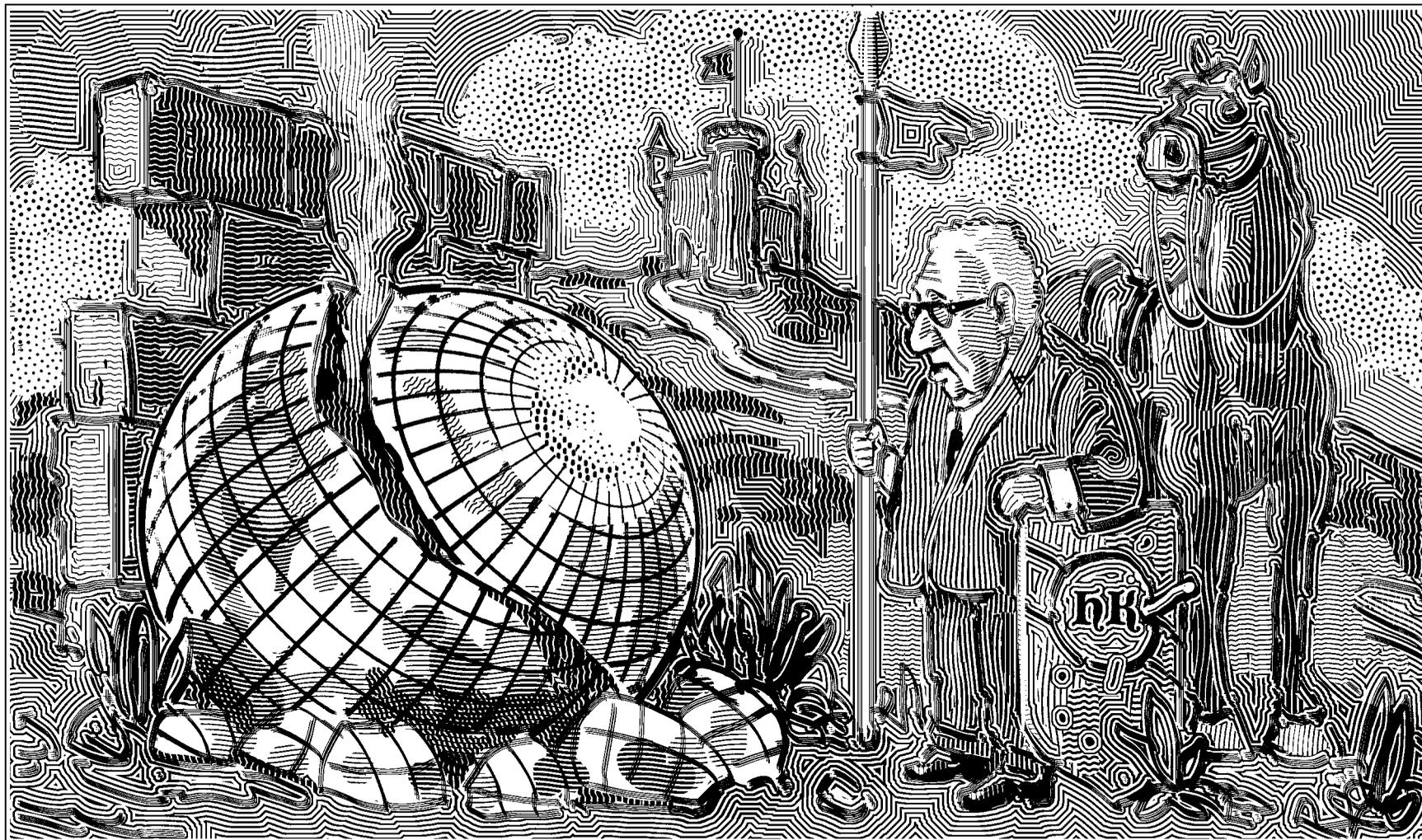


VOLUME XV, NUMBER 2, SPRING 2015

CLAREMONT

REVIEW OF BOOKS

A Journal of Political Thought and Statesmanship



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO KISSINGER

by Angelo M. Codevilla

Plus:

