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Standard

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How the climate cabal suppresses dissent

STEVEN F. HAYWARD

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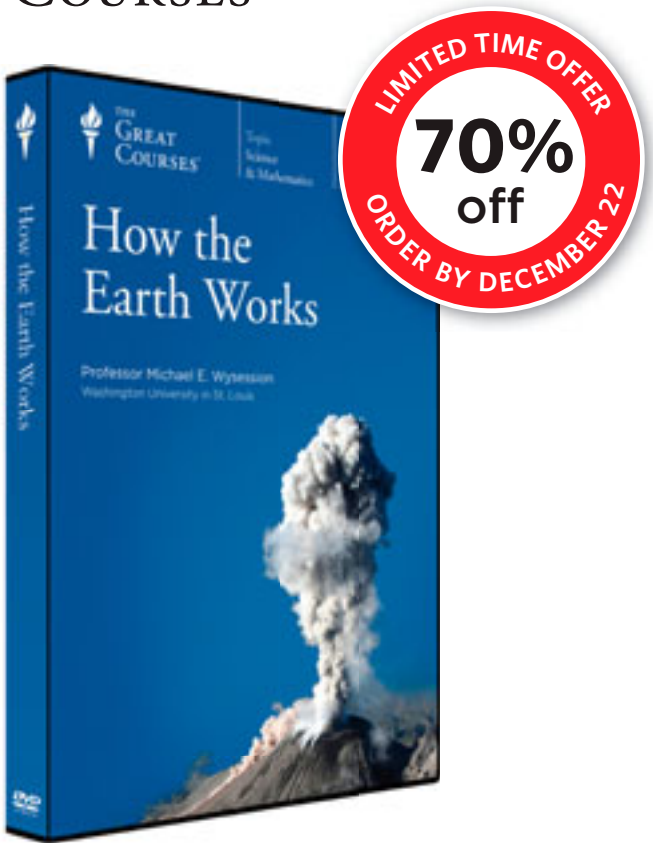

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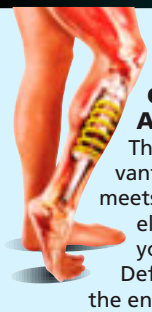

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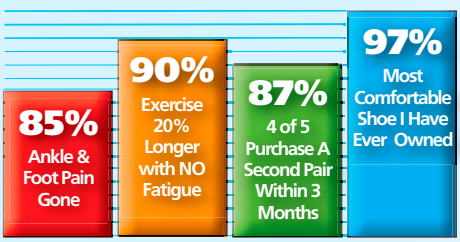

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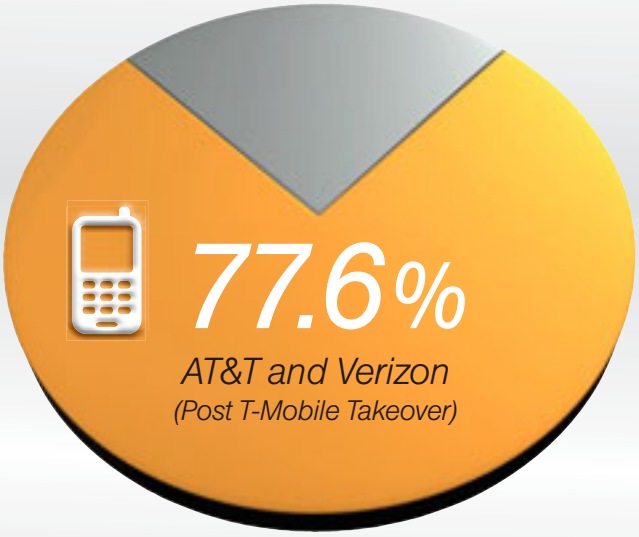
Two companies controlling this much wireless industry revenue creates a one-sided conversation.



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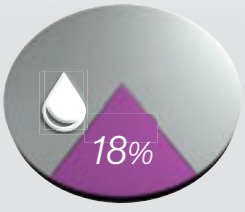

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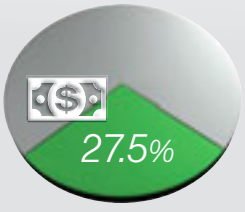

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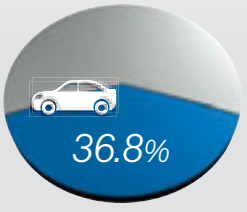

Auto

AT&T's proposed takeover of T-Mobile would result in two companies controlling more than 77% of wireless industry revenues. In other major industries, the two top firms control much less.

Two wireless industry giants would marginalize the ability of other providers to keep prices competitive for consumers and influence the pace of wireless industry innovation.

This is a bad idea for consumers, competition and our country.

Wireless industry source: Individual company annual financial reports for 2010.
Oil source: www.alacra.com/acm/2042_sample.pdf, page 22. Note: data includes oil refining and gas.
Airline source: DOT, form 41, Schedule P-1.2.
Banking source: DATAMONITOR'S "Banks in the United States" and www2.fdic.gov/sdi/main.asp.
Auto source: SEC 10-K filings, (includes cars and trucks and may include other revenue streams).
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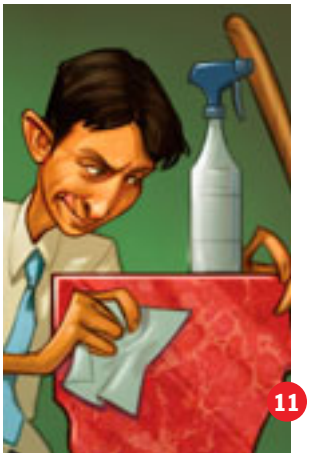

Articles

Feature

Books & Arts

COVER BY GARY LOCKE

D.C.'s Discrimination Escalation

Readers outside of Washington may or may not be aware that there has been a more or less continuous movement, since the late 1960s, to grant statehood to the District of Columbia, the nation's capital city. It came about as close to success as it ever will during the Carter administration (1978), when a constitutional voting rights amendment passed Congress but failed to be ratified by the requisite number of states.

The Scrapbook isn't about to rehearse the arguments for or against statehood; we simply mention this fact by way of introducing the latest reason why statehood will never be granted to the District. Councilman Marion Barry—the onetime four-term mayor of Washington—has just introduced legislation to add "ex-offenders" to the list of people guaranteed legal safeguards against discrimination. Lest you think adding convicted felons to the burgeoning roll of protected species is a nonstarter, think again. The D.C. Council is expected to pass Barry's bill.

Indeed, as the *Washington Post* delicately points out, Washington's Human Rights Act is "considered one of the broadest anti-discrimination documents in the nation . . . [offering] protection based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business."

His Honor Marion Barry

As readers might imagine, the beleaguered business community in the nation's capital has registered its self-evident concern about an ex-offender provision—must they really be obliged, under punishment of law, not to discriminate against convicted murderers and rapists?—but as the existing act suggests, such concerns usually fall on deaf ears in city government.

To be sure, as the redoubtable Marion Barry insists, ex-offenders are, by definition, people who have done their time in prison and are expected to make their way in civil society. (And Councilman Barry, an alumnus of the Federal Correctional Institution, Petersburg, and the Federal Correctional Institution, Loretto, knows whereof he speaks on this.) Nor does The Scrapbook believe that people should be punished ad infinitum for crimes committed in the past—or, put another way, for the not-so-serious offenses from which they have learned their lesson. Still, in a city with 11 percent unemployment, is it necessary or advisable to add "ex-offenders" to a comically broad list that will place another burden on employers already dealing with an Orwellian bureaucracy?

It is worth noting, for readers attuned to the ironies of life, that one of the severest critics of the Barry measure is the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington. They argue, and not without reason, that the Human Rights Act was intended to protect District residents who face discrimination for "arbitrary circumstances," such as age or sex or race. The decision to kill somebody, or commit grand theft auto, or even to possess crack cocaine, is not the same thing. ♦

Happy Birthday, IJ

Everyone loves a David and Goliath story, and that's part of the reason we take pleasure in honoring the Institute for Justice as it closes out its 20th-anniversary year. Its "merry band of litigators," in the words of another admirer, go to court to fight for people's basic rights—to earn a living free from unreasonable regulation, to criticize the government, to keep their own property, to send their children to the school of their choice—and its grateful beneficiaries include hair braiders and street vendors and limo drivers. Our current favorite IJ clients, though, are a few dozen Benedictine monks in Covington, Louisiana.

For decades, the monks of Saint Joseph Abbey had been making simple wooden caskets when it came time to bury their own. But in 2007, seeking new means of supporting themselves by their labor, they opened Saint Joseph Woodworks, to make caskets for sale. Instantly, they were informed that it was a crime, punishable by fines and jail, to sell "funeral merchandise" without a funeral director's license and the acquisition of costly embalming equipment: Thus spake the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, eight of whose nine members are licensed funeral directors.

Never mind that the monks had no intention of embalming anyone or handling dead bodies—the funeral cartel wasn't about to brook minor competition. It squelched even an attempt to secure a legislative exemption from licen-

NATE BEELER

sure for the brothers of Saint Joseph.

Enter IJ, which sued in federal court, arguing that Louisiana's restriction served no public purpose (in a state where caskets are not required for burial) but only enriched a government-protected private group and squelched the monks' right to earn an honest living. In July, a federal judge in New Orleans agreed and struck down the law.

The funeral cartel has appealed to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, perhaps bringing nearer IJ's strategic goal: a historic Supreme Court ruling that government favoritism toward certain private economic interests is unconstitutional. Already there is disagreement among appeals courts: A unanimous 6th Circuit struck down Tennessee's nearly identical casket monopoly in 2002, while the 10th Circuit upheld Oklahoma's law in 2004—both times in cases brought by IJ. The issue is ripening.

And The Scrapbook is looking forward to the day when 20 years' gallant work pays off and Goliath is buried. ♦

Have Yourself a Merry Little Climate Change

Elsewhere in this issue, you can read Steven F. Hayward's account of the second batch of emails to be leaked from the Climate Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia, exposing yet more evidence of chicanery among the global warming smart set. What caught the eye of The Scrapbook in the latest cache was an email less substantive than the ones Hayward focuses on, but nonetheless highly revealing of the spirit of the climate change enterprise.

Following the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 to Al Gore and the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Kevin Trenberth of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), one of the more egregious brawlers of the climate science community, emailed the following lyrics that the NCAR folks sang at their holiday office party (to the tune of "The First Noël"):

Our First Nobel

Our First Nobel, for the IPCC,
Goes to Beth, Bette, Bill, Jerry, Kathy and Guy.
Kevin, Linda, Paty, Re-to and so many more,
And we're sharing the honor with Mister Al Gore.
Nobel, Nobel, a story to tell,
We hope our coworkers' egos don't swell.

The First Working Group said to sound the alarm,
Rising CO_2 levels are causing great harm.
Temperatures and greenhouse gas are racing up neck and neck,

Soon the whole Earth will be hotter than heck.
Nobel, Nobel, the planet's unwell,
This is the future the models foretell.

The Second Working Group said that change is assured,
From the melting of glaciers to migration of birds.
From loss of land and crops to habitats,
How can they make it much clearer than that?
Nobel, Nobel, the oceans swell,
Polar bears search for new places to dwell.

We must work to mitigate, tells us Working Group Three,
Change from fossil consumption to clean energy.
If we all do our share in reversing the trend,
Our children might have a clean Earth in the end.
Nobel, Nobel, sound the warning bell,
Let's make a future where all can live well.

Nobel, Nobel, we are stars for a day,
Can an Oscar be far away?

We're sure you'll agree with The Scrapbook that it was bad enough when the climate campaigners subverted sound science, marginalized skeptics, and stampeded the world towards a growth-killing agenda of

socialist planning and high carbon taxes. But an awkward parody of a lovely Cornish Christmas carol? Now they've gone too far. ♦

Hot Gossip, Hot off the Presses

Readers need no introduction to Joseph Epstein, scholar, essayist, iconoclast, and wit—and, of course, a contributing editor to this magazine. Cranking up the cliché machine, we are bold to say that his wry observations and penetrating insights, frequently appearing in these pages, are among the ornaments of language in our age. Which is The Scrapbook's way of announcing that his latest gem, *Gossip: The Untrivial Pursuit* (Houghton Mifflin, 256 pp., $25), has just been published.

Gossip, as the subhed would have it, is not quite the dismissible vice of conventional wisdom. And gossip, as Epstein describes it, has a long, complicated history in human annals—and has, against all odds, become more, not less, prominent in our sophisticated age. Why is this? What, exactly, is the nature of gossip, and what human need does it fulfill? Is it always good, always bad, or a measure of our status as social animals?

With his customary mixture of humor and wisdom, our author answers these questions, adds icing to the cake with erudition and hilarity, and polishes a subject both fascinating and repellent. The Scrapbook does not have to sell Joseph Epstein to Weekly Standard readers, but we'll say it anyway: Buy this book! ♦

Biden Strikes Again

The vice president visited Iraq last week, where he took the occasion to issue the following statement: "We're not claiming victory," he said. "What we're claiming here is we've done our job the administration said it would do. To end a war we did not start . . . "

This is a disgrace on many levels. Let's leave aside Biden's dutiful allusion to his boss's well-known distaste for "winning" anything except his own elections. The Iraq war was in fact started by the United States, during the Bush administration, with the approval of both houses of Congress, including the "yea" vote of then-Senator Biden. What exactly did Biden mean by *we?* Last time The Scrapbook checked, the office the duties of which Joe Biden swore to discharge

Sorry, the victory parade is canceled.

was vice president of the United States of America, not vice president of the antiwar caucus of the Democratic party. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

"Imagine a political movement created in a moment of terrible anxiety, its origins shrouded in a peculiar combination of manipulation and grass-roots mobilization, its ranks dominated by Christian conservatives and self-proclaimed patriots, its agenda driven by its members' fervent embrace of nationalism, nativism and moral regeneration, with more than a whiff of racism wafting through it. No, not that movement. The one from the 1920s, with the sheets and the flaming crosses . . . " ("The Not-So-Invisible Empire," Kevin Boyle, *New York Times*, November 27). ♦

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Marion Montgomery, 1925-2011

I was at the clock-repair shop when a friend called with the news that Marion had slipped away—Marion Montgomery, the great Southern critic and teacher. I was dropping off my grandfather's broken watch when the call came. I was standing at the counter, holding a run-down timepiece, when my friend told me. And the clocks on the wall ticked, and ticked, and tocked.

The pocket watches on faded velvet pads beneath the scratched counter glass. Wristwatches, too: whole armfuls of old Timexes and Rolexes, Omegas and Cartiers. That pseudo-Swiss cuckoo thing on the back wall. The battered case clock looming in the corner. The table clocks, with gilded feet and little pillars on the sides, like miniature temples to forgotten gods. The tarnished-brass butterflies of clock keys, fallen in a clutter on a dusty wooden tray.

I was waiting at the counter when a friend told me, and the noise—the push of it, the intrusive beat, that ceaseless smug *tick*—suddenly seemed unbearable. And all I wanted, when I learned Marion was gone, was for it all to stop. Just *stop*, for a little while. Stop, for a moment. Stop, for a time.

A longtime teacher at the University of Georgia, Marion Montgomery was perhaps our last link to worlds of American thought now so distant they seem almost a dream, a fantasy just beyond the horizon of memory. A Southern writer, he came of age among the likes of John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren: the Fugitive Poets who dominated the South. A literary figure, he grew to know the Southern Agrarians, from Donald Davidson to Richard Weaver—know them well enough both to cherish and to mock them in his novels, especially his masterpiece, *Fugitive* (1974), a comedy about a country-music songwriter from the big city who moves to rural Georgia in an attempt to find authentic country life: the *real* country life of homespun characters spouting cornpone wisdom that city slickers are certain still abides in the hollows and the backwoods.

COURTESY OF THE MONTGOMERY FAMILY

For that matter, like his friend Flannery O'Connor a Catholic in the South, Marion lived through the peak of the Neothomists, and his intellectual formation was dominated by the writings of the thinkers who seemed so essential back in the 1940s and 1950s. All those names one could conjure with in those lost days—Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson—appear throughout his writing like guide ropes, keeping him centered in the maze of modern philosophy.

Mostly, though, he was a critic. His poetry is good, his fiction excellent (especially his 1971 story "The Decline and Fall of Officer Fergerson"), and his philosophical sense was as fine as an essentially literary mind could manage. But it was as a critic of modernity that he blossomed, particularly in *The Prophetic Poet and the Spirit of the Age* (1981), with its demand for piety as the most deeply human response to the experience of being.

A soldier during the war and afterward a guard at the Nuremberg Trials, Marion Montgomery came home determined to find a unity in it all: the unified-field theory of conservative thought that seemed almost there for the grasping. T.S. Eliot's traditionalist turn in Modernist poetry, the compelling simplicity of Richard Weaver's ideas-have-consequences thesis, the God-haunted South of Flannery O'Connor's stories, the adamant brilliance of Etienne Gilson's neoscholastic Catholicism—even a homegrown libertarianism and self-reliant agrarianism: It all looked as though, at that moment, it might come together in a grand conservative package, the West's truest answer to the lure of communism.

It didn't. The pieces were too disparate, the whole thing a mirage. But that's not Marion Montgomery's fault. By all reports, he died of cancer in his home at age 86 much as he had lived: with a wry sense of human absurdity, a feeling for the family that surrounded him, a deep faith in the life of the world to come.

The point is simple enough, I suppose: The importance of life comes from the future, while the richness of life comes from the past. We look ahead, we plan, we scheme, and all of it *matters* because we can see the future roaring down upon us and our children like a freight train.

