial market activity has flourished, too: people making and selling shoes, clothing, sweets and bread from their homes; traditional agricultural markets that appear in rural towns every 10 days; smugglers who peddle black-market goods like Hollywood movies, South Korean television dramas and smartphones that can be used near the Chinese border.

At least 40 percent of the population in North Korea is now engaged in some form of private enterprise, a level comparable to that of Hungary and Poland shortly after the fall of the Soviet bloc, the director of South Korea's intelligence service, Lee Byung-ho, told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing in February.

This market activity is driven in part by frustration with the state's inefficient and rigid planned economy. North Koreans once worked only in state farms and factories, receiving salaries and ration coupons to buy food and other necessities in state stores. But that system crumbled in the 1990s, and now many state workers earn barely a dollar a month. Economists estimate the cost of living in North Korea to be \$60 per month.

“If you are an ordinary North Korean today, and if you don't make money through markets, you are likely to die of hunger,” said Kim Nam-chol, 46, a defector from Hoeryong, a town near the Chinese border. “It's that simple.”

‘COMPETITION IS EVERYWHERE’

Before fleeing in 2014, Mr. Kim survived as a smuggler in North Korea. He bought goods such as dried seafood, ginseng, antiques and even methamphetamine, and he carried them across the border to sell in China. There, he used his earnings to buy grain, saccharin, socks and plastic bags and took it back to sell in North Korean markets.

He said he had paid off border guards and security officers to slip back and forth, often by offering them cigarette packs stuffed with rolled-up \$100 or



WONG MAYE-E/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Walking in downtown Pyongyang. Information is seeping into North Korea along with foreign goods, eroding the cult of personality surrounding Kim Jong-un and his family.

“If you don’t make money through markets, you are likely to die of hunger.”

10,000-yen bills.

“I came to believe I could get away with anything in North Korea with bribes,” he said, “except the crime of criticizing the ruling Kim family.”

Eighty percent of consumer goods sold in North Korean markets originate in China, according to an estimate by Kim Young-hee, director of the North Korean economy department at the Korea Development Bank in the South.

But Kim Jong-un has exhorted the country to produce more goods locally in an effort to lessen its dependence on China, using the word jagang, or self-empowerment. His call has emboldened manufacturers to respond to market demand.

Shoes, liquor, cigarettes, socks, sweets, cooking oil, cosmetics and noodles produced in North Korea have already squeezed out or taken market share from Chinese-made versions, defectors said.

Regular visitors to Pyongyang, the showcase capital, say a real consumer economy is emerging. “Competition is everywhere, including between travel agencies, taxi companies and restaurants,” Rüdiger Frank, an economist at the University of Vienna who studies the North, wrote recently after visiting a

shopping center there.

A cellphone service launched in 2008 has more than three million subscribers. With the state still struggling to produce electricity, imported solar panels have become a middle-class status symbol. And on sale at some grocery stores and informal markets on the side streets of Pyongyang is a beverage that state propaganda used to condemn as “cesspool water of capitalism” — Coca-Cola.

LEANING ON PRIVATE SECTOR

When Kim Jong-un stood on a balcony reviewing a parade in April, he was flanked by Hwang Pyong-so, the head of the military, and Pak Pong-ju, the premier in charge of the economy.

The formation was symbolic of Mr. Kim's byungjin policy, which calls for the parallel pursuit of two policy goals: developing the economy and building nuclear weapons. Only a nuclear arsenal, Mr. Kim argues, will make North Korea secure from American invasion and let it focus on growth.

Mr. Kim has granted state factories more autonomy over what they produce, including the authority to find their own suppliers and customers, as long as they hit revenue targets. And families in collective farms are now assigned to individual plots called pojeon. Once they meet a state quota, they can keep and sell any surplus on their own.

The measures resemble those adopted by China in the early years of its

turn to capitalism in the 1980s. But North Korea has refrained from describing them as market-oriented reforms, preferring the phrase “economic management in our own style.”

In state-censored journals, though, economists are already publishing papers describing consumer-oriented markets, joint ventures and special economic zones.

It is unclear how much of the recent increases in grain production were due to Mr. Kim's policies. Defectors say factories remain hobbled by electricity shortages and decrepit machinery while many farmers have struggled to meet state quotas because they lack fertilizer and modern equipment.

More broadly, the economy remains constrained by limited foreign investment and the lack of legal protections for private enterprise or procedures for contract enforcement.

Plans to set up special economic zones have remained only plans, as investors have balked at North Korea's poor infrastructure and record of seizing assets from foreigners, not to mention the sanctions against it.

But there is evidence that the state is growing increasingly dependent on the private sector.

Cha Moon-seok, a researcher at the Institute for Unification Education of South Korea, estimates that the government collects as much as \$222,000 per day in taxes from the marketplaces it manages. In March, the authorities re-

portedly ordered people selling goods from their homes to move into formal marketplaces in an effort to collect even more.

“Officials need the markets as much as the people need them,” said Kim Jeong-ae, a journalist in Seoul who worked as a propagandist in North Korea before defecting.

‘LOYALTY DONATIONS’

Ms. Kim fled North Korea in 2003 but has kept in touch with a younger brother there whom she describes as a donju, or money owner. Donju is the word North Koreans use to describe the new class of traders and businessmen that has emerged.

She said that her brother provided fuel, food and crew members for fishing boats, and that he split the catch with a military-run fishing company.

“He lives in a large house with tall walls,” she added, “so other people can't see what he has there.”

Called “red capitalists” by South Korean scholars, donju invest in construction projects, establish partnerships with resource-strapped state factories and bankroll imports from China to supply retailers in the marketplaces. They operate with “covers,” or party officials who protect their businesses. Some are relatives of party officials.

Others are ethnic Chinese citizens, who are allowed regular visits to China and can facilitate cross-border financial transactions, and people with relatives

who have fled to South Korea and send cash remittances.

Whenever the state begins a big project, like the new district of high-rise apartment buildings that Kim Jong-un unveiled before foreign journalists in April, donju are expected to make “loyalty donations.” Sometimes they pay in foreign currency. Sometimes they contribute building materials, fuel or food for construction workers.

“Kim Jong-un is no fool,” said Kang Mi-jin, a defector who once ran her own wholesale business. “He knows where the money is.”

Donju often receive medals and certificates in return for their donations, and use them to signal they are protected as they engage in business activities that are officially illegal.

They import buses and trucks and run their own transportation services using license plates obtained from state companies. Some donju even rent farmland and mines, working them with their own employees and equipment, or open private pharmacies, defectors said.

“Donju wear the socialist hide, operating as part of state-run companies,” Ms. Kang said. “But inside, they are thoroughly capitalist.”

A SHIFTING VIEW

Before Kim Jong-un took power, the government made a last attempt to rein in donju and control market forces. It called on citizens to shop only in state stores, banned the use of foreign currency and adopted new bank notes while limiting the amount of old notes that individuals could exchange.

The move wiped out much of the private wealth created by donju and ordinary people. Market activity ground to a near halt. Prices skyrocketed, and protests were reported in scattered cities.

The government eventually retreated and is believed to have issued an apology when officials convened villagers for their weekly education sessions. It also executed the country's top monetary official, Pak Nam-gi.

The crisis is widely considered the moment when the government concluded it could no longer suppress the markets. A year later, Pak Pong-ju, a former prime minister who had been ousted for pushing market-oriented policies, was restored to power. He now manages the economy under Mr. Kim.

As the markets develop, growing numbers of North Koreans will see the vastly superior products made overseas and perhaps question their nation's backward status.

“Thanks to the market, few North Koreans these days flee for food, as refugees in the 1990s did,” said the Rev. Kim Seung-eun, a pastor who has helped hundreds of defectors reach South Korea. “Instead, they now flee to South Korea to have a better life they learned through the markets.”

Jung Gwang-il, who leads a defectors' group in Seoul called No Chain, said that with more North Koreans getting what they needed from markets, their view of Mr. Kim was changing.

“North Koreans always called Kim Jong-un's grandfather and father ‘the Great Leader’ or ‘the General,’” Mr. Jung said. “Now, when they talk among themselves, many just call Jong-un ‘the Kid.’ They fear him but have no respect for him.”

“They say, ‘What has he done for us?’ ” Mr. Jung said.

Trump’s turn toward China curtails patrols in disputed zones

WASHINGTON

BY HELENE COOPER

Six weeks ago, the United States Pacific Command requested permission from senior American officials for a United States warship to sail within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough Shoal, a disputed reef in the South China Sea that is claimed by the Philippines and China.

The Navy had good reason to think the request would be granted. During last year's election campaign, Donald J. Trump labeled President Barack Obama as weak in defending international waters in the South China Sea, where Beijing has started a sharp military buildup to reclaim land, install runways and haul equipment onto reefs and shoals it claims as its own. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, during his confirmation hearing in January, called for China to be denied access to the artificial islands. And American foreign policy experts and Asia watchers braced for a return to routine Navy patrols within China's self-proclaimed territorial waters, something Mr. Obama allowed sparingly.

But instead, the Pacific Command request — and two others by the Navy in February — was turned down by top Pentagon officials before it even made it to President Trump's desk. More than 100 days into the Trump presidency, no American Navy ship has gone within 12 miles of any of the disputed islands in the South China Sea, Defense Department officials said.

The decision not to challenge China's territorial claims represents a remarkable deference toward Beijing from an administration that is increasingly turning toward President Xi Jinping for help amid the escalating crisis in the Korean Peninsula. It remained unclear on Tues-



BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Chancellorsville, an American guided-missile cruiser, on patrol in seas between the Philippines and Taiwan last year.

day whether it was Defense Secretary Jim Mattis; Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; or one of their deputies who turned down the three requests. Defense officials said the White House was not involved.

Robert Daly, the director of the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Wilson Center, said of the Navy excursions, officially known as freedom of navigation operations, or

Fonops: “All of the language, combined with the fact that the Republican foreign policy establishment had been critical of Obama for not carrying out enough Fonops, means there was a wide expectation that Trump would put down a marker early. And that hasn't happened.”

The simmering crisis in North Korea seems to have changed the Trump administration's earlier assumptions on how to handle China. Mr. Trump cam-

paigned on being tough on Beijing, promising that he would label China a currency manipulator and would go after Beijing on trade.

But with North Korea escalating its provocative behavior the past three months, attempting nine missile launches on six occasions since Mr. Trump came to power, his administration has adopted a more conciliatory air with Beijing as the president seeks help to rein in Pyongyang.

With each missile launch, Mr. Trump's newfound affection for the Chinese leader, Mr. Xi, has increased. Last week, after the most recent launch, Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter: “North Korea disrespected the wishes of China and its highly respected president when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!”

Decisions to deny the Navy's requests to sail within 12 nautical miles of disputed islands in the South China Sea were fairly routine during the Obama administration. In fact, Mr. Obama came under sharp criticism from Republicans for suspending such excursions for more than two years, out of concern that they would raise tensions with Beijing.

In October 2015, the Obama administration sent a guided missile destroyer within territorial waters near Subi Reef, one of several artificial islands that China has built in the disputed Spratly Islands chain. At the time, Mr. Obama's White House played down the episode and directed Defense Department officials not to talk about it publicly.

Such hesitancy prompted harsh words from Mr. Trump during the presidential campaign. In an interview with The New York Times in March 2016, he said that Beijing had built in the South China Sea “a military fortress, the likes of which perhaps the world has not seen.”

“Amazing, actually,” he said. “They do that at will because they have no respect for our president and they have no respect for our country.”

Mr. Tillerson came to office saying that China's island-building campaign was “akin to Russia's taking of Crimea.” He said that the Trump administration was “going to have to send China a clear signal that, first, the island-building stops” and, “second, your access to those islands also is not going to be allowed.”

The decision not to challenge China's territorial claims represents a remarkable deference toward Beijing.

That denial of access is now on the back burner.

In fact, said Mr. Daly, of the Wilson Center, China has continued to militarize the islands and has bomb-proofed airplane hangars that were built on the reclaimed islands, as well as brought in additional equipment.

Chinese officials have maintained that such action does not constitute militarizing the islands. They say the islands are Chinese territory and Beijing therefore cannot militarize land it already owns. The United States and other countries disagree.

The Chinese have not yet begun construction on Scarborough Shoal. American officials have long viewed doing so as something of a red line, and have cautioned Chinese counterparts that any building on the shoal would be viewed as provocative.

Mr. Obama warned Mr. Xi at a March 2016 meeting in Washington not to start building an island at Scarborough Shoal. Late last year, an unusually large number of Chinese vessels were positioned close to the disputed reef, renewing American concerns.

A Defense Department official described the Pacific Command request six weeks ago to conduct a naval excursion near Scarborough Shoal as a signal to the Chinese that building on the atoll remained a red line for the United States. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive operations more frankly, added that Navy officials believed the request to be in line with what the Trump administration wanted.

Business

Mine pay lags, except for chiefs

Gap between workers and front office widens as coal industry wanes

BY HIROKO TABUCHI

Glenn Kellow, the coal executive who led Peabody Energy through bankruptcy, just collected an estimated \$15 million stock bonus. John Eaves at Arch Coal, another recently bankrupt coal giant, got an award valued at \$10 million.

The view from the coal pits is far less rosy.

An analysis of recent government data shows that the wage gap between the coal industry's top executives and average coal workers has expanded, while low-end pay has stagnated.

From 2004 to 2016, the average annual wage for chief executives in the coal industry grew as much as five times as fast as those of lower-paying jobs in the industry, like construction or truck and tractor operator jobs. Executive pay averaged \$200,000, up 60 percent from \$125,000, while paychecks for truck and tractor operators rose just 15 percent, to \$43,770 from \$38,060. Pay for construction jobs in mining rose just 11 percent, to \$35,080 from \$31,470.

Pay for chief executives in the coal industry also grew much faster, on average, than that for their counterparts across the wider economy, while the average pay for coal industry construction workers failed to keep up with similar jobs in other fields. The data excludes bonuses, share options and other perks, which often inflate executive compensation — and the pay gap — many times more. Mr. Kellow's stock options in the last year, for example, are worth almost 350 times what a typical coal truck and tractor operator makes in a year.

"The company boards seem to think they need to keep executives from fleeing a sinking ship," said Sarah Anderson, an executive compensation expert at the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington research group. "But when you protect people at the top from risk," she said, "you're not incentivizing them to shift to another approach, like making a transition toward more renewables."

The lopsided pay structure in coal is a reflection of an economy marked by widening income inequality, where gains at the top of the income scale have come amid stagnation, or losses, at the bottom. But with coal mining, the yawning gap takes on an added significance. President Trump has made lifting the fortunes of blue-collar and rural Americans a centerpiece of his administration.

When Mr. Trump signed an executive order in late March to roll back Obama-era climate change efforts, which would have spurred a shift from coal to renewable forms of energy, he was flanked by coal miners who applauded the move.

Though employment in coal mining has been growing since the fall after a long period of decline, the numbers have been minuscule — a net increase of 100 jobs in the latest jobs report for March. Since September, overall employment has increased by 1,700 to just over 50,000



Carlos Combs at a mine near his Kentucky home that closed in 2013. He worked for more than 30 years repairing mine machinery.

workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

And the work is a far cry from the stable, well-paying union jobs that were once the industry's norm. Average pay for a miner under a United Mine Workers of America contract comes out to at least \$61,650 a year, and closer to \$85,000 a year with overtime, said Phil Smith, a spokesman for the union.

But just 2.5 percent of coal mining jobs were unionized in 2016, compared with over 40 percent two decades ago, according to Unionstats, a census-based database.

Instead, many coal miners now compete for temporary jobs, which pay by the hour and offer few benefits. An online posting for an underground coal miner job in Waynesburg, Pa., offered as little as \$17 an hour.

Mike Grose, who runs Elite Coal Services, an agency based in Summersville, W.Va., said monthly placements had surged to more than 100 by January, from about 20 in October. The positions were mostly temporary jobs, though they could turn into permanent positions if there is a wider revival, he said.

"I'm getting guys that used to be in

the coal industry who left and went to work in oil and gas, and bringing those guys back," said Mr. Grose, who places workers at some of Appalachia's biggest coal producers. "It went from nothing to something."

Carlos Combs, 64, a third-generation coal worker in Cumberland, Ky., knows about the jobs offered at the mines these days. For over 30 years, Mr. Combs fixed continuous miners, gargantuan jagged-toothed machines, and dusty shuttle cars deep in the mines' reaches. But when he lost his union job in the early 1990s, he found himself settling for shorter-term work at lower wages.

"These small outfits, if you didn't produce, you were gone," he said. "You couldn't say nothing. You had to take what they gave you."

Mr. Combs was laid off at least five more times before finally, in 2014, his doctor told him his body was giving out to black lung disease. He now lives with his wife on Social Security and pension payments.

"None of them are worth that," he said of the coal executives. "They get that money on the backs of the men working here."

The steep executive salaries have

come despite dismal recent performances by coal companies that have driven a string of former giants into bankruptcy. Coal executives misread the market in China, racing to develop mines there only to see demand falter, which also caused American coal exports to slump. At home, they have been unable to stem a slide in the domestic market, driven by cheaper natural gas.

Despite those woes, top coal executives have continued to draw hefty rewards. Peabody paid its executive team around \$75 million from 2012 to 2014, according to its filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In the same period, the company lost nearly \$2 billion.

In 2016, Alpha Natural Resources secured a \$12 million bonus package for its executives during bankruptcy proceedings, saying they should be compensated for navigating the complexities of the process. The previous year, the company lost \$1.3 billion.

Seven Arch Coal executives received about \$8 million in bonuses three days before the company filed for bankruptcy in January 2016, seeking to cut \$4.5 billion in debt. An Arch Coal spokeswoman,

Logan Bonacorsi, said that the company had consistently given out bonuses in the first quarter of the year, driven mainly by safety and environmental performance.

Some workers at Arch Coal sites, including some truck drivers, are employed by third-party businesses, and the company had "no insights into wage rates" at those companies, she said.

Vic Svec, a Peabody spokesman, said that average industry wages were lower than those at Peabody, whose coal miners "can earn wages and bonuses nearing six figures per year." He said the majority of stock bonuses would be shared by employees below the company's executive ranks, though he declined to give a detailed breakdown.

An Alpha Natural Resources spokesman, Steve Hawkins, declined to comment.

Coal miners face other woes. Mr. Trump has proposed eliminating funding for programs that support laid-off miners in Appalachia. Congress, however, reached a last-minute deal this week to finance health benefits for more than 20,000 retired miners — miners whose employers have long gone bankrupt, leaving taxpayers to pick up the tab.

Investors keep calm with politics in turmoil

Market volatility stays flat, puzzling analysts who see warning signs

BY LANDON THOMAS JR.

It has become one of the knottier puzzles on Wall Street.

As political risks have increased at home and abroad, complacency among investors has rarely been so widespread.

This trend, which began soon after President Trump's victory in November, culminated on Monday, when the VIX index, known widely as Wall Street's fear gauge, dipped briefly below 10 — the first time it had done so in more than 10 years, in the months before the financial crisis.

The VIX measures investor expectations that stock markets will move sharply up or down.

On Tuesday, the VIX turned up, to close at about 10.6 — but still sharply lower than its historical average of roughly 20.

At current levels, the VIX reflects a striking sense among investors that the persistent rise in stocks would continue, regardless of election fears in Europe and concerns here that Mr. Trump might not deliver on his ambitious economic agenda.

"The pricing of risk is at near historic lows, and the pricing of the stock market is at near historic highs," said Julian Emanuel, a stock and derivatives specialist at the investment bank UBS. "And all of this at a time when political risk is very elevated — at home and abroad."

Since the VIX reached a recent peak of 22 in the days before the election in November, it has fallen sharply as equity markets have rallied in the belief that the president's promises to slash regulations, cut taxes and spend money on infrastructure would buoy the economy.

The gauge generally moves in the opposite direction of the stock market. So with the major stock indexes having hit

"There has been this epic disconnect between soft and hard economic data, and investors are just not willing to sell out of their stocks."

highs, it would make sense that the VIX would reach these unusual lows.

But what is less clear is why investors have been so willing to ignore so many outcomes that would send stocks reeling.

Mr. Emanuel contends that what is driving the decoupling of increased political risks and investor lack of worry is a rock-solid belief in the market that the surge in so-called soft economic data (such as a broad increase in animal spirits among investors and businesses) will be followed by better hard economic data — like a sustained improvement in wages, investment and ultimately economic growth.

This means that even as Mr. Trump has difficulties in getting his bills passed, investors are not abandoning the stock market, but are switching out of stocks tied directly to a Trump recovery, for example, banks and industrial companies.

In their place, investors are loading up on other sectors, like technology. Consider, for example, the recent record close of the Nasdaq composite index with its heavy weighting in stocks like Amazon, Facebook and Google.

