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GEORGE WILL AT BAT
ANDREW FERGUSON

Inequality in the 21st Century

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL on Thomas Piketty

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COVER BY JORI BOLTON

As the *Times* Turns

Far be it from The Scrapbook to know why Jill Abramson was fired, after three short years, as executive editor of the *New York Times*. Or to care why she was fired.

Thus far, there are two explanations for her abrupt dismissal. The first—that she had tried to hire a co-deputy editor without consulting her existing deputy editor—is the sort of bureaucratic tempest that means nothing to anyone outside the *Times* newsroom. But the second—that she had been complaining about her $500,000-plus annual salary—merely confirms the existence of the bubble where celebrity journalists reside. If, at such princely rates, Jill Abramson becomes a martyr in the movement for pay equity, the estrangement between mainstream journalism and ordinary American life will be nearly complete.

Which is too bad. Yet the Abramson Affair also demonstrates the extent to which institutions such as the *New York Times* seem to matter less and less in journalism. A quick survey of the "reporting" about Jill Abramson's firing turns up speculative essays by journalists who cover journalism interviewing one another about how the fate of one journalist will affect other journalists. If this variety of incestuous prose bores the large majority of Americans who are not journalists, The Scrapbook would not be surprised.

What does surprise The Scrapbook, however, is the infinite patience of the Sulzberger clan with the current *Times* publisher and chairman, Arthur O. "Pinch" Sulzberger Jr., in charge since 1997. The world of publishing and, especially, newspapers has undergone a revolution since the rise of the Internet, and the New York Times Company has been caught consistently flat-footed. Not only has Pinch presided over a series of financial and strategic disasters since inheriting the mantle from his father, Arthur O. "Punch" Sulzberger Sr., but his revolving-door sequence of executive editors reminds The Scrapbook of a volatile professional sports team owner.

From top left: Lelyveld, Raines, Keller, Abramson, Baquet

Indeed, The Scrapbook detects a pattern. In 1997, when Sulzberger became publisher, the executive editor was Joseph Lelyveld, a one-time foreign correspondent regarded as a Nice Guy. Lelyveld was succeeded by the tempestuous Howell Raines (2001), who self-destructed after two years and was replaced by Bill Keller (2003), another newsroom Nice Guy. Then came Jill Abramson (2011), whose primary claim to fame had been a hostile biography of Justice Clarence Thomas, coauthored with a *New Yorker* writer, and a famously rude, brusque, and overbearing manner. Now that Abramson has fallen, she has been replaced by one Dean Baquet, yet another newsroom Nice Guy of no particular distinction.

This curious good cop/bad cop routine has not served the *Times* well, and might even have contributed to its diminishing influence. Moreover, if the Nice Guy/SOB tradition holds, it can only mean one thing: Once Dean Baquet falters, in two or three years, his obvious successor would have to be . . . Paul Krugman. ♦

Play Ball

There was a lot of hullabaloo last week over Michael Sam, who, after being drafted in a late round by the St. Louis Rams, is poised to become the NFL's first openly gay football player. Sam was the SEC defensive player of the year, so a chance to play in the NFL seems well merited, regardless of his sexual orientation. Some groused that Sam was picked low in the draft because of discrimination, but the fact is that Sam made a poor showing at the league's scouting combine.

The Scrapbook wishes Sam all the best in his professional career. However, we were hoping, probably foolishly, that the drama surrounding Sam would be contained on the field. That's not going to happen. Sam has already signed a contract to do a reality TV show on OWN—the Oprah Winfrey Network. The average NFL career is nasty, brutish, and short, so we can understand a player grabbing

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

cash where he can. Still, we hope Sam can go out and prove his own abilities rather than get caught up answering detractors or trying to determine his overall significance to the sport.

Already we're seeing signs Sam is causing consternation in the league. After Sam was drafted, he kissed his boyfriend on television. Miami defensive back Don Jones tweeted that the sight was "horrible," and so he's now being shipped off to sensitivity training, which strikes us as overkill. We understand that this kind of sanction is not remotely a First Amendment issue. Jones is being paid a lot of money by his team, and the way the Dolphins wish to present themselves publicly is tied to his paycheck. But there is a big difference between free speech as a legal issue, and a culture in which people are free to speak their mind. Many people pushing the tolerance agenda do not seem to know the difference.

Sadly, writers at the *Washington Post* don't even know the actual meaning of the word tolerance. Appearing on MSNBC—where else?—columnist Jonathan Capehart had this to say about Sam's critics:

> Tolerance, no, is not—it should not be a two-way street. It's a one-way street. You cannot say to someone that who you are is wrong, an abomination, is horrible, get a room, and all of those other things that people said about Michael Sam, and not be forced—not forced, but not be made to understand that what you're saying and what you're doing is wrong.

Is it amusing or depressing that Capehart doesn't even realize he's arguing for coercion of people whose opinions are incorrect? Once Capehart lets the mask slip, his halfhearted attempt to back up and argue that being "made to understand" is somehow more benign than being "forced" doesn't really help.

Being "made to understand" whatever rich NFL owners and liberal columnists think is correct is not a project that will end well. Before our culture of free speech is completely ablated, we only hope that people can somehow be made to care. ♦

NOW YOU KNOW HOW WE FEEL.

Everybody Loses

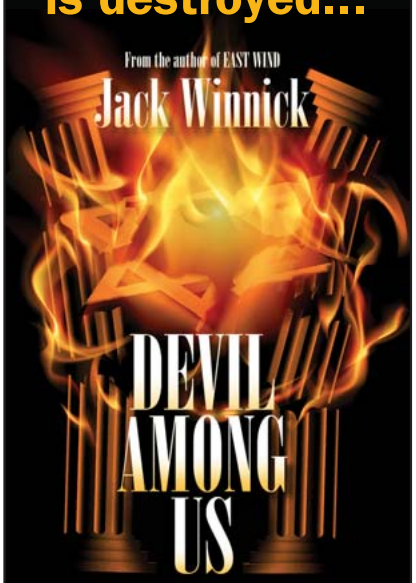
New York enjoyed a mid-season subway series last week with four games between the Mets and Yankees. Seeing the two teams play every year instead of once in a generation is one of the upsides of Major League Baseball's recent experiment in inter-league play. But for the hometown TV audience, it means enduring grotesque public-service antismoking ads. New York State promotes nonsmoking by showing gory surgeries, rotting lungs, and a man struggling to breathe: "Dying from smoking is rarely quick . . . and never painless." Thus the tireless compassion of New York.

The ethics of using tax dollars to frighten people into changing their behavior can be debated. But The Scrapbook has a different objection: This same benevolent state also runs ads promoting its lottery with the slogan: "Hey, you never know."

Of course, you do know: State lotteries have about the same rate of return as wishing wells. Odds of winning the jackpot—1 in 258,890,850, according to the lottery's (.gov) website. Perhaps New York relies on its public school matriculants not knowing much math.

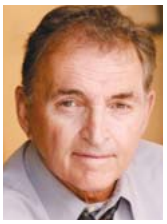
A different New York lottery

When a New York synagogue is destroyed...



The FBI and the Mossad are enlisted to smash an anti-Zionist plot in the United States. The team who foiled a Hezbollah scheme in the US, Lara Edmond and Uri Levin, take on the Muslim extremists again in an action-packed, international chase.

Praise for Jack Winnick's DEVIL AMONG US:



"Winnick's fine thriller displays his expert knowledge of the Middle East and his laudable skill as a storyteller."
-- **Kirkus Reviews**

"Jack Winnick has done it again with his second novel, the fast paced international thriller, "Devil Among Us," demonstrating his vast knowledge of Middle East history and politics, with an all-too plausible and scary scenario involving FBI agents, the Mossad, Christian Zionists, fundamentalists, oil tycoons, politicians against the backdrop of Arab-Muslim-based militants, which starts out with a shocking bombing of a New York synagogue on the High Holidays. Too real, just hope the bad guys don't get any ideas here."
-- **Lee Bender, Philadelphia Jewish Voice**

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campaign uses the slogan "Everybody Wins." One ad features kids singing to a man in a convenience store: "Thank you for being a friend. . . . Your heart is true. . . . Won't you stand up and take a bow?" He proved his heart was true by buying a lottery ticket, some of whose proceeds will go to help schoolchildren "just like them"—those smiling, angelic kids.

Yes, smoking is bad for you (as the ads remind us), and sometimes ruins lives. Well, the lottery, basically a tax on the poor, ruins lives, too. Watching the baseball scoreboard, we couldn't help but wonder about a different score: How many people did New York get to quit smoking versus how many did it encourage to start gambling? ♦

Commencement Update

Last week in these pages ("Unfree Speech"), editorializing on the shamefully canceled commencement addresses of Condoleezza Rice and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Philip Terzian noted, "Both are identifiably conservative, and therefore, so far as the left is concerned, *persona non grata*. . . . But as it broadens and proliferates, as this culture of bigotry takes root and wields power, such campus intolerance will become a problem for the left as well."