The past, however—that's what extends us in time, thickens us with memory, and enfolds us in the human parade. I was having a watch repaired when a friend called with the news that Marion Montgomery had died. And there, in the ceaseless clacking of the clocks, all I could think was that another vital connection to the past was broken. Another linkage gone, lost in maddening tick and tock.

Joseph Bottum

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the weekly Standard

We Do Not Know

"The phrase 'I do not know' becomes inexpressibly bitter once one has proclaimed oneself to be a pundit, if not a polymath, especially when station, office, and dignity seem to demand that we should know."

—Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, or on Religious Power and Judaism* (1783)

Mendelssohn was referring to the original pundits of the East—advisers to the king learned in religion, philosophy, and law. But our modern pundits seem equally averse to Socratic admissions of ignorance. They, like their ancient forebears, wish to claim full understanding of the present and clear divination of the future.

Let us avoid that fatal conceit. Let us boldly proclaim several things we do not know—even though our "station, office, and dignity seem to demand that we should know."

We do not know who the Republican nominee for president will be.

It could be Mitt Romney—though our warnings in this space a couple of weeks ago that his victory is by no means inevitable seem increasingly justified by the dynamics of the race.

The nominee could be Newt Gingrich—whose rise in the polls has been spectacular, and whose skills and appeal are still widely underestimated by many elites, including conservative elites. On the other hand, Gingrich's own statement last Thursday that "I'm going to be the nominee" should be taken as a contrarian indicator that his campaign could hit some bumps. The statement was also a classic example of one of Gingrich's failings—that he even more than most politicians wishes to be "a pundit, if not a polymath," for whom "the phrase 'I do not know' becomes inexpressibly bitter."

The nominee could be Ron Paul—though it is likely that he will exceed expectations in early caucuses and primaries, but hit a ceiling of around a quarter of the vote.

It could be Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, Jon Huntsman, or Rick Santorum—though it's probable that only one of them will survive Iowa, and that even that survivor will never quite make it into the top tier.

It could be someone not yet in the race. If the Gingrich surge turns into a Newt bubble, and if there continues to be the present level of resistance to Romney, then anyone from Mike Huckabee and Sarah Palin to Paul Ryan, Chris Christie, Mitch Daniels, Marco Rubio, or Jeb Bush—or someone else!—could jump into the race, or be dragged into the race, at various junctures over the next couple of months. Such a newcomer could quite conceivably win.

So we do not know who the nominee will be. Nor do we know who the nominee *should* be.

There would seem to be two basic criteria for answering this question: Can the nominee win the general election? And would he or she be a good president?

As to the latter, one could make a good case that all those mentioned above, except for Ron Paul, would be considerable improvements on President Obama. And one could make a variety of arguments for the virtues and limitations of each of the various candidates. Many of us at The Weekly Standard know many of the candidates quite well. Yet we differ among ourselves as to which, if in the Oval Office, would be most effective at governing the country, advancing the conservative agenda, and defeating our adversaries. Some of us have changed our minds on this question over the course of the campaign so far.

Confident pundits who treat the choice among them as an open-and-shut matter are behaving as . . . mere pundits. As are those who confidently proclaim which of the candidates is "most electable." For example, right now, Romney seems a stronger general election candidate than Gingrich. That's what most of the polling so far would suggest. But these polls don't capture the implications of the last couple of weeks of the campaign, which suggest that Gingrich can make the case for himself to heretofore unconvinced voters in a way Romney cannot. Admittedly, these are mostly Republican voters Newt has been charming. Can he similarly win over independents, or disaffected Democrats?

We don't know. We do suspect, however, that the mainstream media's view—and conservative elites' view—of who the swing voters are is somewhat distorted. Every journalist knows upper-middle-class, suburban, socially moderate independents on the East and West Coasts who (for now, at least) would be more likely to vote Republican if the nominee were Romney rather than Gingrich. Journalists do not tend to know the lower-middle-class, non-college-educated, churchgoing voters of exurban Tampa, or the working-class Reagan Democrats of Toledo, who are also swing voters, and who might prefer Gingrich. In any case, for now

we don't really know which of the two frontrunners—or, for that matter, which of the other candidates—would have a better chance to win. And that's without factoring in possible third and fourth parties, which could well appear on the scene in 2012 and would have different kinds of appeal depending on the identity of the GOP nominee.

We do not know. But if it's not given to us mere humans to know, we are capable of learning. We're a month away from the Iowa caucus. There are three months before 90 percent of the Republicans in the nation begin voting, and even then, further information will be produced and processed as the primaries unfold. The Democrats are stuck with their nominee—a failed and unpopular president. Republicans, by contrast, are free to choose. They are in no way required to rush to judgment. And they need not defer to pundits whose "station, office, and dignity" impel them to claim to know what they do not know.

—William Kristol

The President & the Generals

The *New York Times* reported last week that President Obama decided not to apologize to Pakistan about the U.S. airstrikes that killed Pakistani soldiers near the Afghan border in part because he did not want to be seen to be overruling his military commanders yet again. How ironic that the president should feel the need to accept the advice of his military leaders on diplomatic matters while regularly disregarding their opinions on military matters. This most recent incident illuminates the ongoing confusion in the White House and among the American political elite generally about how the president should take advice from his senior military commanders. The situation has become very dangerous for an administration that has overruled its commanders dramatically and frequently and is reportedly considering doing so again by announcing accelerations of the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan beyond what military commanders have recommended.

Such confusion is not confined to the White House. In a recent Republican presidential debate, candidates sparred over the proper role of the president as commander in chief. Mitt Romney emphasized the importance of listening to commanders in the field. Jon Huntsman dismissed that idea with reference to the bad advice tendered by commanders in 1967 during the Vietnam war, declaring that the president is commander in chief and must therefore make his own decisions.

Understanding the proper relationship between the president and his generals is essential both for the president and for Americans concerned about national security. The president has the right to make decisions about the conduct of war as he sees fit, but he jeopardizes America and brings his own fitness for office into question by dismissing the professional advice of commanders he has personally selected.

The commanders of American troops in combat are the president's. He is responsible for choosing them and, by doing so, reposes his confidence in their abilities, judgment, and integrity. If and when he loses confidence in a commander, he has not only the right but the obligation to replace that commander. The same is true of the other military and civilian leaders of the armed forces. The president is personally responsible for selecting the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the other service chiefs if he so desires, the secretary of defense, and all of the combatant commanders. The services can and do propose various names for these positions. But the final selections are the president's alone.

The Vietnam war not only poisoned American politics, but also enshrined a fundamental misunderstanding of civil-military relations. The American military is not an adversary to the White House, a rival to the president, or a challenger to any other governmental organization. More than any other government body, the military is explicitly an instrument wielded by the president. His personal involvement in the selection of military officers at various levels, which is so much greater than his involvement in the selection of subordinates at any other cabinet office, demonstrates the degree to which those officers are executors of the president's orders.

President Obama with General David Petraeus, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and Vice President Joe Biden in June 2010

NEWSCOM

Commanders are all imperfect, of course. Some may mistakenly put interests other than those of accomplishing the orders they've been given ahead of their duty. More often, commanders may offer advice or make deci-

sions or judgments with which the president disagrees. And the president, in those cases, has the right to overrule his commanders.

But, if a president finds himself repeatedly overruling or rejecting the advice of commanders he himself has selected, his own judgment must start to come into question. Is he such a bad judge of character and capability that he cannot see the quality of officers he selects for command before he selects them? Is he so weak a leader that he allows choices for senior military positions to be made by default? Or is something else at work entirely? If the president, as commander in chief, rejects the advice of his field commanders and senior staff and chooses another course of action for military operations, on the basis of what planning and judgment does he do so?

Ambassador Huntsman's comments about the forces he believes would be adequate to accomplish a vaguely defined mission in Afghanistan highlighted precisely this problem. Airily explaining that 10-15,000 troops would be more than enough to conduct counterterrorism operations, Huntsman demonstrated his own ignorance of the intricacies of military operations. How did he arrive at that number? Did he or someone on his staff identify the locations from which drones and Special Forces strike groups would operate? The tasks required to protect those locations from insurgent attack? The requirements for helicopters, aircraft, and trucks to supply them? The maintenance teams needed to keep that equipment running?

Of course not. Choosing a number that seems "right" to a career politician is almost certain to lead to the wrong number. Providing precision about the requirements to accomplish specific military tasks is the job of military staffs, which is why overruling the recommendations of those staffs, tendered by their commanders, is such a dangerous course.

Yet this is the course President Obama has repeatedly pursued. In December 2009, he endorsed General Stanley McChrystal's assessment of the situation in Afghanistan as well as the strategy McChrystal proposed to achieve it, but then withheld a quarter of the combat forces McChrystal had identified as necessary to accomplish the president's objectives. In June 2011, President Obama reportedly received recommendations from General David Petraeus to cut not more than 5,000 troops from Afghanistan in this year and to retain the force levels in that theater at roughly constant levels through the end of 2012. Obama rejected that advice, ordering the withdrawal of 10,000 troops by the end of 2011 and another 23,000 by September 2012.

Meanwhile, painstaking staff work in Iraq led General Lloyd Austin to recommend trying to keep more than 20,000 troops in Iraq after the end of 2011. The White House also rejected that advice and was negotiating with the Iraqi government to keep around 3,000 troops in Iraq. Encountering challenges in that negotiation, the White House then dropped the matter entirely and decided instead to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of this year, despite the fact that no military commander supported the notion that such a course of action could secure U.S. interests or the president's stated objectives.

Three different commanders in two theaters, all personally selected by President Obama, offered their best professional military advice about how to achieve the president's stated goals. In each case, the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported those recommendations. In Afghanistan, at least, two secretaries of defense did as well. In none of these cases had another military staff developed a different recommendation. Nor was there any significant difference of opinion reported within the senior military ranks about the field commanders' recommendations. Yet President Obama selected his own troop numbers and his own timelines in every instance.

Again, President Obama had the right to make every one of those decisions, and the dedication of the American military to the principle of civilian authority has been highlighted by the fact that every commander the president overruled saluted and moved to execute his new orders. There is a wide gap between having the right to do something and having the wisdom to do the right thing, however. Are we really comfortable saying that three different four-star generals—David Petraeus, Lloyd Austin, and Stanley McChrystal—were so incompetent either at understanding the president's objectives or at developing military courses of action to achieve them that the president had to overrule them?

Under no circumstances should the president of the United States ever take an important military decision simply because a uniformed officer has recommended it. But, when the president does overrule his commanders, he had better have an extremely good reason not only to reject their advice but to prefer his own wisdom. And if he finds himself doing it repeatedly, he would do well to consider what the source of the problem really is.

—Frederick W. Kagan

Losing Afghanistan?

Marines are known for their bluntness, so it was not surprising to see the matter-of-fact honesty of General James Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, on display when interviewed by the Associated Press during a recent trip to visit Marines in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. Asked about the

impending drawdown of thousands of Marines from Helmand, Amos said: "Am I okay with that? The answer is 'yes.' We can't stay in Afghanistan forever. Will it work? I don't know."

General Amos went on to say that the Corps would do the best it could while following the commander in chief's orders. But do those orders make sense? Is it good enough to just hope that the drawdown won't be a strategic mistake of the first order? "I don't know" is not a satisfactory answer. Indeed, General Amos's comments should be a warning to the public, the Congress, and those running for president in 2012 that the Obama administration is playing fast and loose with a war that it once argued was "necessary" and "right."

U.S. troops in eastern Afghanistan, November 2011.

Amos is of course correct that America can't stay in Afghanistan forever. But our military is in the position of doggedly trying to do its part while facing a decreasing likelihood of success because of withdrawal timelines imposed for political reasons.

The trend began in 2009, when General Stanley McChrystal requested (as a minimum) 40,000 additional troops to turn around the underresourced and failing Afghan campaign. After a drawn out, months-long review, McChrystal got only 30,000 troops, supplemented by an additional 3,000 noncombat "enablers."

Given the limitations imposed by Washington, the military's plan was to focus first on stabilizing areas in southern Afghanistan such as Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. Once these key areas in the Taliban heartland were secured, forces would be shifted to the east to help clear, hold, and stabilize areas along the border with Pakistan.

The military has delivered. The number of enemy-initiated kinetic incidents in the country is declining (except in the east). This week the Afghan government announced that NATO will turn over a swath of Helmand Province as part of the next round of transition to Afghan control. The turnover includes districts such as Marjah, where the Marines have made significant progress since beginning operations in 2010.

But will these gains endure as American forces begin to withdraw more rapidly than planned? Significant progress has been made in training Afghan forces, who are now fighting and risking their lives in large numbers. But, in many areas, these forces are not yet ready to take the lead in fighting the insurgency.

Worse, the surge drawdown announced by President Obama in June makes the other component of the Afghan strategy—shifting resources to deal with the security situation in the east—no longer possible. Beyond the restive areas along the border with Pakistan, coalition commanders also must ensure that the Kabul security zone is adequately defended, as the Taliban and related insurgent groups such as the Haqqani network pursue their strategy of assassinations and high-profile attacks in Kabul.

This will be difficult to manage with the 68,000 U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan by October 2012. And it will be impossible if, as rumored, President Obama announces further significant troop withdrawals at the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.

Our allies, meanwhile, are reading the Washington tea leaves. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Poland, Belgium, Finland, Spain, and Sweden will reduce troop levels next year. This comes on top of the withdrawal of all Canadian combat troops from Kandahar. If the president succumbs to the temptation to make another drawdown announcement prior to November's election, one can count on an even greater dash to the exits by allied forces. That would only contribute to uncertainty in the region and among the Afghans themselves. Does anyone believe the Pakistani military will be more cooperative if it thinks the United States and her allies are rushing for the door?

Counterinsurgency campaigns require patience. While considerable blood and treasure have been expended in Afghanistan over the past decade, an adequately resourced counterinsurgency effort was put in place only at summer's end in 2010. Planned and prospective cuts in forces may be good news to an American public that has grown war weary. But will the "good news" last?

As General Amos suggests, the administration's drawdown is, at best, a gamble. But national security isn't a game of roulette. Why not do what it takes to win the war, rather than run away by providing too few resources?

—Gary Schmitt and Jamie M. Fly

NEWSCOM

Bobby, We Hardly Know Ye

Governor Jindal's unheralded success story.

BY FRED BARNES

Baton Rouge

Bobby Jindal is forgotten but not gone. He followed the surest path of all to lose the attention of the national media. More than a year ago, he announced he wouldn't run for the Republican presidential nomination in 2012. Except for a spate of news coverage last year when, as governor of Louisiana, he had to cope with the BP oil spill, Jindal all but vanished from the national political scene.

Now he's reemerging, and for good reason. He has a success story to tell or for others to tell for him. In October, he was reelected governor with the largest percentage (66 percent) since Louisiana's open primary system began in 1975. Republicans, thanks in large part to Jindal, now control both houses of the legislature and all 7 nonfederal statewide offices. Jindal-backed reformers have 10 of the 11 seats on the state school board. At 40, Jindal is the most powerful political leader in Louisiana since Huey Long in the early 1930s.

Jindal's future? He's immersed himself in state issues—particularly education reform and jobs—though he wasn't shy about criticizing President Obama for relying on bureaucrats in Washington to deal with the oil spill. Jindal is ambitious, he'll be chairman of the Republican Governors Association in 2014, and one way or another, he's bound to become a player in national politics when he's term-limited as governor in four years.

Striking as they are, his political achievements are less impressive than his policy successes. The records of the three governors seeking the GOP presidential nomination—two former (Mitt Romney, Jon Huntsman), one current (Rick Perry)—pale in comparison with Jindal's. Louisiana was in far worse shape than Massachusetts, Utah, or Texas when Jindal took over in 2008. And that's why his reforms have been more sweeping and dramatic. "We'll run out of time before we run out of things to do," he says.

Jindal has done what most governors only dream about. But he and his aides are painfully aware his accomplishments are unknown outside the state. To spread the word, they've produced a five-page report headlined "Louisiana Turnaround—The Untold Story." It's a largely factual document with minimal spin or exaggeration.

Listing 63 separate actions, reforms, or changes, it makes the point that a lot has happened in Jindal's first four years. He cut spending sharply before that became sexy. In 2008, the state budget was $34.4 billion. For 2012, it's $25.4 billion, a 26 percent decline. Nearly 10,000 state jobs have been eliminated. "If you enforce fiscal

DAVE MALAN

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

discipline, it frees you to do things you should have done anyway," according to Jindal.

He gets credit for the biggest income tax cut—$1.1 billion over five years—in state history. At his instigation, the legislature approved an array of business tax reductions, including a 25 to 30 percent tax credit to attract movie production.

He's a refusenik on tax hikes, vowing never to raise taxes. He even blocked an extension of a cigarette tax. To get around Jindal and prevent the tax from expiring, legislators passed a state constitutional amendment. (Jindal could have vetoed the amendment but chose not to.)

Jindal insists it's the certainty on taxes that draws so many companies to the state. "They're coming here because they know nobody's going to raise taxes on them," he told me. And they like the "level playing field" that now exists. In October, Louisiana added jobs at twice the national rate. Unemployment fell from 8.2 percent in May to 7 percent in November.

When I traveled around Louisiana with Jindal in late November, he touted new jobs. In Broussard, Marine International said it was bringing 90 jobs back from China. At that event, Jindal was declared an "honorary Cajun." In Alexandria, Sundrop Fuels announced it would build a factory, hire 150 people, and produce what it calls "the world's first, ready-to-use, renewable 'green gasoline.'" A Sundrop official slipped me a press release with this written in ink: "Sundrop Fuels has not received any federal funding or loans."