The net effect of this rotation is a stock market that goes up and a VIX that goes down.

"There has been this epic disconnect between soft and hard economic data," Mr. Emanuel said. "And investors are just not willing to sell out of their stocks right now."

Russell Rhoads, the director of education at the VIX's home, the Chicago Board Options Exchange, calls the high level of faith investors have shown in the president's promise to reinvigorate the economy the Trump put.

When Alan Greenspan was chairman of the Federal Reserve, traders came to believe that he would bail out a sinking market by cutting interest rates, thus allowing them to take more risks — an approach that came to be known as the Greenspan put. A put is an option to sell at a particular price.

Now, Mr. Rhoads says, investors are making a similar wager on Mr. Trump.

"We used to have the Greenspan put, maybe it is the Trump put now," Mr. Rhoads said, citing a propensity of investors to stay in the market despite political ups and downs.

"He is so business-friendly — there is a view that whatever happens he will do things that spur economic growth," Mr. Rhoads explained.

Unlike a stock index like the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index, the VIX is not driven by stock prices but by the prices of options to buy or sell the S.&P. **MARKETS, PAGE 8**

Microsoft renews focus on classrooms

REDMOND, WASH.

BY NICK WINGFIELD AND NATASHA SINGER

Last week, Satya Nadella, the chief executive of Microsoft, slipped on a glove made of cardboard and clenched his hand into a fist, causing a robotic hand with fingers made of drinking straws to mimic his movements.

The glove was one of several engineering projects built in a makeshift laboratory on Microsoft's campus. The company spent the last year talking to thousands of teachers and designing high-tech experiments that require mostly low-cost parts. It will give the designs to schools for free so teachers can use them in their lesson plans.

The projects are part of a major push the company announced Tuesday at an event in New York to make its products more attractive to school administrators, students and teachers. The push includes a new version of Microsoft's Windows operating system for classrooms, tweaks to its Office applications and a new Surface laptop for students in a collection of bold colors.

While the dollars available in the education market are compelling enough for big technology companies like Microsoft, classrooms also offer an opportunity to make a first impression on young people who could eventually buy their products.

"The second-order effects of education, of being relevant in education, are going to be very, very key for us," Mr. Nadella said in an interview last week. He added, "The devices the kids take to their school, or to their college, is going to be influenced by what they were familiar with."

Microsoft remains a force in classrooms around the globe. But the company's relevance in schools in the United States is in jeopardy after years of progress by Google, whose software

dominates sales of new devices in schools.

Google has gained ground in public schools by offering a tightly connected system of free classroom apps, lower-cost laptops called Chromebooks and a web-based console that allows schools to remotely manage thousands of student devices.

Industry analysts said Microsoft's initiative was the company's first credible response to Google's recent encroachment into education.

"I am not going to predict that they are going to take back the entire market or anything like that, but this is the best move that I could have seen them making against Chromebooks," said J. P. Gownder, a technology analyst at Forrester Research, a market research company, where Microsoft is one of his clients.

Some of Microsoft's moves are intended to make its products more appealing to educators by simplifying them and, in some ways, restricting them. The new version of its operating system, Windows 10 S, will run only applications that have been vetted by Microsoft and placed in its online app store, to prevent students from downloading software that could slow the performance of their computers.

Microsoft has also devised a way for schools to get new computers running on a network quickly, without manually configuring each one, by plugging in a USB memory stick. A Microsoft management system called Intune for Education allows schools to set further limits on classroom computers, like locking them down so students cannot cheat by surfing the web during tests.

The tools are designed to be easy enough for teachers to use, since many schools do not have dedicated technology administrators. "Sometimes school districts aren't managing the devices," said Terry Myerson, a Microsoft executive vice president. "Teachers are on the front lines of managing the devices."



Satya Nadella of Microsoft sees the classroom as a place to make a first impression.

The company is also making full versions of its Office applications, rather than more limited web versions, available to schools for free. It has modified a version of its Microsoft Teams group-chat tool so teachers can collaborate with students. It is also waiving the cost of an educational version of Minecraft, a popular video game it owns, for the first year schools use it.

While much of Microsoft's focus is on software that makes using inexpensive devices — often in the \$200 to \$300 range — more palatable, the company will also release a \$999 device called the Surface Laptop, a twist on its Surface tablets. The device will run Windows 10 S.

Tech companies are fiercely competing for business in primary and secondary schools in the United States, a technology market expected to reach \$21 billion by 2020, according to estimates from Ibis Capital, a technology investment firm, and EdtechXGlobal, a conference company.

It is a matter of some urgency for Microsoft.

Chromebooks accounted for 58 percent of the 12.6 million mobile devices shipped to primary and secondary schools in the United States last year, compared with less than 1 percent in 2012, according to Futuresource Consulting, a research company. By contrast, Windows laptops and tablets made up 21.6 percent of the mobile-device shipments to schools in the United States last year, down from about 43 percent in 2012.

Outside the United States, Microsoft Windows devices accounted for about 64 percent of mobile-device shipments to schools last year, Futuresource said.

Apple has similarly experienced a steep Chromebook-related decline in shipments of iPads and Mac laptops to schools. Its mobile shipments to schools fell to 19 percent in the United States last year, from 52 percent in 2012.

Like Microsoft, Apple is not taking the Chromebook phenomenon lying down.

Apple recently introduced an iPad management app called Classroom, which enables teachers to assign shared iPads to students and create virtual classrooms to guide students through lessons.

Google began to take off in schools in the United States in 2013, when school districts started making bulk purchases of Chromebooks, which are now made by Acer, Asus, Lenovo, HP and other computer makers. Because the laptops run on Google's Chrome operating system and revolve around web-based apps, they are often cheaper, easier to manage and faster to boot up than traditional laptops.

By contrast, Mr. Gownder of Forrester Research said that Microsoft software is so feature-rich that technology experts in many school districts have had to devote their summers to preparing Windows laptops for students one device at a time.

And some of Microsoft's initial attempts to contend with Google's rise in schools stumbled. In 2014, Microsoft announced it would be going head-to-head with Chromebooks by working with device manufacturers to introduce cheaper Windows laptops.

But some schools found the lower-priced Windows devices too cheaply made to withstand student use and too low-powered to efficiently run Microsoft software.

"The cheapest of them would not work," said Hal Friedlander, a former chief information officer of the New York City Department of Education.

"The challenge for Microsoft is that it did not seem to have a coherent strategy," said Mr. Friedlander, who is now chief of the Technology for Education Consortium, a nonprofit group that promotes transparent pricing for technology sales to schools.

Nick Wingfield reported from Redmond, Wash., and Natasha Singer from New York.

BUSINESS

Potential conflicts for Trump confidant

Mogul in Israel helped finance expansion of Kushner real estate empire

BY JESSE DRUCKER

It was the summer of 2012, and Jared Kushner was headed downtown.

His family's real estate firm, the Kushner Companies, would spend about \$190 million over the next few months on dozens of apartment buildings in tony Manhattan neighborhoods including the East Village, the West Village and SoHo.

For much of the roughly \$50 million in down payments, Mr. Kushner turned to an undisclosed overseas partner. Public records and shell companies shield the investor's identity. But, it turns out, the money came from a member of Israel's Steinmetz family, which built a fortune as one of the world's leading diamond traders.

A Kushner Companies spokeswoman and several Steinmetz representatives say Raz Steinmetz, 53, was behind the deals. His uncle, and the family's most prominent figure, is the billionaire Benny Steinmetz, who is under scrutiny by law enforcement authorities in four countries. In the United States, federal prosecutors are investigating whether representatives of his firm bribed government officials in Guinea to secure a multibillion-dollar mining concession. In Israel, Mr. Steinmetz was detained in December and questioned in a bribery and money laundering investigation. In Switzerland and Guinea, prosecutors have conducted similar inquiries.

The Steinmetz partnership with Mr. Kushner underscores the mystery behind his family's multibillion-dollar business and its potential for conflicts with his role as perhaps the second-most powerful man in the White House, behind only his father-in-law, President Trump.

Although Mr. Kushner resigned in January from his chief executive role at Kushner Companies, he remains the beneficiary of trusts that own the sprawling real estate business. The firm has taken part in roughly \$7 billion in acquisitions over the last decade, many of them backed by foreign partners whose identities he will not reveal. In March, his company announced that it had ended talks with the Anhui Insurance Group, a Chinese financial firm linked to leading members of the ruling Communist Party. The potential agreement, first disclosed by The New York Times, had raised questions because of its favorable terms for the Kushners.

Dealings with the Steinmetz family could create complications for Mr. Kushner. The Justice Department, led by Trump appointees, oversees the investigation into Benny Steinmetz. Even as Mr. Kushner's company maintains extensive business ties to Israel, as a top White House adviser, he has been charged with leading American efforts to broker peace in the Middle East as part of his broad global portfolio.

"Mr. Kushner continues to work with the Office of the White House Counsel and personal counsel to ensure he recuses from any particular matter involving specific parties in which he has a business relationship with a party to the matter," said Hope Hicks, a White House spokeswoman.

A TERRIFIC PARTNER

Representatives for Mr. Kushner and the Steinmetzes put distance between Raz Steinmetz and his uncle, Benny. Risa Heller, a spokeswoman for the Kushner Companies, called Raz "a terrific partner," and added: "He is the only Steinmetz that we have done business with."

In a statement provided by his attorney, Raz Steinmetz said: "None of my investment entities has invested in any transactions with Benny Steinmetz or any of his interests." Louis Solomon, an attorney at Greenberg Traurig LLP, who represents one of Benny Steinmetz's companies, said the business relationships between Raz and Benny were two decades old, and said the two men had not had contact since 2013.

The two men, as well as Daniel Stein-



Jared Kushner obtained much of about \$50 million for payments on Manhattan real estate from the nephew of an Israeli billionaire.

A concerted push for New York area property

Jared Kushner and the Steinmetz family have purchased numerous properties in the New York City area together, spending around \$168 million for about two dozen buildings in Manhattan and New Jersey.



metz, who is Benny's brother and Raz's father, have controlled their own companies. But some of their financial interests — ranging from diamonds to real estate — have been entwined over the years. Records reviewed by The Times show that they have shared offshore investment vehicles, employed the same company director and were once connected to the same Swiss bank accounts. Alan M. Dershowitz, a criminal defense attorney for Benny Steinmetz in the

United States, also said his client was not involved in the Kushner properties. He predicted that the businessman would be vindicated overseas and said he believed the federal investigation of Mr. Steinmetz and his companies was no longer active.

The Justice Department would not comment on the inquiry. But more information about the bribery investigation may be disclosed by federal prosecutors at a trial that began April 24 in New

York. Mahmoud Thiam, Guinea's former minister of mines, is facing corruption charges involving a Chinese company. An affidavit from a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent made public in the case in late March said that the minister bribed a fellow government official "on behalf of" one of Mr. Steinmetz's companies in 2009. The F.B.I. is also examining an alleged bribery episode involving the late Guinean president's wife and a Steinmetz company a year earlier.

A BILLIONAIRE'S LEGAL TROUBLES

Until a few months ago, when he was arrested in Israel, Benny Steinmetz, 61, was a globe-trotting billionaire. One of the country's richest men, he split his time between France, Geneva, Antwerp and his enormous house outside Tel Aviv, on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean.

He teamed up with his brother Daniel, now 79, to create the Steinmetz Diamond Group in the 1990s. The business, which sells under the brand Diacore, has become one of the world's biggest buyers of diamonds from De Beers. In April, a 59.6 carat pink diamond cut by Diacore was sold by Sotheby's for \$71.2 million, an auction record for a gem.

Benny Steinmetz expanded his business interests into steel, gold, nickel, oil and iron ore, and built a global real estate empire, with properties in cities including London, New York and St. Petersburg. Two decades ago, he made a move into Russia, becoming an early investor in newly privatized state enterprises as a co-founder of the hedge fund Hermitage Capital.

Mr. Steinmetz rarely grants interviews and often incorporates his multiple companies in tax havens like Guernsey, Cyprus and the British Virgin Islands that offer secrecy. Although he is the public face of his firms, he holds no executive position. Instead, they are typically owned by a Liechtenstein foundation — similar to a trust in the United States — that names him and his wife as beneficiaries. Officially, he is an "adviser" to his firms.

His legal problems stem from a huge deposit of iron ore in Guinea, in West Africa. In 1997, the Australian mining firm Rio Tinto was awarded exploration rights. But by 2008, the Guinean government was complaining that the project had taken too long, and it awarded half the rights to a Steinmetz firm, BSG Resources. In 2010, BSG sold half of that share, cutting a \$2.5 billion deal with the Brazilian mining giant Vale.

In 2014, the Guinean government alleged that Mr. Steinmetz's company had obtained the rights through corrupt practices, paying more than \$8 million in cash through a representative to Mamadou Touré, then the wife of the dictator Lansana Conté. The Department of Justice had already opened an investigation the year before into Mr. Steinmetz's firms for potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, claiming jurisdiction because some of the alleged payments were transmitted through American banks.

Last month, lawyers acting on behalf of two of Mr. Steinmetz's firms sued the billionaire financier George Soros in federal court in New York, asserting that he had directed a smear campaign against the companies. Mr. Soros has funded a portion of the Guinean government's investigation, as well as work by the nonprofit Global Witness.

THE BUYING SPREE

In 2012, Jared Kushner's company went on a buying spree, snapping up about 13,000 apartments around the country, roughly doubling its inventory. The firm, founded by his father, Charles, also made its first Steinmetz deal that summer.

The younger Mr. Kushner has traveled repeatedly to Israel, where he has gotten funding to fulfill his ambitions. Kushner Companies has taken out at least four loans from Israel's largest bank, Bank Hapoalim. It joined with Harco, one of Israel's largest insurance companies, on one deal. Mr. Kushner's firm was introduced to the Raz Steinmetz team "by a third-party broker in the United States," said Kenneth Henderson, a New York attorney for Raz Steinmetz.

In August of 2012, the Kushner business made a significant move into downtown Manhattan's residential market, spending about \$60 million on eight apartment buildings in the East Village and the West Village. The low-rise buildings are indistinguishable but offer steady income streams.

The move was arranged by Gaia Investments Corporation, headquartered outside of Tel Aviv. No Steinmetz names appear in Gaia's public filings. Instead, the shareholders and officers include

some Steinmetz lieutenants. One of them, Shlomo Meichor, was a former vice president for finance at an investment firm once run by Raz and Daniel Steinmetz, and is a director for at least three Gaia Delaware entities created for the Kushner deals, records show. (Gaia is an ancient Greek word for earth goddess.)

Gaia's representatives have told prospective partners that the firm invests money for Daniel as well, according to two people familiar with those conversations. Mr. Henderson, the attorney, said Daniel Steinmetz was not involved in the Kushner investments.

The deals came amid an unprecedented flow of overseas cash into American properties, much of it through opaque corporations and limited liability companies that make the funds difficult to trace.

Benny Steinmetz's legal problems began to surface a few weeks after the first investment with the Kushner company. In November 2012, The Financial Times reported on the Guinea bribery investigation, setting off coverage around the world.

The Kushner Companies made an even bigger deal with the Raz Steinmetz team a few months later, in January 2013, spending about \$130 million on a portfolio of 17 apartment buildings across Lower Manhattan.

A few weeks later, a BSG Resources representative named Frederic Cillins — meeting in a diner at the Jacksonville, Fla., airport — urged Ms. Touré, by then the widow of the Guinean president, to destroy paperwork documenting the alleged bribes. She was cooperating with the F.B.I., though, and wearing a wire. Mr. Cillins pleaded guilty to obstructing a federal criminal investigation and was sentenced to two years in prison.

Benny Steinmetz has said he had no knowledge of Mr. Cillins' activities.

In October 2013, a few days after Guinea moved to revoke its iron ore contracts with Mr. Steinmetz's firms, his company's representatives wrote their lawyers that he had transferred his diamond company stakes to his brother Daniel's foundation in Liechtenstein. That disclosure is in the so-called Panama Papers, the trove of documents obtained by the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung and reviewed by The Times through a collaboration organized by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

Corporate and bank records point to interlocking financial relationships among the Steinmetz family members in the past. Raz once managed the family's real estate investments and participated in the family diamond business. As part of the bribery investigation involving Benny, Swiss prosecutors searched the offices of a company used by Daniel Steinmetz. The three men were once connected to at least two Swiss bank accounts at HSBC, according to bank records obtained by the French newspaper Le Monde and shared by the journalist consortium.

Mr. Solomon, the attorney for Benny Steinmetz's firm, said that there was no current connection to Raz through any Swiss bank account.

Risa Heller, the Kushner Companies spokeswoman, declined to discuss any due diligence the firm may have performed ahead of the investments.

The Kushner Companies appear to have carried out a public scrubbing of its Steinmetz associations. In late 2014, the Gaia name and logo disappeared from the Kushner website's list of partners, where it had appeared since early 2013.

But the Kushners have not stopped making deals with the Steinmetz family. Around the time Gaia was dropped from the website, it invested in yet another Kushner building: a Trump-branded luxury high-rise in Jersey City. The \$200 million project, known as Trump Bay Street, is at 65 Bay Street.

Jared Kushner's ethics disclosure filed in March revealed a stake in a company called 65 Bay L.L.C. The entity was originally called GAIA JC L.L.C.

Reporting was contributed by Megan Twohey, William K. Rashbaum, Doris Burke, Jilly Bennett, Andrew Kramer and Sarah Cohen.

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* - added; + - Offer Price; N.A. - Not Available; N.C. - Not Communicated; n - New; S - suspended; S/B - Stock Split; ** - Ex-Dividend; ** - Ex-Itm; @ - Offer Price Incl. 3% prolate charge; * - Prolate charge; * - American exchange; a - suspended earlier; a - not registered with regulatory authority; P.Midline of bid and offered price; E - estimated price; p - price calculated 3 days prior to publication; c - bid price.

The marginal symbols indicate the frequency of quotations supplied: (d) - daily; (w) - weekly; (bi) - bi-monthly; (f) - fortnightly; (y) - yearly.

The data in the list above is the NAV supplied by the fund groups to MORNINGSTAR. It is obtained and reformatted into the list before being transmitted to the BFI. The BFI receives payment from fund groups to publish this information. MORNINGSTAR and the BFI do not warrant the quality or accuracy of the list, the data of the performance of the fund groups and will not be liable for the list, the data of fund group or any other. The list is not and shall not be deemed to be an offer by the BFI or MORNINGSTAR to sell securities or investments of any kind. Investments can fall as well as rise. Past performance does not guarantee future success. It is advisable to seek advice from a qualified independent adviser before investing.

Investors calm despite turmoil

MARKETS, FROM PAGE 7

For that reason, it is a forward-looking indicator — 30 days to be precise — that measures how volatile traders think the market will be before the option expires.

One reason for the gauge's recent equanimity, Mr. Rhoads said, is that even when investors purchase options to sell the S&P index at a certain level (betting that the market will fall) to insure against a sell-off, they are at the same time keeping their broad exposure to stocks.

It is this tricky balancing act that has kept the VIX at these low levels.

Mr. Rhoads, a student of financial market history, noted that the index is what is known as "a mean reverting vehicle."

This means that even if it stays at these low levels for a while, the index will spike up when the next bout of fear hits the market.

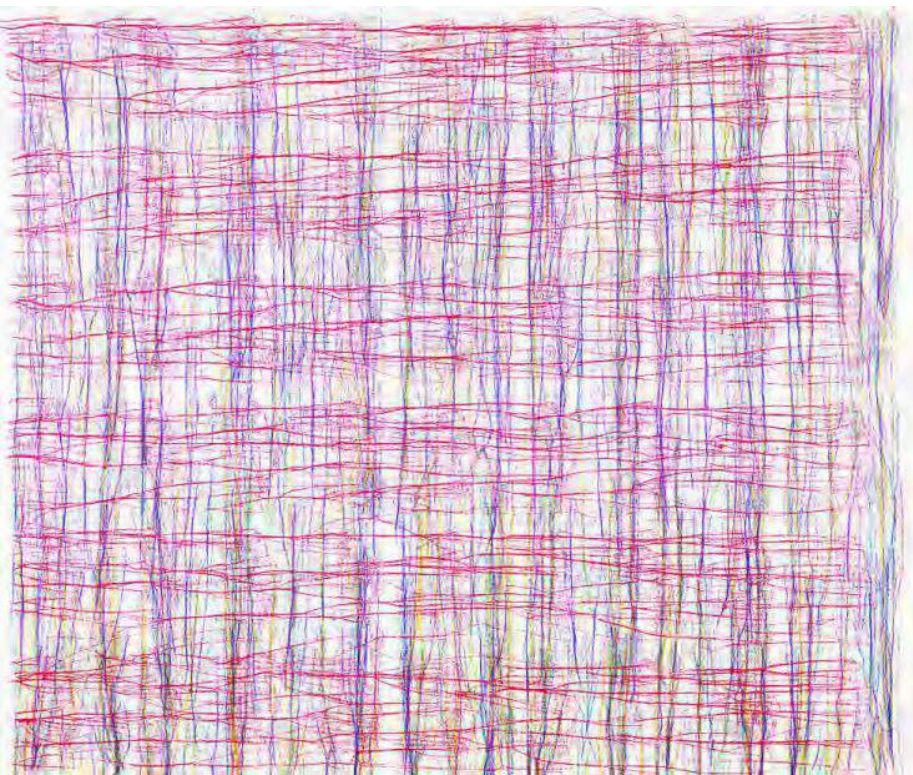
"It's like a rubber band that stretches and stretches until it pops," Mr. Rhoads said. "Everyone might be too confident right now."