Our colleague's prediction struck The Scrapbook as a safe bet; little did we guess it would be vindicated within days. Christine Lagarde, the first woman to head the International Monetary Fund, withdrew from her planned appearance at Smith College, in the face of student protests against the IMF's supposed oppression of women in poor countries. Perhaps more tellingly, Robert Birgeneau, former chancellor at UC Berkeley, pulled out of his commencement speech at Haverford. Decidedly a man of the left, Birgeneau ran afoul of the thought police because on his watch, he allowed campus police to roust Berkeley students affiliated with the Occupy movement. They, in turn, were seeking a public apology and "reparations" from him. Verily, the revolution devours its children. ♦

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BPA WORLDWIDE

Strictly Ballroom

Like a lot of people, I used to hate dancing in public. But unlike most people, I have professional ballroom dancers for parents. When you regularly lose your father in the grocery store only to find him practicing waltz turns down the bread aisle, a fear of public dancing is not sustainable.

When I was very young, I loved to dance. "Life is a musical," my dad sometimes says, and I'm not sure how old I was before I realized that isn't actually the case. In our house, feet tapping under the dinner table usually meant someone was about to spring up to salsa in the middle of dessert.

I spent a lot of time at dance competitions, where I envied the glittering gowns and ran to the floor after each set to collect fallen sequins. I watched practically every Fred Astaire movie ever made. By the age of five or six I had most of the routines down by heart (at least my interpretations of them), and I would put the movies on and dutifully practice in front of the TV. My specialty was a tap routine from *Easter Parade*—Ann Miller's "Shakin' The Blues Away."

But eventually I started to notice that some aspects of my life weren't totally normal. My friends would be over playing and suddenly ask why my dad had been hovering over a bunch of coins spread across the table, muttering to himself and humming, for the past half-hour. Wasn't it obvious? He was choreographing a dance routine! The quarters were the men and the dimes were the women. What else would he be doing?

I also began to realize that I would never get to watch a dance scene in a movie only once through. As soon as the scene came on, my father would inevitably snatch up the remote and rewind the scene to the beginning, asking something like, "Were they using right turns or left turns? Come in here and see this!" My mother would emerge from the kitchen and offer her analysis: "I think they're doing International Style, aren't they?" Before long they'd be dancing around the dining room arguing about which way those turns went, and I might as well give up on the rest of the movie for the next hour. As a result, my family knows by heart the contra dances in the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*, the disco line dance in *Saturday Night Fever*, and most of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* routine.

MICHAEL SLOAN

Of all the epiphanies, the saddest was the shattering of my dream of becoming a dance critic. Already the aspiring journalist, I would sit at the edge of the studio floor and scribble detailed descriptions of my parents' students: "Good footwork, but terrible arm movement." "Awkward hips." "Legs look crooked." Once the students discovered what I was up to, my career was brought to a swift and bitter end.

Then came the harrowing days of middle school, when I first really rebelled against dancing. My parents, in a moment of weakness, had volunteered to teach a children's dance class at our church—obviously not realizing the exquisite diplomacy this would require. First there was the problem of having girls dance with boys, at an age when both like to pretend they don't get along. My parents quickly learned that any dances that involved kicking in your partner's general direction could easily devolve into all-out civil war.

It's also an age when showing enthusiasm in public is mortifying. My parents, deaf to my protests, would force me to get up at weddings and parties and teach line dances to the crowd. It got to the point where the first few bars of the "Cha Cha Slide" could send me into a panic.

Suspecting that I might not be destined for ballroom, my parents instead dragged me to Irish step dance lessons (think *Riverdance*). The first few times I performed, I made a thousand mistakes and grimaced the whole way through. "When you make a mistake," my mother scolded me, "just smile more. No one will ever notice." I now know that if a dancer is smiling really hard—or worse, laughing—there's a significant chance they've either completely forgotten what they're doing or they're yelling at their partner through their teeth.

It took a few years of lectures on turning my toes out and holding my shoulders back, but eventually it became natural again, loving to dance. These days you can find me merengue-ing my way through the produce section, or calling up my dad to ask him for some good dance scenes to watch. Now I only regret the years I spent being embarrassed instead of learning the family trade.

Although I still don't care for the "Cha Cha Slide."

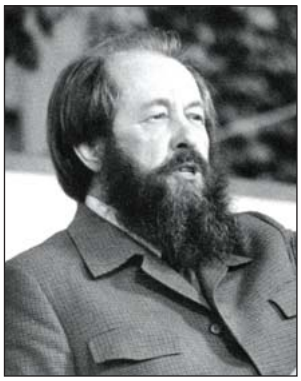
Maria Santos

the weekly Standard

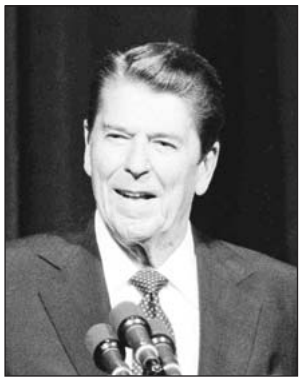
Profiles in Courage

Two emails recently showed up, one right after the other, in my inbox. The first was a mass mailing from Ron Paul (my inbox is a big tent!). Its subject line: "The IRS asked for a fight. How about a revolution?" The second was a review by Peter Berkowitz of the recently reissued book by Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism*.

One couldn't help but be struck by the contrast between these missives from different precincts of conservatism. Paul's spirited fundraising letter is, to say the least, a call to arms. Berkowitz's thoughtful essay, "A Conservative's Case for Moderation," argues that conservatives need to exercise "political moderation in its highest form." So, what's it to be for American conservatives today? The spirit of revolution, or the virtue of moderation?



Solzhenitsyn



Reagan

Our conservatism is generally closer to that of Berkowitz than that of Paul. We're sympathetic to Berkowitz's worry that, "Driven by the fear that every political compromise brings the country one step closer to the defeat of the idea of limited constitutional government at home and the ruinous erosion of America's ability to defend herself abroad, conservatives have taken to equating political moderation with capitulation." We second his warning against so simplistic an equation, and we appreciate his reminder that moderation really is, generally speaking, both a moral virtue and a political necessity.

Furthermore, as Berkowitz points out, moderation plays a crucial role "in satisfying the persistent need [for conservatives] to reach accommodations among themselves." More broadly, Berkowitz is right to remind conservatives of the need for an appreciation of "the complexities, trade-offs, and roads not taken involved in the American constitutional tradition's paradoxical commitment to conserving liberty."

But given the parlous state of the country, isn't there something to be said for a dollop—maybe a soupçon, or even just a drop—of immoderation? We look around at Obama's America. We see unmitigated weakness abroad, unprecedented nanny statism at home, and unimpeded assaults on free speech at universities. It's hard to avoid the sense that we're reaching a tipping point in the age-old struggle between decency and decadence, and between manly independence and importuning dependency.

And so we're alarmed. Being alarmed prompts action, but it doesn't of course lay out the right course of action. And any practical course of action—even if prompted by an urgent sense of alarm—needs to be informed by the virtue of moderation. The fact is moderation and incrementalism can at times serve the cause of boldness. And, conversely, boldness can help achieve a moderate outcome. Thomas Paine's fiery rhetoric helped secure the success of the "bold and doubtful" choice the Founders made "between submission and the sword" (Jefferson). That successful revolution ultimately produced that exemplar of thoughtful moderation, the American Constitution.

Given the challenges today's conservatism faces, a little touch of Paine isn't inappropriate. Or a touch, say, of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

This is the season of graduation speeches—and, alas, of graduation speeches canceled under political pressure. So it's a fitting time to recall Solzhenitsyn's great 1978 Harvard Class Day speech. (Would any major university invite him to give such a speech today?)

"A decline in courage," Solzhenitsyn told the assembled Harvardians, "may be the most striking feature which an outside observer notices in the West in our days. The Western world has lost its civil courage, both as a whole and separately, in each country, each government, each political party, and, of course, in the United Nations. Such a decline in courage is particularly noticeable among the ruling groups and the intellectual elite, causing an impression of loss of courage by the entire society. Of course, there are many courageous individuals, but they have no determining influence on public life."

Shortly after Solzhenitsyn spoke, Ronald Reagan devoted not one but two radio addresses to Solzhenitsyn's remarks. As one would expect, Reagan embraced Solzhenitsyn's critique of détente and of Jimmy Carter's foreign policy. But Reagan also had the courage to summarize some of Solzhenitsyn's broader observations on the dangers facing the West, going so far as to quote Solzhenitsyn on "the

IMAGES: AP PHOTO

calamity of a despiritualized humanistic consciousness."

Immoderate words, perhaps, and to be sure not the kind of words that occupied center stage in most of Reagan's speeches over the next couple of years. But also not words or thoughts that Reagan shied away from. Moderation is a virtue. So, as Solzhenitsyn and Reagan remind us, is courage.

—*William Kristol*

The Road to Repeal

It's a question often asked these days in conservative circles: *Do you really think Obamacare can be repealed?* Usually uttered behind closed doors, the question reveals both an un-Reagan-like pessimism and something of a disconnect from political reality.

Obamacare was profoundly unpopular when the Democrats went ahead and passed it anyway, daring the American people to make them pay. Voters responded by removing more Democrats from congressional seats—69 between the two chambers—than they had since before Ted Williams first donned a Red Sox uniform, in the spring of 1939. In 2012, the failed Republican presidential-selection process yielded a nominee who didn't make Obamacare a central issue and later called it "very attractive." He lost despite Obamacare's continuing unpopularity, which was indicated by exit polling. Now that Obamacare has finally gone into effect, its combined impact on Americans' health insurance, their health costs, and their personal freedom—not to mention the nation's solvency—has been far worse than its supporters advertised and possibly even worse than its opponents predicted. In response, President Obama has refused to implement the legislation as written, unlawfully altering parts of it as if he were a one-man Congress. Meanwhile, the 123 polls taken on Obamacare during his second term (according to *Real Clear Politics*) have *all* found it to be unpopular, with more than two-thirds of those polls—and 8 of the 10 most recent polls—showing approval deficits in the double-digits.