Jindal loves these jobs announcements, not only for their political and economic value, but also because they underscore a point he often makes. "Conservative ideas don't just sound good," he says. "They actually work. That's the secret of our success." He wants Louisiana to be seen as a model for other states to follow.

His first task as governor in 2008 was something more basic: to address the ethics of Louisiana's political class. The state, with a well-earned reputation for corruption, was frequently ridiculed. Former Louisiana congressman Billy Tauzin joked that the state was "half under water, half under indictment." Rolfe McCollister, who publishes several magazines in Baton Rouge, says, "It was downright embarrassing to hear what people thought of us."

Obama and Jindal discuss the oil spill, May 2, 2010.

WHITE HOUSE PHOTO / PETE SOUZA

That's changing. As a result of disclosure, transparency, and ethics enforcement reforms, the Better Government Association lifted Louisiana from 46th to 5th on its Integrity Index. The Center for Public Integrity places the state 1st in its ranking of legislative disclosure requirements.

Ethics reform plays a significant part in Louisiana's improved business climate. In 2009, the Gallup Job Creation Index ranked the state number three in the country. In 2010, *Site Selection* magazine rated its business climate number one in the nation. There's no dispute that Louisiana's economy is vastly better than it was.

Jindal still has things he wants to prove. New Orleans once had "the worst of the worst school systems," he says, but now it's America's "only charter city." Its school system, with 70 percent charter schools, has scored gains recently. "If it can work there, it can be done anywhere," the governor says.

And he'd like the city to rise as a major hub again. It lost to Miami as South America's "gateway" to this country, to Birmingham as the South's leading medical center, and to Houston as the home of the energy industry. New Orleans has a long way to go.

Jindal's political strength comes from his popular support around the state. Earlier reform governors—notably David Treen from 1980 to 1984 and Buddy Roemer from 1988 to 1992—got entangled in legislative machinations in Baton Rouge and lost bids for reelection. Their reforms were mostly undone. Jindal has spent more time around the state, visiting all 64 parishes each year. He won all 64 in the October election. In his new term, Jindal can broaden and lock in his reforms.

Despite his clout, Jindal is not a budding Huey Long, though he says there was a "positive side" to Long. "He brought Louisiana kicking and screaming into the 20th century." But as a conservative who favors limited government, Jindal says "you don't want the people to come to the state government for everything."

Jindal has an amazing personal story. He grew up in a Hindu family in Baton Rouge, converted to Catholicism as a teenager, graduated at 20 from Brown, was a Rhodes Scholar, ran the Louisiana hospital system and colleges, then lost his first race for governor in 2003, but was elected to the U.S. House in 2004. He spent three years on Capitol Hill and returned home to win the governorship in 2007.

It's a résumé that no politician in America can match. And like Paul Ryan and Marco Rubio, he's a 40-something conservative Republican. His future after he steps down as governor may be hazy, but it's awfully bright. ♦

Gingrich shares a laugh with supporters.

The New Newt

He's tanned, rested, and ready—and having a good time on the campaign trail. BY MICHAEL WARREN

Bluffton, S.C.

It's a cold, overcast afternoon near Hilton Head in South Carolina's low country. Newt Gingrich is making his way from a barbecue joint to his brand new campaign office, his sixth in the state. The walk is only about 300 feet down the street, but the former House speaker takes his time. Among television camera crews and local Republican hangers-on, Gingrich turns the corner deliberately as the spectators lining the sidewalk cheer and point and ooh and ah.

As he strolls along, Gingrich speaks briefly with a few voters. An elderly man proffers his plan for securing the southern border. Gingrich responds politely with a hearty laugh and shakes the man's hand. I ask him a question about the defense budget, and he begins to answer. Gingrich stops, though, when he recognizes a *Washington Post* reporter standing next to me. He cracks a smile.

"Hello," Gingrich says brightly. "Nice tweet last night."

He resumes his answer, only to pause again. He turns back to the *Post* reporter and engages her in a little more friendly small talk. Gingrich's press secretary, R.C. Hammond, tries to move the candidate along, promising the press a chance to ask questions later. Gingrich looks at Hammond in mock annoyance. "That's no way to be," he gently scolds as the reporters around him chuckle. He finishes an answer to my question and merrily continues.

The episode is a little confounding. Who is this gregarious, upbeat candidate, and what has he done with Newt Gingrich? Whatever's gotten into him, he is loose and appears to be enjoying himself as he campaigns across South Carolina. "We're just letting Newt be Newt," says Adam Waldeck, Gingrich's South Carolina state director.

The truth is that Gingrich is now the comfortable frontrunner, the self-assured favorite of conservatives who are searching for their champion against Obama, the happy warrior in the fight to (I'm paraphrasing the man) fundamentally reform the federal government on a profound scale, the likes of which the country has never seen in its entire history.

At a townhall in Newberry, Gingrich is gleefully bullish. "If we win South Carolina, I predict I will be the nominee." It's not an unreasonable assumption; since 1980, every winner of the state's Republican primary has gone on to capture the nomination. Two days later, though, in an interview with ABC's Jake Tapper, Gingrich drops the pretense of uncertainty. "I'm going to be the nominee," he tells Tapper. "It's very hard not to look at the recent polls and think that the odds are very high I'm going to be the nominee."

Just letting Newt be Newt.

In fact, the polls are on his side at the moment. The latest national poll from Rasmussen shows Gingrich 21 points ahead of Mitt Romney, the biggest lead for any Republican candidate this year. Gingrich has taken the top spot in the polls in Iowa and South Carolina, and he appears to be chipping away at Romney in New Hampshire. But maybe it's the endorsement from the influential *New Hampshire Union Leader* just before his trip here that's got him jawing with the media, his erstwhile mortal enemy.

Incidentally, Newt *qua* Newt is also something of a stand-up comedian. The emcee in Newberry introduces Gingrich with a comment that any of the Republican candidates would be better than the "train wreck" currently in the White House. Gingrich goes off script and runs with it.

"I really appreciate the way that you explained that I was better than a train wreck," he deadpans. "I'm going to try tonight to rise to that level."

Later in the Q&A, a voter asks if Gingrich (who will be 69 on

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Michael Warren is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Inauguration Day 2013) is healthy enough to serve as president. After noting he is in generally good health, Gingrich acknowledges he could stand to lose a few pounds. "God wanted me to be a bear, not a gazelle," he says. The audience laps it up.

Gingrich even mildly pokes fun at his own penchant for whittling down every issue to a question of reason and logic. A man named "Bulldog" Burke from Saluda poses an important query in a deep Piedmont drawl: "In light of the recent events, who do you think will win the SEC championship?" The former metro Atlanta congressman says he's pulling for the University of Georgia.

"This is an act of faith, not an act of rational calculation," Gingrich jokes.

Amid the wisecracks, though, Gingrich offers more sober fare. Throughout the week, he wears a small flag lapel pin, and it's conspicuously not the Stars and Stripes. On a blue field sit 13 six-pointed stars, representing the first 13 states.

"This is George Washington's campaign flag as commander in chief of the American revolutionary army," Gingrich says at an event in Charleston, pointing to his pin. "This flew at Yorktown outside his camp."

Is Gingrich trying to draw a subtle comparison between himself and our first president? Not explicitly, though in Newberry he offers a brief history lesson on the Battle of Trenton. The narrative is informative and dramatic since, naturally, Gingrich has written a book about the battle. He describes the incredible odds General Washington faced in his effort to cross the Delaware River with his diminished forces and take on an army of professional Hessian soldiers.

"Of his 2,500 remaining people, the last organized force of the rebellion, one-third don't have boots," he tells the rapt crowd. "They march with their feet wrapped in burlap bags and they leave a trail of blood. . . . They find, when they cross the river, that there are two ravines, not one. They have to bring their cannon down these icy slopes, across an icy creek, back up an icy slope. They are running four hours late."

Veteran Gingrich observers, aware of his tendency to insert himself into the annals of history, may begin to pick up on the allegorical undertones here. He explains how the American soldiers snuck up on the Hessians during a furious snowstorm and won the battle.

"And that victory leads 15,000 people to show up and sign up in the next two weeks," Gingrich says. "And the revolution has been saved."

The salvation Newt promises notwithstanding, his rivals and critics have intensified their examination of Gingrich's rhetoric and record since he resigned from Congress in 1999. Recently, primary opponent Ron Paul stitched video showing several of Gingrich's policy flip-flops over the years—on issues from global warming to the Paul Ryan Medicare reform—into an effective online advertisement. Paul himself told radio host Laura Ingraham that Gingrich once occupied the "left wing of the party." Romney, meanwhile, went on the offensive against Gingrich's self-described "humane" position on illegal immigration reform, though the former Massachusetts governor hasn't been able to explain how his own policy would differ. A report last week in the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that Gingrich, who has argued his consulting work for Freddie Mac consisted of advising the federal mortgage lender to change its business model, had, in a 2007 taped interview for the company's website, touted the existing government-sponsored enterprise model as a "more efficient, market-based alternative to taxpayer-funded government programs."

Gingrich says the scrutiny is an appropriate part of the process, and his campaign operates under the assumption that the candidate is pretty much a known quantity. He can weather these storms by staying positive and on message, goes the thinking. As one Gingrich aide explains it, "The worst mistake you can make in a campaign is to let the other guy get into your head." ♦

Crisis of the Eurozone Divided

Someone's gotta give.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

*No, go ahead—*you *explain who'll pay to save the euro.*

A lot of intelligent money people think this is make-or-break week for the euro. They say that by Friday, December 9, either there will be a path toward resolution of Europe's debt crisis, or events will accelerate toward a breakup of the single currency. One such is Morgan Stanley analyst Arnaud Marès, who has a record of being right about Europe when others were wrong. He wrote in a recent memo that we are at a crossroads between a "debt jubilee" (a massive repudiation of debt) and "debt assumption" (in which the EU would take up responsibility for the debts of its formerly independent constituent states, much as Alexander Hamilton convinced the United States to do in the years after the revolution).

Whether or not Marès and others are right, Europe's leaders are behaving as if they are. By "Europe's leaders" we mean not any Brussels committee but its de facto leaders—Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel and France's president Nicolas Sarkozy. For Europe to get out of its mess, the two will need to agree. As has been the case for decades, Germany has the economic might to stabilize the eurozone, even if it does not have the might to support it in the style to which it is accustomed. France has . . . well, France doesn't have much, but is a large enough country to credibly pass off Germany's plans for Europe as its own. This is necessary if Europe's smaller countries are to be kept from grumbling overmuch that German fiscal discipline is accomplishing what the Wehrmacht failed to 70 years ago.

Why is everyone worrying the euro will blow up just now? Well, Nietzsche used to say: "Whatever does not kill me makes me stronger." A reverse of that principle applies in a financial crisis: Any plan that does not solve it once and for all makes it more dangerous. Europe has had several such plans of late. A bit more than a month ago, the European Financial Stability Facility—the bailout fund of several hundred billion dollars that the member states had pitched in to establish—seemed to be running out of firepower. It had been meant to protect Greece from speculators, and now it had to protect the entire southern tier of populous and heavily indebted countries. The Europeans decided to "leverage" the EFSF. In plain English, this means borrow off it. In equally plain English, potential lenders—from U.S. hedge funds to the Chinese government, with its trillions in U.S. dollar reserves—told the Europeans to take a hike.

Once it became clear that Europeans could no longer so easily borrow fresh money to pay back old lenders, then lending to Europe's in-the-red countries—like Italy—began to look more dangerous. People with a lot of money to invest began charging a higher premium to invest it in Italian debt. That created an exponentially more serious crisis. Last week, all of the major central banks in the developed world—including the Federal Reserve, the Bank of Japan, and the Bank of England—joined forces to offer illiquid European banks readier (and cheaper) access to dollars. The dollars will be swapped for euros and then swapped back when things calm down—that is, assuming nothing bad happens to the euro in the interim. That ought to get the continent to Friday, anyhow.

You can't have a currency union without a political union. So if Europe is going to stick together, either the currency will change to fit the politics or the politics will change to fit the currency. Roughly, France wants the former and Germany wants the latter. France envisions a Europe bailed out monetarily. France wants to keep its sovereignty and *gloire*, backstopped, if necessary, by a central bank that spends like a drunken sailor. Killing off

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Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

the Bundesbank, with its culture of strong money, and replacing it with a more easygoing monetary authority was a longstanding French goal. François Mitterrand thought he had achieved it with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, but today many Frenchmen think the Germans outwitted him.

Germany envisions a Europe bailed out fiscally. The warnings against lost national sovereignty that you hear issuing from London and Paris are not audible in Berlin. Forgoing the usual prerogatives of sovereignty is the price that Germany has paid for readmission into the family of civilized nations. Its nonexercise of autonomy has become a habit. With little sovereignty to lose, it doesn't care if the other nation-states of Europe join it in the exurbs of history. It just wants hard enough money so it can enjoy its appliances in peace.

Angela Merkel, speaking before the Bundestag last week, promised to move the continent toward a fiscal union. She showed the same Ahab-like obsessiveness in her tone that Barack Obama did at the height of the health care debate—leaving the impression that a ruinous deal would be better than no deal at all. "We are not just *talking* about a fiscal union but beginning to actually create one," she said.

In France, meanwhile, the Socialist presidential candidate François Hollande, who would drub Sarkozy if elections were held today, has had to warn his party against stoking anti-German sentiment. Arnaud Montebourg, the new leader of the left wing of the Socialist party, has complained that France is being subjected to a German "diktat." The non-Keynesian Germans listening to Merkel came away with the opposite worry. They were unsettled when she confidently stated: "The present crisis in the euro area is above all a crisis of confidence." That is not what most German voters say, and they may take it as a sign that Merkel, faced with French demands, is going to fold like a cheap card table. ♦

Romneycare and Abortion

Iowa's social conservatives weigh the candidates.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Mitt Romney erased any doubt that he's playing to win the Iowa caucuses when he rolled out his first campaign ads in the Hawkeye State last week. A glossy paper mailer pitched Romney to socially conservative Iowans as "the strongest Republican to beat Barack Obama and protect our values." Romney's "pro-life," "pro-marriage," and "pro-family" credentials were the three bullet points. "Mitt Romney lives his values," read the "pro-family" text, as reported by the *Des Moines Register*. "He has been married to Ann for 42 years . . . and he has been a member of the same church his entire life." (Translation: Unlike a certain unnamed former speaker of the House who is leading Romney in Iowa and national polls.)

"I believe he has a real shot," Bob Vander Plaats, a leading Iowa social conservative, says of Romney's chances in the state, where evangelical Christians make up 60 percent of GOP caucusgoers. But Romney won't be winning with the support of Vander Plaats, who served as Mike Huckabee's 2008 Iowa state chairman and lost the 2010 gubernatorial primary by 9 points to Governor Terry Branstad. "Most of the conservative base has written off Romney," Vander Plaats tells me. "The problem is that we don't have a natural like Huckabee we can coalesce around." Vander Plaats says board members of his organization, the Family Leader, have ruled out endorsing Romney, Ron Paul, and Herman Cain.

John McCormack is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Romney doesn't need to win Iowa's social conservative activists, but he does need to allay the concerns of enough social conservatives to win the state—and the nomination. Vander Plaats says that one big stumbling block for Romney is the Massachusetts health care law's coverage of elective abortions. "They can try to spin" Romneycare, he says. "The fact is that abortions are still allowed under that law, and the state is involved in funding those abortions. That's just not all that long ago." In fact, the law passed in 2006—after Romney's pro-life conversion.

Taxpayer funding of abortion is highly unpopular among the general electorate and outright toxic with Republicans. Voters opposed public funding of abortion by 72 percent to 23 percent in a 2009 Quinnipiac poll. Republicans opposed it by an eye-popping 91 percent to 5 percent. The issue nearly brought down Obama's health care bill in an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress. And Huckabee hit Romney on the issue of state-subsidized abortions in the closing days of the 2008 Iowa campaign. Mitt Romney "comes on and says he's pro-life and yet he signed a bill that gives a $50 co-pay for an elective abortion in his state's health care plan," Huckabee said during a *Meet the Press* appearance four days before the caucuses. Romney lost Iowa to Huckabee by 9 points.

The Romney campaign says the attack that helped sink his Iowa campaign in 2008 is unfounded. "Longstanding court precedent requires Massachusetts to cover abortion services in government-subsidized plans," Romney spokeswoman

Andrea Saul writes in an email to The Weekly Standard. "Decisions about what services to cover were ultimately determined by the independent Health Care Connector Authority pursuant to the law."

It's true that the Massachusetts supreme court ruled in 1981 that the state must fund abortions for people on government health plans such as Medicaid. Twelve other states—including conservative or battleground states such as Arizona, West Virginia, Minnesota, and Alaska—pay for abortions for Medicaid recipients because of state supreme court rulings. Only four states have enacted laws through the legislative process to allow taxpayer funding of abortion.

Still, some social conservatives don't buy Romney's defense that it's all the fault of the judges. "You know what I would think if I were a pro-lifer? That's a pretty darn good reason not to have the government take over the health care system," says Steve Deace, a Christian conservative Iowa radio host and longtime Romney antagonist. "Forget the mandate, which is wrong to begin with. The first moral principle is don't murder."

Why would Romney expand access to government-subsidized health care if those plans would cover elective abortions? David French of Evangelicals for Mitt says that argument is a "classic example of not understanding what an actual governor of an actual blue state has to face."