Traders in the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index options pit at the Chicago Board Options Exchange in March. It is not clear why investors have ignored warning signs.

THE ART OF COLLECTING

Reimagining a contemporary art fair, turning a world capital into an exhibition space and chasing music memorabilia from some of the most iconic bands in history



Shades of pink
The color is a common thread in the mix of works by both new and established artists that Cheim & Reid plans to show at Frieze New York. From left: Tal R's "M" (2014), Ghada Amer's "Pink Landscapes-RFGA" (2007) and Lynda Benglis's "Swinburne Egg I" (2009).

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND CHEIM & REID

Where masters mingle with emerging artists

Blue-chip 20th-century works join contemporary art at Frieze New York

BY NINA SIEGAL

Since it was founded in 2003, the Frieze art fair has been devoted to selling works by the hottest new art talent, coming straight from the easel, foundry or studio. To visit Frieze is to be confronted with the most energetic art being produced today.

"Pretty much everything you see was made in the last 10 years," said Victoria Siddall, the director of Frieze. "Work that's very fresh and new and reflective of our time."

That was the original identity of Frieze, and the London-based art organization has somehow maintained that essential quality even as it has expanded to include the Frieze Masters fair in London (devoted to everything else, from ancient works to 20th-century art) and Frieze New York, another yearly showcase.

Maybe it should not have been a surprise to anyone when, two years ago at the New York fair, the Manhattan art dealer Acquavella Galleries displayed 20th-century works by Jean Dubuffet, Pablo Picasso and Cy Twombly in the same booth as new paintings by the Spanish artist Miquel Barceló and the American artist Damian Loeb.

But to Ms. Siddall, the inclusion of modernist works in a fair devoted to emerging art was something of a revelation. "It was a really eye-opening moment, that you could put that kind of work in this very contemporary context," she said in a telephone interview. "Not only did it look good in that context, but it worked."

For the sixth edition of Frieze New York, to be held May 5 to 7 at Randalls Island Park, the fair will feature more galleries capable of curating booths that combine those kinds of blue chip 20th-century works with art by emerging contemporary talents.

Frieze New York, in other words, has become something of a blend of the original Frieze London and Frieze Masters.

Acquavella sold the Dubuffet for \$2.5 million, said Nicholas Acquavella, the gallery's director, a high price at a fair where works have typically sold for less than \$500,000. This year, the gallery will reach even farther back in history and present work by the early avant-garde artist Joaquín Torres-García of Uruguay, who worked from the late 19th century into the 1940s, alongside pieces by Mr. Loeb, Wayne Thiebaud, Dubuffet and possibly a work by Richard Diebenkorn.

Acquavella's Dubuffet sale "proved that there's a strong demand for blue-chip contemporary among our collectors," Ms. Siddall said. "This year, we've built on that."

One area of the fair will be devoted to comprehensive galleries presenting 20th-century art in conversation with newer work, including Acquavella; Lévy Gorvy, based in New York and London; Hauser & Wirth, based in Zurich; and Skarstedt, based in New York. Ms. Siddall has also added a handful of galleries that focus on 20th-century masters, like Castelli in New York and the London-based Eykyn MacLean and Bernard Jacobson Gallery.

Axel Vervoordt, the Belgian gallery often credited with starting the trend of mixing contemporary art with antiquities in the 1990s, will also participate in Frieze New York this year.

Other galleries are rethinking their booths to explore links between established and emerging artists. Cheim & Reid, for example, plans to bring works by Louise Bourgeois, the grande dame of 20th-century art; Andy Warhol; Jenny Holzer, an established conceptual artist; and Lynda Benglis, who was first recognized in the late 1960s for her minimalist and process art.

These will be shown alongside works by contemporary artists like the Egyptian-born Ghada Amer, who makes sculpture, painting and garden projects. The unifying element in all of these works in the Cheim & Reid booth will be the color pink: a homage to the recent women's marches in Washington and in other cities around the world.

Henrique Faria Fine Art from New York aims to create a dialogue between Latin American midcentury modernist artists like the Brazilian painters Willys de Castro and Judith Lauand; historic conceptual artists like the Argentine asemic writer Mirtha Dermisache; Marisol, a forgotten star of the Pop Art movement; and new works by younger artists from the gallery's stable.

In encouraging these kinds of nontraditional juxtapositions, the fair is pushing the boundaries of its own definition of "contemporary art" — long a catchall term that replaced "modern." Contemporary art, a broad category that is defined by auction houses, galleries and collectors in many different ways, can mean anything produced after 1960, or everything since 1980, or sometimes, simply, works made by living artists.

An issue of E-flux Journal titled "What Is Contemporary Art?" suggests in its opening essay that "contemporary" is only a "watery signifier" that "repeatedly escapes our grasp through a set of evasive maneuvers."

Ms. Siddall said that contemporary art could be redefined as any art that was relevant to us today, including 20th-century art that had a crucial influence on artists working today — and even works by dead artists who were ignored in their own time because their sex, their race or another aspect of their identity did not suit the preferences of the era's art tastemakers.

She wants Frieze to keep up with contemporary collectors, who are already

increasingly interested in how works of today connect to art from the past. "We went through a phase in the early 2000s where everyone was just obsessed with the new," Ms. Siddall said, "maybe because it was the beginning of a new century, and everyone was just looking forward."

But that phase seems to have ended, she said, and collectors are now also looking back. "If you're going to collect works by contemporary artists, why not look at the work those artists are obsessed with, too?" Ms. Siddall said. "It's about context, I suppose."

The interest also follows a shift in the museum world, where curators — especially artists who are given opportunities to curate exhibitions — are exploring collections through thematic lenses, rather than keeping to a strictly

chronological formulation. Last year's stellar Met Breuer exhibition "Unfinished," for example, presented art from Titian through Piet Mondrian to Marlene Dumas, exploring works that the artists had left incomplete.

"The notion of looking at any art from any period through contemporary eyes is incredibly relevant," said Sheena Wagstaff, head of the modern and contemporary art department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a curator of "Unfinished." "In my life and in my career, the definition of contemporary art has been constantly shifting, and the parameters between when contemporary begins and modern ends has evolved over the last three decades."

But in allowing more older art to find its way into the booths at this most contemporary of art fairs, Frieze risks dilut-

A bold move by one gallery led to a \$2.5 million sale and a new way of thinking about the fair.

ing its brand and becoming a bit more like the other big art fairs, like Art Basel Miami Beach, that cater to a broader range of contemporary collectors.

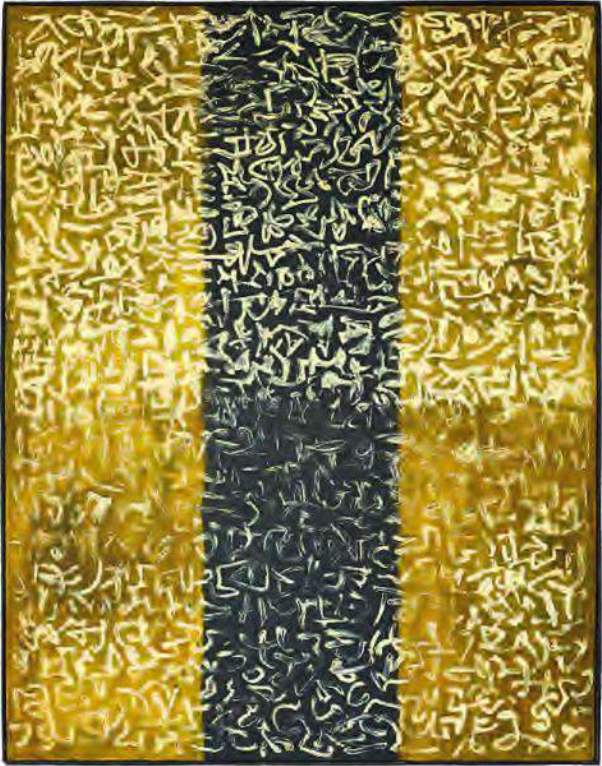
Mr. Acquavella said he was not terribly concerned about that.

"There's not, in my mind, a risk of it going too far and losing that contemporary element and edge to it that is so important to the Frieze brand, because there's just a limit to the number of galleries that are able to do what we're talking about," he said. "They're strengthening the fair rather than diminishing the brand. It's a pretty massive space, and there's a lot of new art to see."

A taste for past and present
"Three Cake Slices" (1999/2012), right, by Wayne Thiebaud; and "Work" (1961), below, by Masatoshi Masanobu. The director of Frieze notes that contemporary collectors have grown more interested in the connections between art being produced today and works created in the past.



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THE ART OF COLLECTING

For one Athens arts group, the city is the space

ATHENS

The NEON group shows art in renovated, decrepit, even open-air settings

BY GINANNE BROWNELL MITIC

Spending a day with Elina Kountouri, the director of the nonprofit art organization NEON, provides an insider's view of this city.

"Through NEON I have revisited the city many times," said Ms. Kountouri, referring to the way she discovers spaces for the art organization's exhibitions. "You have to slow down your pace and think about the relevance that your program should have for citizens and visitors, go back to different histories and try and relate them with art."

First stop: the grounds of the National Observatory of Athens, where she went to check on the construction of a major outdoor site-specific art project by Adrián Villar Rojas of Argentina that is scheduled to open June 1, "The Theater of Disappearance." That is an umbrella title for four separate exhibitions taking place this year also at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Kunsthauus Bregenz in Austria and Gefen Contemporary at MOCA in Los Angeles.

Ms. Kountouri then headed to the Diplarios School, in the center of the city, where NEON has taken over the top two unused floors for the show "Breaking News — Athens" by the artist Michael Landy. One of the rooms has been turned into a workshop where Mr. Landy and his eight Greek assistants busily turn symbols, texts and logos — sent by the public to the NEON website — into blue and white etchings.

Mr. Landy said, joking, "we have created our own Greek bureaucracy," adding that they must sign out every blue oil bar they use and that they stamp each work, which will then be returned to the

Elina Kountouri, the group's director, scours the city for places that could be frames for art.

person who sent in the image as a gift for participating when the show closes on June 11. (Oil bars are shaped like chalk, and produce an oil-paint color and consistency.)

After Ms. Kountouri finished lunch with Dimitris Daskalopoulos, the billionaire art collector who founded NEON in 2013, she rushed to the offices of the Melissa Network, a group that works with migrant and refugee women, to catch up on the Community Projects program the two organizations have been working on together.

Then it was on to the Kolonaki neigh-



STEFANOS GIANNOULIS, COURTESY OF NEON

borhood to tour a stunning but dilapidated neo-Classical house with Kostis Velonis, an artist who will use the space for a site-specific project that will open in September.

Ms. Kountouri finally ended her day near Syntagma Square for a meeting at the offices of Radio Athènes, an exhibition space that is one of a number of Greek organizations receiving grants from NEON.

Since its founding, NEON has become one of the most important visual arts organizations in Greece. Because of the country's financial crisis, there has been a real struggle to get funding for the arts. NEON has helped ease that by supporting local Greek artists and curators and by providing grants and funding to numerous programs and organizations. About 60 percent of its money goes to projects outside the capital.

The organization has an impressive scope of programming in its 20 exhibitions. It has collaborated twice with the Whitechapel Gallery in London, partnered with the New Museum in New York on their "IdeasCity" project in Athens and played host to the Marina Abramovic Institute that showcased 27 performances by 29 artists and drew crowds of over 50,000.

NEON has also brought new life to spaces across the city. Four of those revamped spaces — the Athens Conservatoire, the Gennadius Library, the Ancient Agora and the Stella Municipal Cinema — are being used for the German exhibition Documenta 14, which

opened in Athens in April and continues until July 16. (The rest of the exhibition is being held in Kassel, Germany, from June 10 to Sept. 17.) NEON, said Iwona Blazwick, the director of the Whitechapel Gallery, has become embedded in the city's cultural landscape.

"Everybody is excited about what they do, and it is pretty amazing to build such a reputation so quickly," Ms. Blazwick said, adding that Whitechapel and NEON run a yearly curatorial exchange program between London and Athens.

NEON has purposely never had a permanent exhibition space, opting instead to use the city as its gallery. "One of the mantras of NEON is it is not about the Daskalopoulos collection, it is about contemporary art," Mr. Daskalopoulos said over lunch. "That has been a very important driving force, that sense of freedom."

Mr. Daskalopoulos began collecting contemporary art in 1994 (his collection includes works by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Bruce Nauman, Kiki Smith and David Hammons) and it became a "parallel career," which he said eventually influenced many facets of his life.

"That is why I did NEON, because this exposure to the arts was extremely useful to my life and creativity in the way that I thought about business, in the way I thought about society," he said. "It made me more inquisitive, more innovative. And in that sense I want as many people to be exposed to these challenges

because I think it is useful in whatever you do."

When Mr. Daskalopoulos first met Ms. Kountouri, who worked as a lawyer before moving into arts management, they quickly agreed that they wanted to do something different. "He realized that there could be a chance that the new organization could be relevant in society through current affairs, but could also be a link with the artistic community," Ms. Kountouri said.

They first planned to renovate the National Garden near Greece's Parliament, but private citizens, concerned that the yet-untested organization would ruin the gardens, took them to court. After two years, NEON won the case, but by then the organization had moved on to other garden projects — both with the Whitechapel Gallery — on the grounds of the Gennadius Library ("A Thousand Doors" in 2014 featured artists including Edward Allington, Michael Rakowitz and Nikos Navridis) and the private gardens of the French School at Athens ("Terrapolis" in 2015 showed works by artists like Joseph Beuys, Joan Jonas and Studio Ghibli).

"People were so grateful to have a chance to escape from the constant presence of the tremendous hardship, the political process, upheaval, the impact of refugees," Ms. Blazwick said, adding that it helped people "transcend the harsh reality of everyday life."

Other shows included British-German artist Tino Sehgal's "This Progress" (2014) at the Roman Agora,

where over 11,000 visitors were taken through part of the ruins by 10-year-old guides (40 of them in total), who asked visitors to answer the question, "What is progress?"

"What is fascinating for me is NEON functions in a way that is very professional, very institutional and is an organization committed to producing and presenting cutting-edge practices in the most interesting spaces," said Vassilis Oikonomopoulos, an assistant curator with Tate Modern in London, who will curate Mr. Velonis's September show in the dilapidated house, which includes wood from destroyed churches in Bulgaria and Romania, and was the home of the first president of the Second Hellenic Republic, Pávlos Kountouriotis. "NEON is part of the fabric of the city."

The organization has also focused on getting young people interested in contemporary art through their "Is This Art?" program, which through short videos has introduced over 4,000 teenagers to artists like Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol, and has worked with the Melissa Network to help create understanding between the local community and refugees.

"It is important for us to have this link with the art world because it opens the dialogue in a different direction, and art touches everyone," said Nadina Christopoulou, a co-founder of the Melissa Network. "That is one thing that has been missing in this crisis-handling, is that we have forgotten the need for beauty."

In the city center

The top two floors of the Diplarios School are the setting for Michael Landy's work, "Breaking News — Athens." The show was put on by the NEON group, which purposely has no space of its own. Shown above is one of the project's etchings.

Poster passion: the lifelong pursuit of a rock 'n' roll fan

David Swartz has hunted for the emblems of iconic bands and performances

BY ALIX STRAUSS

David Swartz, an intrepid collector of rock 'n' roll concert posters and memorabilia, has amassed over 5,000 first-edition pieces. His collection is worth a total of well over \$10 million, or about 9.4 million euros.

Mr. Swartz, 54, was one of the heirs to the Timberland outdoor clothing and footwear brand, which was sold in 2011. He spent 14 years in the family business until 2000, when he left to pursue his interests and investments, including his passion for music mementos.

He has spent almost 30 years competitively searching for, and obtaining, posters that highlight iconic bands of the 1960s, psychedelic venues and clubs, and geographic areas in New England. (He is originally from Boston.)

He now lives in New York City with his wife, Diana Castellanos, and their two children.

Following is a condensed and edited version of a conversation with Mr. Swartz.

Q. Why posters?

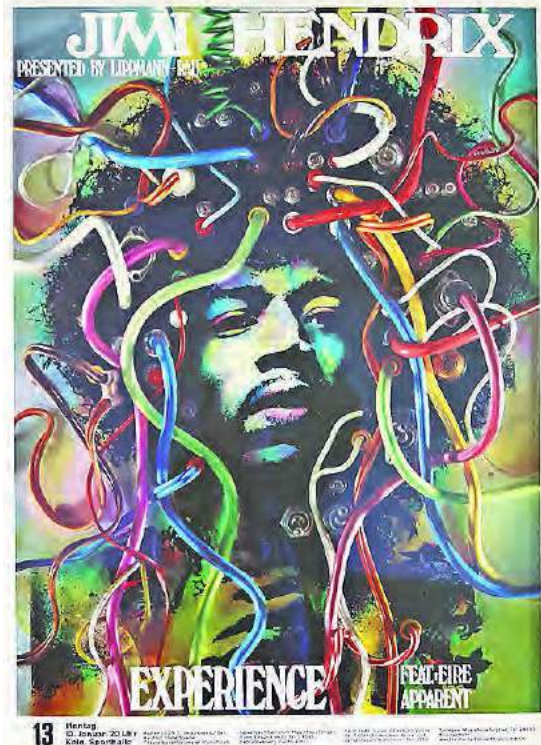
A. Posters document and frame specific moments in history, which, when you look at them, bring you back to a time that's gone. What I collect is the soundtrack to the most exciting period of the 20th century.

What are some favorites?

I own the Beatles '65 & '66 at Shea Stadium; Dylan '63 at Town Hall, which was considered his first major concert venue gig; Joplin '68 at the opening of Bill Graham's Fillmore East; the Stones '64 at Carnegie Hall, which was the final two shows of their very first U.S. tour; and an original '62 poster for J.F.K.'s birthday at the Garden where Marilyn sang him "Happy Birthday."

Which fairs have you been to?

Paper, record, antique, and sports. I've



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN NORMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

done flea markets, and auction houses. The most important one for this industry is TRPS, The Rock Poster Society. The annual show is in October in San Francisco.

Best find at a fair?

Out of the 200 or 300 posters I've bought at fairs, most of which were haphazardly tossed under tables or thrown in milk crates, my best two were a '65 Beach Boys surfing poster, which I bought for \$200 and is worth \$2,500; and the Who at the Music Hall, '68, for which I paid \$175 and is worth \$7,000 to \$10,000.

How do you navigate the fairs?

They can be overwhelming but are invaluable. It's where you meet legitimate resources, players, dealers, artists, and can network. Lap first, take everything in, and know what people are selling. See if artists are doing signings. These can cost an additional \$100 to \$150, or as much as half more than the original asking price. But it can be worth it. Look for

rarity, condition, dates, artist credit, low number of printing and first prints, which are always better investments than reprints or second printings.

What's something no one tells you?

There was a time when posters were plentiful, now they're not, so people are looking for strategic advantage. Collectors, and some dealers, don't want to share information about what's valuable, or give hints as to how to search or where to look. But you can still find something unique or special.

First significant hunt?

Eleven years ago, I'd found this guy in Buffalo who had this amazing collection of posters from the Boston area. I was hit hard with the flu, and it was snowing. I'd spent six years talking with him, hoping he would invite me to his home, so when he finally said, "O.K.," I couldn't turn it down. I felt horrible, but got on a plane. My wife thought I was crazy, but I left with 15 to 20 posters. The thrill of the

chase is sometimes better than the prize, but this was equally as great.

Which poster would you save in a fire?

The Hendrix "wire hair" '69, done by the artist Günther Kieser. The colors are rich and resonate with Jimi's aura. It's a rare original that's visually compelling, historical, and perfectly crosses over from poster to art, as Kieser's work has been showcased in the MoMA, among other museums.

First poster you bought?