So—yes—Obamacare can, should, and must be repealed. America's future as a nation of liberty, prosperity, civil society, and laws depends on it. Indeed, given its unpopularity, the question should be: How can Obamacare *not* be repealed?

What's more, Republicans, as the party of limited government, not only have an obligation to repeal Obamacare but would benefit politically from doing so. More specifically, they would benefit politically from putting forward the alternative to Obamacare that is the key to achieving its full repeal.

Americans are eagerly awaiting such a conservative alternative. A recent poll by McLaughlin & Associates asked, "If the Republicans were to propose a new plan of their own to improve health care by repealing and replacing Obamacare would you be more or less likely to vote for a Republican for Congress?" By a margin of 31 percentage points (48 to 17 percent), likely voters said they'd be more, not less, inclined to back a Republican in that event. Moreover, that margin was at least 25 points among independents, Hispanics, those under 40, those who make less than $60,000, and women—groups the GOP is supposedly courting.

On the generic congressional ballot, the McLaughlin poll showed Republicans trailing Democrats by 2 points among likely voters—43 to 41 percent. But the poll also asked whether likely voters would be more apt to support for Congress a "Republican who wants to repeal and replace Obamacare" or a "Democrat who wants to keep and fix Obamacare." By a tally of 47 to 43 percent, respondents picked the Republican—a 6-point swing in the GOP's favor (from 2 points down to 4 points up). That swing from the generic congressional ballot was even greater among independents (13 points in the GOP's favor), Hispanics (7 points), those who make under $60,000 (7 points), and women (8 points).

Earlier McLaughlin polling, commissioned by the 2017 Project, is similarly revealing. When asked their "view of" Obamacare, only 32 percent of respondents said "it should remain the law of the land, either in its current form or in amended form"; 44 percent said they'd rather see it "repealed and replaced with a conservative alternative that aims to lower health costs and help people get insurance"; and 16 percent said they'd rather see it "repealed but not replaced with an alternative." Thus, with a conservative alternative in play, support for repeal beat opposition to repeal by almost two to one (60 to 32 percent).

Any such conservative alternative, however, will be judged in two key ways: What will it do for the poor and the near-poor who are almost the sole Obamacare beneficiaries, and will it be disruptive in any other way?

At great expense and at great disturbance to people's existing doctor-patient relationships, Obamacare has managed to increase the number of people with health insurance. True, many if not most of those people were merely dumped into a failing Medicaid program at taxpayer expense, and many if not most of the rest were coerced into buying mandatory Obamacare-compliant insurance against their will. Still, millions of additional people are now insured, millions more will become insured by January 2017, and Republicans are going to have to make clear that those millions would continue to have access to insurance under a conservative alternative. At the same time, such an alternative should not cause turmoil by chang-

ing the tax treatment of health insurance for most people in the employer-based insurance market. A conservative alternative that enables anyone who is insured to remain so and anyone who wants to become insured to become so, and which doesn't disrupt the typical American's employer-sponsored insurance, would be a political and policy winner, and would enable the repeal of one of the worst pieces of legislation in American history.

The 2017 Project has advanced one such alternative. It would not allow people to be kicked off, or charged higher premiums for, their existing insurance—including insurance bought through the Obamacare exchanges—because of preexisting conditions. It would end the unfairness in the tax code by offering refundable, non-income-based tax credits to anyone who buys insurance in the individual market. These tax credits ($1,200 for those under 35 years of age, $2,100 for those between 35 and 49, and $3,000 for those 50 and over—plus $900 per child) would enable people to buy insurance even if they supplemented the credit with no more than $15 a month of their own money, according to the federal government's own figures on the price of insurance on the eve of Obamacare. These credits would do so, that is, except in five liberal Northeastern states that have ruined their insurance markets through hyper-regulation—but people who live in those states could escape by buying across state lines. Those with expensive preexisting conditions would be able to get insurance through federally funded, state-run high-risk pools, from which no one could be turned away or charged a premium he or she couldn't afford. To further equalize the tax treatment of the employer and individual markets, the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored insurance would be capped at $20,000 for a family plan, far above the level at which the typical American would be affected at all. (Even those with premiums over $20,000 would still get the full tax break on that first $20,000.) Moreover, all of this would cost about half what Obamacare would cost—and much of that "cost" would come in the form of an overdue tax cut for middle-class Americans—saving taxpayers about $1 trillion over a decade.

Such an alternative would pave the way to full repeal. Without such an alternative, however, Obamacare will almost surely survive—for when one political party offers something and the other offers nothing, Americans almost always choose something. So the real question worth asking is not whether Obamacare *can* be repealed, but this: Are Republicans serious enough about repeal to advance a winning alternative that can make repeal a reality?

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

Celebrating the Center for International Private Enterprise

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
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Free enterprise may be a quintessentially American concept—but it's not an exclusively American one. Across the globe, enterprising individuals have the liberty to pursue opportunities and rewards based on their own efforts and initiative, not on their backgrounds. Their achievements support the world's leading and emerging economies. In other pockets of the world, however, exercising this kind of economic freedom isn't always encouraged, enabled, or in some cases even allowed.

For 30 years, the mission of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) has been to spread economic freedom in developing countries and parts of the world where market-based and democratic institutions haven't been able to flourish. CIPE, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was founded in 1983 on the principle that there is an intrinsic link between free enterprise and democracy. Individuals who have greater economic self-determination also wish to have strong voices in their governments. They have vested interests in the decisions made by political leaders and lawmakers.

Through programs focused on anticorruption and advocacy to entrepreneurship and corporate governance, and in partnerships with business associations and think tanks, CIPE is putting important tools in the hands of individuals, businesses, and communities.

It helps businesses better advocate for their own interests. Through support of more than 100 associations in Ghana, it has enabled farmers to strengthen their advocacy skills and begin to engage in dialogue with their local government officials. In Pakistan, CIPE worked to revise the Trade Organizations Ordinance in 2006 to allow women to independently form chambers of commerce. Today, there are eight women's chambers officially registered in the country.

Anticorruption has been another area of focus and progress. By working with the business community to reduce corruption in Russia, CIPE is improving the economic competitiveness of small firms and raising transparency in public governance institutions. In Yemen, it sponsored the documentary film *Destructive Beast* to illustrate corruption's damage to the economic, political, and social fabric of society. Yemeni government agencies are using the film to train officials on anticorruption efforts.

By improving governance in towns across the Philippines, CIPE is fostering democracy on the local level and creating a more solid foundation for economic development and entrepreneurship. And through civics courses in Afghanistan, it is helping the next generation of Afghan students understand democracy, entrepreneurship, and their benefits.

CIPE's work over the past 30 years has not only brightened the lives of individuals who are realizing new opportunities—it's been a stabilizing force in the world. And we're all better off for it. Learn more at CIPE.org.

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Some of the victims of a Boko Haram attack in northeastern Nigeria, February 2014

NEWSCOM

Al Qaeda's Nigeria Franchise

Why Hillary Clinton's State Department downplayed Boko Haram.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

When Hillary Clinton tweeted her support for the more than 200 Nigerian girls held by the extremist group Boko Haram, she probably did not expect that her tenure as secretary of state would soon be critically examined by the press through the lens of that very same mass kidnapping. But examined it has been.

Clinton's May 4 tweet, "Access to education is a basic right & an unconscionable reason to target innocent girls. We must stand up to terrorism," was accompanied by the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. Three days later, on May 7, Josh Rogin of the *Daily Beast* reported that Clinton's State Department "fought hard against placing the al Qaeda-linked militant group Boko Haram on its official list of foreign terrorist organizations for two years." Under the former first lady, Foggy Bottom resisted pressure from the Justice Department, the FBI, the CIA, and over a dozen senators and congressmen—all of whom wanted Boko Haram designated a terrorist organization, Rogin reported.

James Meek and Dana Hughes of ABC News followed up, reporting that State Department officials objected to the designation because they didn't believe that Boko Haram is a "transnational threat outside of Nigeria or a direct threat to the U.S. homeland." Eli Lake, Rogin's colleague at the *Daily Beast*, found that the debate over Boko Haram is indicative of wider disagreements over the extent of al Qaeda's international network. (Lake cited this author, but mainly others.) And Michael Hirsh of *Politico* echoed the theme, mentioning U.S. officials who said that the failure to designate Boko Haram a terrorist organization was "partly rooted in a larger effort by the Obama administration to narrowly define al Qaeda and deemphasize the rise of its new affiliates, especially in Africa." This also helps explain the Obama administration's failure to identify the enemy who struck on September 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya, Hirsh added.

Regardless of the extent of Boko Haram's ties to al Qaeda, the organization deserved to be designated during Clinton's tenure. Boko Haram has terrorized civilians, including Africans and Westerners, Christians and Muslims, throughout Nigeria. And whether or not Boko Haram is under the operational control of al Qaeda's top leaders, the group openly advocates al Qaeda-style jihad. But that is not the whole story. There is, in fact, evidence linking Boko Haram to al Qaeda's leadership.