Michael Anton:
**Tom Wolfe's
Women**

Mackubin T. Owens:
Robert E. Lee

Lee Edwards:
LBJ vs. Reagan

William Voegeli:
Political Correctness

Lucas E. Morel:
Brookhiser's Lincoln

Edward Feser:
Science & the Soul

Christopher Caldwell:
Getting Over Vietnam

Allen C. Guelzo:
**Is Capitalism
Slavery?**

Larry P. Arnn:
Martin Gilbert



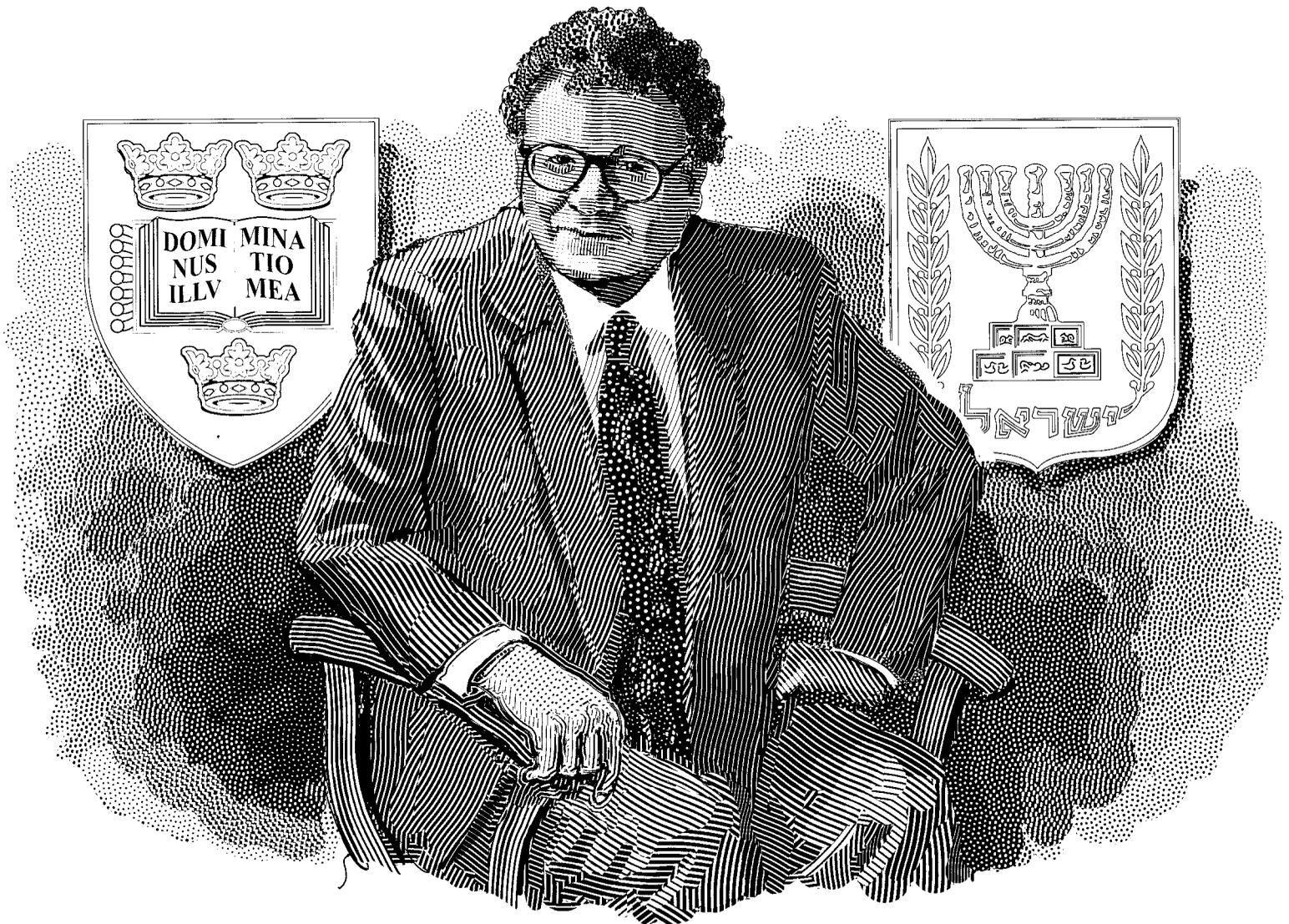
A Publication of the Claremont Institute

PRICE: \$6.95

IN CANADA: \$7.95

Essay by Larry P. Arnn

MARTIN GILBERT AMONG THE WODGES



HOW WOULD SOMEONE GO ABOUT writing 88 books of serious history in a life of 78 years? Take out the 21 years or so that are necessary to grow up and get going. Exclude something at the end for age and incapacity. That leaves scarcely 54 years in which to do it, and so one must write 1.629 scholarly books every year. How can it be done?