The Who, '73, done by the artist David Singer, which I found at an antique store on Newbury Street. I was in my 20s and paid \$100 or \$150, which was a big investment back then. As a kid, I would go to Harvard Square to buy bootleg vinyls. Posters were a natural evolution from the audio format to the visual one.

How do you find these artifacts?

It's a research game and hunting people down. Being in the field you develop a

network of dealers, collectors, promoters and artists who created the posters. I've bought college yearbooks to find the student body and social committee responsible for putting on the shows in the hope of locating something. Then there's eBay, poster shows, art fairs and auction houses.

Most expensive poster you own?

I have a few from the '50s called boxing-style, which were done in big, block lettering. Really rare ones had photos. Four exist of Elvis from his 1956 tour. Each is worth \$500,000 to a million dollars. I'm fortunate to have three.

Biggest regret?

There was a Beatles '66 Shea Stadium oversized poster, which was in great condition. Maybe six exist. It was offered to me 10 years ago for \$50,000, which was a staggering amount, so I didn't buy it. At auction shortly after it went for \$133,000, the most money a poster has sold for publicly.

Golden oldies

Near left, the rock memorabilia collector David Swartz in his New York City home, surrounded by some of his collection. Far left, the Jimi Hendrix "wire hair" poster, by Günther Kieser, which Mr. Swartz says is the one he would save in a fire.

THE ART OF COLLECTING

Frieze New York presents promising artists

The Frame section stages solo shows to give them broader exposure

BY LOUIS LUCERO II

Conversation-setting modern and contemporary art galleries from cities across the world will transport some of their most striking and valuable works to 256 acres of parkland in the middle of the East and Harlem Rivers May 5 to 7 for Frieze New York.

Upward of 200 galleries will participate in this year's international art fair, which grew out of the success of a similar festival in London. As the event's profile continues to rise, its organizers have attracted leading galleries like David Zwirner of New York, the Modern Institute of Glasgow and Sprüth Magers of Berlin. Scattered performance pieces and interactive installations also enliven the proceedings.

But one of the major draws of Frieze New York, taking place in Randalls Island Park, is its Frame section, a space reserved for solo shows of promising artists, mounted by the young galleries that represent them.

Jacob Proctor, the curator of the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago, and Fabian Schöneich, the curator of the Portikus contemporary art center in Frankfurt, make recommendations to the fair organizers about galleries' applications for Frame. Nudges from the two men may also provide the impetus for a gallery to apply. Their suggestions on which artists in a gallery's stable would make for the most promising bid carry significant weight with the applicants.

In the Frame section, many thrilling showrooms and their artists will receive their first broad exposure. Here are a few highlights.

THE ART OF THE PHOTOCOPIER

The mix of galleries included in Frame always skews international, and this year, the 17 up-and-coming galleries represent 13 different countries. Many are in cities — Cape Town, Warsaw, Guatemala City — not traditionally thought of as art centers.

Galeria Jaqueline Martins, from São Paulo, Brazil, works to remind the public of overlooked or forgotten South American artists from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, according to Mr. Proctor. Partly in recognition of the extraordinary legwork involved in restoring one artist, the São Paulo native Hudinilson Urbano Jr., to the attention of audiences, Frieze is allowing Ms. Martins to show his work in Frame in New York — even after exhibiting at London's fair.

"It's an important artist, it's the first introduction into this context, in New York, and it's the gallery that has done all the background," Mr. Proctor said.

Mr. Urbano, who died in 2013, was a multimedia artist whose tool of choice was a photocopy machine. In the 1980s he created works that fragmented his body into disorienting black-and-white close-ups — his hairy chest, the soles of his feet, genitalia — and confronted topics that many young artists are grappling with now.

"It's very powerful work, in terms of dealing with questions about gender and sexuality and identity, all of which are big, front-and-center important issues," Mr. Proctor said.

FOUND ART

Galerie Bernhard of Zurich is also presenting a hometown artist, Jan Vorisek, whose work is shot through with technological elements.

Mr. Vorisek's creations are the descendants of disparate artistic traditions: performance, installation and sculpture, among others. His assemblages, pieced together from used and found materials, have a way of breathing life into their constituent parts. (Sound-emitting devices provide an added jolt of vivacity.)

Although there is not much digital work among the 2017 Frame presenters, Mr. Proctor pointed to the Vorisek works as representing an interesting kind of hybrid, with their integration of sound, sculpture and notation.

"There's a kind of kinetic aspect to it," he said.

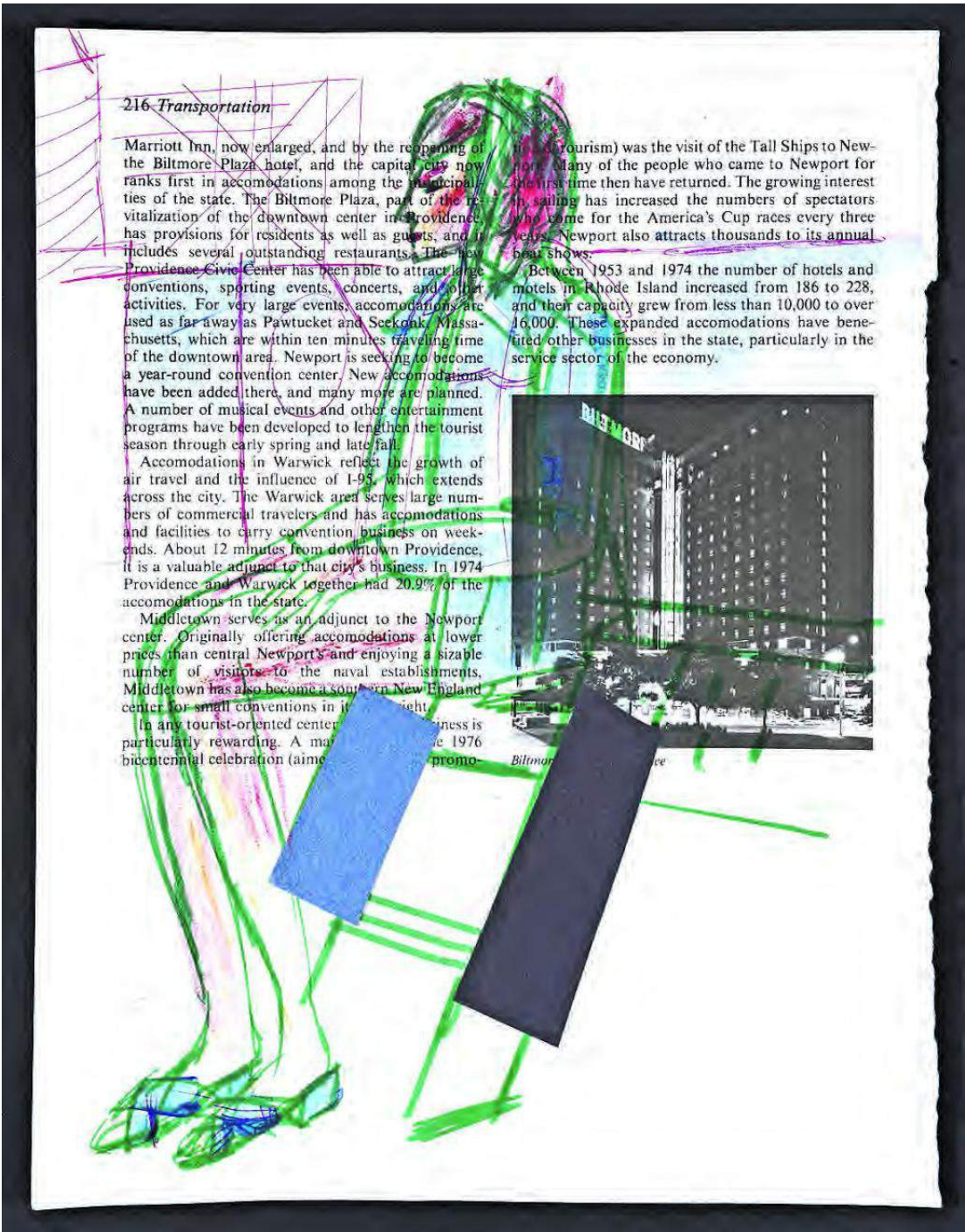
GOING BIG

Galerie Joseph Tang, a Right Bank newcomer in central Paris, is seeking to unlock some kinetic energy of its own with a solo show highlighting the large-scale installations of the young Latvian artist Daiga Grantina, whose potential in the United States, Mr. Proctor said, has yet to be realized.

After having participated in several significant exhibitions in Europe over the last few years, Ms. Grantina has a great deal of critical momentum on the Continent right now, he said. But given the extreme scarcity of opportunities to see her work in the United States, she remains largely unknown to American enthusiasts and collectors.

"That's one that I'm personally, as a curator, I'm excited to see," Mr. Proctor said.

Her works reflect a preoccupation with alternately capturing and throwing off light. Her reliance on nontraditional



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND BRIDGET DONAHUE, NYC

In the Frame

Clockwise from above: Susan Cianciolo's ink on paper "Mari" (2016); the Swiss artist Jan Vorisek's mixed media "Terrace" (2016); "Buff in Flight" (2016), by Daiga Grantina of Latvia, uses plastic, feathers and fabric.

sculptural materials to achieve her desired effects is of a piece with a broader trend in contemporary art to reach beyond the usual media.

A COMEBACK ARTIST

New York City can be a challenging place for fledgling galleries. Still, some thrive.

Mr. Proctor said he thought two of the best would be in this year's Frame section.

One of them, Bridget Donahue, a second-floor space on Bowery in Manhattan, is enjoying the spotlights that have fallen on one of its artists, Susan Cianciolo, this year. In addition to being selected for a solo show in Frieze New York's Frame section, Ms. Cianciolo is also featured in the Whitney Museum of American Art's closely scrutinized — and critically lauded — biennial, continuing through June 11.

At Frieze, in a showcase offering an overview of some two decades of her art, Ms. Cianciolo will present a varied array of works on paper: watercolors and drawings, yes, but also garment sketches and recipes. She is also a fashion designer who studied at the Parsons School of Design, and for the Whitney Biennial she revisited her 2001 project "Run Restaurant" for an installation within the museum's own restaurant, a ground-floor dining room called Untitled.

Bridget Donahue, a first-time exhibitor with any Frieze art fair, plans to display Ms. Cianciolo's energetic leap-frogging between interest areas using vintage brass hanging implements in an alluringly immersive show.

"She's never disappeared from people's minds," Mr. Proctor said, adding that Ms. Cianciolo has "come back in a really strong way in the last year or two."

FRAMES IN FRAME

Chapter NY, the other New York City gallery participating in Frame, elected to showcase the work of Los Angeles-based Milano Chow. For a young artist (she is 29), Ms. Chow puts out work in a traditional vein. Chapter's presentation will include eight new illusionistic graphite drawings depicting, as it would happen, frames.

Mr. Proctor has a deep enthusiasm for Ms. Chow's work. Had any of the other galleries representing her proposed a solo show of her work, he said they could have earned his recommendation, too.

Coordination between the various galleries generally keeps such overlap from happening, but it speaks to the strength of her work that, in Mr. Proctor's appraisal, hers is art that needs to be seen.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE BERNHARD



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Opinion

Chechnya’s anti-gay pogrom

Ramzan Kadyrov’s Chechen elite is pandering to prejudice to shore up its brutal rule — with Russia’s permission.

Ekaterina Sokirianskaia

MOSCOW At the beginning of April, reports surfaced that a crackdown on gay men was afoot in Chechnya, the small, turbulent republic on the southern edge of the Russian Federation. According to the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, more than 100 gay men were rounded up by the police and brutalized in secret prisons, and at least three of them were killed. Many remain in detention.

In fear and desperation, 75 people called in to the Russia LGBT Network’s Chechnya hotline. Of these, 52 said they had been victims of the recent violence, and 30 fled to Moscow where they received help from L.G.B.T. activists.

“Once they bring you there,” a survivor told me, referring to the secret prison in Chechnya where he’d been detained, “they immediately start the beatings and electrocutions, demanding information about who you were dating.” The guards, he said, would spit in the prisoners’ faces, and worse: “We were such hated creatures that each guard felt obliged to hit us when passing by.”

This persecution of gays is symptomatic of the repressive regime that now runs Chechnya. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union a quarter-century ago, that rugged outpost of the old empire has lived through separatist agitation, terrorism and two bloody wars. Tens of thousands of people have been killed, some 5,000 are still missing, and its

towns were left in ruins.

Chechnya’s autocratic leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, has enjoyed near unconditional support from Russia’s president, Vladimir V. Putin. Mr. Kadyrov’s father, Akhmad,

started out as a separatist Islamic leader, but at the beginning of Russia’s second military campaign against Chechen rebels, which began in 1999, he swapped sides to support Moscow.

When Akhmad Kadyrov was killed in a terrorist attack in 2004, his son took his place, muscling out rival strongmen and monopolizing power in the republic by placing his people in charge of federal institutions. Mr. Kadyrov ensured that his fighters were integrated into the local police force, largely preserving the command chains, and their violent skills were deployed in heavy-handed counterterrorism operations on behalf of the Kremlin.

In 2009, by the end of what was officially called “the counterterrorism operation,” he had succeeded in suppressing the separatist insurgency and consolidating his regime. Loyalty to Moscow was rewarded with lavish federal funds to raise Chechen towns from rubble and build shiny skyscrapers in the capital, Grozny.

Collective punishment is the hallmark of Mr. Kadyrov’s repression. Relatives of those who displease the authorities are threatened, beaten, held hostage, expelled from the republic or have their homes burned down. Such methods were first applied to suspected rebels but have spread to regime critics, religious dissenters, even drunken drivers. The same techniques have now been applied to the families of men thought to be gay, which are threatened with detention unless the suspects turn themselves in to the police.

“If somebody does not obey my orders in this republic, I’ll force him,” Mr. Kadyrov boasted on Chechen TV in 2013.

In this climate of humiliation and immense fear, Chechens are fleeing the Russian Federation en masse. Yet the Kremlin turns a blind eye to such excesses in return for allegiance. Mr.

Kadyrov calls himself a foot soldier for Mr. Putin. Chechnya sends thousands of state employees, students and schoolchildren into the streets to celebrate Russia Day, Mr. Putin’s birthday and the annexation of Crimea. Chechen “volunteers” have fought in Ukraine and in Syria, and Mr. Kadyrov regularly assails the West, Russian liberals and the opposition. Above all, Mr. Kadyrov has pursued the fight against separatism and Islamist insurgency.

Chechnya is a state within a state. Mr. Kadyrov is the only regional leader in the federation who has de facto control of the security services in his territory. Beside the republic’s Russian subsidies, a parallel economy based on extortion and kickbacks thrives. State employees report being obliged to hand over part of their salaries and bonuses. In other cases, they have to purchase equipment or raise funds for reconstruction projects, or collect money as gifts for celebrities visiting Grozny.

The regime’s coercive methods are allied with punitive conservative

values. Official Chechen ideology is a mix of traditionalism, Sufi Islam and Putinism. The authorities have banned alcohol, enforced dress codes and “moral behavior” for women, supported honor killings and blood feuds, and even closed orphanages as being alien to Chechen culture.

As news reports emerged about the arrests of gay men in the republic, Mr. Kadyrov met with Mr. Putin on April 19. Mr. Kadyrov is said to have complained to the Russian president about the “provocative articles” in the news media on issues he felt “embarrassed” to talk about. This show of coyness and piety no doubt played well with his supporters. Since the news broke, the Chechen leadership has fomented homophobia.

“Some think they are sadists and we are simply another social group that they are terrorizing,” a Chechen gay man told me, “but in fact, it is part of their new ideology of a ‘pure nation.’ ”

By promoting nationalism and traditionalism, Mr. Kadyrov tries to prove to

Chechens that their republic now has more autonomy than separatist leaders ever dreamed of; and this justifies his strong pro-Putin position. But his appeal to tradition is self-serving and spurious. Until now, Chechnya never had any record of organized violence against gays.

Behind this facade of stability, Mr. Kadyrov lacks legitimacy, both at home and abroad. Chechnya’s ruling elite has many enemies among the Russian military, which sees Mr. Kadyrov as a separatist who was unduly promoted.

Internal tensions have also increased since 2016. An economic crisis, coupled with the state’s expropriations, has pushed large parts of the population into deprivation. While local critics are dealt with harshly, the growing Chechen diaspora in Europe has mobilized protests.

The security situation is also slipping. Last year, an assassination plot against Mr. Kadyrov was foiled. Casualties resulting from armed clashes between security services and insurgents in

Chechnya rose 43 percent last year over 2015. Attacks inspired or claimed by the Islamic State have escalated and become more daring in the past six months.

Mr. Kadyrov and his clique depend entirely on Mr. Putin. It is within the Russian president’s power to halt the violence against gay men, empty the illegal prisons and force an investigation into this crackdown. If Mr. Putin continues to give the Kremlin’s tacit approval to Mr. Kadyrov’s repressions, he is only storing up trouble for the Russian Federation.

The Chechen conflict has not been resolved but merely contained by brute force and a personal bond between the two leaders. In the long run, such an unstable situation makes a deadly new conflict in Chechnya almost inevitable.

EKATERINA SOKIRIANSKAIA is the project director for Russia and the North Caucasus at International Crisis Group, an independent conflict prevention organization.



CRISTÓBAL SCHMAL

Stand up for democracy in Hong Kong

It’s more important than ever for Washington to show Beijing its commitment to freedom in Hong Kong.

**Joshua Wong
Jeffrey Ngo**

HONG KONG The selection in March of the Beijing loyalist Carrie Lam as Hong Kong’s next leader is the latest sign that China will continue to tighten its grip on this city. Political divisions will deepen and mistrust of the government will rise.

Ms. Lam, who was picked to be chief executive by an election committee stacked in Beijing’s favor, has long taken a hard-line approach to suppressing dissent. As the former No. 2 official under the unpopular outgoing leader, Leung Chun-ying, she presided over the political reform process that ignited the Umbrella Movement of 2014, in which tens of thousands of Hong Kongers occupied major thoroughfares for three months demanding democratic rights. With Hong Kong’s autonomy plum-

meting to a 20-year low, it’s more important than ever for Washington to affirm its commitment to freedom in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, introduced by a bipartisan group of senators in February, would put the Hong Kong people’s rights at the center of United States policy toward the semiautonomous Chinese territory.

The legislation, an update to a 1992 law governing relations between the United States and Hong Kong, would authorize the president to freeze United States-based assets of individuals who have suppressed freedoms in Hong Kong and deny them entry to America, require the secretary of state to issue an annual report on Hong Kong’s political situation until at least 2023 and guarantee that Hong Kongers who have participated in nonviolent assembly would not be denied American visas on the basis of their arrest.

Our freedoms in Hong Kong have been increasingly squeezed since 2014,

when the Chinese leadership in Beijing decided against democratizing the process for selecting our leader, inciting the months of protests.

A renowned legal scholar and former law school dean at Hong Kong University was denied a promotion to a top leadership post at the university because of his pro-democracy positions. Five Hong Kongers working for a book-seller that sold books critical of Beijing were abducted and taken across the border to China, where one was coerced into confessing to crimes on national television. Democratically elected lawmakers in the opposition camp have been facing costly lawsuits filed by the government to disqualify their seats. Democracy activists have been rounded up for leading protests against the government.

Beijing’s fear of separatism and President Xi Jinping’s uncompromising leadership style mean the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better. The Hong Kong Human Rights and

Democracy Act would put much-needed pressure on American presidents to stand up to Beijing for its aggression against the people of this territory. No United States president has visited Hong Kong since Bill Clinton in 1998. The State Department stopped issuing periodic assessments of Hong Kong’s political situation in 2007. Former President Barack Obama showed only tepid support for the Hong Kong democracy movement.

President Trump hasn’t spoken much yet about Hong Kong, but his China policy has been disappointing. He showed some early signs of hope when, as president-elect, he seemed willing to challenge the unjust “One China” policy on Taiwan, but he has since backed off from his tough talk against Beijing.

Congress should do its part to renew White House interest in Hong Kong, sending a message that the United States is concerned about our political freedom. Hong Kong, in spite of all the difficulties it is facing, remains the

freest territory under Chinese control. For dissidents in the mainland, Hong Kong’s social movements have long been sources of hope. Safeguarding what has made Hong Kong unique is in Washington’s interest, especially if Americans wish to someday see a free and democratic China.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act — recently introduced in the Senate by Republican Senators Marco Rubio and Tom Cotton, along with Democratic Senator Benjamin Cardin — has received bipartisan backing at this early stage. American conservatives and liberals alike should support the bill and help uphold their shared values of freedom and democracy for this corner of the world.

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STATE DEPARTMENT DESERVES BETTER

One of the agencies most responsible for trying to give order to a world in turmoil needs to have a stable senior staff.