While State Department officials were trying to ignore Boko Haram's al Qaeda ties in 2011 and 2012, other parts of the Obama administration were sitting on files showing that al Qaeda's senior leaders had been in direct contact with the group.

Hundreds of thousands of documents and files were recovered during the raid on Osama bin Laden's safe house in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in early May 2011. The Obama administration has released only 17 of them, plus a handful of videos, to the public. According to U.S. intelligence officials, some of the files that remain in the administration's possession catalog al Qaeda's dealings with the ultraviolent Nigerian group.

On April 27, 2012, the *Washington Post* reported that bin Laden's files "show that through his couriers, bin Laden was in touch not only with al Qaeda's established affiliates but also with upstarts being groomed for new alliances. Among them was Nigeria's Boko Haram, a group that has since embraced al Qaeda and adopted its penchant for suicide attacks."

Two days later, on April 29, 2012, the *Guardian* ran its own account

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explaining the contents of the files. "Bin Laden appears to have been in direct or indirect communication with [the] Nigerian-based militant group Boko Haram as well as many other militant outfits," the *Guardian* reported. "As with the Taliban, the question of whether Boko Haram . . . is in touch with al Qaeda or one of its affiliates has been hotly debated by analysts." Nonetheless, "documents in the cache show that leaders of the Nigerian group had been in contact with top levels of al Qaeda in the past 18 months." The *Guardian* added that the description of bin Laden's files it was given by intelligence officials confirmed claims made by a senior Boko Haram figure earlier that same year.

The following day, April 30, 2012, John Brennan, who was then the senior counterterrorism adviser to President Obama, gave a speech at the Wilson Center in Washington. Brennan's talk hinged on the idea that there is a discrete "core" of al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that this nucleus of al Qaeda had become "a shadow of its former self." Brennan said that "we can look ahead and envision a world in which the al Qaeda core is simply no longer relevant." While cautioning that al Qaeda's "affiliates" remain something of a threat, Brennan argued that these organizations are on the decline, too, having lost "key commanders and capabilities as well." Moreover, Brennan sought to distance these "affiliates" from the original "core" of al Qaeda that attacked us on September 11, 2001, saying al Qaeda's "leaders continue to struggle to communicate with subordinates and affiliates."

The hard distinction between al Qaeda's "core" and "affiliates" does not really exist, but it is crucial to the administration's approach to fighting terrorism. The core/affiliates model is a Western invention. In reality, al Qaeda has always been an international network of organizations and personalities. Not every jihadist group is part of al Qaeda, but many of them are. And al Qaeda has "core" leaders throughout Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. While they likely have a significant degree of freedom in deciding how to go about their day-to-day business, these terrorists are still doing al Qaeda's bidding. But if the number of groups dedicated to al Qaeda's vision (at a minimum) has been growing—and it has been—then it is difficult for President Obama and his surrogates to argue that the 9/11 war is coming to an end. It is for this reason that some within the administration have invented a series of arguments intended to distance groups like Boko Haram from al Qaeda. The result has been uneven rhetoric and policies filled with basic contradictions.

A Boko Haram logo

There is ample evidence tying Boko Haram to al Qaeda's international network. Those ties have been formally recognized by the State Department, both during and since Clinton's time in Obama's cabinet, making her department's refusal to designate the group all the more curious.

For instance, not too far beneath Brennan's triumphalist rhetoric about al Qaeda lies a subtle acknowledgment that things are, perhaps, not going so well after all. Thus, for example, Brennan said in his Wilson Center speech: "And in Nigeria, we are monitoring closely the emergence of Boko Haram, a group that appears to be aligning itself with al Qaeda's violent agenda and is increasingly looking to attack Western interests in Nigeria, in addition to Nigerian government targets."

Still, Brennan cited bin Laden's documents as evidence that the administration's description of al Qaeda as a dwindling force was accurate. Brennan also announced that "some" of the al Qaeda master's files "will be published online, for the first time, this week by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center."

Indeed, the 17 documents mentioned above were published by the Combating Terrorism Center on May 3, 2012, along with an accompanying report that conveniently repeated the administration's storyline about al Qaeda. None of the documents released to the public said anything about Boko Haram, despite the fact that just days earlier two high-profile newspapers had revealed the existence of communications between the group and al Qaeda's senior leaders.

The overwhelming majority of bin Laden's files, including those dealing with Boko Haram, remain locked away from the public. Therefore, we do not know what they say, exactly. We do know, however, that there is ample evidence tying Boko Haram to al Qaeda's international network. Those ties have been formally recognized by the State Department, both during and since Clinton's time in Obama's cabinet, making her department's refusal to designate the group itself all the more curious.

In June 2012, Clinton's State Department did designate three individual terrorists, including Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau. The two other jihadists designated "have ties to Boko Haram and have close links to al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," State reported. One year later, after Clinton had left office, the State Department announced a $7 million reward for information

leading to the capture of Shekau. The "Rewards for Justice" page for Shekau says that he has issued statements "expressing solidarity with al-Qaida and threatening the United States." The same page reads: "There are reported communications, training, and weapons links between Boko Haram, al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al Shabaab, and al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula [AQAP], which may strengthen Boko Haram's capacity to conduct terrorist attacks." AQIM, al Shabaab, and AQAP are all formal branches of al Qaeda and have sworn an oath of allegiance (*bayat*) to Ayman al Zawahiri.

Boko Haram itself was finally designated by the State Department in November 2013. The designation recognized Boko Haram's "links to" AQIM and responsibility "for thousands of deaths in northeast and central Nigeria over the last several years including targeted killings of civilians." And in its annual *Country Reports on Terrorism*, published on April 30 of this year, Foggy Bottom again noted that Boko Haram "at times has received assistance, including funds and training, from" AQIM.

Despite these well-documented links between Boko Haram and al Qaeda's network, there are still some who try to play disconnect the dots between the two. A key argument made at the State Department was that Boko Haram is purely a "local" group that shouldn't be lumped in with al Qaeda's "global" jihad. Such games do not help America craft sound counterterrorism policy. They obfuscate what is plain to see.

Even Hillary Clinton has said as much. During congressional testimony in January 2013, Rep. Tom Cotton asked Secretary Clinton if various jihadists in Africa should be considered al Qaeda. "Whether they call themselves al Qaeda or Boko Haram or Ansar al Sharia, they are all part of the same global jihadist movement," Clinton responded. Unfortunately, the State Department did not act that way until after her term as secretary of state had ended. ♦

The Consensus Candidate

Cory Gardner unifies Colorado Republicans.

BY MICHAEL WARREN

"I love to smoke," says Colorado congressman Cory Gardner, his voice trailing off. His aide's eyes widen. "Finish that thought!" she says.

The 39-year-old Republican lets out a distinctive belly laugh at his unfortunate pause. After all, marijuana is now legal in the state of Colorado, a fact we had just been discussing moments before I asked Gardner to tell me something most people don't know about him.

"I love to smoke *food*," he clarifies, adding that his wife had bought him his own Masterbuilt smoker for Christmas. "Brisket, chicken, ribs, you name it."

Cory Gardner

NEWSCOM

That's about as far off-message as Gardner's ever likely to go, and that self-discipline is part of the reason professional Washington perked up in February when the two-term House member made it known he had changed his mind and would, indeed, challenge Democrat Mark Udall for the U.S. Senate. Those who know him say Gardner is careful and risk averse—not the type of guy to challenge an incumbent senator on a whim. Gardner himself admits that he could have kept his House seat "as long as I wanted to," but he says he saw an opportunity to make the race competitive.

Republicans are thankful he did. As the cycle began, the GOP field was crowded with disparate representatives of the party's coalition, including Ken Buck, a candidate who already lost a winnable Senate race in 2010. Party folks had tried to recruit Gardner last year, but he declined. In January, however, he says he began to reconsider. Public polls showed Udall, a reliably liberal House member who had won his Senate seat in 2008, was weak on issues like Obamacare and energy, and a private poll indicated Gardner would be a formidable opponent.

He began making his moves. When Gardner officially announced his candidacy on March 1, two of the Republican candidates, including Buck, dropped out of the race and endorsed him. A third GOP rival did so days later. It was a smooth operation that left him with no serious primary challenge and has allowed Gardner and the Republicans to set their sights on Udall.

"He has a unifying personality," says Jim Nicholson, the former Vatican ambassador and Veterans Affairs secretary who once served as chairman of the Colorado GOP. "He seems to have come along as the right guy at the right time."

Rich Beeson, Mitt Romney's former political director and a GOP strategist from Colorado, is bullish about Gardner, whom he calls a "rising star" in the party. "This is the most excitement I've seen around a Senate race in a long time," says Beeson.

Michael Warren is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Two polls in March showed Gardner and Udall just a couple of points apart. Prognosticators shifted Colorado into the "toss-up" column. Around that time, conservative outside groups like Americans for Prosperity began running ads in Colorado hitting Udall hard for his support for Obamacare. Like many Democratic senators up for reelection, Udall had repeated the claim that under Obamacare Americans could keep their insurance plans and doctors if they liked them. "The primary promises that Obamacare was sold to the American people on turned out to be lies," Gardner says.