Here is the way Martin Gilbert did it.

First, you must set things up right. When I met him in 1977, Martin lived and worked in Oxford. He was in his ninth year as official biographer of Winston Churchill, and before that for six years he had been a researcher on the project. He had built himself a house, which he called The Map House, after his love of historical maps. A modern structure with windows running its length on the upper of two floors, it was on Harcourt Hill, to the west and south of Oxford, looking down on the spires. The top floor and part of the lower were dedicated to work. The lower work area, I should mention,

became the domain of Penelope Houghton, Gilbert's new secretary, two weeks after I arrived as his new research assistant. She was the best thing I found in Oxford, which is saying something. Since 1979, she has been my wife.

On the top floor, one long side—probably 80 feet long—was covered with books, floor to ceiling. On the other long side and one of the short sides was a desk, at least 35 feet long by about five feet wide. Stacked on this long desk were tens of thousands of historical documents. The documents were bound into “wedges,” a bit smaller than a ream of paper, fixed in the upper left corner with a “black clip” or, as we say in America, a bulldog clip. The documents inside each wodge were arranged in chronological order. The wodes—a British word for large or thick pieces of something—themselves were stacked, two or three stacks deep and two or three feet high, in chronological order along the desk, left to right, earliest to latest. Included in these wodes was every

relevant original source document, from every place public and private, that Martin Gilbert could find in decades of looking, sometimes with help from the odd person here and there, like me.

The wodes were organized in the way the story would be written, which is also the way in which the documents came to be: in time order. Martin said:

All history I think ought to be narrative because that's how things happened in the past. They began in the morning and ended at night. They began in January and ended in December. It's possible to...deconstruct history, and write about theoretical models...which are static, but I feel that doesn't happen, it doesn't happen in our daily life. I feel if a historian can recreate that in the past... it is of course not only a narrative, but a dramatic narrative.

Truth in the Wodges

HOW WOULD YOU USE THESE WODGES? They were excellent for sitting down and writing the story, if, that is, you intended to write the story in order of time. But often one needed to look things up in the wodges that came before or later than the immediate things about which one was writing. Here the difficulties were often formidable. Let us say you need the minutes to the “Defense Deputation.” As I recall, sitting here writing this memorial, this deputation met in 1936, when Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was compelled by the force of Churchill’s speeches and other things to receive some people at 10 Downing Street to talk about the defense of the nation. Baldwin had been doing his best to avoid that subject. It was an important occasion. It is one of the steps on the long road to turning the country around to get ready to fight. Like the other steps, it was not enough to prevent the war or to be ready for it, but it helped.

The documents there in the Map House when I arrived covered 1921 until after the Second World War: the year 1936 (if I am remembering the year rightly) is one year among some 25. It would help a lot to remember the month in which the defense deputation occurred. I cannot do that right now, although this is one of my favorite stories about Churchill in the 1930s, my favorite time in his life. To look for the document efficiently I must look up the date somewhere.

I discover in *Churchill: A Life* by Martin Gilbert that the deputation met on July 29, 1936. Now I can find the document. I did not find the date on Google, which did not exist for most of Martin’s work. I found it in his book, the best one-volume biography of Churchill, and this book like all of Gilbert’s books was written by laboring, page by page and inch by inch, through those wodges to construct the story of Churchill’s life. I have looked up the date by using something written *from* the wodges to find something *in* the wodges.

Can you see that it was harder to look things like this up, before Gilbert wrote his books? Before he did, you would have to consult many different books to find a thing like that, or you would have to read the whole year’s documents (if you got the year right). When I was working for Martin, that was often necessary, because who writes books these days out of original source material almost exclusively? The defense deputation is a famous thing, and many people, including Churchill, have mentioned it in books. But there are countless things in Martin Gilbert’s books that no one has mentioned before. What if you are looking in the wodges for one of those?