Barring a course change, the State Department is expected to limp along without most of its senior staff until well into 2018. That could be more than a year from now. Even citizens who are deeply jaded about the government must realize that with the world in turmoil, it's dangerous for one of the departments most responsible for managing the chaos to be treading water.

That apparently is what you get when Rex Tillerson, the former chief executive of Exxon Mobil who has no government experience, becomes secretary of state. President Trump and others have long rhapsodized about the value of bringing business skills to government. However valuable these skills are, running a business is not the same as leading the free world in an era of multiple, complex crises.

Three months into his tenure, Mr. Tillerson has done almost nothing to select nominees for the White House to consider for nearly 200 State Department jobs that require Senate confirmation. The Times's Gardiner Harris reported.

Mr. Tillerson told NPR that he first wants to embark on a departmentwide listening mission to hear what his diplomats and civil servants have to say. That effort will start Wednesday morning, when he has scheduled a general meeting with department employees.

Many State Department employees will relish the chance to finally hear from the secretary on how he plans to restructure the department in light of Mr. Trump's demand for draconian budget cuts, and to tell him what they think.

Many State Department officials believe that he has been inaccessible for far too long, cooing himself with a small group of aides in a process that deprived him of hearing a broader range of views and policy options. Mr. Tillerson's stumbles have been many, including statements that conflicted with other administration comments on Syria and Iran and initially failing to meet with employees who staff American embassies while he was on overseas trips.

North Korea, Russia and China are getting a lot of top-level attention, but who's watching out for Afghanistan or the Balkan region?

Mr. Tillerson may not have wanted to be secretary, but he accepted the job and bears responsibility for how he carries it out. He needs the best possible permanent team to help him.

POPULISM, POLITICS AND MEASLES

An outbreak in Italy shows how dangerous it is when irresponsible politicians fan skepticism about vaccines.

One of the tragedies of these post-truth times is that the lies, conspiracy theories and illusions spread by social media and populist politicians can be downright dangerous. The denial of human responsibility for climate change is one obvious example; another is opposition to vaccination. A serious outbreak of measles in Italy and in some other European countries could well be the result of a drop-off in vaccinations caused by utterly misguided and discredited claims about their dangers.

Vaccines are among the greatest achievements of medical science, an easily and safely administered defense against once common and often deadly diseases like measles, polio, smallpox, whooping cough and cervical cancer. Yet fear of vaccines has spread over the past two decades, fueled in part by an infamous study published in the medical journal *Lancet* in 1998 and later retracted and completely discredited.

More recently, President Trump has added his voice to vaccine skepticism, like this utterly unfounded and irresponsible tweet: "Healthy young child goes to doctor, gets pumped with massive shot of many vaccines, doesn't feel good and changes - AUTISM. Many such cases!" In Italy, the populist Five Star Movement (M5S) led by the comedian Beppe Grillo has campaigned actively on an anti-vaccination platform, likewise repeating the false ties between vaccinations and autism.

To these and other skeptics, the measles outbreak in Italy should sound a piercing alarm. As of April 26, the Italian Ministry of Health had reported 1,739 cases of the disease, compared with 840 in all of 2016 and only 250 in 2015. Of those stricken, 88 percent had not been vaccinated. The danger was not only to them: 159 of the cases were health care workers infected by patients. Yet studies show that 97 percent of people who receive the recommended two doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine are fully protected.

M5S may not be responsible for the entire outbreak, since vaccine skepticism predates the party's rise. Yet the percentage of 2-year-olds given vaccinations has steadily fallen in recent years, from 88 percent in 2013 to 86 percent in 2014 and 85.3 percent in 2015.

Combating vaccine skepticism is not easy, because even the countless studies by innumerable health groups affirming that there is no link between vaccines and autism have failed to penetrate the fog spread by Mr. Grillo and his ilk. The Italian measles outbreak, unfortunately as it is, does give health authorities an opportunity to strengthen their case by pointing to concrete evidence of what inevitably follows when vaccinations drop off.

Chaos looms over Venezuela

Hugo Prieto

CARACAS, VENEZUELA This episode took place on my street in downtown Caracas last week. People were shouting, running past my building, trying to escape from a contingent of national guardsmen who had opened fire a block away with buckshot, rubber bullets and tear gas canisters on a peaceful demonstration outside the offices of PDVSA, the state-owned oil company.

One protester, a woman in her 60s, sought refuge from the tear gas by hiding behind a tree. We opened the door for her, but she wasn't happy about taking shelter; she felt she was shirking her duty as a citizen by not facing the attackers openly. "We can't do anything if we're dead, Missus," said a young man who obviously sympathized with her. "And they're starting us to death, so nobody can stop me going out to the streets to protest," the woman said. That's what's new in the protests

taking place in Venezuela — the conviction that the 21st-century socialism begun by former President Hugo Chávez has failed and has left the country in ruins. And there are other, darker new elements involved — police brutality, mass detentions and the use of paramilitary groups armed by the government to carry out the dirty work the military doesn't want to handle: murdering people.

The demonstrations multiplied across the country. Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets, knowing they face armed repression, because they have realized that the institutions that make democracy work are in grave danger and that they must defend themselves against a despotic government.

What awakened them was the declaration made early last month by the attorney general, Luis Ortega Díaz, concerning two resolutions, 154 and 155, issued by the Supreme Court's constitutional division that in effect voided the National Assembly. She denounced the ruling as "breaking the thread of consti-

tutional continuity," words that were translated into a rallying cry for the protesters: "Maduro, coup-monger! We didn't say so — the attorney general said so!"

In over a month of protests, 29 people have been killed, and there have been over 1,200 arbitrary detentions, according to human rights organizations and the prosecutor's office. President Nicolás Maduro's government went from autocracy to dictatorship in just a few weeks.

Liberty and democracy have become an existential struggle.

Today, it's only a step away from tyranny. But the people aren't giving up. They're no longer afraid. At long last, liberty and democracy have become an existential struggle, a matter of life and death.

Lacking the leadership skills of Mr. Chávez or the unconditional support of his own followers, Mr. Maduro has given more and more power to the military.

When he appears in public, he seems erratic and disoriented. Over 80 percent of Venezuelans reject his administration. But the Chavista ruling class is in denial over its failure, which springs from its own political incompetence.

The opposition has been firm in its demands: Open a channel for distributing food and medicine to alleviate the people's suffering; restore the National Assembly's constitutional roles; set a timetable for elections; and free political prisoners. For the government, agreeing on even one of these points would be like opening a tiny crack that would soon turn into an enormous hole through which its control would slip away.

The greatest fear of Chavismo has always been the revolt of its own electoral base: the impoverished segments of the population who saw in President Chávez a quasi-religious figure who would redeem them. The most radical change under Chavismo was to place "el pueblo" — his label for the poor — at the center of Venezuelan politics. In return, "el pueblo" kept Mr. Chávez the indispensable master of power from 1999 to his death in 2013.

The people of Petare — Latin America's most heavily populated shantytown, with 1.2 million inhabitants — joined the protests on April 20, when they met violent repression and clouds of tear gas extending the length of Caracas's main traffic artery, the Autopista del Este. Their slogan was "Llénstenos, Maduro, we're from Petare. Do your worst, do your best, you'll never, ever, stop our protest." People from other low-income quarters of the city, such as El Valle and La Vega, have also demonstrated against the government. The role of Mr. Chávez's political base in the demonstrations is unclear, but it could mark the beginning of the end of Mr. Maduro's government.

Is there a way out of this labyrinth? The possibility of a negotiated transition satisfactory to the opposition is negligible, even more at a time when Mr. Maduro has called for a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution. But there is still a small window for dialogue. If that doesn't happen, the alternative would be a military intervention to install a national unity government that would organize free and fair elections — in essence, the plebiscite that Mr. Maduro refuses to hold. Although it is dangerous to allow the military to mix in political matters, it has happened before in Venezuela: in 1958, a civil-military alliance toppled the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. There is also the risk of a Communist-type dictatorship modeled on Cuba's.

It's an enormous challenge to find a political solution, but we must try. Without one, we can hope for only a miracle.

HUGO PRIETO is a Venezuelan reporter and fiction writer. This essay was translated by Sonia Berah from the Spanish.



BRIAN WALSH

Tragedy on a mountain

Michael Wejchert

NORTH CONWAY, N.H. The Swiss alpinist Ueli Steck was probably the best mountain climber in the world. In a sport where a willingness to take risks is as crucial as fitness, he combined an Olympian's physique and a calculated daring few could rival.

His death this weekend at age 40 — on the Nepalese Himalayan mountain Nuptse, which neighbors Mount Everest — on a training foray, came when he fell around 3,000 feet while climbing alone.

The equipment and terminology of conventional climbing are often difficult to convey to the layman. Solo climbing — which Steck excelled at — is not. It's as dangerous as it looks. There is no trick of the light, no specialized piece of gear. A mistake is fatal. The more difficult the climb, the more practiced and disciplined the climber should be.

Soloists can look at it one of two ways. Either the risk decreases with years of dedicated practice, or more simply, the more one undertakes dangerous climbs alone, the greater the chance of an accident. The long list of great mountaineers who have been killed climbing alone points toward the latter argument. As Steck put it in a 2016 video, "The risk is constantly there — and you deal with it."

As satellite phones, helicopter access and a lack of virgin terrain squeeze the unknown and unexplored out of mountaineering, alpinists have had to fight for relevancy. With new routes and unclimbed peaks becoming scarcer, many have transitioned into completing classic climbs as quickly as possible. Steck, who often ran up difficult routes in little more than tight and a headband, could easily have been mistaken for a distance runner or Nordic skier. But try as mountaineering might to masquerade as a traditional endurance sport, the risks remain, increasing as gear is stripped away to the bare minimum.

Speed is an easily quantifiable thing. It's exhilarating to be able to move so quickly. And if mountaineers were measured by this benchmark alone, Ueli Steck was the greatest in history. He

climbed the Elger's infamous North Face in 2 hours 22 minutes, sprinting up the 6,000-foot-high "Wall of Death" in the time it takes to run a fast marathon.

In 2015, he climbed all 82 of the peaks in the Alps 4,000 meters or higher. (That's 13,123 feet.) It took him a mere 62 days, including the time spent biking and paragliding between mountains.

His legendary endurance, bolstered by years of science-informed physical training, earned him the nickname the Swiss Machine, but more important, it showcased what a talented mountain climber could do if given the time and funding to prepare like a conventional endurance athlete. He challenged the image of the bearded, beer-swilling mountaineer; here was a honed engine who ran on a Spartan diet and planned his ascents down to the move. Preparation trumped danger, or so it seemed.

The availability of Steck's feats on YouTube and Vimeo helped bring mountaineering out of the doldrums. Watching alpine climbing now felt as fast and exciting as viewing tennis or soccer. And while the American company Clif Bar canceled its sponsorship

of several climbers because of discomfort with the risks they were taking, Steck's European sponsors, like Audi, gave him free rein.

Like many of his more traditional athletic counterparts, Steck had his share of controversial moments. Having ascended Everest in 2012 without supplemental oxygen, he returned in 2013 with a more ambitious plan, to climb both Everest and a neighboring peak, Lhotse, in one push.

On the way up, Steck, the Italian climber Simone Moro and the photographer Jon Griffith passed a group of Sherpas who were fixing ropes low on Mount Everest.

In doing so, the trio violated an understanding held by the Sherpas and Western guides on the mountain that no one would climb until the ropes were in place. Steck and his team had no use for the safety of a fixed rope; they simply wished to sprint by. In the ensuing confrontation, Moro hurling an insult at the Sherpas in Nepali didn't help.

When the climbers returned to camp, they found themselves challenged by angry Sherpas who shouted insults and hurled rocks toward their tent. Fearing for their lives, Steck, Moro and Griffith hoisted it down the mountain and gave up their attempt. It is difficult not to make the assumption that Steck's elite stature encouraged the hostile ex-

change of a clash of the old and new worlds of mountaineering.

The second blip in Steck's career also occurred in the Himalayas. In 2007, he had tried a second climb of Annapurna, whose deadly south face had become a kind of Grail for talented alpinists, combining sheer technical difficulty with high altitude. The face had claimed the lives of several pioneers of the sport, including Steck's particular, dangerous game, "fast and light" alpinism.

The brilliant British climber Alex MacIntyre was struck by a single falling rock and killed there in 1982. In 1992, the French alpinist Pierre Béghin fell to his death, leaving his partner Jean-Christophe Lafaille to descend the face alone in a harrowing multiday ordeal.

During the process, Lafaille, too, was hit by a falling stone, which broke his arm. Steck attempted the south face in 2007, but was also hit by rockfall and knocked unconscious. "Only luck," he wrote in the magazine *Alpinist*. "Keep me from dying." In October 2013 he returned alone, finishing the route Lafaille and Béghin had begun, in 28 hours round-trip.

But doubts swirled around his Annapurna climb. Why hadn't Steck, for whom the camera and altimeter watch had been constant companions, better documented his ascent? He claimed a small avalanche wrenched the camera away and his shimer watch had broken. Ultimately, he brushed the criticisms aside, letting his actions on successive peaks speak for him.

Repeating routes as quickly as possible, linking up multiple summits are specific undertakings. If you keep getting away with it, there's limited or no negative feedback. You either have a success rate of 100 percent, or zero. Those who live into old age are usually the soloists who quit climbing alone.

Steck was killed before attempting to link Everest and Lhotse in one marathon effort — his goal from the interrupted 2013 expedition. Ultimately, speed and training weren't enough. Steck will be remembered as the climber who ushered mountaineering into its latest modern age. But his death is a reminder that those on the cutting edge are still subject to mountaineering's oldest companion: tragedy.



JONATHAN GIBBY

Ueli Steck on the Col du Plan on the Aiguille du Midi mountain in Chamonix, France.

MICHAEL WEJCHERT is a climbing guide.

OPINION

A sensible invitation

Richard Javad Heydarian

MANILA Over the weekend, President Trump provoked an avalanche of criticism at home and abroad by extending a formal invitation to his Filipino counterpart, Rodrigo Duterte, to visit the White House. The two leaders are reported to have had a "very friendly conversation" by phone, prompting denunciations by human rights groups and the liberal establishment in both America and the Philippines.

To the chagrin even of administration officials, the White House, in a statement announcing the invitation, appeared not only to play down Mr. Duterte's brutal crackdown on illegal drugs — which rights groups say has claimed 1,000 lives a month since it started last July — but also went so far as to praise his efforts to rid his country of drugs. (For his part, Mr. Duterte, after visiting Chinese warships in his hometown Davao City, said on Tuesday that he might be too "died up" to go to Washington because of planned trips to Beijing and Moscow.)

Mr. Trump's invitation to Mr. Duterte, however, is a sensible one when understood against a broader geopolitical backdrop. First of all, it was part of a package of invitations handed out to Southeast Asian leaders, including Prime Ministers Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore and Prayuth Chan-ocha of Thailand. In other words, Mr. Duterte wasn't the only foreign leader invited.

Nor is this the first time that Mr. Trump has invited a controversial head of state. The Egyptian strongman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has been a guest, and Mr. Trump is scheduled to welcome President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in coming weeks. Both leaders have questionable human rights records.

Moreover, the invitation to Mr. Duterte was particularly timely since there is growing concern that the Trump administration is neglecting smaller regional states in favor of Northeast Asia and Europe, two regions quickly visited by top officials, including Vice President Mike Pence, Defense Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

What's more, Mr. Trump has already hosted Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and President Xi Jinping of China. In contrast, the Obama administration placed Southeast Asia at the



Rodrigo Duterte has been invited to the White House by President Trump.

center of its regional diplomacy. To the delight of Southeast Asian leaders, however, Mr. Trump finally confirmed, during his conversation with Mr. Duterte, that he would attend the East Asia Summit, an annual gathering of Asia-Pacific heads of state, in November. As former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton once memorably put it, sometimes "half of diplomacy is showing up" at meetings.

We must also bear in mind that as the chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Mr. Duterte is the host of the East Asia Summit, and so a meeting between him and Mr. Trump is almost

A necessary step toward restoring the alliance with the Philippines.

inevitable. Inviting Mr. Duterte to visit the White House, therefore, was crucial to setting the stage.

More specifically, Washington is also rightly worried about Mr. Duterte's rapprochement with China. Other regional partners could easily follow in his steps. For instance, Thailand, America's other treaty ally in Southeast Asia, is expanding its security cooperation with China and has purchased advanced naval hardware from Beijing. Malaysia is also tightening its military cooperation with China and deepening investment relations there.

Mr. Trump has realized that Washington's leadership in the region can no longer be taken for granted. The reality is that Southeast Asia has become the main strategic battlefield for China and America.

Inviting regional heads of state and personally listening to their concerns is

not only necessary to the preservation of the (American-led) liberal order in Asia, but it could also deepen Mr. Trump's (still minimal) understanding of America's global role as an anchor of stability and prosperity.

There are also more immediate strategic imperatives. As the Trump administration ramps up its defense policy in Asia, particularly in the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea, it desperately needs to revive security cooperation with regional allies like the Philippines, the former site of some of America's largest overseas military bases.

As a concession to China, Mr. Duterte has already downgraded security cooperation with America, having canceled major joint military exercises, limited United States access to Philippine military bases and barred the United States warships from using Philippine naval facilities to conduct exercises in the South China Sea. As a result, the United States Navy's ability to effectively push back against Chinese maritime assertiveness in the area has been noticeably constrained. Indeed, Mr. Duterte is considering long-term military cooperation and joint military exercises with China and Russia. Revived relations with Washington diversify the Philippines' strategic options, strengthen the hand of the largely pro-American military establishment in the country and limit Sino-Russian strategic forays into Southeast Asia.

Above all, a diplomatic reset could allow Washington to exert a more constructive influence not only on Mr. Duterte's foreign policy but also on domestic policies, including the heavy-handed campaign against illegal drugs. Notwithstanding Mr. Trump's own worryingly illiberal rhetoric on law and order issues, the American government, along with allies such as Japan and the European Union, would be in a better position to nudge the Philippines toward a more humane, public-health-focused drug policy if bilateral relations returned to the way things were before.

Diplomacy is the art of the possible. Mr. Trump's invitation to Mr. Duterte is an indispensable step toward restoring one of the world's oldest alliances and maintaining American leadership in Asia.

RICHARD JAVAD HEYDARIAN is the author of "Asia's New Battlefield: The U.S., China and the Struggle for the Western Pacific."



Crazy like a fox?



Thomas L. Friedman

Has the first 100 days of the presidency made Donald Trump nuts?

I don't ask that question as a doctor. I don't do medical diagnoses. I ask it as a newspaper reader. You read all of Trump's 100-day interviews and they are just bizarre.

Out of nowhere Trump tells us he would be "honored" to negotiate directly with the leader of North Korea, after weeks of threatening war. Out of nowhere he says he would consider a gasoline tax to pay for infrastructure. Out of nowhere he says he is considering breaking up the nation's biggest banks. He also insists that his Obamacare replacement legislation contains protections for people with pre-existing conditions that it doesn't.

There's barely a dictator in the world for whom he doesn't have praise. And he repeats a known falsehood — that Barack Obama wiretapped him — and tells reporters they should go find the truth, when, as president, he could get the truth from the F.B.I. with one phone call, and when pressed whether he stands by that allegation, answers, "I don't stand by anything."

Is this a political strategy unfolding or a psychiatric condition unfolding? I don't know — but it tells me that absolutely anything is possible in the next 100 days — both good and bad. Trump is clearly capable of shifting gears and striking any deal with any party on any issue.

Trump was always going to be an unpredictable work in progress because he did not know what he was coming to office — which is why he now tells us that he's finding so many problems more difficult than he anticipated.

ated — and because he didn't know most of his cabinet members. They're sort of a pickup basketball team, bound not by a shared vision but by a shared willingness to overlook Trump's core ignorance, instability and indecency and serve in key jobs as much to restrain him as to be guided by him.

In his first 100 days, allies and adversaries saved Trump and the country from some of his most extreme, ill-considered campaign promises. His foreign policy team stopped him from tearing up the Iran nuclear deal and moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

North Korea's missile-loving dictator saved him from declaring China a currency manipulator and starting a trade war with Beijing, because Trump discovered he needed China to restrain

The president's remarks about his first 100 days have been simply bizarre.

North Korea and avoid a war. Boeing and General Electric restrained Trump from getting rid of the Export-Import Bank, which would have left U.S. exporters at a big disadvantage. The federal courts prevented him from imposing his Muslim ban. Border-state Republicans blocked his Mexico wall and other Republicans are blocking his draconian replacement of Obamacare. U.S. farmers, whose exports to Mexico have soared since NAFTA was signed, dissuaded him from walking out of that trade deal.