The Udall campaign and liberal groups have fired back hard on what could be Gardner's biggest liability in the critical Denver suburbs. ProgressNow Colorado began in March, calling out Gardner for his past support for the controversial pro-life "personhood" ballot initiative that failed in Colorado in 2010. (By legally defining every fertilized egg as a "person" under state law, it would have effectively banned all abortions.) Many mainstream pro-life groups, including National Right to Life and the Eagle Forum, object to personhood amendments for being too extreme, and Gardner told the *Denver Post* in late March that he now opposes personhood efforts. The congressman says he's pro-life but that he changed his mind about personhood after he learned more about the issue. That hasn't stopped the Udall camp from making it the focus of its first anti-Gardner ad.

"Congressman Gardner's history promoting harsh anti-abortion laws is disturbing," says a female voiceover as a rainbow coalition of stone-faced women look disapprovingly at the camera. "But Mark Udall protects our right to choose, our access to birth control."

Gardner shakes his head at the implication that he's too extreme. "When people look at my record, they're going to know that Senator Udall is simply repeating what they think will work—which is nothing more than a tired, sad playbook—because he can't run on his record," he says.

Notwithstanding the war-on-women strategy, Democrats may find Gardner difficult to demonize. He looks youthful, apart from his salt-and-pepper hair, and his ever-present grin makes him instantly likable. He often starts his answers with a hail-fellow-well-met guffaw, particularly if it's a question he's not keen on answering. Gardner's humor is light-hearted and usually directed at himself. He tells me about growing up working at his family's business, a farm implement dealership ("red tractors, not green") in his hometown of Yuma in eastern Colorado.

"They let me do some incredible, high-skilled tasks like sweep the floors, clean the bathrooms," he chuckles. "Twenty years later, they still let me sweep the floors and clean the bathrooms."

After graduating from Colorado State and the law school of the University of Colorado, Gardner ran his first race for the state legislature in 2004, in a heavily rural and agricultural district. "I ran for office going around eastern Colorado telling people I had met most of them at the implement dealership, that I had sold half of them the wrong parts," he says. "And I actually had to quit using that line because people started shaking their heads."

A fifth-generation Coloradan, Gardner still lives in Yuma, in a house once owned by his great-grandparents, with his wife Jaime and their two children. He says his kids are the main reason he opposed Colorado's marijuana legalization when it was on the ballot in 2012. I jokingly suggest he could have supported it to be a "cool dad," and he briefly turns serious. "I think being a cool dad is doing the right thing for your kids," he says.

Gardner is keenly aware of the politics of pot. Legalization remains popular in Colorado (an April Quinnipiac poll shows 52 percent still support it), and so he tries to steer away from the issue. "The Founders intended the states to be laboratories of democracy, and Colorado is now deep in the heart of the laboratory," he says.

A state issue Gardner's more eager to talk about is the effort to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing to extract oil and natural gas, which has found its way onto 12 local ballot initiatives throughout Colorado. Gardner says the issue is splitting the state's Democratic party, with wealthy congressman Jared Polis putting his own money into the antifracking movement while Governor John Hickenlooper remains passively for fracking. That puts Udall in a bind. The energy industry is booming in Colorado, and Gardner argues the ban could cost the state 100,000 jobs and $12 billion in economic activity—a ready-made campaign line if Udall supports a ban. On the other hand, opposing a ban would mean he'd have to forgo the help of Democratic megadonor and antifracking billionaire Tom Steyer.

Gardner says by not taking a position on an issue that Coloradans will be voting on this November, his opponent ends up looking ineffective. "Mark Udall's simply been along for the ride," he says.

Maybe so, but even with his weak poll numbers, Udall still has a downhill ride to reelection. Democrats in Colorado have built a coalition of young people, single women, Hispanics, environmentalists, suburban moms, and college-educated liberals that's flipped the once reliably red state blue. Barack Obama won Colorado twice, and since 2007, the state's had a Democratic governor. Republicans have been cursed with poor candidates and splits among conservatives in nearly every statewide election for a decade. Even last year's successful recall of two Democratic state senators who had supported strict gun control legislation was more a reaction to Democratic excess than any newfound love for the GOP.

Gardner says he hopes to harness voters' desire for political balance. Doing so would give Republicans a much-needed win in Colorado, and he's fairly clear-eyed about what his victory would mean for GOP control of the Senate. "We have to win Colorado to be number 51," Gardner says. ♦

Some Juggernaut

Democrats look awfully frantic for a party with history on its side. BY FRED BARNES

Democrats think they are the party of the future. After a last hurrah for Republicans in this year's midterm elections, Democrats will have a commanding majority at the polls as far as the eye can see. A rising tide of minority, young, female, and affluent liberal voters assures them of this. And perhaps it will.

But Democrats aren't acting like a political party on the brink of taking over the country. They're unnerved and unhappy. Their chief motivation these days is to make Republicans look bad. Ideological fissures are dividing them on health care, energy, and charter schools. President Obama's second term keeps getting worse. He's lost interest in bipartisan compromise. His agenda is largely rhetorical.

If you think Obama and Democrats in Congress are getting along well at the moment, forget it. Meanwhile, the wheels are beginning to come off the bandwagon to boost Hillary Clinton as the next president. Senate majority leader Harry Reid is obsessed with the Koch brothers. He fears they'll hasten a Republican takeover of the Senate by outspending even his Senate Majority PAC. House minority leader Nancy Pelosi is befuddled on how to handle the special committee investigating the Benghazi affair.

Democrats are increasingly living in a fantasy world. They believe Obamacare, following a rocky debut, is now headed for smooth sailing and the chance of repeal is dead. Wrong on both counts. There's big trouble ahead once delayed mandates are operative and millions lose their employer-paid health insurance, face higher premiums, and confront limits on their access to first-rate health professionals. All that's required for repeal is a Republican president and Congress—a possibility in 2016.

Listening to Democrats and Obama, one might conclude a solid economic recovery is firmly in place. Hardly. Obama's refusal to seek incentives for investment continues to stymie growth and job creation. He's sticking with policies that have produced the weakest recovery in memory. Obama prefers to expand the welfare state, not spur the private economy.

Don't hold your breath.

Without troubling Democrats, a record number of Americans are dropping out of the workforce entirely, more than 800,000 in April alone. This has created a mirage of declining unemployment. When the number of dropouts exceeds the newly employed, as was the case in April, the jobless rate declines. The media can be relied on to focus on the falling rate, and Democrats are pleased. But the economy may not have improved at all.

By the way, what happened to the 5 million "green" jobs that Obama promised to create? Democrats took his promise seriously. In 2009, the economic stimulus package included billions for green industries. And Democrats like Senator Barbara Boxer of California campaigned for reelection in 2010 on an anticipated explosion of green jobs. She was a true believer and may still be. But the 5 million jobs, or anything close to that number, have yet to materialize.

The biggest Democratic fantasy is the impact of global warming. The trouble used to be in the future when oceans would rise and glaciers melt. But the Obama administration now says global warming is causing floods and wildfires and droughts today. Next they'll blame the calamities of the past—the Great Galveston Hurricane maybe or Noah's flood—on global warming.

The left wing of the Democratic party is hysterical on this subject. Christopher Hayes of the *Nation* has discovered a "connection between slavery and fossil fuels." Who knew? So what's needed now, Hayes writes, is a "New Abolitionism" to free America from "the grip of a fossil fuel frenzy almost without precedent."

These fantasies show how far removed Democrats are from the cares of average Americans. Yes, Republicans have fantasies of their own. (One is that voters are opposed to immigration reform.) But no one is predicting the coming decades will transform the GOP into a powerful majority party.

Democrats have another problem, their lurch to the left led by Obama. Most political reporters have missed this while exaggerating the Republican drift to the right. The exception is Josh Kraushaar of *National Journal*. He recently made a strong case—irrefutable, I'd say—that Democrats have moved leftward on five big issues: the budget deficit, income inequality, the environment, social issues, and America's role in the world.

This won't help Democrats in 2016, when their surge to dominance is supposed to begin. Instead, its effect may be to weaken the demographic trend. That Democratic voting blocs like

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Latinos are increasing is beyond dispute. The question is whether they'll continue to vote for Democrats in such high percentages.

In 2004, President George W. Bush got either 40 percent or 44 percent of the Hispanic vote, depending on which survey you believe. Four years later, John McCain dipped to 31 percent. In 2012, Mitt Romney slipped further to 27 percent.

Voting groups change their minds. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, pro-life Democrats migrated to the GOP. Evangelical Christians who voted in 1976 for Jimmy Carter abandoned him in 1980, voted heavily for Ronald Reagan, and have stayed in the Republican orbit.

Demography is destiny only "up to a point," Michael Barone says. A disastrous finish to the Obama era could blunt the trend toward Democratic rule. If that's what is bothering Harry Reid and Democrats, no wonder they seem so cheerless. ♦

Harvard Rejects Satan

The elusive Black Mass.

BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

Cambridge, Mass.

Every once in a while—not too often—good triumphs over evil. Such was the case on May 12, when a Harvard student group dropped its sponsorship of a satanic "Black Mass," originally scheduled to take place on campus, about an hour and a half before the event was supposed to begin, at 8:30 that evening. Earlier that day Harvard's president, Drew Gilpin Faust, issued a statement condemning the ritual, a parody of the Catholic Mass, as "abhorrent" and announced her intention to attend a "holy hour" of prayer and worship that had been arranged by the Harvard Catholic Center at a nearby church to take place simultaneously with the Black Mass.