"Mitt Romney did not have the option of saying . . . that there won't be government involvement in Massachusetts health care," says French. "He was a conservative governor facing a veto-proof [Democratic] majority in both houses dead-set on a particular kind of health care reform."

French argues that by going to the Heritage Foundation for advice and using what leverage he had, Romney got the best deal he could in Massachusetts. "Doing nothing wasn't a realistic alternative," he says. "People need to get over the idea that he's coming out of Texas. He's coming out of Massachusetts."

"I don't think it is fair to say that Governor Romney just expanded taxpayer funding for abortion as though that was kind of a directly intended policy decision on his part," says Ramesh Ponnuru, senior editor at *National Review* and author of *The Party of Death*. "I certainly take the point that Massachusetts law requires abortion funding under Medicaid, and that is a reason not to expand Medicaid," he says. "But you have to be careful about the principle that you're acting on here. You don't want to say something like you don't want, let's say, a free market insurance policy that leads to more people getting insurance" because some private insurance policies cover abortions.

The question for socially conservative Republicans isn't whether Romney's perfect—it's compared to what. Romney's chief rival at the moment, Newt Gingrich, doesn't have a spotless record as a social conservative. Gingrich himself has a strong pro-life record, but in 2009 he endorsed liberal Republican congressional candidate Dede Scozzafava, who supported direct taxpayer funding of elective abortions. (Gingrich later said he regretted the endorsement.)

Gingrich also supported federal funding for research on stem cells that involved the killing of human embryos. In an interview with ABC News on December 2, Gingrich left many pro-lifers confused. He said that life does not begin when a human embryo is created, but rather when an embryo successfully implants *in utero*. Then Gingrich called embryo-destructive research "dehumanizing" and said he opposed it.

For Romney, embryonic stem cell research is the issue that led to his pro-life conversion. Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard law professor and former ambassador to the Vatican, says it took "political courage" for Romney to veto funding for embryonic research as governor. "Embryonic stem cell research was a big topic here in Massachusetts because we have a big biotech industry," says Glendon, a Romney supporter during both of his presidential bids. "So for him to make that a central point of his own [pro-life conversion] was not a politically prudent position in his own state." Pointing to Ronald Reagan's signing of a liberal abortion law as California governor, David French says, "Mitt Romney has a much better record as governor of Massachusetts than Ronald Reagan had in California."

Another issue that could hurt Gingrich among social conservatives is his history of infidelity and two divorces. "There is a large and significant gender gap on the issue of your two previous marriages," Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention wrote in an open letter to Gingrich. "My research would indicate a majority of men, but less than a third of Evangelical women, are currently willing to trust you as their president."

"There's no doubt we're very concerned about his past," says Bob Vander Plaats, who has worked with Gingrich on a number of issues. "However, part of our faith is forgiveness. He did not have a road to Des Moines conversion. He's had five, six, seven years where he's been repentant, he's been humble, he's been transparent, he's shown a level of maturity.

"It appears that he has a strong relationship and marriage with Callista, he has a restored relationship with his children, a great relationship with his grandchildren. And so if his life change is authentic, then I think part of our faith is that we need to forgive and move forward," Vander Plaats continues. "Part of it is he's 68, not 58 or 48 either. As one soccer mom, who's supporting Gingrich, said to me, 'Bob, I really believe his childish ways are behind him.'"

For now, the thrice-married Catholic convert and former speaker is leading the formerly pro-choice Mormon from Massachusetts by double digits. But that could change. The position of Iowa frontrunner has been held by Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, and Herman Cain each for about one month. The first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses are a month away. ♦

Tango Lesson

The Argentine preview of the eurozone crisis.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

A bank run in Buenos Aires, December 2001

There are good days and bad days, but even on the good days the abyss is never too far away. The eurozone's dangerously original mix of innovation, incoherence, and unaccountability makes it difficult to identify a single event that could finally push it over the edge. But, with confidence already shot, there is one obvious contender, a series of old-fashioned bank runs given a brutal new twist by the logic of currency union as cash pours out of the stricken banks and the country (or countries) that hosts them. Unless the European Central Bank could show that it has what it really takes, fear would feed on itself, credit markets would seize up, and that, quite possibly, would be that.

The extra liquidity offered by the Fed and other central banks on November 30 was a sensible precautionary move, but its extent and its timing were clear signs of anxiety that, while the eurozone's leadership moves from grand plan to grand plan, the building blocks of disaster are falling into place. U.S. institutions are wary about extending short-term funding to many European banks. European banks are wary about lending to each other.

Of all the sickly banks surviving on the Rube Goldberg life support systems now being deployed in the eurozone's grisly ER, Greece's are probably (and the implications of that "probably" are appalling) the most vulnerable to the panic that could set everything off. Their country is the closest to default. If Greece goes under, its banks will, without fresh capital, go under too. So what are their depositors doing?

They are not yet running. But they are walking away at an ever quicker pace (deposits have fallen by over 20 percent since January 2010) that can only have accelerated since the moment in early November when Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy first conceded that a country's eurozone membership might not be irrevocable after all.

To understand just how bad things could get, the best place to look is Argentina in early 2001. In 1991, just 10 years before, Latin America's most gorgeously faded republic had decided to turn over its latest new leaf. It linked its peso to the dollar at a 1:1 exchange rate. This peg was backed by reserves held by a currency board. Despite its distinctly permissive, distinctly Argentine, characteristics, it was designed to use external market pressure to force the country into the tough financial discipline that it had found impossible to impose upon itself. Those Greeks who regarded the EU's single currency as something more than a free lunch supported signing up for the euro for pretty much the same reason.

At first, the Argentine experiment worked well. The economy grew briskly, and foreign lenders were pleased to feed its growth in a manner well beyond the capability of Argentina's relatively small banking sector. After all, they told themselves, the country had changed its ways, and, thanks to the peg, exchange risk had been hugely reduced. What could go wrong? If you think that sounds a lot like the talk that accompanied the prolonged surge in international lending to Hungary, Latvia, Greece, Ireland, and all the other future catastrophes crowded into the euro's waiting room (and, subsequently in some cases, the eurozone itself) just a few years later, you'd be quite right.

What could go wrong, did: Deep-seated structural flaws within the local economy, a series of external shocks (starting with the Mexican crisis of 1994), weaker commodity prices, and stresses flowing from the fact that the dollar and the peso were an ill-matched pair all combined to push the country into difficulties made cataclysmic by ultimately unsustainable levels of foreign debt. Private lenders shied away. Private capital fled. Taxpayers hid. Ratings agencies screamed. The cost of borrowing soared. The resemblance

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Andrew Stuttaford works in the international financial markets and writes frequently about cultural and political issues.

to Greece in 2011 is unmistakable. Interestingly, the Argentine storm was gathering strength at the same time as Greece was being accepted, not without controversy, into the eurozone, raising the question what in Hades the EU's leadership was playing at. The implicit warning for Greece contained in the Argentine disaster was as clear as Cassandra, and just as ignored.

In any event, as the 20th century lurched into the 21st, Buenos Aires previewed Athens. There were differences, of course, not least the fact that Argentina had hung on to its own national currency, but that meant less than it might have done. By the end of the 1990s, 90 percent of Argentina's public debt was denominated in a foreign currency, marginally better than Greece's 100 percent (for these purposes the euro is a "foreign" currency everywhere), but not by enough to give any comfort. And it wasn't just the debt: Wide swaths of the economy had been dollarized.

And so had the banks: According to the IMF, close to 60 percent of the Argentine banking system's assets and liabilities were denominated in dollars throughout the second half of the 1990s, leaving the banks horribly exposed in the event that the peg broke. Indeed, the potentially enormous cost of breaking the peg was a good part of why it was maintained, a logic similar to that now keeping the embattled PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Spain) on the euro's leash. This should come as no surprise: The stability that such mechanisms can bring largely rests on the absence of any obvious exits. Countries that sign up for them need to be sure that they have what it takes to stay the course. Slinking in on fudged numbers and, ludicrously, expected to maintain some sort of pace with Germany's Porsche economy, the Greek jalopy stood even less of a chance than had far-better-intentioned Argentina.

Argentine headlines in 2000-01 must have read much like those in Greece today. The country accepted billions in international assistance (from the IMF) in exchange for the imposition of austerity measures that pummeled an already faltering economy. There was a voluntary debt swap (on terms as absurdly expensive as those proposed for Greece earlier this year) that bought time, but no confidence.

Massively widening spreads between peso and dollar debt signaled the market's fear that the peg was doomed. But, to quote the IMF's invaluable *Lessons from the Crisis in Argentina* (approved by one Timothy Geithner), it was "the resumption [in July 2001] of large scale withdrawals from Argentine banks [that was] perhaps the clearest sign of the system's impending collapse." Indeed it was.

The banks—and, of course, the country itself—were quite literally running out of the dollars that made up a monetary base already depleted by previous capital flight, and a growing current account deficit. The rules of a currency board (even in its looser Argentine variant) meant that it was not possible simply to print money to fill the gap. This is a problem familiar to those of today's PIIGS who have to watch the money drain out of their economies, yet are blocked from direct access to the printing press by the European Central Bank. Argentina's more sinuous treasuries (provincial and then national) tried to meet this challenge by issuing a series of evocatively named quasi-monies (IOUs, basically), but these *patacones*, *porteños*, *quebrachos*, and *lecops* were harbingers of doom, not a solution.

And when the dominoes of finance finally fall, they fall quickly. To return to the IMF's grim textbook: "The crisis broke with a run [on] private sector deposits, which fell by more than $3.6 billion (6 percent of the deposit base) during November 28-30." At that point the game was up. The authorities' response (notably the introduction of the *corralito*) should alarm depositors throughout the PIIGS as they mull how their governments might stop precious euros escaping to safe havens abroad in the wake of bank runs at home.

The *corralito* limited cash withdrawals from individual bank accounts to the equivalent of $250 a week (the dollar value would soon fall sharply). And the response to it should worry those now running the PIIGS. Argentinians took to the streets and reduced the country's political order to chaos. Depending on how you define the term, Argentina had five presidents in less than a month, but none could change the inevitable. The country defaulted on its debt, the peg was scrapped, the peso tanked, and the *corralito* was replaced by the *corralón*, the centerpiece of an even tougher regime. Depositors were allowed to withdraw a little more money than before, but only in heavily depreciated pesos. Term deposits were frozen, and transfers of money out of the country heavily restricted. Not so long after, dollar deposits were switched into pesos, and the ruin of Argentine savers, many of whom lost their jobs as the economy crashed, was complete.

History does not always repeat itself. Maybe those remaining Greek depositors are confident that, however battered their nation's finances, its guarantee of bank deposits up to some $135,000 will hold up through the toughest times. Maybe they have faith that Greece will stick with the euro. And maybe they trust that, should the walk from Greek banks turn into a run, the European Central Bank will do what it takes to put things right. But if they do have any doubts, they can, for now, easily move their euros to a part of the eurozone—Germany, say—where there is no currency risk and bank deposits are blessed with a guarantor that is, you know, solvent. Thinking like that is how a run on the banks can begin. Paranoid? Well, if you were a depositor with a Greek bank, what would you do?

And, if you were a depositor in an Italian bank, watching all this and aware that money is ebbing away from Italy too, what would you do?

I know what the Argentine advice would be. Run.

And if the Greeks run, and the Italians run, who will be next? ♦

Alabama Slammed

Obama's mendacious case against an immigration law. BY QUIN HILLYER

Mobile

Aided greatly by the establishment media, the Obama administration is trying to resurrect the image of Alabama as both the Heart of Dixie and the heart of darkness, with Jim Crow's abuses this time being readied against light-brown-skinned immigrants and the freedom-riding preachers who give them succor.

A multiple-front legal fight is under way regarding Alabama's controversial new law against illegal immigrants—which, among other things, punishes businesses that knowingly hire illegals and asks police to check the legal status of anybody being detained for some other violation. But the law carefully tracks, rather than contradicts, federal statutes, and the only "massive resistance" involved is the Obama administration's massive resistance to the truth. The president himself led the way into the gutter.

In a November 9 briefing to Hispanic media, Obama blasted "the idea that we have children afraid to go to school, because they feel afraid that their immigration status will lead them to being detained . . . [and also] the notion that if a Catholic priest drives an undocumented worker to the hospital, he could be criminally charged; that people can be stopped in the streets and harassed or checked [for residency status]."

Seven days later, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas Perez, who has opened an investigation of alleged "civil rights" violations without yet identifying specific examples, chimed in about parents keeping their children from school "because they're concerned they will be pulled over because of what they look like."

Aside from the existence of real fears—unfounded fears ginned up by the administration itself—every element of the Obama and Perez complaints was false.

First, as in other such laws around the country, the Alabama law in multiple places specifically rules out ethnic profiling and stopping people in the streets for suspected lack of immigration status alone—that is, without legitimate suspicion of non-immigration violations. "A law enforcement officer . . . may not consider race, color, or national origin in the enforcement of this section," the law says on page 28. And on page 30. And on page 32. And, adding "ethnicity" and "gender" to the list, on page 60. On page 43, it insists that businesses make firing decisions "without regard to the race, ethnicity, or national origin" of a worker and that termination be "consistent with the anti-discrimination laws of this state and of the United States."

It's worth noting that several Democratic leaders in the state legislature, white and black alike, voted for the Alabama law, hardly the stance one would expect if racial profiling were involved.

Then there is the absurd notion that priests or pastors might be arrested while providing humanitarian assistance under the part of the law that would make it unlawful to "harbor" an illegal alien. For one thing, the anti-harboring provisions match, almost word for word, an extensive anti-harboring section of federal law (8 U.S. Code 1324) that similarly makes it unlawful to "conceal, harbor, or shield from detection, such alien in any place, including any building or any means of transportation"—a federal law that never before has been thought to put clergy in the slightest danger. For another thing, the Alabama law contains a host of exceptions for primary and secondary education and for just the sorts of humanitarian actions Obama described—among others, any "emergency medical condition," "emergency disaster relief," and "soup kitchens, crisis counseling and intervention, and short-term shelter."

To add to the protections for those in the ministry, Alabama's constitution contains a "Religious Freedom Amendment" more extensive than the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, namely "to guarantee that the freedom of religion is not burdened by state and local law; and to provide a claim or defense to persons whose religious freedom is burdened by government."

Finally, when Obama was using the Hispanic media to spread alarm, a federal judge had already enjoined the Alabama law's "harboring" sections on technical grounds, mooting (at least for now) the entire alleged danger.

"I've made it clear in every public statement that there is nothing in this law that would prohibit anyone from being a good Samaritan," said Luther Strange, Alabama's mild-mannered, moderate-conservative attorney general cast by the *New York Times* in the role of the viciously segregationist former governor George Wallace, with all of Wallace's "defiant history of intolerance and minority oppression." The characterization fits Strange about as well as a tuxedo would fit a porpoise.

As for the profiling charge, Strange calls it "just ridiculous. . . . [Perez's lawyers] came down here to set up a hotline, had press conferences, etc., all of which is not to eliminate fear but to *foster* fear."

Strange is in conflict with Perez over a letter Perez sent directly to Alabama school superintendents—abandoning protocol by bypassing state legal officials—demanding collection of nine comprehensive sets of enrollment data by "race" and "national origin."

Strange objected, arguing that the

Quin Hillyer is a senior fellow at the Center for Individual Freedom and a senior editor at the American Spectator.

Justice Department has no authority to compel local school officials to provide such information, a task school officials have independently been quoted describing as "extremely labor-intensive." He asked Perez to explain what specific authority allowed him to demand such information; Perez in effect then gave Strange the back of his hand, listing a number of antidiscrimination laws that Justice "has express authority to investigate and enforce" but without providing a single citation describing a power to commandeer local officials to enforce them.

In reply, Strange told Perez that he interpreted the latter's letter as "confirm[ing] that your Office asserts no legal authority to *compel* production of the information." He also asked Perez to share any supposed civil rights complaints received by Justice regarding the immigration law, in hopes of beginning "a joint endeavor" to root out any abuses. To date, Perez has declined to share such information—if indeed it exists.

"What I see come out of Washington really smacks of politics more than anything else," Strange told me. "One of the things I think is most frustrating to me is they want to ignore 50 years of fabulous progress in this state."

There is precedent for Strange's belief that he can win a confrontation with the Department of Justice. In 2001, Alabama's then-attorney general Bill Pryor fought back against Justice's attempts to undermine an Alabama law requiring that felons submit to DNA testing when applying for restoration of various privileges including the right to vote. Pryor, now a judge on the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, won that battle. Likewise, the Obama Justice Department has fared poorly so far in its own federal court battles over state immigration laws—including with several of Pryor's 11th Circuit colleagues in early rulings on Justice's suit against Alabama.

As the *Washington Post* noted in a November 17 story on the controversy, "legal experts say the level of federal intervention over the immigration laws is extraordinary." And, one might add, extraordinarily demagogic. ♦

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The Thirty-Year War

Iran policy goes from failure to failure.

BY LEE SMITH

The British embassy in Tehran under siege, November 29

The storming of the British embassy in Tehran last week by the Islamic Republic's Basij loyalists is evidence that fevered paranoia is now part of the Iranian regime's decision-making process. In Washington, a confrontation between a Democratic senator and Obama administration officials over Iran sanctions suggests that the White House may have resigned itself to Iran's acquiring a nuclear bomb. Taken together, these two scenes show that the United States and Iran are moving ever closer to an open war that has been more than three decades in the making.