As for the next 100 days, who will protect us? Myself, I am not counting on the Democratic Party. It's too weak. On the issues I care about most, I'm actually counting on California. I believe California's market size, aspirational goals and ability to legislate make it the most powerful opposition party to Trump in America today.

How so? Trump wants to scrap Obama-era standards requiring passenger cars to average about 31 miles a gallon by 2025; today it's just under 24 miles a gallon. But as The Los Angeles Times recently noted, under the Clean

Air Act, California "can impose emissions standards stronger than those set by the federal government, and a dozen other states have embraced the California rules."

More than one-third of the vehicles sold in America are subject to the rules California sets. Trump can deregulate U.S. automakers to make more gas guzzlers all he wants, but they can't if they want to sell cars in California. Trump can sue, but that will take years.

Ditto California companies: Apple is now powering 96 percent of its operations around the world with renewable energy — 100 percent in 24 countries — including the U.S. and China. Trump's pro-coal — make-America-cough-again — campaign will never get Apple back on coal.

Also, notes Energy Innovation founder Hal Harvey: "California has a renewable portfolio standard requiring that 50 percent of all electricity come from wind, solar and other renewables by 2030. Another 15 percent already comes from existing nuclear and hydro — so our grid will be 65 percent decarbonized in 13 years."

As Kevin de León, leader of the California State Senate, told me: California has far more clean energy jobs than there are coal jobs in all of America, and California's now nation-leading growth rate in jobs gives the lie to everything Trump says: You can have gradually rising clean energy standards, innovation, job creation and G.D.P. growth — all at the same time.

California is also leading the resistance to Trump's draconian immigration policies, with a web of initiatives embracing tighter border controls while also creating health care, education and work opportunities for illegal immigrants who have been living here responsibly and productively.

"We have made it very clear — we will protect our economic prosperity and our values from Trump," said de León, whose Legislature recently hired former Attorney General Eric Holder to defend it against Trump suits. Holder is California's (and my) secretary of defense.

The New York Times

Athens Democracy Forum

Sept. 13-17, 2017
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Can Labour return from the brink?

HATTERSLEY, FROM PAGE 1
ship.

The third was the Militant Tendency, a group of Trotskyite infiltrators who, in Labour's name, won control of the Liverpool City Council and tried, almost always without success, to undermine mainstream Labour members of Parliament.

In time, these problems had solutions. Although Mr. Benn's supporters enjoyed a majority on Labour's national executive committee for a time, left-wing dissidents never commanded the party machine. And the labor unions could be relied on to use their bloc vote to ensure the defeat of the most outrageous conference resolutions. All that has changed. The leaders of the two of the biggest, and most politically active, unions support Mr. Corbyn and Corbynism. A flood of new activists — many attracted by the offer of party membership, and thus a vote on the leadership, at the bargain basement price of £3 (less than \$4) — openly organizes to change Labour's constitution in a way that reduces the power and influence of the overwhelmingly moderate members of Parliament.

Most of the new party members come in three mutually debilitating categories. The largest group, by far, is made up of sentimentalists who think that elections can be won, and the world changed, by a campaigning party of the left that wants to negotiate with the Islamic State rather than destroy it, mistrusts the police and security services, and believes that as long as taxes are high enough, public spending can be unlimited.

Their hearts are in the right place, perhaps, but their heads are filled with memories of what they regard as the betrayal of the Labour Party's socialist principles by Tony Blair when he was

leader. Their list of grievances includes legitimate complaints about the invasion of Iraq and Mr. Blair's unwillingness to express regret that, during his tenure as prime minister, the gap between rich and poor widened.

At least the sentimentalists want to win elections. But they are supported and manipulated by two other groups that criticize the supposed obsession with "electability." One argues that Labour must choose principle rather than power. The other argues that the parliamentary route to socialism is doomed.

The only solution on offer to mainstream Labour voters is a counter-revolution, a long guerrilla campaign in which men and women of a moderate disposition reclaim the party.

The party will not disappear. Social democracy is too strong an idea for that. But if the reassertion of reason takes a decade or more, with moderates simply waiting for the ideological tide to turn and the Corbynists' growing tired demonstrations, Labour will become a party of permanent opposition without the strength or standing even to hold the government to account.

Fear of political impotence and reluctance to endure the abuse of Corbynite comrades have led to new speculation about the formation of a breakaway party. More than loyalty and sentiment argues against the idea. The Social

Democratic Party, founded in 1981 by four former Labour cabinet ministers, became no more than an appendage of the Liberal Party in the 1983 general election, which ended with the so-called epoch-making Alliance winning a mere 23 seats.

The only solution on offer to mainstream Labour voters is a counter-revolution, a long guerrilla campaign in which men and women of a moderate disposition reclaim the party. Labour has a network of moderate MPs founded in 1988, has begun to mobilize its supporters. Valuable though the group's work is in protecting beleaguered mainstream members of Parliament and promoting moderate delegates to the annual party conference, organizing for a return to reason is not enough.

Members of the real Labour Party have to be inspired by the visible manifestation of a fight back. And the inspiration can come only from potent post-Corbyn leaders setting out the program for better government and demonstrating that the real Labour Party, though recently submerged, is beginning to surface. This general election offers them an ideal opportunity. Whatever the Corbyn camp may claim about the need to close ranks for the next five weeks, Labour seats in Parliament will be saved only by demonstrating that the party stands for more than simplistic slogans and noisy protests.

Those who speak out will be branded as traitors. But the real treachery is committed by those men and women who, because of hubris or bigotry, willingly sacrifice Labour's chance of governing ever again.

ROY HATTERSLEY, a journalist, was the deputy leader of the Labour Party from 1983 to 1992.

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STYLE

The Met Gala: The good and the avant-garde

BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN

What does it mean, as the invitation requested, to dress “Avant-Garde”?

This was the question Monday night at the Met Gala, the annual fund-raising event for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute, and the answer was always going to be a doozy. On the one hand, the term avant-garde implies all sorts of things: pushing boundaries, breaking rules, going where no one has gone before. On the other, the gala, one of the most-watched, celebrity-packed, red carpet events of the year, has come to imply a lot of other things, chief among them major fashion-brand marketing moments (you know: put movie star in dress, have movie star identify dress, send picture round the world). They are not necessarily compatible imperatives.

How to reconcile the two was the challenge. Especially because the obvious move — wear clothes from Comme des Garçons, the brand being celebrated at the event, the subject of the exhibition the party was honoring and the inspiration for the dress code itself — seemed largely off the table. Though whether that was because the truly avant-garde nature of the work of Rei Kawakubo, the brand’s founder and designer, was simply too scary for most people-page regulars or because CdG does not pay celebrities to wear its clothes and has no official “face” or “ambassadors” was unclear.

There were, for sure, some brave souls: Pharrell Williams, an event co-chairman, in ripped jeans, “Rei” inked on the knee, plaid shirt and motorcycle jacket; his wife, Helen Lasichanh, in a red jumpsuit that flattened and haloed the body and had no armholes; Michèle Lamy, the partner of the designer Rick Owens, in snaking red and pink vinyl waves; and Rihanna, swallowed up in a boa constrictor of chintz ruffles, femininity on the rampage. In CdG, all.

Also Tracee Ellis Ross in a terrific sapphire swaddling CdG coat dress that skewed her proportions in an elegantly off-center way and — best of all — Caroline Kennedy, the former ambassador to Japan, in steroid-stoked floral tiers that put paid to the idea that CdG was unwearable. If she could do it, well, what was everyone else doing?

Paying homage (or playing it safe — but that’s another story). Which is to say, taking bits and pieces from the CdG oeuvre and attempting to make them their own. The exhibition itself is titled “The Art of the In-Between,” and the ethos of the evening seemed to be “In Between Rei and [insert brand name here].” The results ranged from the interesting to the pretty silly to the eye-



On the red carpet, from left, Caroline Kennedy (with her son, Jack Schlossberg) and Rihanna, both wearing Comme des Garçons, the brand being celebrated at the Met Gala; and Katy Perry, in Maison Margiela.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN NORMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

rollingly banal.

Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid seemed, for example, to have taken inspiration from Ms. Kawakubo’s statement in 2013 that she had decided to stop making clothes for her runway collections (she was making “objects for the body”) and decided that they, too, would stop wearing clothes; they would wear underwear!

So Ms. Jenner was in a La Perla crystal mesh scrim-like gown atop a body thong with a giant slash cut down the front, and Ms. Hadid was in an Alexander Wang crystal mesh catsuit. Nicki Minaj wore H&M satin hot pants beneath a flowing cape-dress of sparkling red and black, and Hailee Steinfeld wore a Vera Wang version of the same look, both open in the front to show the legs.

Because really, who needs a dress, when you can have the idea of a dress?

Not Kylie Jenner, in floral-and-tinsel strewn see-through Versace, or Halle Berry, also in Versace, with black and white feathers sprouting from the train. Though, pointedly, that former proponent of the naked look, Jennifer Lopez, was demure in powder blue Valentino. Ditto Kim Kardashian West in baptismal white Vivienne Westwood that showed — shock! — her shoulders. Sometimes what’s really startling is upending expectations.

Still, red, apparently in reference to Ms. Kawakubo’s “Roses and Blood” collection of 2014, was the color of the evening, on people like Katy Perry, an event co-chairwoman, who wore a sparkling, skeletonized Maison Margiela Artisanal red trench under a floor-length red veil decorated with a variety of doodads; Emma Roberts, in a simple Diane Von Furstenberg sheath

dress; Ashley Graham in ruffled and corseted H&M; and Rami Malek in a crimson Dior Homme tux. And the yin and yang of shredding and exaggeration were the design strategies.

See, for example, Kerry Washington in patchworked silver-and-black Michael Kors, the edges not quite lined up; Celine Dion in a cut-and-paste Versace ball gown/T-shirt; and Claire Danes in a rent-and-ruffled Monse pirate shirt, the asymmetric train framing her skinny black trousers (There were a lot of trousers, though my favorite was Evan Rachel Wood’s Altuzarra midnight-sky slip-dress/cigarette pant combo). See Janelle Monáe frothing and foaming at the skirt in Ralph & Russo, and Gigi Hadid in a half-samurai, half-boudoir Tommy Hilfiger number that got compared, on social media, to bad sushi.

Less obvious, and better for it, were

Jaden Smith in simple black Louis Vuitton clutching his cut-off dreadlocks as an accessory (really), and Priyanka Chopra in a classic Ralph Lauren trench coatdress — with a witchy collar and a swirling, stair-sweeping train. Both played to tradition and entirely undermined it. Which is to say, they managed to enter into the spirit of the evening while also maintaining a certain elegant integrity.

It’s not an easy balance to achieve. Little wonder that many guests threw up their hands and chose to go with a theme of a different kind: Elle Fanning channeling “Frozen” in a strapless empire-waisted ice-blue princess Miu Miu; Zendaya in a Tropicana fantasy ball gown from Dolce & Gabbana; Katie Holmes in a ye olde Hollywood Zac Posen fishtail; Dakota Johnson in sexy Victorian-governess Gucci; and Mary-

Kate Olsen and Ashley Olsen in outfits that looked as if they had been sourced from the costume department of “Game of Thrones.” That’s breaking the rules in a way, I guess.

Though perhaps ultimately the most avant-garde of all the approaches was the one evinced by both Anna Wintour, a co-chairwoman of the event, and Ms. Kawakubo herself: Ignore the dress code entirely. Ignore even the idea of a dress code.

Instead, Ms. Wintour chose Chanel, as she has done at every Met Gala in recent memory (this time a sparkle-encrusted T-shirt gown with a swath of fur at the knee giving way to lighter underskirt). Ms. Kawakubo chose a white jacket and black skirt, a simple variation on her usual uniform — with sneakers. It’s their party, and they’ll wear what they want to.

Rei Kawakubo, the nearly silent oracle of fashion

The designer, 74, prefers to let her clothes speak for themselves

BY MATTHEW SCHNEIER

Late last week, in a closed-off gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, teams of workers were circling through a makeshift village of stark white huts, fixing mannequins and laying down guide numbers. It was the homestretch before the Costume Institute’s spring show, “Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons: Art of the In-Between,” was set to open, and the pieces that Ms. Kawakubo has designed for Comme des Garçons, the fashion label she founded in 1969, waited for their final installation.

It is usually a safe assumption that the Costume Institute’s exhibitions will be filled with garments, but what Ms. Kawakubo creates is not all even recognizably clothing. The pieces may be elaborately bulbous or bulging; tatty or fraying; they may or may not make allowances for their wearer’s arms, or faces, or vanity.

Many designers work with the goal of making women look good. Ms. Kawakubo seems to work with the goal of making women look again.

Ms. Kawakubo appeared in the Met gallery on Friday, in her uniform of fringed bob and black leather motorcycle jacket, a day after arriving from Tokyo, where she lives and Comme des Garçons has its headquarters.

Officially, Ms. Kawakubo does not speak English, communicating her Delpic instructions via her husband, translator and company president, Adrian Joffe, though she understands more than she lets on, and if sufficiently interested or engaged, will lean forward to address an English speaker directly. Mostly, her silence seems useful and convenient, as it discourages two things she abhors: explanation and interpretation. (She will never offer more insight, publicly, into any of her collections than the enigmatic title she gives each one.)

We tend to project serenity upon the silent, but in person, Ms. Kawakubo has the tense energy of a coiled spring, or a set trap. She presides over Comme des Garçons, which has grown to encompass several lines and several other designers, as a benevolent but unchallengeable autocrat, and she can be military in her decisiveness, as Andrew Bolton, the Costume Institute’s curator in charge, learned while working on the exhibition. Ms. Kawakubo designed the

exhibition space, working on a full-size prototype in a warehouse in Tokyo, which is as much her sui generis creation as any of the pieces inside.

The designer is a legend in the world of fashion, and the exhibition is a ratification of her unique stature: The Costume Institute has not devoted an entire show to a single, living designer since Yves Saint Laurent in 1983. (And Ms. Kawakubo’s presence at the opening night gala on Monday was her first appearance at what has long been called “the party of the year.”)

For decades, at least since her Paris debut in 1981, Ms. Kawakubo has forged her own path, a durable antagonist of established norms. She has gone into and out of favor over the years, but she has been at the forefront of important developments all along. She arrived early to ideas still percolating within the fashion ecosystem: androgyny, artificiality, the pop-up shop, the luxury group (she has encouraged several former assistants, most notably Junya Watanabe, in the creation of their own lines under the aegis of Comme des Garçons).

“What’s inspiring is that for her, the body and the dress body have no limits,” Mr. Bolton said. “That’s what I grew to really appreciate.”

The exhibition, 150 outfits in all, is overpowering. Ms. Kawakubo’s designs are outrageous, radical and beautiful, united in their variety by the wild extremity of her commitment to creating newness at every outing. They can be coquettish, as the furred and feathered masses (from the collection she called “Blue Witch,” spring 2016), or cartoonish, like paper-doll dresses in crayon-colored felt (“2 Dimensions,” fall 2012). They can be fragile, like the hole-pocked sweaters (“Holes,” fall 1982) that are the oldest pieces gathered here, or tough, like a jagged skirt and top in what looks like leather but is in fact rayon and polyurethane (“Tomorrow’s Black,” spring 2009). In some cases, like a series of looks that pair tutus with biker jackets, they can be all of the above (“Ballerina Motorbike,” spring 2005).

Comme des Garçons breeds passionate acolytes but skeptics and doubters, too. “These clothes, honestly, are walking pieces of art,” said Katy Perry, who modeled them for the cover of Vogue, and who was a gala co-chairwoman.

That is how Ms. Kawakubo prefers it. Comme des Garçons is about “proposing a new beauty,” she said. She does not expect everyone to like Comme des Garçons any more than she expects everyone to wear Comme des Garçons.

“That’s the ultimate aim, of course,



Rei Kawakubo has designed for Comme des Garçons since she founded the label in 1969.

that’s the best,” Mr. Joffe said, translating for Ms. Kawakubo, and occasionally adding his own opinion. “But really, if everyone came and saw the beauty of it and tried it on and felt amazing, that’s the end. If everybody thought it was beautiful, it would be time for Rei to stop. The times we’ve had standing ovations, when absolutely everybody loved the show, were the times she has worried the most.” (More than one collection deemed too readily understandable was withheld from the show.)

Seated downstairs, dwarfed by a large library table, Ms. Kawakubo emphasized over and over again that the point, and the struggle, was to create something new. “Doing something new doesn’t necessarily have to be beautiful in the eyes of the people who look at it,” she said. “The result of doing something

new is beautiful. The fact of doing something new and people being moved by it is what’s beautiful.”

She starts every season from scratch, presenting a kernel of inspiration to her patternmakers, and together they flesh out a collection. But once it is done, Ms. Kawakubo moves mercilessly to the next, and one byproduct is that confronting her past work, even in the setting of a museum, is difficult for her — “physically painful,” Mr. Bolton said. He and Ms. Kawakubo came to understand and respect each another, but their collaboration was not without conflict.

I asked Ms. Kawakubo what an exhibition she herself curated would have looked like.

“Probably just the last thing I ever made,” she said.

The last one thing?

She fixed me with a stare. “The only one, yes,” she said in English.

Though it covers 35 years of work, Ms. Kawakubo insisted the exhibition not be conceived as a “retrospective.” For a designer obsessed by the new, not much separates the museum from the mausoleum.

Ms. Kawakubo, however, at 74, is in no way interested in departing. The company is so entirely fused with her that when I asked whether there was any part of her that was not Comme des Garçons, she said she did not understand the question.

Yet she has considered the future of Comme des Garçons after her. “It can’t be the same,” she said, “but it can be.” The specter of mortality hangs over some of her late work. Beginning with her spring 2014 collection, she declared she would stop making clothing, and in the time since, has turned her attention to more abstract investigations of silhouette, form and function.

But Ms. Kawakubo is shrewd. The Comme des Garçons company is set up, with its many lines, diffusions and subsidiaries, so that each part can support another. (The company’s total revenues were more than \$280 million last year, including its Dover Street Market multi-brand stores; the Met will have its own Comme gift shop, with exclusive products, like a Nike sneaker with a gold-welded CDG logo.)

Her spirit and her values guide the entire Comme des Garçons enterprise, but not all newness is created equal. And it is because the company does a brisk trade in its more digestible, commercial collections, like the heart-studded Play line, its wallets and its fragrances, that Ms. Kawakubo is free to be esoteric with her most obsessional creations, the runway collection she shows for the main Comme des Garçons line.

It is a measure of her cult appeal that even Ms. Kawakubo’s not-clothes are desirable to her most ardent fans, and unlike many other labels, which show fantasy on the runway but reality in the shops, Comme des Garçons sells its showpieces too — to its founder’s occasional irritation.

“She gets really upset because she doesn’t want to make them,” Mr. Joffe said. “They’re so difficult.”

But if they are artworks — if Ms. Perry is right — Ms. Kawakubo is adamant that she is not an artist. “There are very few designers working today whose body of work could sustain itself in the context of an art museum,” Mr. Bolton said earlier, but Ms. Kawakubo considers herself a businesswoman first

and foremost. I noted that she had long maintained this, but in recent interviews she appeared closer to agreeing that perhaps she was an artist after all.

Mr. Joffe nodded and smiled, but when he relayed this to Ms. Kawakubo, she grew agitated and began speaking rapidly. “She said it’s my fault for translating badly,” he said. “She’s not an artist.” She gestured to my notebook, that I should write this down. “Please make sure,” she said.

If not an artist, then a punk. “Punk is very important,” she said. “The spirit of punk is being against the establishment. That’s how you can start from zero to make something new — you don’t accept the existing order of things.”

I pointed out that she was currently enshrined in the temple of the establishment, the Met.

“The fact of *being* here is rebellious,” Mr. Joffe said. “The fact of her being here is punk enough. Of course there’s going to be people saying we sold out, why are we on the cover of Vogue? But it’s not the point.” Ms. Kawakubo nodded.

Perhaps the point is the work, and, if I may suggest it, the legacy. Comme des Garçons’ influence has been felt in fashion for decades, and not always in the obvious ways of imitation and homage. Ms. Kawakubo has raised the stock of exposed seams, asymmetry, synthetic fabrics and the color black, but more than that she has kept her own course with a steadfastness and a single-mindedness that others have absorbed, and begun a conversation whose thread others have taken up.

I wondered, not for the first time, what she thought of her legacy. I reminded her that we had done one interview before, by mail, four years ago. I had asked her then how she wanted to be remembered. She had answered, “I want to be forgotten.” Had that feeling changed?

“It is more and more true,” she said. “I’m not doing another exhibition, that’s for sure.”

There is a bleakness to her uncompromising worldview that can be startling, even uncomfortable. But then a thought occurred to her, and she smiled slightly as she turned and murmured something to Mr. Joffe.