This kind of work places a premium on memory, and Martin had the best memory I have ever observed. He had the capacity to marshal and command all those wodges, and yet he looked everything up before he wrote it down, even when he remembered, which he always did. He would say to me, with a certain emphasis he would use when making a general point that was to be absorbed and lived by: “You have a good memory, and I have a good memory. We do not rely upon our memories.” As I remember those words, I remember also that before I started this article I would not have bet much on the month in which the defense deputation occurred: I would have said “summer.” And as to the details of the meeting and the aftermath—better go look. Martin did not like the word “perhaps,” and if you used it he would arch his impressive eyebrows and reply: “Perhaps not.” At a lecture at Hillsdale College, he told some students the story of his teaching me this lesson decades before and said: “In the writing of 19th and 20th century history, there is no room for the word ‘perhaps.’” You can find out, and you had better.

That was his way. He poured the substance of his professional life into gathering, organizing, and exploiting those wodges. To be around him and to be useful was to help him with that. In those wodges was the truth, or rather the Truth. The nuggets of purest gold were the ones written down, at the time, by people who knew the facts. This included whatever Churchill or anyone else said or wrote about his own judgments, motives, and opinions, recorded at the time they gave rise to action. The documents that contain this information are immune to the two perils: hindsight and failures of memory. There is no space for hindsight and no need for memory at the moment things are done and said. Taken together—and they must be taken together—such documents tell the story most truly.

Interviews and Other Sources

AFTER CONTEMPORANEOUS DOCUMENTS, recollections of eyewitnesses are valuable, but less so. Witnesses remember, but the first things they remember are the conclusions they drew from seeing something. I watched and later helped Gilbert conduct many interviews. Often people would begin with what they thought, meaning what they concluded, about Churchill. This was of course an important subject to them, for Churchill became famous and honored as much as anyone in modern times. Martin would stretch and probe their memories by asking details: Where were you when you saw him? Why were you there? What did he say?

What did you say? How long did you talk with him? One could watch as their memories became sharper and richer by remembering details, which were to Martin more valuable than their conclusions, at least initially and generally. The wodges contained detailed notes of these interviews, each placed at the dates in the past described in the interview. If many dates were described, many copies were made. What was life like before the photocopier?

My favorite example of an interview is the man who came to the Map House one afternoon. I have forgotten his name, but he was short and trim with white close-cropped hair. Also he was quietly spoken, as if shy. He was not quick to speculate. He had been a naval officer working in the Admiralty when Churchill was First Lord (political head of the Royal Navy) in 1939-40. Not all at once, but in stages, the visitor revealed a story to Gilbert. He recalled that a man from the bank visited Churchill once a week to see how he was coming on a book. It seems Churchill had a large overdraft, and during his lunch hour—during the greatest war in history—he would dictate some for the book. He had a progress payment coming from the publisher when he finished a chapter, and the bank man would welcome the money into Churchill’s accounts. This was a great interview.

The wodges were also full of excerpts from secondary sources. I cannot recall a single one of them (and the wodges, which are now in Hillsdale, have been familiar to me for 37 years) that states the opinion or conclusion of the author/historian. The excerpts from secondary works are rather direct quotations from original documents or recollections. One can read a thousand pages of Gilbert and not find a footnote to the opinion of a secondary author. I hardly ever saw him reading them. Yet I never brought one up to him when he did not do one of two things: explain some place where they found or neglected some valuable piece of evidence, or quiz me in detail about the book, how it was written, and what it said. Most often he had read the book, which he must have done at lightning speed.

This failure to quote other historians did not make them happy. Moreover, for a long time Martin had exclusive use of the Churchill papers, which are massive and invaluable. My wife, then fiancée, and I went with Martin to London for a series of three (as I recall) annual war lectures by him at King’s College, University of London. Several of the great historians attended the lecture, including Martin’s teacher, A.J.P. Taylor. Martin was nervous. In his introduction, the chair of the first lecture encouraged Martin to “take his eye away from the microscope” and talk more generally about Churchill and his times. Martin’s first words

were: "the microscope is stuck to my eye." In the question period Martin was asked some testy queries, even by the chair. I remember Martin quoting the man's own book back to him, and then referring to a specific document presented in the Churchill biography that refuted his point. "Did you not read my book?" Martin asked. It was a powerful moment.