Faust's statement followed a series of protests against the involvement of the university with the Black Mass, which was to be staged by the Satanic Temple, a New York City group of Satanists, under the sponsorship of the Cultural Studies Club at the Harvard Extension School, Harvard's part-time program for nontraditional students. The Satanic Temple is best known for its efforts via crowdfunding to erect a seven-foot-tall statue of Satan, or at least of one of his lieutenant demons, the horned and goat-faced Baphomet, on the grounds of the Oklahoma State Capitol, where a monument to the Ten Commandments had been placed by a state legislator in 2012.

During the weeks preceding Faust's statement, Harvard's chaplains representing a range of religious traditions, Boston's Catholic archdiocese, and numerous Harvard students and alumni had spoken out against the planned ritual, arguing that its only purpose was to mock and denigrate the faith of Catholics and their central Eucharistic ritual. In her statement Faust had rejected pleas for Harvard to cancel the event, or at least to deny the Satanic Temple the use of university premises, citing Harvard's "dedication to free expression at the heart of a university."

At first the Cultural Studies Club announced that it would forge ahead with the Black Mass, which was to take place at the Cambridge Queen's Head pub in the basement of Harvard's Memorial Hall just north of Harvard Yard. But as the day wore on, and small groups of protesters began to form on the sidewalk outside the hall on an unseasonably warm afternoon, the club began to waver in its commitment.

Some backing-off had begun even earlier. The Satanic Temple had at first told reporters that it planned for its Black Mass to feature a consecrated host that would presumably be pilfered from a Catholic church. Catholics hold that the consecration rite of the Eucharist transforms the host, or wafer of bread, into the body of Christ, so the use of such a host in a satanic ritual would be the ultimate blasphemy. Later on, the temple maintained that the host it would use would not be consecrated and that its ceremony would be merely a "reenactment" of a historic ritual for educational purposes.

But at about 5 in the afternoon of May 12 the Cultural Studies Club announced that it would abandon Memorial Hall—voluntarily and not at the instigation of Harvard—and seek an off-campus venue.

Around 7 P.M., the Cultural Studies Club threw in the towel and announced that it would no longer sponsor the Black Mass. Some members of the Satanic Temple went ahead and at 10 P.M. held what appeared to be a Black Mass on the second floor of a Chinese restaurant, the Hong Kong, across the street from Harvard Yard. About 50 people were reportedly in attendance, and according to the *Crimson*, the Harvard student newspaper, the participants included "[f]our individuals in hoods . . . one man in a white suit, a cape, and a horned mask . . . [and] a woman revealed to be wearing only lingerie." So reduced in scope was the ritual that the Hong Kong's owner, Paul Lee, told a *Crimson* reporter over the phone at 11 P.M. that he was "unaware" it had taken place.

The Cultural Studies Club decided to play the victim card. In a lugubrious statement emailed to reporters desperately trying to find out what was going on, the club declared: "[W]hat

Charlotte Allen, a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *last wrote on the living-forever movement.*

we find most disturbing have been the demands that the rituals and beliefs of marginalized members of our society be silenced. It is gravely upsetting to us that some people feel vindicated on the basis that they have disingenuously mischaracterized our invited guests as being part of a hate group."

So much for the Harvard Black Mass: a victory for freedom of expression *and* respect for others' religion. But for a reporter, good news is no news. I had traveled to Cambridge—even packing a crucifix in my purse (just in case!)—only to find myself effectively barred from covering what I was most interested in: What is a Black Mass really like? Do they dress up like KISS? Do they spit on the Bible? To what extent does their ritual resemble a Marilyn Manson concert? My cold comfort was that no other reporters, including anyone from the *Crimson*, had witnessed the goings-on at the Hong Kong restaurant that night.

Historically speaking, the Black Mass is something like *droit du seigneur*, the supposed medieval custom in which the lord of the manor got to deflower attractive peasant girls on their wedding night: It's vilified aplenty in literature and culture, but it's difficult to prove that it ever actually happened. During the 17th century, the golden age of real and imagined witchcraft in the Western world, a lurid Black Mass template emerged: a rogue priest saying Mass on the body of a naked woman lying on the altar, with the aim of invoking Satan to work magical spells. I emailed Ronald Hutton, an expert on pagan religion at the University of Bristol, to find out if there was any truth to this, and he emailed in reply: "It may well be a Christian legend, since Christian writers alleged it against Satanists, but there's no solid proof that an actual or defrocked priest ever did celebrate a blasphemous mass using the body of a woman as an altar."

Today's Black Mass seems to have a far shorter history: in the career of Anton Szandor LaVey (*né* the more prosaic Howard Stanton Levey in Chicago in 1930). In 1966 LaVey shaved his head to look more diabolical and founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco. He declared that year to be "the year one, Anno Satanas," à la *Rosemary's Baby*. LaVey, who died in 1997, devised a Black Mass that copied the Catholic church's old Latin Mass, except that "Satan" seemed to be substituted for Jesus. The Satanic Temple is a kind of politicized offshoot of the Church of Satan. Its leader, Lucien Greaves (another exotic name change: from Douglas Mesner; Satanists seem to cultivate a Continental sheen), used to blog for an atheist website and appears to be more of a debunker of religion in general than a believer in anything in particular about diabolical power. The temple's website asserts that it views Satan as "the ultimate icon for the selfless revolt against tyranny, free & rational inquiry, and the responsible pursuit of happiness." In a February interview with the *Atlantic*, Greaves admitted that the Satanic Temple has only about 20 members.

Holy Hour at St. Paul Church in Harvard Square, May 12

COURTESY OF PILOT CATHOLIC NEWS / GREGORY L. TRACY

I never got to Greaves's Black Mass, but I did get to St. Paul's, the large and lavishly decorated Italianate church just off Harvard Square where the holy hour took place. There I witnessed the tail end of a procession that had walked behind a priest carrying the Eucharist for the two miles between the MIT campus and Harvard. An estimated 2,000 people were trying to cram themselves into a church built to hold 1,200; they spilled into the aisles, into the vestibule, down the stone church steps, and into the street, where a contingent of Cambridge cops kept order.

There were students from MIT and Harvard, babies in arms and in strollers, nuns, a bishop (Arthur Kennedy, a Boston auxiliary), and two young women who had driven from Stockbridge in western Massachusetts; they carried big pictures of Jesus. There were people in T-shirts sporting Bible verses, and people with medals, crosses, and sometimes medals *and* crosses around their necks. There was a portly man standing on the church steps wearing a Knights of Columbus polo shirt and eating ice cream from a cup. There was an ancient lady who insisted on kneeling on those steps during most of the service and then had to be helped to her feet by friendly neighbors. There were little girls in pretty dresses and at least a dozen Franciscan friars. I talked to two of them, Brother Rick and Brother Scott. They were grinning. They had learned that the Harvard club canceled its sponsorship of the Black Mass "while we were processing," said Brother Scott. "We were overjoyed."

Across the street stood a lone heckler, who told me his name was Bob Odenkirk, age 27 and a graduate of MIT. He was shouting indefatigably: "They stopped the Satanists from having their mass! This church protects child molesters! They demonize gay people! They don't let women into their priesthood!"

Inside the church's packed interior, though, there was nothing but silence as a lector read aloud from the Book of Revelation: "And now war broke out in heaven, when Michael with his angels attacked the dragon. The dragon fought back with his angels, but they were defeated and driven out of heaven." ♦

First Legalization, Then Lawsuits

Can marijuana retailers survive the tort bar?

BY JOHN P. WALTERS & TOM RILEY

The legalization of marijuana in Colorado and Washington has spawned reports of increased use, declining perception of risk, increased neonatal risk, drug tourism, diversion of public assistance to fund use, creation of significantly more powerful forms of the drug, and new financial rules to permit money from drug sales to enter the banking system. President Obama, moreover, proclaims marijuana use is no more dangerous than drinking alcohol or smoking tobacco—virtually assuring that the legalization of marijuana will be a defining domestic policy of his presidency. That is a matter for politics and history. A more pressing question for us is how families and communities can protect themselves from this unfolding debacle.

Marijuana legalization—and what some now suggest will be the legalization of all drugs—is dangerous, but not unstoppable. Indeed, the dangers can be turned against the forces of legalization. The new drug retailers are known businesses. They sell a dangerous, addictive product, and they need a substantial number of addicted users as their customer base to generate the profits they seek. In other words, addiction is not a byproduct, it is a business plan.

As these businesses grow more powerful, they deploy lobbyists to pressure government leaders to write laws that improve their bottom lines. Hence recent efforts to eliminate regulations that keep drug money out of our banks. Legislation that improves the viability of these businesses also increases the number of stakeholders with an incentive to boost sales. Even one advocate of legalization admits there will be at least a 50-percent increase in use. This is a public health and safety catastrophe.

Singing his president's tune

NEWSCOM

President Obama and some other intelligent Americans are eager to deny the overwhelming evidence of the harm illegal drugs do. Yet the harm caused by marijuana is clearer than ever, thanks to research conducted in recent years. Marijuana use is linked to diminished academic achievement, short-term memory loss, and impaired judgment. It impedes motor skills and diminishes impulse control, which contributes to violent behavior and weakened self-control in general. Marijuana use worsens, and perhaps triggers, serious mental illness—including depression, psychosis, and suicidal thoughts and actions. And marijuana users permanently increase their risk of addiction and perhaps the risk of addiction for their children, according to some of the latest research findings.