It is an index of what has happened during the last 30 years that few were surprised when sovereign British territory was seized last week in the Iranian capital in protest of strong European sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran. After the mob freed captured British diplomats, London recalled its senior staff and threw Iran's mission out of the British capital. In solidarity, France and Germany withdrew their staff from Iran. Presumably, Paris and Berlin were also fearful of mob attacks on their own envoys. The 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and subsequent bombings of the American embassy in Beirut and the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires have long made it clear that customary international law is no part of the revolutionary regime's playbook.

Iranian exceptionalism—the fact that Tehran's outrages are tolerated by the international community—explains why Western policymakers and deterrence theorists have wasted so much time deliberating whether the clerical regime now marching toward a nuclear weapon is rational. What would constitute abnormal behavior from any other government is considered normal for the Islamic Republic. Had Washington dealt with Tehran

Lee Smith is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

like a rational state, the Carter White House would have treated the embassy takeover 30 years ago as an act of war, and responded in kind. (Even veteran diplomat George F. Kennan, a realist's realist, advocated a declaration of war and the interning of Iranian diplomats in this country.)

Instead, the Carter White House embarked on a secret mission to rescue the hostages, thereby establishing one of the enduring pillars of Washington's Iran policy—clandestine operations. While the United States and its allies, especially Israel, have enjoyed many successes against Iran in the secret war, Tehran is itself much more comfortable operating in the shadows. This is especially so when Washington provides much of the darkness, obscuring, for instance, Iran's role in killing American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the last month, there have been two blasts at Iranian facilities that are apparently related to the regime's nuclear weapons program. It's unclear who is responsible for the explosions, whether it is external actors—the U.S., Israeli, or some other intelligence service—internal opposition forces, or more likely some combination of the above. Whether it was sabotage or an accident in a program that is by most accounts poorly managed, the result is the same. The explosions are driving the regime crazy. The nuclear weapons program is a vital interest to mullahs whose self-image is built on confrontation, and the blasts erode their prestige. In the short term, the secret war sets back the Iranian bomb with every explosion. But in the long run, this is a success only if Washington's larger strategy is to lure Iran into making the first move in an open war that will result in the fall of the regime and the destruction of the nuclear weapons program.

Nobody wants war, of course, but at this point it seems no one is going to stop Iran from getting the bomb either. Diplomacy is the second pillar of Washington's 30-year Iran policy, and after failing to engage the regime, the White House has moved on to a strategy of containment and deterrence that assumes a beefed-up coalition of Gulf Arab states are willing, and able, to push back against Iran. Sanctions were supposed to have been the White House's fallback position after diplomacy, but the administration apparently fears that certain sanctions targeting Iran's energy sector will hurt the president's chances at reelection. A hike in oil prices that might result from going after Iran's main source of income is not going to help an already moribund U.S. economy rebound in time for November.

The more immediate concern is that sanctions driving up oil costs might create a windfall for Iran. The question, says Mark Dubowitz, executive director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), "is how do you design a package that targets the price of oil but leaves the physical supply alone? Otherwise Ali Khamenei will enjoy an astonishing windfall by selling his oil at sharply higher prices." The answer is to wean your allies off of Iranian oil as quickly as possible and leave Tehran with only those customers who will ignore sanctions anyway, namely China. If Beijing is Iran's only buyer, it will have leverage to extract discounts from Tehran, which might cost the regime tens of billions of dollars in revenue.

Significant discounts are also possible even if India keeps buying Iranian oil along with Turkey, South Africa, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, Iran's other major buyers. FDD's confidential report on the "Oil Market Impact of Sanctions Against the Central Bank of Iran" provided a detailed economic model that informed the Kirk-Menendez sanctions amendment, which won unanimous Senate consent for consideration on the new Defense authorization bill. Senators Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) wrote separate amendments, with Kirk's the more draconian of the two, levying secondary sanctions on anyone who did business with the Central Bank of Iran.

Administration officials feared that Kirk's effort would alarm allies and oil markets and requested that the two draft a compromise. The Kirk-Menendez amendment leaves plenty of room for those accustomed to working with the Central Bank of Iran to take their business elsewhere. It imposes sanctions on "foreign financial institutions, including central banks, engaged in petroleum related transactions with the Central Bank of Iran after 180 days with 180-day special exemptions tied to the availability of non-Iranian oil on the market and a country's significant reduction in purchases of Iranian oil."

The point of sanctions like the Kirk-Menendez amendment, says Dubowitz, "is to bring your allies on board as quickly as possible without spooking oil markets and to give the administration flexibility to manage two of the most sensitive elements of the global financial system—oil markets and central banks."

To get the White House to buy in, the amendment provided a number of waivers for the president. For instance, the timeline allows the president to decide "whether the price and supply of petroleum and petroleum products from non-Iranian suppliers is sufficient to allow purchasers to significantly reduce their purchases from Iran."

Nonetheless, the administration came out against the amendment, with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner arguing that it would force the international community to choose between doing business with us or with the Islamic Republic. "I think that choice is pretty easy for them," Menendez countered. "We shouldn't be leading from behind, we should be leading forward."

The clock is ticking on the Iranian nuclear weapons program, said Menendez. "The published reports say we have about a year. Now when are we going to start our sanctions regime robustly, six months before the clock has been achieved? Before they get a nuclear weapon?"

Over the last 30 years the price for stopping Iran has risen steadily. What would have come relatively cheaply in November 1979 will likely cost the United States, its allies, and interests, dearly. The Obama administration may not be on board, but at least U.S. lawmakers recognized last week that the international community can't afford an Iranian nuclear weapon. ♦

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Climategate (Part II)

A sequel as ugly as the original

By Steven F. Hayward

The conventional wisdom about blockbuster movie sequels is that the second acts are seldom as good as the originals. The exceptions, like *The Godfather: Part II* or *The Empire Strikes Back*, succeed because they build a bigger backstory and add dimensions to the original characters. The sudden release last week of another 5,000 emails from the Climate Research Unit (CRU) of East Anglia University—ground zero of "Climategate I" in 2009—immediately raised the question of whether this would be one of those rare exceptions or *Revenge of the Nerds II*.

Before anyone had time to get very far into this vast archive, the climate campaigners were ready with their critical review: Nothing worth seeing here. Out of context! Cherry picking! "This is just trivia, it's a diversion," climate researcher Joel Smith told *Politico*. On the other side, Anthony Watts, proprietor of the invaluable WattsUpWithThat.com skeptic website, had the kind of memorable line fit for a movie poster. With a hat tip to the famous *Seinfeld* episode, Watts wrote: "They're real, and they're spectacular!" An extended review of this massive new cache will take months and could easily require a book-length treatment. But reading even a few dozen of the newly leaked emails makes clear that Watts and other longtime critics of the climate cabal are going to be vindicated.

The original Climategate: December 14, 2009

Climategate I, the release of a few thousand emails and documents from the CRU in November 2009, revealed that the united-front clubbiness of the leading climate scientists was just a display for public consumption. The science of climate change was not "settled." There was no consensus about the extent and causes of global warming; in their private emails, the scientists expressed serious doubts and disagreements on some major issues. In particular, the email exchanges showed that they were far from agreement about a key part of the global warming narrative—the famous "hockey stick" graph that purported to demonstrate that the last 30 years were the warmest of the last millennium and which made the "medieval warm period," an especially problematic phenomenon for the climate campaign, simply go away. (See my "Scientists Behaving Badly," The Weekly Standard, December 14, 2009.) Leading scientists in the inner circle expressed significant doubts and uncertainty about the hockey stick and several other global warming claims about which we are repeatedly told there exists an ironclad consensus among scientists. (Many of the new emails make this point even more powerfully.) On the merits, the 2009 emails showed that the case for certainty about climate change was grossly overstated.

More damning than the substantive disagreement was the attitude the CRU circle displayed toward dissenters, skeptics, and science journals that did not strictly adhere to the party line. Dissenting articles were blocked from publication or review by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), requests for raw data were rebuffed, and Freedom of Information Act requests were stonewalled. National science panels were stacked, and

Steven F. Hayward is the F.K. Weyerhaeuser fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of the Almanac of Environmental Trends.

qualified dissenters such as NASA prize-winner John Christy were tolerated as "token skeptics." The CRU circle was in high dudgeon over the small handful of skeptics who insisted on looking over their shoulder, revealing the climate science community to be thin-skinned and insecure about its enterprise—a sign that something is likely amiss. Even if there was no unequivocal "smoking gun" of fraud or wrongdoing, the glimpse deep inside the climate science community was devastating. As I wrote at the time ("In Denial," March 15, 2010), Climategate did for the global warming controversy what the Pentagon Papers did for the Vietnam war 40 years ago: It changed the narrative decisively.

The new batch of emails, over 5,300 in all (compared with about 1,000 in the 2009 release), contains a number of fresh embarrassments and huge red flags for the same lovable bunch of insider scientists. It stars the same cast, starting with the Godfather of the CRU, Phil "hide the decline" Jones, and featuring Michael "hockey stick" Mann once again in his supporting role as the Fredo of climate science, blustering along despite the misgivings and doubts of many of his peers. Beyond the purely human element, the new cache offers ample confirmation of the rank politicization of climate science and rampant cronyism that ought to trouble even firm believers in catastrophic climate change.

Phil 'hide the decline' Jones, left, and Michael 'hockey stick' Mann

JONES, AP / RAPHAEL SATTE; MANN, GREG GRIECO

In fact, the emails display candid glimpses of concern inside the CRU circle. Peter Thorne of NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration), who earned his Ph.D. in climate science at East Anglia in 2001, wrote Phil Jones in a 2005 message, "I also think the science is being manipulated to put a political spin on it which for all our sakes might not be too clever in the long run." An appeal to "context," which the climate campaigners say is crucial to understanding why excerpts such as this one are unimportant, does quite the opposite, and only points to the problems the climate change campaigners have brought upon themselves by their tribalism.

This exchange between Thorne and Jones, along with numerous similar threads in the new cache, is concerned with what should and shouldn't be included in a chapter of the IPCC's 2007 fourth assessment report —a chapter for which Jones was the coordinating lead author along with another key Climategate figure, Kevin Trenberth. The complete chapter (if you're keeping score at home, it's Chapter 3 of Working Group I, "Observations: Surface and Atmospheric Climate Change") lists 10 "lead authors" and 66 "contributing authors" in addition to Jones and Trenberth. One of Jones's emails from 2004 displays how explicitly political the process of assembling the IPCC report is: "We have a very mixed bag of LAs [lead authors] in our chapter. Being the basic atmos obs. one, we've picked up number of people from developing countries so IPCC can claim good geographic representation. This has made our task harder as CLAs [contributing lead authors] as we are working with about 50% good people who can write reasonable assessments and 50% who probably can't."

The final chapter was amended along lines Thorne recommended, but several other objections and contrary observations (one in particular from Roger Pielke Jr. about extreme weather events that has been subsequently vindicated) were scornfully dismissed. And appeals to context avoid the question: Is this "science-by-committee" a sensible way to sort out contentious scientific issues that hold immense public policy implications? Perhaps a politicized, semi-chaotic process like the IPCC is unavoidable in a subject as wide-ranging and complex as climate change; future historians of science can debate the issue. But the high stakes involved ought to compel a maximum of open debate and transparency. Instead, the IPCC process places a premium on gatekeepers and arbiters who control what goes in and what doesn't, and it is exactly in its exercise of the gatekeeping function that the CRU circle has shredded its credibility and trustworthiness.

One thing that emerges from the new emails is that, while a large number of scientists are working on separate, detailed nodes of climate-related issues (the reason for dozens of authors for every IPCC report chapter), the circle of scientists who control the syntheses that go into IPCC reports and the national climate reports that the U.S. and other governments occasionally produce is quite small and partial to particular outcomes of these periodic assessments. The way the process works in practice casts a

No Competition for Us

One of the newly released emails discusses something I wrote here in The Weekly Standard and in a longer policy paper for the American Enterprise Institute in 2006, where I suggested that "what [the IPCC] needs is competition—the equivalent of the famous 'Team B' of Sovietologists at the CIA in the 1970s. A robust independent effort at assessing climate science would have the tonic effect of making the IPCC behave with more circumspection in its methodology and judgment."

A week after my paper appeared, Phil Jones wrote to Susan Solomon, a NOAA scientist who was the head of U.S. climate change research at the time, apparently nervous about the idea:

> Susan, In case you've not seen this, look at Item 4 [my AEI paper]. Some of the other items are interesting re Mike Mann, but less relevant. A rival IPCC (their Team B). They seem to not realise we're doing an assessment and not a review!

I'm not sure what Jones means by saying "They seem not to realize we're doing an assessment and not a review," as my piece specifically discussed this difference. But perhaps he didn't read it very closely. More interesting is the implication that a competitive assessment process would represent a threat. ♦

shadow over one of the favorite claims of the climate campaign—namely, that there exists a firm "consensus" about catastrophic future warming among thousands of scientists. This so-called consensus reflects only the views of a much smaller subset of gatekeepers.

Beyond additional bad news for the hockey stick graph, is there anything new in these emails about scientific aspects of the issue? This will take time to sort out, but I suspect anyone with the patience to go through the weeds of all 5,300 messages and cross check them against published results may well discover troubling new aspects of how climate modeling is done, and how weak the models still are on crucial points (such as cloud behavior). Some of the new emails frankly acknowledge such problems. There are arcane discussions about how to interpolate gaps in the data, how to harmonize different data sets, and how to resolve the frequent and often inconvenient (because contradictory) anomalies in modeling results. Definite examples of political influence have emerged already from a first pass over a sample of the massive cache.

In the editing process before the IPCC's 2001 third assessment report, Timothy Carter of the Finnish Environmental Institute wrote in 2000 to three chapter authors with the observation, "It seems that a few people have a very strong say, and no matter how much talking goes on beforehand, the big decisions are made at the eleventh hour by a select core group." In this case, decisions at the highest levels of what specific figures and conclusions were to appear in the short "summary for policy makers"—usually the only part of the IPCC's multivolume reports that the media and politicians read—required changing what appeared in individual chapters, a case of the conclusions driving the findings in the detailed chapters instead of the other way around. This has been a frequent complaint of scientists participating in the IPCC process since the beginning, and the new emails show that even scientists within the "consensus" recognize the problem. Comments such as one from Jonathan Overpeck, writing in 2004 about how to summarize some ocean data in a half-page, reinforce the impression that politics drives the process: "The trick may be to decide on the main message and use that to guid[e] what's included and what is left out."

No amount of context can possibly exonerate the CRU gang from some of the damning expressions and contrivances that appear repeatedly in the new emails. More so than the 2009 batch, these emails make clear the close collaboration between the leading IPCC scientists and environmental advocacy groups, government agencies, and partisan journalists. There are repeated instances of scientists tipping their hand that they've thrown in their lot with the climate ideologues. If there were only a handful of such dubious messages, they might be explained away through "context," or as conciliatory habits of expression. But they are so numerous that it doesn't require an advanced degree in pattern recognition to make out that these emails constitute not just a "smoking gun" of scientific bias, but a belching howitzer. Throughout the emails numerous participants refer to "the cause," "our cause," and other nonscientific, value-laden terms to describe the implications of one dispute or another, while demonizing scientists who express even partial dissent about the subject, such as Judith Curry of Georgia Tech.

Since the beginning of the climate change story more than 20 years ago, it has been hard to sort out whether the IPCC represents the "best" science, or merely the findings most compatible with the politically driven climate policy agenda. Both sets of emails have lifted the lid on the insides of the process, and it isn't pretty.

A good example of how the political-scientific complex works hand-in-glove to tightly control the results comes from May 2009, when the IPCC authors were working on a "weather generator," which they hoped would produce climate change scenarios tailored to localities, so as to promote favored adaptive measures (sea walls, flood control, drought readiness, etc.). This is a small but hugely controversial aspect of climate modeling, and one where politicians and advocacy groups (the World Wildlife Fund was especially keen to have this kind of work done) may well be asking scientists to do the impossible. But there's research money in it, so scientists are only too happy to oblige. Kathryn Humphrey, a science adviser in Britain's DEFRA (Department of Environment, Forestry, and Rural Affairs—Britain's EPA) wrote a worried note to Phil Jones and several other scientists involved in the project about criticisms of the cloistered working group behind the weather generator scheme, noting, "Ministers have also raised questions about this so we will need to go back to them with some further advice." Jones tries to reassure Humphrey that he's got the working group under control: "As I've said on numerous occasions, if the WG [working group] isn't there, all the people that need [the weather generator] will go off and do their own thing. This will mean that individual sectors and single studies will do a whole range of different things. This will make the uncertainties even larger!" What Jones is referring to are numerous independent scientific efforts to "downscale" climate models to predict local impacts, and the fact that the results of these separate efforts have been chaotic, rather than demonstrating consensus. Hence the need for someone in authority to marginalize uncertainties and contradictory results. But this is properly called politics, not science.

Humphrey wrote back: "I know this is extremely frustrating for you and completely understand where you are coming from. This is a political reaction, not one based on any scientific analysis of the weather generator. We did the peer review to take care of that. *I can't overstate the HUGE amount of political interest in the project as a message that the Government can give on climate change to help them tell their story. They want the story to be a very strong one* and *don't want to be made to look foolish*." (Emphasis added.) Even putting the most charitable possible construction on this exchange—namely that Humphrey really thought the criticisms of the weather generator lacked solid scientific foundation—other messages in the emails make clear that many scientists understand that their models really aren't up to it, despite Jones's attempts at reassurance.