Freedom and War

THIS METHOD OF WRITING HISTORY makes for long books, especially when one is writing about Churchill. He did so much, for so long, and wrote and said so much about what he did, that the story is almost without bounds. Martin often made the point that it took many months just to read what Churchill wrote, and that is only the starting place. This was a task made for a man with Gilbert's energy and attention to detail. It also makes for the longest biography ever written—8 volumes and 9,166 pages in all. Very few people have read it through; very few ever will. Never mind: it is valuable because it is true, its truth backed by now 17 and eventually 22 volumes of documents. It is written in chronological order, and it is carefully, even lovingly, indexed by the author himself. It is truly an exhausting work; and, thanks to Gilbert, it is exhaustive.

As Martin wrote on, year after year, the shape of his thinking and his interests became clear. He was British, and like the British he loved freedom and the nations that protect it. Also he hated war, and he reports that for a time in his youth he was a pacifist. It may seem incongruous that such a young man would write for so long and so well on Winston Churchill, but then Churchill both hated and feared war, even if he was excited by it and good at fighting it. Plus, Martin was a Jew, and he cared for the Jewish people and for Israel. He wrote a great deal about them and their state, and he knew many of the people who helped to found it. His *Israel: A History* (1998) is a wonderful story written in love but with all the care for the wedges that distinguishes his works. His several books on the holocaust make one of the grimmest and most comprehensive records of that most grim event. I remember him one morning making a little groan to himself. He had found another document that showed the conflict between the German military and the SS over priority of transport: it was so urgent to win the war; it was so urgent to ship those Jews to the killing factories as quickly as possible.

All these themes of freedom, faith, war, peace, tyranny, and justice come together in the life of Churchill, the greatest of our modern states-

men. By modern I mean what Churchill meant: the time in which science, the magic tool, has transformed both war and peace to produce opportunity alongside cataclysm, plenty alongside paucity and destruction, justice alongside tyranny on a scale never seen. Churchill loved freedom, peace, prosperity, nature, God, and the right to worship God, and he fought the greatest threats to those goods that the "dark lamentable catalog of human crime" has produced. Churchill was a friend to the Jews and to Israel from early days to the last. In writing history to the high standards he achieved, Martin Gilbert fought Churchill's battle in his own way, a powerful way.

True Order

ANY BIG AND EXCELLENT THING THAT humans produce will require both the moral and the intellectual virtues. Martin exhibited them in profusion.

Begin with the moral. Martin worked long hours, every day. He would begin at 9 a.m.

Martin did not like the word "perhaps," and if you used it he would arch his impressive eyebrows and reply: "Perhaps not."

punctually, and in less than half an hour he would be writing. The relevant wedges, two or three or four, would be out before him and open. He would page back and forth within and among them; he would follow each little story of each day, several for each day, each of them discrete yet connected in time and in the soul of a statesman who must deal with them. So they must be connected in the mind of the historian, yet their discreteness must remain. It was like painting: the nature Gilbert recorded was found in discrete facts in the documents, and he had to hold them in his soul and render them into their true order. Churchill values this capacity and compares it, in his writings, to statesmanship, to philosophy, to art, and to war. Gilbert painted this picture or fought this battle daily, with a break for lunch and dinner, for 50 years. Sometimes dinner was the end of the working day. Often in my day I would be invited to stay for dinner, and that meant we would work after dinner until 10 or 11.

The stories that Gilbert told were huge, and it required decades of research and writing to

get them told. They were for him a way of life. As he prosecuted this way of living, he became important and famous, and then a new kind of interruption began to intrude. Now not only graduate students and professors would call with questions, but also statesmen and other famous people. I once spoke to Laurence Olivier on the telephone: "This is Larry Olivier. May I speak to Martin?" I had the presence of mind to say: "I will get him, Lord Olivier." The Russian embassy sent some large men in a black car to pick up a document. The Carter White House had a question about atomic power, and I found the answer, by gosh, and the president used the quote in some way and was grateful, we later heard. Martin, who knew better than I how hard things were to find, asked me how I found it in the three hours available. I confessed: the speech was entitled "Atomic Power," and the quote was in the first paragraph.