For years, the federal government has reported that marijuana is the most prominent drug causing individuals to need treatment for addiction. Today, it is the source of more addiction referrals than all other illegal drugs combined. Of the roughly 7 million individuals the federal government estimates need treatment (almost certainly an undercount), over 4 million have a primary or exclusive dependence on marijuana. Moreover, marijuana dependence among teens exceeds even their dependence on alcohol, long more easily available and widely used.

With the open sale of formerly illegal drugs, the number of users will grow. Some advocates expect legalization to destroy criminal markets by providing cheaper drugs, which should boost sales. If the legal market does not produce discounts, however, the black market will continue to operate in parallel with the new higher-end market—a kind of "fast-food" network persisting alongside the new "gourmet" outlets. Either way, the result is increased use and increased profits.

But communities are not helpless before this onslaught. Even when the criminal law has been compromised at the state level, resort to civil procedure might offer protection. Legal or illegal, marijuana injures users—researchers call it a "neurotoxin"—and those who distribute it for profit are liable for its known effects. Its production and distribution, after all, are still federal crimes. America's tort attorneys could respond by suing drug retailers for the harm done by their product to particular addicts,

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then collecting damages for the clients and legal fees for themselves.

This approach would not depend on the president or federal, state, or local government policy. It would require only a victim, a drug trafficker, a capable lawyer, and a sympathetic jury. Some law firms could afford to take such cases as a pro bono service to families. They already see for themselves that growing drug addiction makes their communities unattractive to legitimate businesses. Philanthropies concerned about the disadvantaged could also push this initiative forward.

Some clever attorneys might partner directly with treatment providers for referrals. Others might advertise on billboards, buses, television, and radio. They might find that YouTube and sites on the Internet are a vast repository of self-incrimination.

In addition, the retailers of marijuana as medicine—whether for smoking or eating in baked goods, candy, and ice cream—should be easy targets of legal action. There is scant evidence of legitimate medical efficacy and much evidence that "medical marijuana" is a calculated fraud producing large profits. Far from approving it, the FDA has written a letter denying that smoked marijuana is medicine.

If you think trial lawyers made a windfall on tobacco, just wait until they get a handle on marijuana. The scientific and medical evidence against marijuana now dwarfs what we knew about tobacco at the time of the surgeon general's report of 1964. No warning label in the world could shield marijuana growers and sellers from the tsunami of tort liability they should face from distributing a product with so many known harmful effects.

Everyone loves the tale of Robin Hood because it is a story of justice—taking from oppressors and giving to the oppressed. That story is about to be reenacted with a drug-dealing-retailer near you. The rule of law is a beautiful thing; it can protect our democracy in times of danger even when national leaders and government institutions fail. ♦

Playing the Verdun Card

Fearmongering in Brussels.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

In the curious pantomime that is the EU parliament, the French politician Joseph Daul is a star. He's the president of the European People's party (the principal center-right bloc in the parliament), an apparatchik with impeccable EU establishment credentials. He has euro-federalist beliefs, a funding scandal in his past, and a willingness to warn that Brussels is all that stands between the continent and a reversion to its warring ways. He's also a little twitchy about the elections to the EU parliament later this month.

"I am convinced," he announced recently, "that if Europe succumbs to the siren voices of populists and Eurosceptics, there will be a turning back towards chaos and war."

This is an all too familiar eurocratic refrain, but it is heard even more frequently on those rare occasions when Europe's voters are given a chance to slow down the march to a superstate. Trying to cajole his compatriots into choosing the euro in a 2003 referendum, Swedish prime minister Göran Persson recalled how Germany's "weeping" Chancellor Kohl had told him that he did not want his sons to die in a third world war, an understandable sentiment, but an unpersuasive argument. Swedish voters stuck with the krona.

Two years later, another Swede, Margot Wallström, then the EU commissioner charged with selling the proposed EU constitution to a somewhat doubtful continent, took the opportunity presented by a visit to the Nazi concentration camp at Theresienstadt (Terezin) to observe that "there are those today who want to scrap the supranational idea. They want the European Union to go back to the old purely intergovernmental way of doing things. . . . Those people should come to Terezin and see where that old road leads."

With this month's election falling within a few weeks of the hundredth anniversary of a certain shooting in Sarajevo, the dire warnings now tend to refer to a different dark chapter in Europe's tumultuous 20th century. Last year, José Manuel Barroso, the EU's top bureaucrat, implied that those "who want to roll back our integration" were risking a regression to "the war [and] the trenches" of the past, a ludicrous variation on an already ludicrous theme.

If all this scaremongering were a matter of cynical calculation it might be possible to treat it with a degree of admiration. As a political tool, it has, after all, proved very effective: Fear works. And so does the manipulation of historical memory, another integral element in Brussels *dezinformatsiya*. If Europeans could be persuaded to blame the nation-state for their wars, they could be talked into distrusting their own patriotism and buying into the bogus made-in-Brussels "European" identity.

And, indeed, this is what we have seen over recent decades. As it came to be widely accepted that a united Europe was the key to peace, those who persisted in dissenting from the principle of a broader federalist agenda, except, perhaps, in reliably stubborn Britain, were pushed into uncomfortable and ultimately

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self-segregating corners far from the electoral mainstream. Outside the skeptic isle, almost the only political parties prepared, until lately, to reject "ever closer union" were those drawn from the rougher ends of the political spectrum, an uninviting destination for centrist voters. That, in turn, made it easier to claim that Euroskepticism was, by definition, evidence of extremism and, maybe, a screw loose too.

The mantra that the EU was staving off a return to the hecatombs also operated as an unsubtle reminder to the Germans that they had a moral obligation to confine their role in the new Europe to keeping quiet and footing a large chunk of the bill. Meanwhile the rest of the continent—and, such is the power of guilt, much of Germany too—was led to believe that only Brussels could keep the Hun on the leash, a notion that rested on the absurd premise that panzers still prowled through Teutonic dreams. Such is the power of history.

The passing of time and the reemergence of German economic power have eroded some of the Bundesrepublik's willingness to follow the demeaning postwar script, but by less than might be expected. Introducing the euro over the objections of most Germans made a mockery of their democracy. Preserving the single currency has stretched the country's much-prized constitutional order and now threatens to become a permanent drain on its coffers, but the conservative, gently Euroskeptic (anti-euro, but pro-EU) Alternative für Deutschland is only likely to score 6-7 percent in the upcoming election, and no small portion of that support will owe more to the AfD's mildly restrictive immigration policy than to its opposition to the single currency. Most of the rest of Germany's political class remains in thrall to the tired myth that to retreat from ever closer union would be to advance into danger and, quite possibly, war.

But a myth it is. What kept the peace in Europe was, yes, in part, memories of Auschwitz and Verdun, but it was also, much more so, the product of the savage ethnic cleansing of Eastern Europe's awkward German minorities, and, above all, the discipline imposed by the Cold War—by Soviet hegemony over half of the continent and American leadership of the other. The evolution of the EU was the consequence of this new, rather chilly peace, not the creator of it. Brussels subsequently performed an invaluable role in shepherding Moscow's former European colonies back to the West after the Soviet collapse, but on foundations built by the Atlantic alliance.

Verdun in ruins, 1914

NEWSCOM

Those who used and abused this myth to drive the EU forward were in many cases not so much Machiavellis as priests who had faith in a tale they themselves spun. And it proved to be a highly convenient myth. The insistence that nationalism is inherently dangerous is an extrapolation from a totally defeated, especially toxic, and specifically German form of nationalism. But it gave those in charge of the European project an ever-expanding license to remove more and more of anything that marked out the distinctiveness of a nation from the regular democratic process: The voters, poor creatures, so susceptible to "populists," you see, could not be trusted to do the right thing.

Slice by slice, sovereignty has been transferred from democratic nation-states to a largely unaccountable supranational technocratic elite which in turn has become dangerously disconnected from the reality that encounters with the electorate might have brought, and dangerously emboldened as a result. And so the euro was put together with little regard for its own rule book, common sense, or anything resembling informed popular consent. Once launched, the currency union was run in a way that was, if anything, worse. After hubris, nemesis, and with it, old demons began to stir.

The long economic crisis has shattered the never completely convincing illusion of a continent that was leaving nationality behind. Northern Europeans resent being compelled to bail out nations of a eurozone periphery for which they feel little affinity and less respect. The eurozone's laggards detest what they see as harsh rule by foreign diktat. Vintage stereotypes are dusted off. Greeks are thieves. Chancellor Merkel is a Nazi. Trapped in the jaws of a dysfunctional currency union, and lacking the democratic legitimacy to fix it and either the imagination or the courage to try something else, the establishment parties have little to offer but more of the same. And so the hard times grind on.

And as hard times tend to do, they are persuading increasing numbers of voters to turn to alternatives they once would never have considered. While the effect may be magnified by low turnout (which fell—the sixth consecutive drop—to 43 percent in 2009), this month's European election is likely to see something that looks a lot like a Euroskeptic wave. Some 25 percent of the vote could go to Euroskeptics of one description or another, up from 15 percent or so (it's difficult to be precise) in the current parliament. As waves go it will be choppy: This is a ragtag group, drawing from left and right and ranging from the benign (such as Britain's UKIP) to the sinister (Greece's neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, given its big break by the failures of an EU that once claimed it had consigned black shirts to history). It will

be neither numerous nor cohesive enough to change very much in the short term. But what these parties do have in common is a determination to wrest back control of their countries' destinies from what is rightly seen as remote, micromanaging, and alien bureaucratic control.