In a 2008 email from Jagadish Shukla of George Mason University and the Institute of Global Environment and Society to a large circle of IPCC scientists, Shukla put his finger squarely on the problem: "I would like to submit that the current climate models have such large errors in simulating the statistics of regional [climate] that we are not ready to provide policymakers a robust scientific basis for 'action' at a regional scale. . . . It is inconceivable that policymakers will be willing to make billion- and trillion-dollar decisions for adaptation to the projected regional climate change based on models that do not even describe and simulate the processes that are the building blocks of climate variability." Despite this and other cautionary messages from scientists, Jones, DEFRA, and the IPCC charged ahead with the weather generator anyway.

Other problems with climate modeling are more subtle and less easily discerned from the emails. In particular, there is much discussion about the political pressure to tune the climate models to isolate and emphasize the effect of carbon dioxide only, even though there are other important greenhouse gases and related factors highly relevant to a complete understanding of climate change. Carbon dioxide was emphasized because it is the variable that the policymakers made central to their monomaniacal mission to suppress fossil fuels to the exclusion of other policy strategies, such as "geoengineering," that might be considered in the event of drastic climate change. Here and there Jones and his compatriots complain about this constraint, but go along with it anyway. But it's another case of policy-driven science, and not science-driven policy, which we are constantly reassured is the mission of the IPCC.

These are only a few of the many problems with the climate models on which all of the predictions of doom decades hence depend. It will take months of careful review to sort the wheat from the chaff, but there is enough evidence already to support the conclusion that the climate science establishment has greatly exaggerated what it knows. One of the stranger aspects of all of these emails is how much they are concerned with statistical refinement of climate models, and how little work there seems to be on basic atmospheric physics. There are curious exchanges over the impact of changes in solar activity on global warming. The effect of fluctuations in the sun have been consistently downplayed in the climate models and IPCC reports, despite a steady stream of science journal articles—most of them peer reviewed—that argue for a more substantial weighting of solar factors. As with so many parts of climate science, the empirical basis of solar factors is controversial and incomplete.

For example, a 2003 email from Michael Mann of Penn State summarily dismisses one variation of the solar story: "I'm now more convinced than ever that there is not one single scientifically defensible element at all [in this]—the statistics, supposed climate reconstruction, and supposed 'Cosmic Ray Flux' estimates are all almost certainly w/out any legitimate underpinning." And yet the basis for the idea he dismisses was largely vindicated a few months ago in a major study from CERN, the European lab that is behind the Large Hadron Collider, which found a significant role for cosmic ray flux in cloud formation. The imperatives of climate orthodoxy came immediately into view when Rolf-Dieter Heuer, the director of the CERN lab, told a German newspaper, "I have asked the colleagues to present the results clearly, but not to interpret them. That would go immediately into the highly political arena of the climate change debate. One has to make clear that cosmic radiation is only one of many parameters."

Between their boorish behavior, attempts to conceal data and block FOIA requests, and dismissal of dissent, the climate science community has abdicated its credibility and done great damage to large-scale scientific inquiry.

As all the new emails are dissected and analyzed, no doubt Jones and the CRU circle will be able to claim to have been misinterpreted or wrongly besmirched in many instances. But between their boorish behavior, attempts to conceal data and block FOIA requests, and dismissal of dissent, the climate science community has abdicated its credibility and done great damage to large-scale scientific inquiry.

It is worth revisiting one of the most infamous statements in the climate change saga, which came in 1989 from the late Stanford environmental scientist Stephen Schneider (who turns up in many of the emails in both Climategate features):

> On the one hand, as scientists we are ethically bound to the scientific method, in effect promising to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but—which means that we must include all the doubts, the caveats, the ifs, ands, and buts. On the other hand, we are not just scientists but human beings as well. And like most people we'd like to see the world a better place, which in this context translates into our working to reduce the risk of potentially disastrous climatic change. To do that we need to get some

broad based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, means getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have. This "double ethical bind" we frequently find ourselves in cannot be solved by any formula. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest. I hope that means being both.

Schneider used to complain correctly that his critics omitted the last line in his statement—"*I hope that means being both*"—but the lesson of the Climategate saga is that scientists who become advocates, or allow themselves to become adjuncts to an advocacy campaign, damage science and policy-making alike. They end up being neither effective nor honest. One of the poignant revelations of the new emails is that some of the scientists seem to grasp this. Tommy Wils, a British climate researcher at the University of Swansea, wrote in a 2007 note to a large list of recipients: "Politicians like Al Gore are abusing the fear of global warming to get into power (while having a huge carbon footprint himself)." About Michael Grubb, a prominent climate campaigner in Britain, Tom Wigley (a prominent figure in U.S. climate research circles) wrote in 2000: "Grubb is good at impressing ignorant people. . . . Eileen Claussen [then-head of the Pew Climate Center] thinks he is a jerk. . . . Basically he is a 'greenie'; and he bends his 'science' to suit his ideological agenda." Did any of the leading climate scientists ever say this publicly, or call out environmental activist organizations for their reckless distortions of climate change? Had the climate scientists been more honest about their doubts, and more willing to discipline their allies, they might not be going through the present agony of having their dirty laundry exposed.

If Climategate II does poor box office, it won't be because the various internal reviews exonerated the CRU from the narrow allegations of fraud in Climategate I, but because the whole show has become a crashing bore. The latest U.N. climate summit that opened last week in Durban, South Africa, is struggling to keep the diplomatic circus on life support. Yet there is one more tantalizing detail that has been largely overlooked in the commentary so far. According to "FOIA," the online name of the hacker/leaker behind the release of these emails, there are another 220,000 emails still out there, blocked by a heavily encrypted password that "FOIA" vaguely threatens or promises to release at some future date. Stay tuned for Climategate III. ♦

A gathering at the Algonquin Hotel: Wolcott Gibbs (seated, second from left), Dorothy Parker (seated, right), James Thurber (top row, right), 1938

There at the *New Yorker*

The wit and wisdom of Wolcott Gibbs BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

The *New Yorker*, like New York itself, is always better in the past. In the present, it seems always to be slipping, never quite as good as it once was. Did the magazine, founded in 1925, have a true heyday? People differ about when this might be. The *New Yorker*'s heyday, it frequently turns out, was often their own.

I began reading the magazine in 1955, at the age of 18—not my heyday, which, near as I can tell, has yet to arrive—drawn to it originally because someone told me that the then-current issue had a story by J.D. Salinger. Harold Ross, the magazine's founder and tutelary spirit, had died four years earlier. William Shawn was on the first stretch of his 35-year tour (1952-1987) as editor in chief. The writers Harold Ross had hired remained in place—the big four among them were James Thurber and E.B. White, Joseph Mitchell and A.J. Liebling—and the ethos of the magazine was still that which Ross had imprinted.

Backward Ran Sentences
The Best of Wolcott Gibbs from The New Yorker
edited by Thomas Vinciguerra
Bloomsbury, 688 pp., $22

Ethos is a word that Harold Ross, even if he knew it, probably wouldn't have permitted in the pages of his magazine. Urban sophistication, emphasizing life's eccentricities (and often featuring its eccentrics), with an amused view of human ambition, was the spirit with which Ross imbued the *New Yorker*. The magazine was apolitical, serious without being heavy-handedly so. During World War II its war reporting was first-class, and it gave over an entire issue, in 1946, to John Hersey's account of the devastation caused by the atomic bombing of

BETTMANN / CORBIS

Joseph Epstein, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *is the author, most recently, of* Gossip: The Untrivial Pursuit.

Hiroshima. Yet when I came to the magazine there were still columns devoted to horse-racing, Ivy League football, jazz, and night-club entertainment. The general tone of the proceedings was casual, playful, and yet, somehow, withal adult.

An impressive roster of contributors, who in those days had their names printed not under the titles of their articles and stories but at the conclusion, popped in and out of the *New Yorker*'s pages each week. S.J. Perelman, Mary McCarthy, Janet Flanner, Edmund Wilson, Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley were part of the magazine's literary vaudeville. Many *New Yorker* writers began their professional lives as newspapermen, lending them an anchor in reality, if not cynicism, before turning to the unpretentious belles-lettristic journalism practiced at the magazine.

If in those years there were a representative *New Yorker* writer, his name was Wolcott Gibbs. Gibbs, too, began writing for newspapers. A man of all work, he contributed Talk of the Town pieces, Notes & Comments, profiles, light verse, short stories, drama and movie and book criticism, and delicious parodies. (The most famous of his parodies—a parody-profile, actually—was "Backward Ran Sentences," which was about the rise of Time, Inc., written in *Time* magazine style.) In the foreword to a collection of his pieces called *More in Sorrow*, Gibbs claimed to have contributed more words to the magazine over its first 30 years than any other writer. In *Here at The New Yorker*, Brendan Gill notes that Gibbs was also the magazine's best editor of other people's copy. As an editor, deletion was his specialty; he was a cut man in the corner of less elegant writers.

Wolcott Gibbs is not a name any kid taking next year's SATs need be concerned about. He wrote a play that had a modestly respectable run on Broadway, and three collections of his various writings appeared in book form (*Season in the Sun and Other Pleasures*, *More in Sorrow*, and *Bed of Neuroses*). Today he seems a man of another era, unlikely to arouse interest in a world clamorous with so many other demands on its attention.

Gibbs might have slid into oblivion but for the fact that an editor and journalist named Thomas Vinciguerra, much taken with Gibbs's writing, has gone to the work of assembling an impressive, and substantial, collection of his prose, the preponderance of it from the *New Yorker*. Reading through Vinciguerra's book sets off many observations, notions, insights into the world of smart journalism, criticism, and the writing life, both now and then at the *New Yorker*.

As we Americans reckon such matters, Wolcott Gibbs was well-born. One of his paternal forebears, Vinciguerra informs us, signed the Declaration of Independence; another was secretary of the Treasury under John Adams; both were governors of Connecticut. On his mother's side he was descended from Martin Van Buren. Yet the family was tapped out financially before Gibbs was born, in 1902, owing to bad investments, among them a bungled land purchase in New Jersey.

Sent to the Hill School, in Pennsylvania, where Edmund Wilson also went to prep school, Gibbs took a pass on college, as did many of the good writers of his and the preceding generation. Brendan Gill remarks that Gibbs suffered feelings of inferiority for not having gone to university, though this seems unlikely. H.L. Mencken, who similarly didn't bother with college, claimed that between listening to boring German professors and working as a journalist covering fires, executions, and bordello raids, there really wasn't any choice. Vinciguerra reprints a mock commencement address to non-college-graduates Gibbs wrote that establishes his awareness of the inanity of much college education.

Wolcott Gibbs died at 56, in 1958, in bed, cigarette in hand, a batch of galley proofs of a collection of his writings on his lap. In his introduction, Vinciguerra leaves open the question of whether he was a suicide, which was what Gibbs's third wife suspected. He was a dedicated drinking man, a serious boozer, as were many of the staff assembled by Harold Ross. The *New Yorker* of those days was a place where, in the mornings, it wouldn't at all do to tell people to have a great day.

While he could cause laughter in others, Wolcott Gibbs was not himself a notably cheerful man. ("I suppose he was the unhappiest man I have ever known," wrote his friend the playwright S.N. Behrman.) When a newly arrived writer at the *New Yorker* asked him if he had had a pleasant New Year's, Gibbs instructed him to practice an anatomically impossible act on himself. This same want of conviviality found its way into his drama criticism, but with winning effect. He came across as the very opposite of the enthusiast—as a man much put upon, giving the clear impression that he wished he could have departed most plays after the first act; or better still, never left his apartment and gone to the theater in the first place.

All this might result in mere glumness if Gibbs didn't write so well. Of the great and gaudy snob Lucius Beebe's early days in journalism—Beebe later made his mark as the chronicler of café society—Gibbs wrote: "He had an apathy about facts which verged closely on actual dislike, and the tangled wildwood of his prose was poorly adapted to describing small fires and negligible thefts." Gibbs described the mustache of Thomas E. Dewey as "bushy, dramatic, an italicized swearword in a dull sentence." He referred to posterity as "the silly bitch," to Eugene O'Neill's "involved and cosmic posturings," to the liberal newspaper *PM* as "a journal of salvation," to the "genial condescension of an Irish cop to a Fifth Avenue doorman."

Gibbs claimed to be "comparatively accomplished only in the construction of English sentences," but he also had a nicely angled point of view and the courage of his opinions. Intellectually, he was hostage to no one, not even Shakespeare. He thought *Romeo and Juliet* an ill-made play: "There are too many innocent misunderstandings and staggering coincidences, too many potions and poisons; in the end, far too many bodies cluttering up the Capulets' not so very quiet tomb." Sacred cows, he felt, made good hamburger. Paul Robeson, he wrote, overacted in the part of Othello.

To the gods of modernism, he brought no sacrifices but, instead, a heavy dose of useful philistinism. Of *Waiting for*

Godot, he wrote: "All I can say in a critical sense, is that I have seldom seen such meagre moonshine stated with such inordinate fuss." Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* he called "little more than a one-act drama of unusual monotony and often quite remarkable foolishness."

On lighter matters, writing about Maurice Chevalier's stagey pursuit of women, he compared French seduction to women's basketball: "There is a lot of squealing and jumping up and down, but certainly not much in the scoring department." In explaining the breakup of the old Algonquin Round Table group, he wrote:

> Those who didn't move away [to Hollywood, to Connecticut or Bucks County] were by now temperamentally unfit for the old close association, since there is nothing more enervating to the artist than the daily society of a lot of people who are just as famous as he is.

One of Gibbs's few idols was Max Beerbohm, also a literary man of all work, with great skill as a caricaturist added. Gibbs and Beerbohm shared the quality of sublime detachment. No man of his day was less *parti pris* than Wolcott Gibbs. After reading the more than 600 pages of his writing in *Backward Ran Sentences*, I cannot characterize his politics. A.J. Liebling, his colleague on the *New Yorker*, claimed that his own politics were "let Paris be gay," which turned out not to be true in the case of Liebling (who was a fairly standard liberal) but was, I believe, true of Gibbs, although gaiety, clearly, was scarcely his specialty.

In a fine formulation, Vinciguerra writes that Gibbs "embodied [the *New Yorker*'s] archetypal combination of blunt honesty, sly wit, exacting standards, and elegant condescension." The *New Yorker* of those days seemed mildly aristocratic, making everything seem easily within the grasp of its writers and, perhaps as important, of its readers. Hilton Kramer, in an essay-review of James Thurber's *The Years with Ross*, recounts that a *New Yorker* fact-checker called him countless times to get straight the positions of various French art critics for a piece the magazine's own art critic, Robert Coates, was writing about the European art scene. When the piece appeared, Kramer was struck "at the absurdity of the feigned ease" with which it was presented in Coates's published copy: "I marveled at the discrepancy between the pains taken to get the facts of the matter as accurate as possible, and the quite different effort that had gone into making the subject seem easy and almost inconsequential to the reader." What was going on? "For myself," Kramer wrote,

> I don't see how we can avoid concluding that the principal reason for *The New Yorker*'s method is ignorance: the ignorance of writers first of all, and ultimately the ignorance of readers. In a society which could assume a certain level of education and sophistication in its writers and journalists—which could make the assumption because it shared in that education and sophistication—there would be more of a public faith that writers knew more or less what they are talking about.

But, then, the magazine has never been without its critics. Robert Warshow, in 1947, wrote: "*The New Yorker* has always dealt with experience not by trying to understand it but by prescribing the attitude to be adopted toward it. This makes it possible to feel intelligent without thinking, and it is a way of making everything tolerable, for the assumption of a suitable attitude toward experience can give one the illusion of having dealt with it adequately." The charge here on the part of Kramer and Warshow, of course, is middlebrowism—the pretense of culture when the efforts behind attaining true culture have been efficiently eliminated for the reader.

The charge of middlebrowism became more difficult to prove as the *New Yorker* began, under William Shawn, to load up on certified intellectual contributors. Edmund Wilson was the first of these, writing regularly for the magazine's book section. Dwight Macdonald soon joined Wilson, and his assignment was, precisely, to attack such middlebrow cultural artifacts as Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins's *Great Books of the Western World*, the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, and *Webster's Third International Dictionary*. Harold Rosenberg signed on as the magazine's regular art critic; Susan Sontag wrote for the magazine. Vladimir Nabokov, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Saul Bellow, and other highbrow novelists regularly published stories in the *New Yorker*. Two of the great controversial intellectual publishing events—Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and James Baldwin's essay "The Fire Next Time"—first appeared in the magazine's pages.

The reason so many intellectuals, in effect, went over to the *New Yorker* is no more complicated than that they were asked. The money the magazine paid was much greater than that paid by any other even semi-serious magazine. Quite as important, the *New Yorker* had the best of all American audiences. Anything published in its pages was certain to be read by everyone a writer cared about. Even people who didn't much like the magazine felt obliged at least to glimpse it. Writing for the magazine, one discovered an America one could not be sure existed until one heard from its readers: the cardiologist from Tacoma, Washington, who kept up his ancient Greek, the lady from Tyler, Texas, who read Proust in French and with intellectual penetration, and many more.

William Shawn's regular contributors not merely appreciated but adulated him, a writer's editor. Two of my friends who were staff writers under his reign never referred to him as other than Mr. Shawn. Editorially, Shawn was immensely tolerant, allowing writers to take years to complete assignments (he could also hold back pieces for decades and not run them at all). He permitted his writers to run on at great, sometimes stupefying, length: Long John McPhee pieces on geology or E.J. Kahn pieces on corn were notable winners in the eye-glazing boredom category. A man who does not press a writer about deadlines, never suggests that length might be a problem, and pays him handsomely—that, from a writer's point of view, is an immortal editor.