He traveled to Washington with John Major to meet with Bill Clinton. He traveled to Jerusalem with him to meet with, among others, Yasser Arafat. He spent hours with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Margaret Thatcher asked him twice to write her biography: he would not, because he must not write about anything except when all the documents were available. He was given a knighthood. He spent Easter weekend at Windsor with the queen.

Martin told me about this last over the telephone, but he would not give details. He said: "It was magical, but it must be told over dinner." That dinner came, and I learned about it all as only he could describe it. As in his writing, the details make up the story (they packed our bags for us when we left, and I took a picture when I got home because nothing was wrinkled and the suitcase was less than half full!), and the story made a whole. This was also what it was like to travel with him. In Jerusalem, for example, he knew the history of every building or wall, back 2,000 years in some cases. I first beheld the city having been forbidden to look at it before he said I could. He led me up a hill, Mount Scopus, with my eyes closed. "Now open them," he said, "and you will see what Tiberius saw before he took the city."

All this—fame, travel, connections—might have distracted another man. Martin was the most persistent worker I have seen. I came in one morning to find him sitting with a small towel in his left hand pressed against his face. He was writing with his right hand, and the documents were rearranged so that he could put his pen down and manipulate them with his writing hand, instead of using his free hand, as usual. This was inefficient,



and he complained of it. I asked, "What is the towel for?" He said that he had been stricken the evening before with Bell's palsy, and the doctor, whom he had seen that morning, said it would probably go away. Meanwhile the left side of his face was paralyzed. He was using the towel to keep his mouth closed. He pressed on. There was no complaint about the condition.

Martin Gilbert was married to Esther, his third wife, when he died. I know both Susan, his second wife, and Esther well. Both of them were of great help to Martin in his work, both of them deeply interested in the Holocaust especially. Susie was his research assistant at one time, and evidence of her work crops up often in the woggles. Esther and Martin found a lot of happiness together in the last 10 years of his life. For almost three of those Martin was incapacitated, and Esther's care for him was selfless to the point of heroism.

Act of Discovery

OF COURSE THE DECISIVE VIRTUES that he displayed were intellectual. As I say, Martin had the best memory I have ever seen. This would have meant little except for the principle that drove his approach to history. This principle is profound; it is connected to a view of nature and of politics like Churchill's or the classics'. In one way, this view involves limiting one's ambitions: the historian cannot think of the past as a structure for a thinker to build anew, fresh and

bright for the current day. He cannot think of history as a creative act, but rather as an act of discovery. He does not make what he finds; the satisfaction is in the finding.

In another way this is the most ambitious approach to history. If the truth is one and error is many, and if the truth can be known, then one is on a treasure hunt. For that treasure to exist, its value would have to be continuous, that is valuable to us today as it was to those in the past. Otherwise how could we understand it? This means that the questions of justice and injustice that are alive today may have been alive in the past in terms understandable to us, and this in turn means that the most important masters of the past could become our teachers. We could learn from their deeds as well as from our own, and all the peaks of history could be part of our landscape. And so our experience of nature, of man, of things can be infinitely wider than if we were confined to our own time. This was Gilbert's breathtaking project, captured beautifully in a passage he wrote about his approach to history:

On the tomb of the nineteenth century Church historian Bishop Mandell Creighton are inscribed the words: "He tried to write true history."

Like the bishop—who was a member of my own college at Oxford—I believe that there is such a thing as "true history."

What happened in the past is unalterable and definite. To uncover it—or

as much of it as possible—the historian has several tools, among them chronology, documentation, memoirs, and the vast apparatus of scholarly work in which others have delved and laboured in the same vineyard.

For Gilbert, history was like nature, and not like the History that has replaced nature in the thinking of the modern age. The work of the historian was not to interpret the past into a new thing recognizable to us from our different perspective. It was rather to find out what happened and why, and so then to find in a different time the exhibition of human potential. Professor Harry V. Jaffa, who introduced me to Martin, loved to quote the statement of Aristotle, repeated by Thomas Aquinas: "This alone is denied even to God: to make what has been not to have been."