“If you write that as she said it,” he said, “that this is the last exhibition, she wonders whether more people would come to see it.”

The woman is a marketing genius, I said, and Ms. Kawakubo began to laugh. “You should say at the end, absolutely, I am a businesswoman,” she said.

Sports

A flashier cricket faces the specter of doping

LONDON

BY TIM WIGMORE

For two decades, cricket has been familiar with the specter of match-fixing, which brought scandals and suspensions to a sport that considered itself a gentlemen's pastime. Now, though, as cricket embraces the faster, flashier version of the game known as Twenty20, which rewards explosive power, the sport is grappling with a new threat to its integrity: doping.

In January, Andre Russell of Jamaica, one of the world's leading Twenty20 players, was barred for a year for failing to file his whereabouts with doping officials three times in a year, resulting in a series of missed tests. Then on April 13, the International Cricket Council announced that Mohammad Shahzad of Afghanistan, ranked world seventh-best T20 batsman, had tested positive for the banned substance clenbuterol in an out-of-competition test. On Sunday, he was provisionally suspended.

While doping suspensions in cricket remain rare, antidoping officials and the sport's governing body have expressed concern that these two incidents reflect how the rise of T20, and the explosion of cash it has brought to the sport, has made cricket more vulnerable to doping than ever.

"Cricket is a high-risk sport for performance-enhancing drug use," said Richard Ings, the former head of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, who described the game's testing protocols as "porous and inconsistent." "I would rate the risk of doping in cricket as high," Ings added, "and the quality of the sport's coordinated global antidoping efforts as poor."

The I.C.C., which governs the game worldwide, said it conducted 547 drug tests in 2016 — suggesting that a reasonable proportion of top male international cricketers were tested, although testing is less common at lower levels and in the women's game.

The council has announced plans to introduce blood testing starting in June, largely to monitor the potential use of human growth hormone, which does not show up in urine samples.

"I don't think you can possibly say drug free, but we are doing all that we



Mohammad Shahzad, a leading Twenty20 batsman, tested positive for a banned substance and was provisionally suspended on Sunday.

can to police cricket," said Sally Clark, the senior legal counsel for the I.C.C. The fear inside the game is that while cricket has had sporadic concerns with drugs before, it now faces a much more sustained threat, perhaps similar to what baseball encountered two decades ago.

"The I.C.C. and the World Anti-Doping Agency view that the power-based skill set required in T20 makes it a sport that fits a similar profile to baseball," said Tony Irish, the executive chairman of the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations.

Test cricket, the most traditional and slowest form of the game, rewards scoring runs while taking minimal risk; matches last five days. But in T20 cricket, the goal is different. With matches completed in only a few hours, teams try to score as quickly as possible, with shots that are hit over the boundary for six runs being particularly important. The emphasis on the power those big hits require — over more careful shot-making — means that performance-enhancing drugs have the potential to make a big difference for batsmen.

Performance-enhancing drugs also could be appealing to bowlers, just as they were to some baseball pitchers seeking to match the increasing strength of batters. Bowlers have an especially high risk of injury, so drugs that increase endurance could help them bowl more, and therefore play a fuller part in T20 leagues.

But for cricketers of all types, the use of performance-enhancing drugs has become more attractive because of the sheer amount of money available in T20 leagues. Contracts in the region of \$1 million

are common in the Indian Premier League, a six-week tournament. The popularity of T20 cricket has led to the formation of other leagues, too, and all of them compete for the services of the world's best players.

So where once leading cricketers might have expected to have almost half a year off, now they can play virtually nonstop, moving from one T20 league, and one rich contract, to the next. Russell, for example, played for seven T20 teams in 2016, winning five titles.

"Risk is a function of motive and opportunity," Ings said. "Motive in cricket

exists because selections are highly competitive, contracts involve massive sums of money and injuries are common." A player who gets injured, he said, risks losing his contract, and affecting his next one.

Effective antidoping education has been made trickier by the diffusion of top T20 leagues, which sprawl from India, Australia and Hong Kong to England and the Caribbean. Since many players are based in their home countries less frequently, that "makes educating players consistently harder," Irish said while acknowledging "more could be done from a global educational perspective to prevent issues arising and avoid the need for punitive punishment."

The emphasis on the power in Twenty20 means that performance-enhancing drugs have the potential to make a big difference for batsmen.

Enforcement also remains an issue. Despite missing three tests in 2015, Russell played on for 11 months — a period in which he helped the West Indies win the World Twenty20 tournament — before he was suspended.

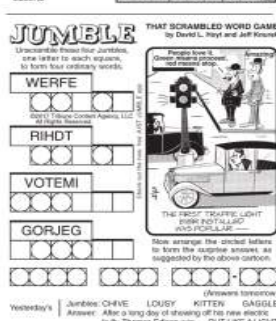
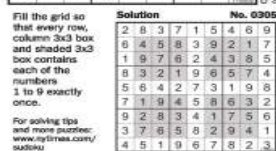
With the number of domestic T20 leagues growing, it may be impossible for the I.C.C. to monitor antidoping efforts in cricket.

The I.C.C. conducts out-of-competition testing on cricketers who have played international matches in the previous two years. But players who have not played international cricket in this period, or have retired from the international game, are not subject to I.C.C. testing.

For such cricketers, drug testing depends on national governing bodies and antidoping authorities.

Although all 10 full-member countries in the I.C.C. have antidoping codes in place, there are inconsistent standards of testing across the different leagues. So players in less-heralded competitions could have particular reason to be tempted, knowing how good performances could increase their chances of being picked up by a more lucrative league.

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Culture



The rotunda at the North Carolina State Capitol with a reproduction of the statue commissioned shortly after the War of 1812 to honor the Revolutionary War hero and first American president. The original Washington statue was ruined in a fire.

GERRY BROOME/ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Italy, the natural George Washington

Centuries-old statue of first president in the buff to be in U.S. exhibit

BY JAMES BARRON

It is a statue of the father of our country that America has never seen: George Washington in the buff.

He is not wearing a velvet suit, as he does in the stony-faced Gilbert Stuart portrait. He is not wearing a Continental Army uniform, as he does in the painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware.” Nor is he wearing a Roman toga, as he does in another statue. That Washington, naked from the waist up, offended Victorian-era sensibilities in the nation’s capital. A founding father’s pecs and abs were too much for the 1840s.

The naked Washington is a not-quite-200-year-old plaster statue by the Italian sculptor Antonio Canova — a 30-inch preliminary model for a life-size image of Washington that was going to show him in a Roman soldier’s uniform (with the torso covered). The naked statue is coming to the United States for the first time for an exhibition called “Canova’s George Washington,” which is scheduled to open next year at the Frick Collection. A full-size plaster model will also make its American debut, along with sketches and drawings, all lent by the Museo Antonio Canova in Possagno, Italy.

The museum is a shrine to Canova, the foremost neo-Classical sculptor of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Canova was celebrated while he was

alive, with Goethe and Wordsworth in the chorus of admirers. Flaubert managed to plant a kiss on Canova’s “Cupid and Psyche” and declare, “I was kissing beauty itself.”

Canovian beauty was what North Carolina got when the General Assembly decided to honor Washington. This was soon after the War of 1812, when the still-young United States was celebrating its place among nations. Someone asked Thomas Jefferson who could produce a suitable statue. “There can be but one answer to this,” he responded. “Old Canove of Rome.”

Jefferson got Canova’s name wrong, but Canova got the commission. It was his only work that was destined for the United States. As Xavier F. Salomon, the Frick’s chief curator observed, “A commission from America then, it was like a commission from Mars.”

Canova did the naked Washington in preparation for the final statue, which he sent to Raleigh in 1821. The completed statue sat in the state’s House until it was ruined in a fire in 1831. (A replica was installed in 1970.)

As a preliminary piece, the naked Washington never left Canova’s studio in Italy. Mr. Salomon said North Carolinians almost certainly had not known about it, even though artists often did naked versions of their subjects — in effect, sketches in plaster — as they thought through the process of turning cold, hard stone into hair, skin and soft-looking fabric.

“It is one of the four preliminary models, part of the preparatory work,” Mr. Salomon said, and it was practical, not prurient. “He always did a nude

model of his sculptures so he could understand how the body worked under the drapery,” he said. “Absolutely standard practice. He would start with rough drawings and then move to three-dimensional plaster models such as this one.”

Mr. Salomon does not know who posed for the body. It was not Washington. The first president had been dead for 17 years by the time Canova went to work. Canova had done a nude Napoleon as the god Mars about 10 years earlier. But when it came to Washington, clothes made the man — and the statue — because his appearance mattered.

“John Marshall, his first serious biographer, even entitled the chapter on Washington’s arrival in the world ‘The Birth of Mr. Washington,’” the historian Joseph J. Ellis wrote, “suggesting that he was born fully clothed and ready to assume the presidency.” Nathaniel Hawthorne seemed to echo Marshall’s notion after posing a provocative question: “Did anybody ever see Washington naked?”

“It is inconceivable,” Hawthorne wrote. “He had no nakedness, but, I imagine, was born with clothes on and his hair powdered, and made a stately bow on his first appearance in the world.”

Canova must have realized that it was hard not to notice Washington. He stood at least 6 feet, 2 inches tall, six inches taller than average in those days; weighed about 175 pounds; and had unusually large hands and feet.

Mr. Salomon said Canova had seemed to struggle with the arms as he worked to show Washington writing his farewell



FRANCA COIN

Left, a photograph of the nude Washington by Antonio Canova. The piece was a study for a life-size image of Washington clothed. Right, another Canova study of Washington.



FABIO ZONTA

address on a stone tablet. “He’s trying to get the muscles,” Mr. Salomon said.

But Canova did not have much to go on. He never saw Washington and relied on a bust owned by an American diplomat who shipped it to Canova’s studio in Rome.

“At that point, America was still searching for who their heroes were,” Mr. Salomon said. “They were trying to define the history of a country that has no history.”

For the North Carolinians, the Canova commission must have had a keeping-up-with-the-Joneses flavor — they were

well aware that Virginia’s State Capitol already had a statue, by Jean-Antoine Houdon, that showed Washington in a military uniform.

Mr. Salomon said Canova had chosen the Roman imagery carefully. What interested Canova about Washington was not that he had outsmarted the British in the Revolutionary War, or that he had presided at the creation of a new country. To Europeans, Mr. Salomon said, “what was bizarre was that someone who was running a state had stepped down from power — no one ever did that.” Except Cincinnatus, a former gen-

eral whom the Romans summoned to be dictator. He served for 15 days, then resigned and went back to his farm, much as Washington went back to Mount Vernon after the presidency.

Mr. Salomon said zeroing in on the naked statue “is kind of schoolboyish.”

“I hope people understand it’s about classical bodies and ancient statuary and all that,” he added.

Yes, but it is a departure for American presidential iconography. Sean Wilentz, a history professor at Princeton, said he could not think of a single major commemorative statue “in which you have nudes.” Last summer, naked statues of Donald J. Trump were placed in Union Square and in public spaces in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Cleveland and Seattle. DNAinfo.com reported that the one in Union Square was gone after about two hours, removed by Parks Department workers.

“The very idea of having a nude Washington in the 1820s would have been scandalous,” Professor Wilentz said. “If you go to Statuary Hall in the Capitol, they’re all there, tobacco-chewing politicians who all look like Roman gods. That was the style. You really have to talk to an art historian about the place of the nude in American art, but looking at American politics, I mean, no, we never have our presidents in the buff.”

And then he quoted a line from the Bob Dylan song “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding)”: “But even the president of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked.”

“That’s from 1965,” Professor Wilentz said. “The very idea is mischievous, to say the least.”

Click if you think you’re being watched

MOVIE REVIEW

‘The Circle’ doubles as satire and paranoid look at surveillance

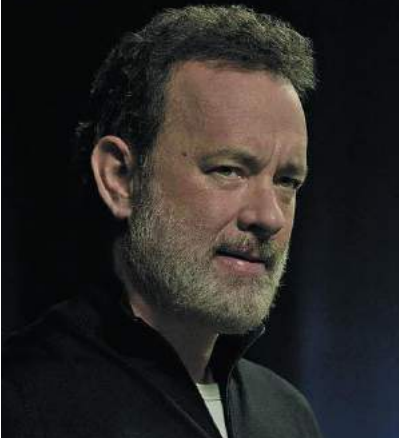
BY GLENN KENNY

From the drab 1995 cyberthriller “The Net” onward, mainstream American movies have been hard-pressed to pertinently weigh in on the internet and its discontents. Yes, comedies are regularly larded with “old folks can’t tweet” and “these darn kids and their ‘texting’” jokes, while espionage thrillers invariably serve up hot webcam action. But few pictures attempt to take a hard look at what it all means — perhaps because the entertainment business has some resentment about its digital usurpation.

So credit “The Circle” with ambition,

at least. This film, directed by James Ponsoldt, is an adaptation of Dave Eggers’s 2013 novel, and the two collaborated on the screenplay. Mr. Eggers’s book is both a satire and a cautionary tale, grafting surveillance-state mechanisms to a faux-progressive vision with pronounced cult leanings — a lot of its “join us” vibe feels passed down from Philip Kaufman’s 1978 version of “Invasion of the Body Snatchers,” a tale set, like the one here, in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Mr. Ponsoldt’s movie begins with its heroine, Mae (Emma Watson), trapped in a stale cubicle doing meaningless dunning labor for a meaningless company; in due time, she’s doing much more high-tech “customer experience” work at the Circle, an internet service that seems to meld all the most annoying features of Google, Facebook, Twitter, you name it. Adding to the forced-extroversion fun is a new invention, a multipurpose webcam that’s the relative size and shape of an eyeball.



“Knowing is good but knowing everything is better,” crows one of the company’s principals, a Steve Jobs-like visionary named Eamon Bailey (Tom Hanks).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STX ENTERTAINMENT

Tom Hanks and Emma Watson star in “The Circle,” an incoherent take on the internet.

That maxim also appears in the novel, and it sticks in the craw, not least because any first-year graduate student in philosophy could demolish it. At what point did the Circle put a

hiring freeze on anyone conversant with epistemology? Lampooning the simple-mindedness of utopian web clichés was arguably part of Mr. Eggers’s point, but much of that point is often muddled in the book. And it’s simply incoherent in the movie. The novel is at its most trenchantly funny when depicting the exhausting nature of virtual social life, and it’s in this area, too, that the movie gets its very few knowing laughs. But it’s plain, not much more than 15 minutes in, that without the story’s paranoid aspects you’re left with a conceptual framework that’s been lapped three times over by the likes of, say, the Joshua Cohen novel “Book of Numbers,” or the HBO comedy series “Silicon Valley.”

You’re also left with oodles and oodles of bad acting and bad dialogue. Ms. Watson has to spend way too much time looking concerned while staring at various screens. Ellar Coltrane, who was so unaffectedly appealing as he grew up onscreen in

Richard Linklater’s “Boyhood,” can’t find any footing in the role of Mae’s Mr. Integrity ex-boyfriend. It doesn’t help that he has to mouth lines like “We used to go on adventures and have fun and see things, and you were brave and exciting.”

Mr. Hanks evokes an idea of avuncular visionary charm and doesn’t have much to do beyond that. And John Boyega — playing a character who was vital in the book but whose role has been reconfigured so that his function in the movie makes no sense — mostly stands around at the rear of auditoriums, backlit, and when called upon to speak does a very creditable Denzel Washington impersonation.

The movie is dedicated to Bill Paxton, who died in February and is quite fine in the small role of Mae’s father, who’s dealing with multiple sclerosis. The dedication is a kind and considerate touch. Still, if you’d like to enjoy a movie featuring both Mr. Paxton and Mr. Hanks, I’d recommend “Apollo 13.”

Living large by taking it easy

LOS ANGELES

Meet Mac DeMarco, singer-songwriter and laid-back rock idol

BY JOE COSCARELLI

Before Mac DeMarco bought a lovely blue home with a pool on a quiet hill here in Silver Lake — the first real adult spoils of a surprising career built on seeming like an affable deadbeat — he gave out his exact address to fans, not exactly expecting them to show up in droves.

“Stop on by — I’ll make you a cup of coffee,” Mr. DeMarco, a mischievous singer and songwriter, said on a whim at the end of “My House by the Water,” an instrumental track from 2015. His place, a four-bedroom on the beach in Far Rockaway, Queens, was relatively secluded, directly across Jamaica Bay from Kennedy International Airport. But accessibility aside, people soon started showing up, and they didn’t really stop for the next six months.

“We had thousands of kids, all through the day, all hours,” Mr. DeMarco recalled recently as he chain-smoked Marlboro Reds in his new backyard, surrounded by overflowing ashtrays and discarded cans of beer and seltzer. “It was crazy. I really liked it.”

True to his word and reputation, he played amiable host to those making the Rockaway pilgrimage — his longtime girlfriend, Kiera McNally, “was a good sport for as long as she could be” — even as summer bloomed and space got tight. “Sometimes we’d have like 40 people sitting against the sea wall watching us rehearse,” Mr. DeMarco said, insisting that the impetuous stunt did not lead to any negative experiences and only brought him closer to his fan base.

That’s the kind of easygoing intimacy and relatability that has turned Mr. DeMarco, who is originally from Edmonton, Alberta, into what has become a rare breed: a breakout indie-rock idol whose consistent musical output — mostly mellow guitar pop in the mold of ’60s and ’70s songwriters like Harry Nilsson, Neil Young and John Lennon — is only bolstered by a fervent cult of personality.

As a kind of pied piper for the blog crowd, Mr. DeMarco, with his trademark gaptoothed smile and disarming baby blues, has tended to his flock not so much with the dubiously revealing gimmicks of social media, but on-the-ground, grass-roots outreach via non-stop touring and direct human connection.

His new album, “This Old Dog,” out Friday, is his third full-length LP and fifth release in five years on the independent Brooklyn label Captured Tracks, with each enjoying exponential growth. (“Salad Days,” his previous album, sold more than 100,000 copies in the United States.) But instead of blowing out his sound for bigger festival stages and more crossover opportunities, Mr. DeMarco has knowingly pulled back with a collection of his softest, most personal songs, recorded at home in Los Angeles, mostly on acoustic guitar.

“It’s funny, as things progress, I just want to keep making them smaller and smaller,” Mr. DeMarco said, his natural inclination toward a do-it-yourself punk ethos shining through. “I try to retain a certain amount of control. I’m not a freak, but I don’t want to do anything that I don’t want to do.”

He also seemed to recognize how crucial a sense of connectedness has been to his success. Approachable, genuine and undeniably charismatic, Mr. DeMarco, who turned 27 on Sunday, is a



ELIZABETH WEINBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mac DeMarco in his home pool in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles. Below, he performed last year at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival.

recognizable archetype to anyone familiar with small-time local music scenes — a trendsetting merrymaker likely to get drunk and pull down his pants onstage, but who also happens to be a devoted songwriter.

“I’m not the artiste — we’re just having a good time,” Mr. DeMarco said, recalling being drawn as a teenager to bands “that made me go, ‘Oh, I can do this, too!’” He added: “Kids tune in and they’re like, ‘Mac would drink a beer with me.’ And the answer is probably yes! These people are paying my mortgage, putting food on the table for me and my girlfriend. Thank you! And you like the music? That’s crazy.”

‘I’m not the artiste — we’re just having a good time.’

But as grateful as he is for the support, Mr. DeMarco was realistic and self-aware in acknowledging that his irreverent rock ‘n’ roll prankster vibe and sense of humor — onstage, in legend and in countless playful YouTube videos — has spawned a following almost apart from his solid yet unassuming songs.

“I’m like a meme,” he said. “My music is one thing, and then there’s also this weird personality that people attach to it.” That comes with expectations. “Nowadays, it’s like, ‘Put the cigarette between your teeth, man!’ But I did that already.”

Yet some bewilderment aside, Mr. DeMarco insisted that he harbors no existential anxiety about the jester role, mostly because it’s not a character. “I’ve always tried to keep public Mac and me Mac fairly in line with one another so it doesn’t become weird,” he said. It also provides a firewall for his art.

Mike Sniper, the founder of Captured Tracks, who signed Mr. DeMarco solely on the strength of songs uploaded to Bandcamp, marveled at the multiple facets of the singer’s career. “He’s given himself total privacy in his own music to make whatever he wants,” Mr. Sniper said. “Who else is afforded to be that serious as a musician and that goofy in person? I can’t think of anyone who can pull that off as well as he has.”

Mr. DeMarco toured and released music in Canadian obscurity, mostly under the name Makeout Videotape, for years before he signed to a label with any influence. When he did, releasing the more experimental, lo-fi “Rock and Roll Nightclub” in 2012 on Captured Tracks, the indie-rock stars were aligning.