William Shawn was the editor responsible for changing the *New Yorker*, taking it from the realm of smart into that of intellectual journalism. Was it a happy change? Under it, Wolcott Gibbs was replaced as drama critic after his death by Kenneth Tynan, a man much more attuned—some would say too well

attuned—to the avant-garde. Arlene Croce, along with Edwin Denby the best dance critic America has known, covered ballet. Movies, which had hitherto been treated as, at best, trivial entertainment became, under Pauline Kael, quite literally the talk of the town, with Miss Kael's opinion on the latest movie weighing more heavily among the so-called educated classes than the opinions of the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

The magazine also became more political. Earlier, E.B. White would occasionally print Notes & Comments editorials urging the need for world government, an idea always up there among the Top Ten dopiest political ideas of all time. Under Shawn, political ideas became more specific. He ran Rachel Carson on pollution, Lewis Mumford on city planning, and several pieces highly critical of American involvement in Vietnam. The magazine's politics were liberal but—an important qualification—liberal without being hostage to any political party, professing to speak on behalf of the greater good of the nation.

During his long editorship, Shawn held to an unvarying policy of no profane words or descriptions of sex in the *New Yorker*. (Whenever one saw a John Cheever or John Updike story in *Harper's* or *Esquire*, one could be fairly certain that it contained bits of fancy fornication.) Harold Ross's advice upon hiring editors for the magazine was "Don't f— the contributors," which Wolcott Gibbs claimed was the closest Ross came to enunciating an editorial policy. This was a policy violated by, of all people, Shawn himself; after his death it was revealed by Lillian Ross, one of the magazine's longtime reporters, that she and the married Shawn had had a love affair of many years' standing.

Much to the consternation of the *New Yorker*'s staff, in 1987 William Shawn's retirement was forced, at the age of 79, by S.I. Newhouse, who had bought the magazine for his Condé Nast publishing empire. Robert Gottlieb, a successful publisher's editor, replaced Shawn. His major contribution to the magazine was to allow profane language and sexy stories in its pages. He departed five years later, to be replaced by Tina Brown, who set out to make the magazine genuinely with-it. She had a taste for épater-ing the genteel with gaudy covers and photographs, and also made it seem, through her selection of articles, as if the most important things in the world were Hollywood, designer culture, and royalty.

After Tina Brown left in 1998 to begin a short-lived magazine called *Talk*, the magazine was taken over by David Remnick, an earnest journalist who had written well on the Soviet Union and other matters. *New Yorker* staff members, seeing this as a return to seriousness, were pleased. Remnick's ascension also meant a turn toward a more specific politics. The politics were liberalism now distinctly aligned with the Democratic party, both in a large number of its general articles that make American foreign policy seem what the left calls "the imperialist project," and in its "Comment" editorials written most weeks by Hendrik Hertzberg, which read with all the complexity of old western movies: Good guys wear Democratic hats, villains wear Republican ones, and that isn't the Lone Ranger but Barack Obama riding to the rescue.

Relevance has its costs. In its covers, its coverage of events, its need to seem *au courant*, and its insistent politics, the *New Yorker* has begun to seem more and more like a weekly news or opinion journal ("of salvation") than the magazine once adored by earlier generations of readers. The *New Yorker* Wolcott Gibbs wrote for—elegant, literary, ironic, laced with a bracing skepticism—was the spiritual house organ for people looking for relief from the clang of rivaling opinions, the barkering of each week's Next New Thing, the knowingness of haughty punditry, the maelstrom of the world's unrelenting noise. The *New Yorker* of the current day flourishes financially, its circulation in the ascendant. The *New Yorker* of Wolcott Gibbs's time, published in the world we now live in, would probably not last out the year. ♦

B&A

Friends Indeed

How and why the Jews have thrived in England.

BY DANIEL JOHNSON

The People of the Book
Philosemitism in England, from Cromwell to Churchill
by Gertrude Himmelfarb
Encounter, 183 pp., $23.95

In the last words of this book, the author quotes her brother Milton Himmelfarb in one of his last essays: "Hope is a Jewish virtue." Nobody embodies that virtue more felicitously than Gertrude Himmelfarb, who over a long and fruitful life of scholarship has given hope to all who have encountered her, whether in person or in print.

Some 60 years have elapsed since her first book appeared: *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics*. There she praised her noble subject for having taken "the idea of conscience out of the reign of metaphysics and placed it within the province of politics," thereby giving his readers grounds for hope in the face of the pessimistic dictum for which he is chiefly remembered: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Like Acton and the other great Victorians to whose study Himmelfarb has devoted so much of her life, she is

Daniel Johnson, editor of Standpoint *in London, is the author, most recently, of* White King and Red Queen: How the Cold War Was Fought on the Chessboard.

a "liberal with a difference"—a liberal, that is, who takes seriously humanity's capacity to inspire despair. Such liberals are nowadays invariably seen as conservatives by the socialists who have usurped the term "liberal." But like her late husband Irving Kristol, she is also a "conservative with a difference"—a conservative, that is, who takes seriously humanity's capacity to inspire hope.

This brings us to philosemitism, Gertrude Himmelfarb's new subject. In a sense a sequel to her last work, a study of George Eliot's seminal proto-Zionist novel *Daniel Deronda*, *The People of the Book* is an attempt to explain the background to the love affair between the English and the Jewish peoples.

At first sight, such a subject looks like nothing so much as a triumph of the Jewish virtue of hope over the bitter experience of English anti-Semitism. In the dismal chronicles of medieval persecution, the English distinguished themselves by their infamy: The first recorded instance of the blood libel occurred in Norwich in 1144, and in 1290 Edward I became the first king to expel the Jews. It is equally true, as Anthony Julius has recently documented in his history of anti-Semitism in England, that three of the most important figures in the canon of English literature—Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens—created archetypal Jewish villains whose influence has resonated ever since. John Gross wrote an entire book about the figure of Shylock, for example, whose very eloquence has perpetuated the anti-Semitic myth he embodies.

Yet Himmelfarb is right to remind us that there is another aspect of this story that has hitherto received much less attention. Between the 17th and the 19th centuries, a whole series of what Lionel Trilling called "counter-myths" emerged in English culture. From the heroic Hebraism that identified with ancient Israel to the idealization of modern Jews in mundane fact and monumental fiction, philosemitism became a formidable force in the public and intellectual life of England—a force that ultimately contributed to the Balfour Declaration and the creation of the state of Israel.

Gertrude Himmelfarb tells this story without exaggerating the virtues of her dramatis personae, though with all her customary economy and elegance. She knows exactly how to capture their nuances, inconsistencies, and ambivalences. An abstract affection for Jews did not invariably translate into a predilection for them in practice. The epic poetry of John Milton, for example, did much to foster English Hebraism; but the poet himself could not abide the living Jews readmitted by Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell (whose Latin secretary he was). Himmelfarb notes a delicious irony: Milton insisted that the Jewish diaspora was God's punishment for the sin of usury, yet he owed his own prosperity to his father, who had been a moneylender.

Cromwell's toleration of the Jews, which was adopted by the restored monarchy of Stuart, Orange, and Hanover too, had been implicit rather than explicit. By 1753, the case for religious toleration had been so well established, largely thanks to John Locke, that the Whig government introduced a bill to permit the naturalization of foreign-born Jews. This "Jew Bill" was passed without opposition by both houses of Parliament. Almost immediately, however, Tory clergy began agitating against it, a general election polarized the country on the issue, and the act was repealed.

Himmelfarb observes that despite the intrusion of (in Horace Walpole's words) "the grossest and most vulgar prejudices," there was no pogrom of the kind Roman Catholics suffered in the Gordon Riots a few decades later. Though the incident coined a fateful phrase, "the Jewish question," what would later become known as anti-Semitism did not become a ubiquitous fact of political life in England, as it did in Germany and France. Jews, whether natives or immigrants, were no worse off than others who refused to conform to the established church, though it took rather longer for Jewish disabilities to be removed.

Emancipation, however, took another century and was not without further ironies. Himmelfarb focuses on the debate in 1847 over a bill to lift the last barrier to political equality: the ban on Jews sitting as members of Parliament. Lionel de Rothschild, elected for the City of London but barred from taking his seat by his refusal to take a Christian oath, became the occasion for a bill that was fiercely contested by the most eminent Victorian statesmen of all: Gladstone and Disraeli. Both supported the bill, but for contrasting reasons. Gladstone, still on the journey that would take him from High Tory to Grand Old Man of Liberalism, conceded Jews a place in the Mother of Parliaments only because their exclusion would be an anomaly after other non-Anglicans were included. Disraeli outraged many by asking how a Christian assembly could exclude those "who are of the religion in the bosom of which my Lord and Saviour was born," and that consequently "every gentleman here does profess the Jewish religion."

Though baptized, Disraeli was as proud to be a Jew as he was to be an Englishman. Many gentiles, such as the social reformers Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, revered the Jewish people, too, but found it hard to accept them as ordinary fellow citizens, or to grasp that subjective philosemitism was hypocritical if it tolerated objectively anti-Jewish laws. Only in 1858 did Parliament accept Rothschild as a member. But Himmelfarb points out that, in France, where emancipation came earlier, it was on the condition that Jews became French individuals, nothing more or less, by renouncing their Jewish identity. Rothschild, by contrast, entered the Commons not only as a man but as a Jew.

Himmelfarb has an illuminating excursus on the philosemitic influence in the English novel, from Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* and Disraeli's *Tancred* to Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* and John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. The inclusion of the last two authors is at first glance surprising, for both were quite capable of exploiting anti-Semitic stereotypes in their fiction. Himmelfarb explains Trollope's prejudice by his envy of Disraeli, whom he lampooned in *Phineas Finn*. Trollope, however, redeemed himself for his Jewish villains such as Melmotte and Sidonia by creating Jewish characters who are among the most likable in his

entire oeuvre: from Ezekiel Breghert to Madame Max Goesler, whom the late Shirley Letwin eulogized as "the most perfect gentleman."

Buchan has one of his characters advance a vicious conspiracy theory about the "little white-faced Jew in a bath-chair with an eye like a rattlesnake . . . who is ruling the world." But the real conspirators, it transpires, are not Jews but Germans. Though his novels are peppered with passages that today sound racist even when they depict Jews favorably, Himmelfarb gives Buchan his due as a passionate Zionist who saw the Balfour Declaration as "reparation for the centuries of cruelty and wrong."

The People of the Book, indeed, concludes with a consideration of the genesis and consequences for the Jewish people of that cryptic yet momentous gesture, and above all of the two men who rose to the occasion in the supreme tests of the world wars: David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. Both war leaders identified strongly with the Jews, whose history they knew better than their own, and whose destiny mattered no less. Churchill, whose "wilderness years" made sense in the light of Mosaic precedent, was especially prophetic in his insistence that the Jews were in Palestine "as of right and not in sufferance." This was one of many things in the 1920s and 1930s on which Churchill was right when most other Englishmen were wrong.

Whether the tradition evoked in this luminous little volume is now defunct, Gertrude Himmelfarb does not say. I should like to think that English philosemitism is alive and kicking, for it is more needed today than ever. We may lack a figure of Churchill's stature, but we do have Michael Gove, our proudly philosemitic and pro-Zionist education secretary; Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher are still with us. All would heartily affirm Churchill's words to Eisenhower on the eve of the Suez crisis, vainly urging the president not to abandon Israel in its hour of need:

> I am, of course, a Zionist, and have been ever since the Balfour Declaration. I think it is a wonderful thing that this tiny colony of Jews should have become a refuge to their compatriots in all the lands where they were persecuted so cruelly, and at the same time established themselves as the most effective fighting force in the area.

The irony is that such sentiments, which fell on deaf ears in 1956, are now uncontroversial in America, yet find few echoes in the land of Churchill's birth. ♦

B&A

The Mighty Dollar

A wealth of worthless observations about money.

BY **P.J. O'ROURKE**

Dr. James Roberts, professor of marketing at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, exhorts us to curtail our consumer spending. Here's a place to start. Don't buy this book.

Let's be charitable and presume that Roberts's aversion to what's named in his title is the result of living in Waco where, in the local shops, one is rarely tempted by gleaming Patek Philippe wristwatches, glossy custom-made Lobb shoes, lustrous Hermès neckties, and baubles from Cartier for the significant other. Or let's not be charitable and call the dim tome what it is: partly a left-wing screed, partly a self-help manual for compulsive shoppers, and mostly an idiocy.

Shiny Objects
Why We Spend Money We Don't Have in Search of Happiness We Can't Buy
by James A. Roberts
HarperOne, 368 pp., $25.99

Against Thrift
Why Consumer Culture Is Good for the Economy, the Environment, and Your Soul
by James Livingston
Basic Books, 288 pp., $27.50

I will concede that Roberts delivers his buncombe with great economy. It's all there in the first paragraph of the first chapter: "Americans currently spend $48 billion a year on their pets. That's . . . more than the gross domestic product (GDP) of all but sixty-four countries." Upon which fallacious comparison and self-sanctimony my bird dog lifts his leg.

The number of countries in the world (depending on who's counting what Palestinians where and so forth) is about 195. Thus there are 131 countries not economically productive enough to breed, train, groom, and feed a decent pointer. This is why foreigners are such lousy shots, allowing us to win wars; but I digress. I've been to some 50 of those countries and, believe me, my Kibbles 'n Bits bill is not what's the matter in Somalia.

Forty-eight billion dollars sounds extravagant, but if American pet spending is divided by Americans, the individual outlay on wagging tails, soothing purrs, and the happy squeak of gerbil wheels is an unappalling $153.85. In and around my house we have three dogs, half a dozen chickens (who, never eaten and rarely laying, must be counted as animal companions), and a fluctuating number of tropical fish, hamsters, and mice. (Admittedly, some of the mice are free-range.) My Boston Bull Terrier tried to eat a porcupine yesterday. If the vet bill is less than $153.85, I will assume my veterinarian just gave up after getting bitten by the bull terrier even more times than I did last night while I was trying to yank quills with a pair of pliers. Furthermore, I'll bet the Vietnamese spend more per dog than we Americans do, if tips to the waitress are included.

Since we aren't supposed to be buying rhinestone collars for our guinea pigs, what *are* we supposed to be doing?

P.J. O'Rourke, a Weekly Standard *contributing editor, is the author, most recently, of* Holidays in Heck.

Roberts says, "spending time with loved ones, reaching our full potential as human beings, and participating actively in our world." I'm 64. I've reached my full potential as a human being. It isn't pretty. As for spending time with loved ones, Roberts is welcome to come spend time with three of mine, ages 13 and under, especially when they have to be pried away from the Wii for dinner, want to be escorted to a Justin Bieber concert, or desire a cheering section for soccer games in the pouring rain. And I don't know how to play the bongo drums so I can't participate actively in our world by Occupying Wall Street. I'm going to the mall.

Roberts abhors a life of luxury. "The emergence of a worldwide consumer culture," he says, "has potentially severe consequences for everyone." Such as too many nice places to live, work, and shop and not enough room for the birds that mess on our cars and the raccoons that get into our garbage cans. He is aghast that we buy things "for non-utilitarian reasons such as status, envy, provocation, and pleasure-seeking." Somebody tweet Thorstein Veblen. And Roberts is very opposed to "materialism," which he defines as "a mind-set, an interest in getting and spending, the worship of things, the overriding importance that someone attaches to worldly possessions."

It's the old commie conundrum: If you practice economic leveling, the economy gets leveled. So you wind up with a materialist philosophy that's necessarily antimaterialist. The pinkos have never figured out that their politics are a kind of Vatican City chapter of Planned Parenthood.

Roberts excuses it with a pair of graphs. One shows a happy rise in U.S. per capita GDP from 1972 to the present. The other shows polling data indicating that the number of Americans who say they are "pretty happy" has held steady at about 50 percent over the same period. Well, yeah. Anybody who is "pretty happy" more than half the time is on better drugs than I am. (And come to think of it, the drugs *were* better in 1972.) Yet think what that happiness graph would look like if per capita GDP had been in steep decline since Richard Nixon's first term.

Further bungling numbers, Roberts cites UCLA's annual survey of freshmen. In 2010, 77 percent of the college kids said they thought it was important to be "very well-off financially." In 1980, 62.5 percent thought so. And in 1966, 42 percent were of that opinion. To Roberts, this proves that everything in America is getting worse; to a parent, this proves that kids are getting smarter.

Roberts is no kid. What his Ph.D. is in, I don't know; but if it's economics, he skipped some required reading: *The Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter 8, "Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production."

The argument of *Shiny Objects* (such as it is) is complete by page 12. The text in the remaining 300-odd pages alternates between the stupidly obvious—"The 1920s were a time of great upheaval"—and the stupid—"... the federal budget rose from $9 billion in 1939 to $100 billion by 1945, and much of this money fell into the hands of the American people." Pray tell, from whose hands had it risen? There is also much larding with quizzes you can take to find out if you're a naughty spendthrift with crap values. (You are.)