This principle drove Martin to amass those woggles, to master what was in them, and to relate them to us. If one wishes to know what has happened in this turbulent and terrible age in which we live, he can find the story in the pages of Martin Gilbert. If one wishes to understand the judgments of Winston Churchill, the supreme statesman of this time, it is possible because Sir Martin worked so hard. We who love freedom and knowledge owe him a debt beyond any repayment.

Larry P. Arnn is the president of Hillsdale College, and a former president of the Claremont Institute.

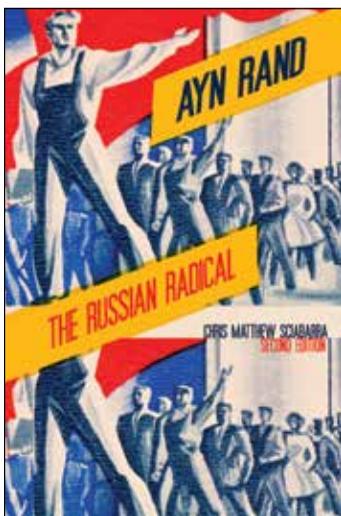
penn

1-800-326-9180

state

www.psupress.org

press



Ayn Rand

The Russian Radical

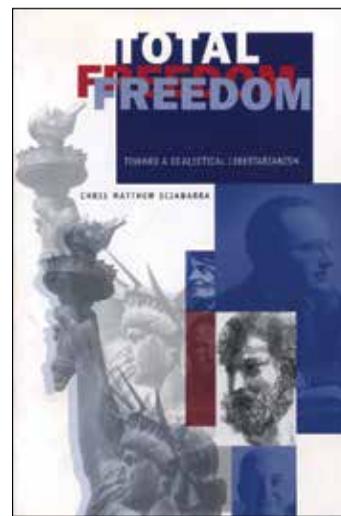
Chris Matthew Sciabarra

"Chris Matthew Sciabarra wrote a powerful book. It is not easy reading, but it is a *must* for all Randians, all individualists, and all men and women who believe in and live by the precepts of truth, reason, and freedom."

—Jack Schwartzman, *Fragments*

In this new edition of *Ayn Rand*, Chris Sciabarra adds two chapters that present in-depth analysis of the most complete transcripts to date documenting Rand's education at Petrograd State University. A new preface places the book in the context of Sciabarra's own research and the recent expansion of interest in Rand's philosophy. Finally, this edition includes a postscript that answers a recent critic of Sciabarra's historical work on Rand. Shoshana Milgram, Rand's biographer, has tried to cast doubt on Rand's own recollections of having studied with N. O. Lossky. Sciabarra shows that Milgram's analysis fails to cast doubt on Rand's recollections—or on Sciabarra's historical thesis.

544 pages | 17 illustrations | \$39.95 paper



Total Freedom

Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism

Chris Matthew Sciabarra

"Unlike so many other scholars and historians, Sciabarra looks at the history of philosophy through his own eyes and his own understanding. As a result, this beautifully and clearly written book will make the reader reexamine the history of philosophy and the history of dialectics by means of a new epistemological perspective: the perspective of dialectics. *Total Freedom* is a landmark in philosophical studies and interpretation."