The label, which had success with groups like Dum Dum Girls, Wild Nothing and Beach Fossils, had become “Pitchfork’s darling,” Mr. Sniper said of the gatekeeping music website, which was once a peerless tastemaker in that world and began championing Mr. DeMarco. “Whatever cultural cachet we had, he really took advantage of it and went nuts from there,” Mr. Sniper said.

Mr. DeMarco’s freewheeling, wide-scale debut also came on the heels of a more self-serious moment in the genre, which was dominated by headliners like Animal Collective, Arcade Fire and Dirty Projectors.

“I played the internet game a lot in the first couple years,” Mr. DeMarco said. “A lot of videos, a lot of interviews, a lot of content.”

He added, “A lot of bands don’t give it up like I do, I guess.”

Even today, Mr. DeMarco’s every move is parsed online by obsessives. In addition to his rapper-esque 643,000 Instagram followers, the active r/macde-marco Reddit community includes spec-



KENDRICK BRINSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ulation about not only his songwriting but also fluctuations in his weight (“Anybody else concerned with Mac’s recent decline in physical health?”), his finances and his relationship with Ms. McNally, who has become a co-star among the cast of characters in Mac World.

Another is Agnes, Mr. DeMarco’s mother, who has leaned into her niche celebrity status and now runs her son’s official, tongue-in-cheek fan club. “Right off the hop, these kids wanted to be my Facebook friend,” Ms. DeMarco said in an interview.

She described her son as a curious and enthusiastic child, who was “perhaps a bit of a rabble-rouser — very, very full of energy, much like he is now.” She added: “He draws people to him. Mac always traveled in a herd of kids, and even if they didn’t want to like him, they ended up liking him.”

Mr. DeMarco’s immediate loved ones have long featured in his music as well as his career, though he favors what he called “vague, pretty common themes and not very specific lyrics — little pop song nuggets.”

But on “This Old Dog,” which Mr. DeMarco started at the Rockaway house and returned to after his move to California, he got more thematically pointed than ever, calling the songs “diary-entry style.”

The opening track, “My Old Man,” plainly addresses the father he grew up without and who struggled with addiction (“Uh-oh, looks like I’m seeing more of my old man in me”). The album was inspired in part by the two reconnecting under dire circumstances: a cancer diagnosis.

“I’d say see you later, if I thought I’d see you later and I’d tell you that I loved you if I did,” Mr. DeMarco sings in

“Moonlight on the River.” The album ends on the line: “And even though you barely know each other, it still hurts watching him fade away.”

“It was my ‘See you later, partner,’” Mr. DeMarco said of the low-key LP, its sound stemming from the singer’s recent deep dives into the careers of Paul Simon, James Taylor and Yellow Magic Orchestra. But in a twist, his father has since recovered to an extent, outlasting his diagnosis. “I didn’t think he would ever hear the songs,” Mr. DeMarco said. “Now he’s like, ‘I’m *baaack*,’ and I’m like, [expletive].”

That this introspective moment coincides with Mr. DeMarco’s turning a corner into his late 20s and adjusting his lifestyle accordingly is probably not a coincidence. “I have retracted a little bit from just giving everything away,” he said of his public persona. But maturation is a funny thing for a singer whose generous high jinks are foundational to his popularity.

At his home in Los Angeles, those contradictions were on display as domesticity coexisted with the Neverland aspects of playing rock for a living. Guitars and gear were strewn in almost every room, and band mates had colonized the extra space, all while Ms. McNally baked sourdough bread and cinnamon buns, reminding Mr. DeMarco to take his fiber supplement. (He ate a spoonful of frosting instead.)

“I’ve lived in way too many crawlspace rooms,” Mr. DeMarco remarked, taking in his yard with astonishment and uttering a string of curse words for emphasis. “It’s such a fluke, so lucky and so amazing,” he said motioning over the pool, which at that point he had yet to swim in. “Look at this! See this! From playing guitar? It’s ridiculous.”

A requiem for pain and secrets

BOOK REVIEW

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE
By Elizabeth Strout. 254 pp. Random House. \$27.

BY JENNIFER SENIOR

Anyone who’s ever experienced depression, even the tiniest mote, knows that there’s great power in relief. Certainly Olive Kitteridge, the protagonist of Elizabeth Strout’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name, knew this. “Pleasure is the absence of pain,” Olive thought to herself at one point, recalling the words of a philosopher she’d read in college. (She couldn’t remember who. Epicurus.) She may as well have been speaking for any of Strout’s characters. The things they carry are heavy. Not to suffer would be more than enough.

And oh, how the characters suffer in Strout’s latest novel, “Anything Is Possible”! The title seems a mean joke, given the book’s army of hurting men and women, desperate for liberation from their wounds.

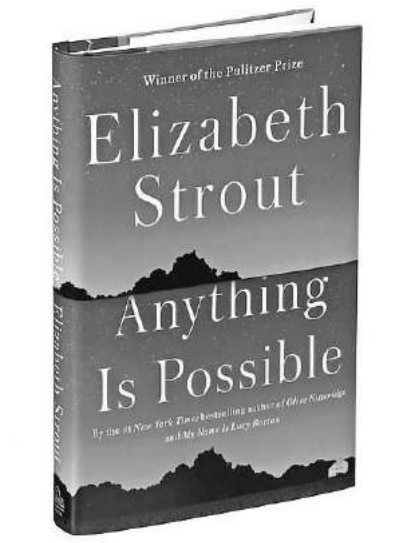
To describe the plot, to the extent that there even is one, is pointless. Like “Olive Kitteridge,” “Anything Is Possible” is really a necklace of short

stories about people in a small town, studded with clues about who’s connected to whom. (Strout was born to be an omniscient narrator, born to flit and swoop from one crooked perch to the next.)

It is most useful to think about Strout’s work thematically. The same ideas continually preoccupy her, and her characters often behave in similar ways. They indulge in the petty comforts of gossip, their judgments disguised as concern, their desperation to reassure themselves of their luck — and virtue — disguised as pity. They throb with loneliness and fume with disappointment. (A lot of her characters are old, very old, and are bitter to discover where they have ended up.) Grown children defend parents who have done the indefensible, their mercy almost saintly in its bounty; or they do its opposite, clinging to righteous fury over parental infractions on a more human scale, driving their mothers wild with grief and remorse.

And many characters walk around with great satchels of unexpressed love.

“Because he was Charlie and not someone else,” Strout writes of Charlie Macauley, a damaged Vietnam veteran, “he could not say to his son: You are decent and strong, and none of this



PATRICIA WALL/THE NEW YORK TIMES

has anything to do with me; but you came through it, that childhood that wasn’t all roses, and I’m proud of you, I’m amazed by you.”

Where this book sharply departs from Strout’s previous work is in its frank, unapologetic emphasis on forbidden desire. Not a chapter spins by, practically, without the unveiling of some sexual secret. There are stories of voyeurism. Prostitution. A father’s

secret gay life. We discover, to our horror, that the husband of one of the most tender, largehearted characters, Patty Nicely, was repeatedly raped as a child. When she was a child, Patty herself walked in on her mother in flagrante delicto — with Patty’s Spanish teacher, who was spanking her.

“Her mother could not stop herself from wailing,” Strout writes, “this is what Patty saw, her mother’s breasts and her mother’s eyes looking at her — yet unable to stop what was coming from her mouth.”

The trauma of the primal scene, which may or may not involve both parents, is central in “Anything Is Possible.” It misshapes the psychosexual futures of many innocents. The best they can hope for in adulthood is not to recapitulate the crimes.

So where, you might ask, is the relief in such a book?

“Anything Is Possible” is certainly more grim than Strout’s previous work. It’s more audacious, too, and more merciless, daring you to walk away. “Little House on the Prairie” assumes a mythic status among some of its characters. This book is its terrible opposite. No chirping families to be found among the swaying golden fields here.

But the writing is wrenchingly

lovely. It almost always is with Strout, whether she’s knitting metaphors or summarizing, with agonizing economy, whole episodes of a life: “Having met in their late thirties, they’d had only eight years together. No children. Patty had never known a better man.”

You read Strout, really, for the same reason you listen to a requiem: to experience the beauty in sadness.

For those who have read Strout’s previous novel, “My Name Is Lucy Barton,” this book also offers the pleasures of intertextual sport. “Anything Is Possible” takes place in Amgash, Ill., the town of Lucy’s birth. Though readers never actually went there — we only heard tales of it from Lucy’s mother, who prattled on about its beleaguered residents during a hospital visit with Lucy in New York — this new novel still feels like a homecoming of sorts, with familiar-sounding characters now earning chapters of their own. Like the “Pretty Nicely Girls,” whose mother’s affair liquidated the family. And Charlie Macauley, whose experience in Vietnam liquidated his soul. And the Bartons.

The meta conceit of “My Name Is Lucy Barton,” which the reader only realizes partway in, is that the novel is meant to be the actual “published” memoir of Lucy, its author-narrator:

“Anything Is Possible” is sly, too. Characters in the town of Amgash purchase Lucy’s book at the local bookstore; they quote from it; they make note of its cover (which looks like the real-life cover of “My Name Is Lucy Barton”).

But the most startling thing the reader discovers in this book is that “Lucy Barton” wasn’t the whole truth. You may think, having read it, that you know the Barton family. Trust me: You don’t. Those children suffered cruelty of an astounding magnitude, far worse than Strout originally conveyed. That their father couldn’t stop diddling himself in their presence, and on the job, is only the half of it. It was their mother who inflicted the most harm. Lucy was holding out on us — possibly willfully, or possibly because the complete truth, half-glimpsed, was all her adult self could tolerate.

But her siblings have fuller memories. Her sister in particular can cite chapter and verse of her mother’s crimes. “You want truthful sentences?” she asks in the new novel, after a noisome litany of them rolls off her tongue. “Write about that.”

“I don’t want to write that story,” Lucy replies.

“And who’d want to read it?” asks her brother.

We would. And we do.

TRAVEL

Free hospitality for road-weary cyclists

PERSONAL JOURNEYS

Program links hosts with traveling guests, who are asked to return favor

BY KATIE KRAMON

Oregon had never seemed so nasty. For two long days in 2013, I had bicycled south with two intrepid college friends along its coast into a relentless gale, the rainy headwinds leaving us exhausted and flat tires a frequent occurrence. Now we sat soaked on the side of a piney road, in the middle of nowhere, with no place to stay.

One companion, ever the optimist, excitedly told us she had found an online organization with the fuzzy name of Warm Showers: “It’s like Couchsurfing for bike tourers,” she said, referring to the free-stay site for travelers.

Warm Showers pairs itinerant bicyclists with hosts who offer their homes at no charge. The hope is that the cyclists will themselves play host in turn.

I was skeptical. I had cycled across the United States twice and never heard of it. How did we know this wasn’t a trap, set by predatory homebodies to lure naifs like us?

But we were desperate, so we agreed to call Brian Heron, a nearby Warm Showers host. He showed up within 20 minutes, asking whether we needed a ride up the hill to his place and whether we liked pizza. (No, and yes.) We arrived at his house covered in mud and smelling like wet dogs.

Mr. Heron, an ordained Presbyterian pastor who had first experienced Warm Showers as a guest on a 2011 bicycle trip across the West, told us to leave our gritty bikes in the front hallway (you wouldn’t want them to rust in the rain, he said) and to put our wet clothes in the dryer. Then he served us mountains of Hawaiian pizza, ice cream and brownies.

Was this too good to be true? Warm Showers started small in 1993, but its website now lists 39,000 hosts and 89,000 bicycle tourers — people who hit the road for extended trips — in 175 countries. It is built, the website says, “on 100 percent reciprocal hospitality.” Hosts offer what they can: a couch, a



VIA LOUIS MELINI

From left, Louis Melini, Julie Melini and Alvaro Neil. The Melinis take part in the Warm Showers program.

room, or a place outside to pitch a tent, and sometimes meals, too. They receive no benefit other than the chance to make new friends and hear stories of the road. And unlike the for-profit Airbnb, Warm Showers is run by volunteers.

“There’s something special about the Warm Showers cyclists,” Mr. Heron said. “They easily connect to that sense of adventure, being willing to take risks and be vulnerable. They get me, and I get them, and it’s always a delight.”

How Warm Showers has succeeded in the face of everyday human frailty is something of a mystery, even to its

founders. Only one significant theft has been reported, according to Louis Melini, a former board member, and only a handful of hosts have made guests uncomfortable enough for them to complain. (Both hosts and guests can post reviews online.) The offenders were promptly removed from the site.

Of course, there have been cases in which guests have overstayed their welcome, hanging around for more than a night or two, monopolizing the host’s living room, and kitchen. Some guests have more colorful backgrounds than others.

My mother, a Warm Showers host who joined the site in 2014 to repay the hospitality bestowed upon her daughter, learned by going online that a guest, staying downstairs on the living room sofa, had been accused of abusing his ex-wife. She was relieved when he pedaled off the next day. Another time, she returned home to find her guests of five days cooking up a meal and making a royal mess of the kitchen. But most of her memories of guests are fond ones, including the time one fell in love with her usually moody dog. Another sent her postcards for weeks after leaving.

Happy matches are common. Some cyclists return year after year to hosts with whom they feel a special bond, and those riders may in turn open their own homes. Warm Showers expects cyclists treated with kindness to pass it forward, as Mr. Heron has.

“In our society right now, we don’t know our neighbors, and we aren’t looking out for each other,” he said. “Warm Showers reminds me of something I loved as a child: trust, and taking care of each other, and stopping by the side of the road to help someone in trouble. That’s the kind of world I want to live in.”

Due in part to that vibe, the organization has grown fast, attracting 20,000 new members in 2014 and 25,000 in 2015. Hosts can be found in countries like Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and Ecuador.

Stories are a bike tourer’s greatest currency, especially with hosts who have desk jobs and dream of returning to the road.

Ethel MacDonald of Missoula, Mont., has stayed with 140 Warm Showers hosts all over the world, and recently celebrated her 77th birthday with a tour through Spain. One host has invited her to his daughter’s wedding in June. In turn, she has welcomed 150 cyclists into her home, she said.

She gives her guests meals and a lot of attention. But she said she always assures them that “I’ve had hosts way better than this. I know how much this kind of treatment means. Pass it on.”

Mr. Melini, 65, a physician assistant, was a Warm Showers board member from its founding through last summer. He and his wife, Julie, have a combined 25,000 bicycle touring miles and just finished hiking the Appalachian Trail, returning the hospitality they have received on the road when they are back home in Salt Lake City.

One of the couple’s Warm Showers guests was Pablo Garcia, an Argentine who has cycled thousands of miles, on every continent. Another was Alvaro Neil, 50, of Spain, a lawyer who is also known as Biclown, and who hopes to make it all the way around the world.

Mr. Melini worries that Warm Showers lacks a sufficient number of hosts. Members regularly complain that they have contacted 10 and heard back from only one. “There are advantages to being big and advantages to being small,” he said. “You lose some of that purity

when you get bigger, but you can provide more opportunities and options for bike travelers.”

The organization is trying to make it more difficult to sign up as a guest without also becoming a host, encouraging new users to list themselves as both. It’s a tough ask, as many bike travelers don’t spend much time in one place.

Ken Francis of Long Beach, Calif., who has cycled across the country three times, finally bought a house with a yard that he deemed adequate to host cyclists with tents. He has since responded to each of the more than 75 people who have contacted him through the website.

One reason he’s so eager to welcome other cyclists is his belief that hosts on his own early trips led him to a career as a therapist. After just two trips, he realized how much he enjoyed talking with

She gives her guests meals and a lot of attention. “I know how much this kind of treatment means. Pass it on.”

those he met on the road. “I really enjoyed just listening to people and hearing people’s stories,” he said, “and I thought wow, to have a job where that’s what I do would just be an amazing thing.”

My friends and I stayed with several Warm Showers hosts during our ride from Seattle to San Francisco, including Phillip Michael Long of Kelso, Wash. We never had a chance to thank him; he was off to work before we hit the road the next morning.

Our final hosts were Linda and Dave Allen of Santa Rosa, Calif., who put us up the night before we rolled into San Francisco, on the Fourth of July. They told us about Dave’s cross-country trip on a bicycle with a giant front wheel, requiring him to use a footstool to reach the seat. And of their 16 years sailing the world. And how they had ridden an antique tandem across Europe.

Empty nesters, they took us in as if we were their children’s childhood friends. We churned ice cream on the back porch, adding blackberries the couple had just picked. They found some old sparklers in their basement, and we all ran around barefoot on their back lawn, watching them glow.

Music for the security line blues

ITINERARIES

BY AMY ZIPKIN

The last thing Joel Malizia, a co-founder of the video production company Pilot Moon Films, expected when he arrived at the airport in Austin, Tex., for the recent South by Southwest festival was the sound of live music.

What he heard was the ensemble of Wendy Colonna, who describes her musical style as Americana. “It was so ethereal,” he said.

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport is among over a half-dozen airports in the United States that offer travelers frazzled by bottlenecks on security lines and cramped seating on planes (not to mention hard-pressed airport employees) a bit of a respite in the form of music.

Ms. Colonna said that her group played at the airport about four times a year as part of the airport’s Music in the Air program. “We don’t have to go on the road to make new fans,” she said. “At the airport, the road comes to us.”

For much of the year, several musical groups perform weekly, but during South by Southwest in March, that number swelled to more than 20, said Michael Pennock, the music coordinator for the city’s aviation department.

The city aviation department; Delaware North Companies, a food service and hospitality company based in Buffalo; and Pepsi underwrite the program. The musicians are paid \$120 for two 50-minute sets on four smaller stages or \$100 per musician for up to five musicians on a main stage on the secure side of the airport.

For a similar program at Nashville International Airport, Music in the Terminal, 80 to 100 bands perform each year on four stages. Last year, Pittsburgh International Airport began hosting two

performances a month in the baggage claim area. Houston Airport System created a performance series, Harmony in the Air, with rotating soloists, including classical music and jazz, at William P. Hobby Airport beginning in 2015 and George Bush Intercontinental Airport in 2016. San Diego Airport recently instituted a paid performing arts residency. This year’s winner, TranscenDance, began performances there last month.

The idea is not a new one: After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Portland International Airport in Oregon began hosting musical performances by volunteer musicians and now has 65 performances a week.

The airports’ arrangements with musicians vary. Most pay the performers, although rates may depend on experience, the size of the group and even the

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difficulty of the genre. Funding comes from a combination of sources. An airport authority may join forces with a corporate partner or a state or municipal arts commission. Houston Airport System has an enterprise fund for operations, maintenance and capital improvements.

While passengers say they appreciate the unexpected interludes, and musicians’ earnings and fan bases may receive a lift from the programs, airports’ decisions to offer performing arts are largely for their own benefit, said Steven A. Carvell, a professor at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

“Arts are one of the few things an air-

port authority can do to control the traveler experience,” he said. “They take the traveler out of the space they are in, so they are not attending to their anxiety.”

A potential for increased profits may also factor into that decision. In airports where entertainment is offered in areas past security lines, the music gives passengers a reason to linger near shops and food and beverage concessions, and to make purchases.

A report released in March by the Airports Council International-North America, a group in Washington representing airport owners and aviation-related businesses, said that airports estimated they would need almost \$100 billion for capital projects over the next five years. Right now, they can fund only about half that on their own.

“Music provides a better passenger experience and encourages people to arrive earlier,” said Darren Perry, a managing director in the aviation and travel practice at L.E.K. Consulting. “The earlier they arrive, the more money they spend. The money could be used for any number of things, from improving the facilities to making the facilities more comfortable.”

Some passengers, like Donna Seymour, an assistant vice president and account executive at a title insurance company who lives in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., agree. Ms. Seymour said that hearing a blues guitarist when she arrived at the Nashville International Airport recently “set the mood for the trip.”

A performance may reach listeners beyond its in-person audience. Sharjeel Ahsan, an accountant in Houston who said he traveled about six times a year for business, was walking through Hobby Airport in February when he heard strains of classical music.

Before getting something to eat and continuing to his gate, he stopped for about 15 minutes to hear the Apollo Chamber Players. He recorded the segment on his phone and still listens to it. Later, he said, he told his colleagues about his encounter.

Matthew J. Detrick, a violinist and artistic director for the Apollo Chamber Players, said that the airport gig had helped improve the group’s performances. “It teaches us to break down barriers between audience and performer,” he said.

For all its entertainment value, music can only go so far in easing passengers’ stress. Barbara E. Lichman, a lawyer specializing in aviation at Buchalter, a law firm in Irvine, Calif., said that the airlines and the Transportation Security Administration needed to closely examine their contributions to travelers’ anxiety. She pointed to overcrowded airplanes and what she considered illogical T.S.A. searches.

“Fix the problems in the industry and don’t coat them over with icing like music,” she said.



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The Apollo Chamber Players performing at William P. Hobby Airport in Houston.