Roberts concludes with an exercise in secular piety patronizing enough to cause any feeling undergraduate to stink-bomb the social science department:

> Psychologist Clayton Tucker-Ladd has asked hundreds of college students the question below, which I would now like to ask you:
>
> *Is it morally just and fair to be free to have plenty to eat, nice clothes, luxuries, time and money for fun, TV, and comforts, while others in the world are starving, uneducated, and in poor health?*
>
> CIRCLE ONE Yes No

Oh, chain me to the garden gate, dump the fridge, the breadbox, and the canned goods down at the end of the driveway, lay out my Casual Friday duds, pour the Chivas in the sink, throw my cash to the winds, waste my waking hours in idle gloom, rip the satellite dish from the rooftop, put a pea under every mattress and everything will be okey-dokey for Zimbabweans.

It was, as you can well imagine, with glad relief that I turned to *Against Thrift* by James Livingston. "Less work, less thrift, more leisure, and more spending are the cures for what ails us," says Livingston. I'm all ears. Then, just two paragraphs later, comes, "... a redistribution of national income away from profits, which don't always get invested, toward wages, which almost always get spent." You're losing me, Jim. And a couple of sentences along, "... *higher profits almost never lead to more investment, more jobs, and more growth* [italics his] ... so cutting taxes on corporate profits is pointless at best and destructive at worst."

Forget you.

Against Thrift is ladled out of the same reeking pot of leftover, reheated socialist bean stew as *Shiny Objects*, though better written. Not that you'd want to read it: Begin with a glance and a groan at the phrase "alienated labor" on page xi of the introduction and go straight to the spectacularly predictable conclusion on page 210: "If we want to prevent another economic disaster, and to promise balanced, sustainable growth, we must create ... a more equal, more democratic America—by redistributing income and socializing investment." You'll miss a lot of erudition in between, but it only raises the question of why so much study of Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, and Keynes is needed to be plain wrong.

Livingston seems to be one of those people who actually read Herbert Marcuse while the rest of us were rolling joints and saying we had. (Ours was the wiser choice.) He also read Georges Bataille, the French sometime-poet, surrealist, and pornographer, admirer of de Sade, author of an essay on mysticism in economics, and philosopher so flaky that he was considered a flake by Jean-Paul Sartre. There's a coda at the end of *Against Thrift* about how reading Bataille convinced Livingston, a vegetarian, to eat a hamburger.

I don't know what this has to do with economics, but, then again, I don't know what anything in either of these books has to do with economics. They do, however, send a strong message. But the message is not to the reading public, government policymakers, or financial titans. The message is to the authors.

Shut up. ♦

B&A

Classical Gas

Seeing things in the Hellenic world that aren't there.

BY JAMES SEATON

Until quite recently it was generally believed in the West that an acquaintance with the ancient classics was the mark of a civilized individual, one whose personal views were grounded in the moral and cultural norms of a long tradition.

Yet if the Homeric epics, for example, have sometimes been cited as a source of authoritative guidelines, they have also been an inspiration for those wanting to escape from the guidelines of their culture. Alexander Pope urged the young writer to make *Homer's works your study and delight / Read them by day, and meditate by night*. Doing so the student would learn "for ancient rules a just esteem." As a leader of the English Romantics, Wordsworth rejected the neoclassical rules, but he found something in the ancient world that was for him far more important. The young Wordsworth had moments when he wished he were "A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn" if that would allow him to *Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn*; / *Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea*; / *Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn*. Romantics like Wordsworth envied the ancient Greeks because the ancients, untroubled by modern science, seemed to live surrounded by gods, while in the modern world the saving ignorance of the ancients was possible only for children.

Karl Marx turned to the Romantic view of the Greeks as children when searching for an explanation for the continuing appeal of ancient Greek art and literature. The Greeks, Marx asserted, were the sort of children that give childhood a good name, "normal children." The seemingly permanent attraction of Greek art and literature, difficult to understand from a Marxist perspective, thus became understandable. After all, Marx asked, "Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm?"

All Things Shining
Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age
by Hubert Dreyfus & Sean Dorrance Kelly
Free Press, 272 pp., $26

Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly, the former a professor in the department of philosophy at Berkeley and the latter the chairman of the department of philosophy at Harvard, don't actually refer to the ancient Greeks as children, but they do claim the ancient Greeks lived in a state of wonderment that is impossible today, at least for grownups. The Greeks of Homer's time, according to Dreyfus and Kelly, "held the world in constant wonder" while living "intense and meaningful lives." Theirs was a world filled with "worldly wonders that people in the Homeric Age saw everywhere."

What accounts for their ability to live in a state of "constant wonder" despite war, disease, and natural disaster? According to Dreyfus and Kelly, it is because the ancient Greeks were "happy polytheists" living in "a world of sacred, shining things" that we would do well to recover. Our first step, it appears, would be to overcome the "ancient temptation to monotheism." Monotheism used to be considered an advance over Homer's polytheism, not least because the notion of one God over all human beings could be taken to mean that all human beings were equal before God and thus deserve to be treated according to the same moral rules. Dreyfus and Kelly suggest, however, that Homeric polytheism fostered what they see as an even more important moral principle than such equality: diversity. They praise "the happy diversity that Homer allowed," asserting that "Homer's gods were a diverse but tolerant family." We would be much better off, they suggest, if we would only replace judgmental Christian monotheism with "the happy diversity of Homer's Olympian gods."

But a glance at the *Odyssey*, and especially the *Iliad* (which they almost entirely ignore), suggests that the Dreyfus-Kelly portrait of the Homeric world is so sanitized as to be egregiously misleading. The authors put great stress on the way Homer treats sexuality as exemplified by Helen's affair with Paris. While a monotheistic, more censorious morality might find Helen and Paris blameworthy, Homer's Greeks are above such pettiness: "It is true that running off with Paris caused the Trojan War. But that is not lamentable in Homer's world; it is just the way life is."

In support of their thesis, Dreyfus and Kelly pay special attention to Helen's after-dinner speech to Odysseus' son Telemachus and other guests of her and her husband Menelaus in the fourth chapter of the *Odyssey*. She "tells a sensational story" about how she "left Menelaus and their young child to run off with an irresistible houseguest named Paris." For Dreyfus and Kelly, "Perhaps the most shocking feature of the scene . . . is that nobody at the party is shocked." They clinch their point about Homer's refusal to assign blame by quoting from Fitzgerald's translation her husband's nonjudgmental comment: "An excellent tale, my dear, and most becoming."

A look at the speech itself, however, reveals nothing shocking about the scene except the extent of Dreyfus and Kelly's misrepresentation. Helen, the text reveals, does not talk about leaving Menelaus and running away with Paris at all. Instead, she tells a story calculated to please both Telemachus and her husband. Odysseus, she relates, once during the war sneaked into Troy in disguise.

James Seaton, professor of English at Michigan State, is the editor of George Santayana's The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy *and* Character and Opinion in the United States.

She helped him, kept his secret, and was delighted when he got back to his camp after killing many Trojans. Helen makes it clear that her sympathies were with the Akhaians, not the Trojans:

> *The Trojan women raised a cry—but my heart*
> *sang—for I had come round, long before,*
> *to dreams of sailing home, and I repented the mad day Aphrodite*
> *drew me away from my dear fatherland,*
> *forsaking all—child, bridal bed, and husband—*
> *a man without defect in form or mind.*

There is nothing shocking, after all, about Menelaus praising a speech that ends by praising him so highly. Notice as well that Helen "repented," an emotion that Dreyfus and Kelly claim was unknown in Homer's world.

Helen's description of her feelings in the *Odyssey* speech is confirmed by her presentation in the *Iliad*. Speaking to a sympathetic Hektor (Fitzgerald's spelling) in the sixth book of that epic, she calls herself "a whore, a nightmare of a woman" (Fitzgerald's translation). She appreciates Hektor's refusal to condemn her even though *You are the one afflicted most / by harlotry in me and by his* [Paris's] *madness*. Apparently not only Helen herself but most of the Trojans are not willing to write off Helen's role in causing the war as an illustration of "just the way life is." In the last chapter of the *Iliad* Helen mourns that, with Hektor dead, *no one is left who will befriend me, none; / they all shudder at me*.

Dreyfus and Kelly compare Helen to Achilles: "What makes Helen great in Homer's world is her ability to live a life that is constantly responsive to golden Aphrodite. . . . Likewise, Achilles had a special kind of receptivity to Ares and his warlike way of life." But Achilles is not linked with Ares anywhere in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. Ares supports the Trojans, not Achilles and the Akhaians. Ares, furthermore, is presented throughout Homer as an unpleasant character whom the other gods despise. In Book Five of the *Iliad*, Zeus warns Ares, *Do not come whining here, you two-faced brute, / most hateful to me of all the Olympians*.

Those inclined to accept Dreyfus and Kelly's portrait of the Homeric gods as "a diverse but tolerant family" might turn to Book Twenty of the *Iliad*, in which Ares, angry at Athena for injuring him earlier, throws a "giant spear" at Athena. Unhurt, Athena hurls a "black, jagged, massive" boulder at Ares, hitting him in the neck. She lets him know who is boss: *Fool, / you've never learned how far superior / I'm glad to say I am*. When Aphrodite tries to help Ares get away, Athena *from the side struck Aphrodite's breast / with doubled fist, so that her knees went slack, / her heart faint, and together she and Ares / lay in a swoon upon the earth*.

If Dreyfus and Kelly largely ignore the *Iliad*, at least they don't argue that Homer shouldn't have written it. They are not so restrained with Dante. In their view, he should have stopped when he finished the *Purgatorio* and not bothered writing the *Paradiso* at all: "If Dante had stopped with Beatrice at the top of Purgatory, therefore, he'd have described a completely livable world that could bring joy and meaning into his life. . . . Unfortunately, that is not the path Dante takes." If Dante had only realized, first, that Christianity is best understood as a mood, "Jesus' contagious new mood of agape love," and second, that Aquinas's attempt to use Aristotelian reason in articulating a Christian theology "turns out to have been a bad idea," we would have been spared a poem that wrongly privileges the love of God over the love of a human being. Dreyfus and Kelly cannot accept that in the *Paradiso* Dante's "individual will along with his love of Beatrice and his political commitments have been overwhelmed by the bliss of contemplating God."

Dreyfus and Kelly's criticism of Dante because "Beatrice herself is not the ultimate object of love in Dante's final picture" recalls the Romantic objection to Dante's placing of the lovers Paolo and Francesca in the second circle of Hell. Isn't the passionate love of a real person more meaningful than the love of some abstract entity that, to tell the truth, doesn't actually exist anyway? George Santayana's reply to the Romantics in 1910 would seem to answer Dreyfus and Kelly today:

> There is a great difference between the apprentices in life and the masters. . . . Dante was one of the masters. He could feel the fresh promptings of life as keenly as any youngster, or any romanticist; but he had lived these things through, he knew the possible and the impossible issue of them; he saw their relation to the rest of human nature, and to the ideal of an ultimate happiness and peace. He had discovered the necessity of saying continually to oneself: Thou shalt renounce.

Dreyfus and Kelly, uninterested in renouncing, promise that the adaptation of their updated version of polytheism will result in a world even more splendid than Homer's must have been: "The polytheism that gets all these ways in balance will be more varied and more vibrant than anything Homer ever knew. This contemporary Polytheistic world will be a wonderful world of sacred shining things."

There is only one catch: Having rejected the universal moral rules that go with monotheism, or any conception of natural law, we are left without any principles to distinguish between charismatic leaders who can bring us closer to the "shining things" and charismatic leaders whose glitter might bring us to catastrophe.

According to Dreyfus and Kelly, "in place of the Kantian courage to resist the madness of crowds, we need the courage to leap in and experience it." Since there is no way to distinguish on the basis of principle, all one can do (according to Dreyfus and Kelly) is "leap in" and hope that the charismatic figure is more like Martin Luther King than Adolf Hitler:

> Only by having been taken over by the fanatical leader's totalizing rhetoric, and experienced the dangerous and devastating consequences it has, does one learn to discriminate between leaders worth following and those upon whom one must turn one's back.

It would be prudent to look for ways to learn to "discriminate between leaders" before having to experience "dangerous and devastating consequences," but doing so would probably involve returning to universal moral standards derived from monotheism, what Dreyfus and Kelly dismissively refer to as "objective, context-independent principles." ♦

B&A

Closely Watched Trains

A railway station in 1930s Paris, and cinema magic.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Hugo
Directed by Martin Scorsese

How many rhapsodic adjectives can be summoned up to describe *Hugo*, Martin Scorsese's new movie in 3D? Well, *perfect* comes to mind, which is saying something about a film that runs two hours and seven minutes. As I think back over it, there's not a second that seems out of place, not a performance I would trade, not a bum note in the score, not a shot wrongly conceived.

So does *magical*—an overused and meaningless word, for the most part, except where *Hugo* is concerned it is the *mot juste* for a story about an orphaned boy who literally lives within the walls of a Paris train station in the 1930s and keeps its many clocks ticking. The train station and Paris are living, breathing characters in *Hugo*, as vivid in their way as the grave title character (played by an intense, beautiful, and raw 13-year-old Londoner named Asa Butterfield) and the mean, sad old proprietor of the station's toy shop (Ben Kingsley, who infuses every moment of screen time with deep and powerful feeling) from whom Hugo steals strange little bits of machinery for a mysterious purpose.

Seeing the city of light dance and blaze and sing in the 1930s from Scorsese's perspective is yet another indication of just how lame and cliché-riddled Woody Allen's depiction of it in the 1920s is in the inexplicably popular *Midnight in Paris*. Scorsese's movie is what Allen's is not: *enchanting*. Unlike *Midnight in Paris*, there are no supernatural elements, but *Hugo* does not take place in the real world. The movie is, in part, about the development of the motion picture as an art form, and it is very much in the manner of the early "dream films" in which time bends and skips and every image is both real and unreal at the same time. The mood is heightened, and there is a sense that anything and everything could happen.

Chloë Grace Moretz, Asa Butterfield

Anything and everything does happen to Hugo, very little of it good, and much of it *heartrending*. Solitary and isolated, Hugo must be a shadow inside the station because he is fearful of being captured by the local constable (Sacha Baron Cohen, in a yeasty comic performance that suggests yet again he may be the second coming of Peter Sellers) and sent to an orphanage.

As a result, Hugo is silent and watchful, displaying the intent gaze of James Stewart stuck with his broken leg staring out that rear window in the indelible 1954 film of the same name. Scorsese was entirely aware of this homage to Alfred Hitchcock; I only thought of it because he wanted me to. Besotted with movies as he and the title character both are, Scorsese fills *Hugo* with references to silent comedies (Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last*), early French talkies (René Clair's gorgeous *Under the Roofs of Paris*, Jean Renoir's *Boudu Saved from Drowning*), great train-station pictures (Vincente Minnelli's *The Clock*, Billy Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon*, David Lean's *Brief Encounter*). These references are extras, like little enhancements on a DVD for the cinematically obsessed. If you don't get them, *Hugo* works just as well.

Transporting: That is the adjective of all adjectives here. Scorsese, working with screenwriter John Logan from an award-winning 2007 children's novel by the illustrator Brian Selznick, manages the stunning feat of depositing us directly inside a storybook and keeping us there throughout. And the spectacular use of 3D—easily the most imaginative deployment of this problematic technology I've ever seen—has the effect of making it seem almost as though you're inside a pop-up book. Scorsese even succeeds in using the three-dimensional trickery to create genuinely emotional moments. Near the end, there is a long shot of Ben Kingsley speaking about the title character; as he speaks, Kingsley's face comes toward you from the screen, his voice hushed and full of emotion, and it is as though he is whispering a profound secret in your ear.

Hugo is an expensive, highly stylized, long, elaborate, and complicated children's movie, and Hollywood history is littered with the corpses of comparably overproduced fare derived from beloved children's literature. The miracle here is that Scorsese and Logan manage to maintain the movie's magical, enchanting, heartrending, transporting spirit from the first moment to the last. It is the greatest achievement of Scorsese's career, and one of the high-water marks of American cinema. ♦

JAAP BUITENDIJK / GK FILMS

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

"Obama's toughest critic: Obama"
—Politico headline, November 27, 2011

December 4, 2011

Dear Diary,

I CANNOT believe I just did that. Ugh! Stupid Barry! Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! I just want to lock myself in the Oval Office and never come out!

Ok . . . calm down . . . remember what Joe always says: Don't take yourself too seriously. Yeah, of course HE says that. He's the VICE president. Nobody cares what he does. I'm, like, the PRESIDENT president. And when Angela Merkel asks the PRESIDENT president to back her plan to save the eurozone, he does NOT say: "Like, yeah, totally." What was I thinking? TOTALLY? What am I, in ninth grade? Why didn't I just say, "Totes magotes, A-Merk!" FML.

No, you know what? It's not my fault. It's just, it's just those Congressional Republicans. They've got me all messed up. I'm just so worried about what they're doing to America — of course I can't focus! They, they twist what I say around, they lie to the American people, they don't really care about them, not the way I do. I mean, what if I don't win next year? How will I save the American people from the upcoming worst economic crisis since the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression? We're just starting to recover from that last one. (I'm pretty sure we really are now . . .) And if Mitt or Newt wins the presidency, well, then, God — no, Barry, no, stop it! Resist the urge to blame others. Remember, you are the PRESIDENT president. You are in charge. You have to be better, way better than they are. More honest, more caring, more humble. The man you know, deep down, you really are. So let's just take a deep breath, remember Grant Park, and say it one more time: You are the you you've been waiting for.

Phew. Ok. Everything's ok.

Thanks, Diary. Don't know where I'd be without you. Sometimes I just need someone to listen. Michelle certainly doesn't. She's not the nic— Oh, speak of the devil! Gotta go. Wonder what I did THIS time, LOL!

P.S. Shot 85 at Congressional yesterday! SOME things are looking up!