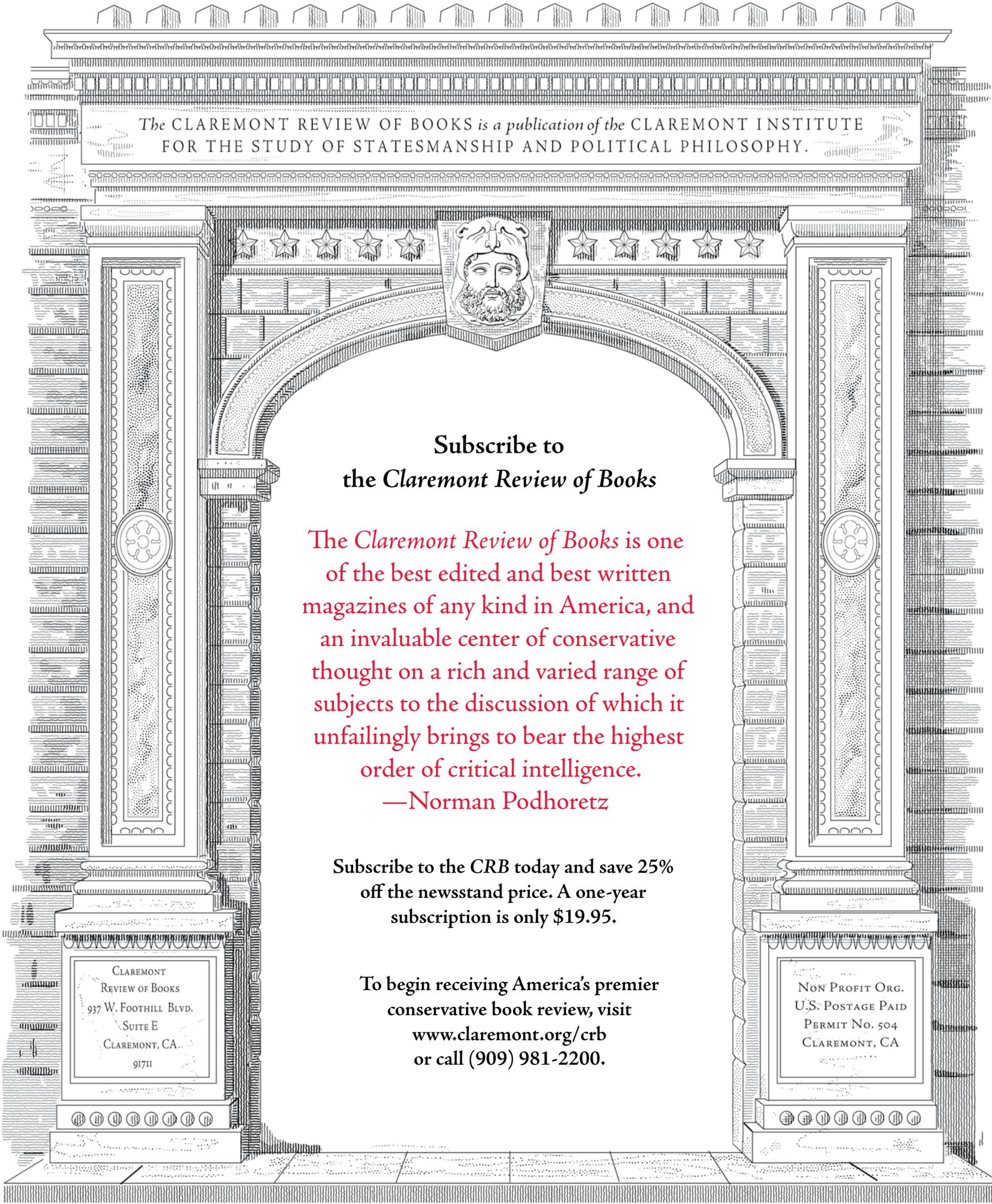
—Barbara Branden

"*Total Freedom* is a treat: a scholarly tour de force that successfully integrates seemingly disparate intellectual traditions, while providing a feast of valuable insights whose assimilation promises to raise libertarian theory to new heights of sophistication, flexibility, and theoretical power."

—Roderick T. Long,

Journal of Ayn Rand Studies

480 pages | 18 illustrations | \$39.95 paper



The CLAREMONT REVIEW OF BOOKS is a publication of the CLAREMONT INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY OF STATESMANSHIP AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

Subscribe to
the Claremont Review of Books

The Claremont Review of Books is one of the best edited and best written magazines of any kind in America, and an invaluable center of conservative thought on a rich and varied range of subjects to the discussion of which it unfailingly brings to bear the highest order of critical intelligence.

—Norman Podhoretz

Subscribe to the CRB today and save 25% off the newsstand price. A one-year subscription is only \$19.95.

To begin receiving America's premier conservative book review, visit www.claremont.org/crb or call (909) 981-2200.

CLAREMONT
REVIEW OF BOOKS
937 W. FOOTHILL BLVD.
SUITE E
CLAREMONT, CA
91711

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT No. 504
CLAREMONT, CA