This month's vote will be followed by noisy, angry, and overwrought polemics, but not by dramatic transformation or the guns of August. That said, as the Barrosos and the Dauls push on—and they will—with the trudge towards ever closer European integration, doubtless claiming that the rise of "dangerous" Euroskepticism makes it even more imperative than before, they will be ignoring a nastily inconvenient truth from Europe's past: Imposed multinational federations don't end well.

Sarajevo learned that a century ago. And then it learned it again. ♦

The Paper of the Apes

The *New York Times*'s animal-rights crusade.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

That the *New York Times* is a subversive cultural force can readily be seen in its unremitting assault on human exceptionalism, the philosophical backbone of Western civilization.

In the old view, every human being has intrinsic dignity and equal moral worth. The United Nations's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

But particularly in politically progressive circles, assignment of special status to people—as opposed to flora and fauna—is increasingly seen as hubristic and arrogant. If we just demote ourselves to merely another animal in the forest, we are told, we will live more gently on the land and save the planet. While the *Times* frequently hosts this latter view, it rarely—outside the occasional Ross Douthat column—publishes an unequivocal defense of the unique importance of human life.

On April 27, the *Times Magazine* published a cover story about Steven Wise, the radical head of the Nonhuman Rights Project. An animal rights lawyer, Wise has spent years strategizing to obtain a court ruling declaring some animals legal "persons." Most recently, he unsuccessfully sought writs of habeas corpus for three chimpanzees.

"Animal standing," as it is known, is high on the animal-rights agenda because it would allow movement ideologues to attack animal industries in court. But the *Times* profile doesn't get into that inconvenient issue. Rather, it accepts Wise's premise that human exceptionalism is "inherently irrational" and that the poor treatment of animals is equivalent to an abuse of human rights:

> "It's those deeply held beliefs [in human exceptionalism] that I'm concerned about," [Wise] told me. "The judge who either doesn't recognize that he's ruling against us on those grounds, or who does, and decides that way anyway. Our challenge is to lay bare that bias against our facts. I will say: 'Judge, you know, we've been here before. We've had people who've essentially said, "I'm sorry, but you're black." Or "I'm sorry, you're not a male or a heterosexual." And this has led us to some very bad places.'"

The Wise profile ends by making the civil rights analogy explicit:

> Much like other civil rights movements, the [Nonhuman Rights Project's] efforts are designed to be a systematic assault; a continued and repeated airing of the evidence now at hand so that other lawyers and eventually judges and society as a whole can move past what Wise considers the increasingly arbitrary distinction of species as the determinant of who should hold a right.

This is par for the course. The week before the Wise profile, the *Times Magazine* gave a similar boost to another social radical, the English environmentalist Paul Kingsnorth, creator of the Dark Mountain Project.

The DMP exemplifies the anti-humanism and nihilism that has infected much of the environmental movement. Rather than striving through activism and civil disobedience to save the planet, Kingsnorth directly promotes "uncivilization." He seeks to harness the power of art to celebrate economic collapse and liberate society from human exceptionalism. As one of the DMP's "8 Principles of Uncivilisation" states:

> We intend to challenge the stories which underpin our civilisation: the myth of progress, the myth of human centrality, and the myth of our separation from "nature." These myths are more dangerous for the fact that we have forgotten they are myths.

Actually, these "myths" have created more freedom from want, political liberty, and alleviation of suffering than at any time in human history. But never mind. In "It's the End of the World as We Know It . . . and He Feels Fine," the *Times* devoted 6,000 words to Kingsnorth's journey back to paganism. The piece opens as participants at an uncivilization festival set a wicker sculpture on fire, chanting, "We are

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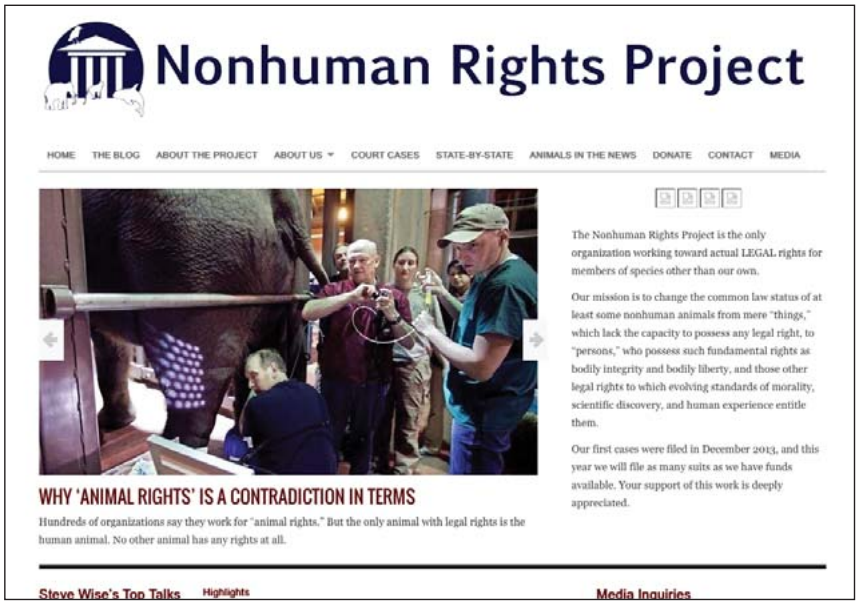
gathered. We are gathered." To what end? Baying at the moon:

> A man wearing a stag mask bounded into the clearing and shouted: "Come! Let's play!" The crowd broke up. Some headed for bed. A majority headed for the woods, to a makeshift stage that had been blocked off with hay bales and covered by an enormous nylon parachute.
>
> There they danced, sang, laughed, barked, growled, hooted, mooed, bleated and meowed, forming a kind of atavistic, improvisatory choir. Deep into the night, you could hear them from your tent, shifting every few minutes from sound to sound, animal to animal and mood to mood.

Kingsnorth is convinced that global warming and human development will lead to ecological collapse, a hysterical idea that the profile never questions. He even claims to be so discouraged about our future that he has given up activism and essentially dropped off the grid. Well, not entirely: "For the past three years," the story tells us, "he has spent a good portion of his time trying to stop a large supermarket from being built in Ulverston, in northern England. . . . He does it, he said, because his sense of what is valuable and good recoils at all that supermarket chains represent."

Had the interviewer been a bit more skeptical he might have discovered that Kingsnorth isn't actually opposed to commerce, nor is DMP uncontaminated by technology. Although the piece doesn't mention it, books and recorded music are sold on the DMP's website. You can even pick up a "limited edition" vinyl LP album celebrating "uncivilized music." Vinyl, of course, is made from oil.



The Nonhuman Rights Project's home page

In addition to its profiles of social radicals, the *Times* regularly publishes human-reductionist columns in its opinion pages. Two years ago, for example, it ran a Sunday opinion feature by the philosophy professor Michael Marder essentially arguing for plant personhood.

What could justify thinking of plants as persons? Marder cited a study finding that peas communicate chemically through their root systems. This, he said, matters morally. "If Peas Can Talk, Should We Eat Them?" asked the headline. A plant, Marder insists, is "not only a what but also a who—an agent in its milieu, with its own intrinsic value or version of the good."

Marder then claims that this sophistication means we should not eat annuals. "The 'renewable' aspects of perennial plants may be accepted by humans as a gift of vegetal being and integrated into their diets. But it would be harder to justify the cultivation of peas and other annual plants, the entire being of which humans devote to externally imposed ends."

Marder was not the first—nor will he likely be the last—to argue in the *New York Times* for elevating our moral view of plants. Back in 2009, Natalie Angier, a *Times* science writer, bathed in anthropomorphism as she asserted that plants are the most "ethical" life form. From her "Sorry, Vegans: Brussels Sprouts Like to Live, Too":

> Just because we humans can't hear them doesn't mean plants don't howl. Some of the compounds that plants generate in response to insect mastication—their feedback, you might say—are volatile chemicals that serve as cries for help. Such airborne alarm calls have been shown to attract both large predatory insects like dragon flies, which delight in caterpillar meat, and tiny parasitic insects, which can infect a caterpillar and destroy it from within.

Angier concluded: "It's a small daily tragedy that we animals must kill to stay alive. Plants are the ethical autotrophs here, the ones that wrest their meals from the sun. Don't expect them to boast: they're too busy fighting to survive."

But of course ethical behavior requires rational thought and free will—which only we possess.

Some might maintain that the frequent criticism of human exceptionalism appearing in the *Times* (these examples are nowhere near exhaustive) simply reflects the increasing prominence of these ideas, which "the paper of record" has a duty to acknowledge. The claim would be more persuasive if the paper also regularly hosted defenses of the ancien moral régime.

But that's not how the *New York Times* rolls. The paper is substantially agenda-driven. Progressives have long denied that any superior dignity attaches to human life, deeming the idea irrational, unscientific, and religiously based. So, naturally, the *Times* lends its space to views corrosive of any "outdated" belief in the sanctity of human life. ♦

Top Dogs

Rock-star economist Thomas Piketty—tough on inequality, soft on elitism

By Christopher Caldwell

The *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman has written that *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Piketty's new book on inequality and wealth, "will change both the way we think about society and the way we do economics." Clive Crook describes the raptures with which intellectuals have greeted the book as almost "erotic." President Obama's advisers have been buttonholed about Piketty at speaking appearances from here to Dublin. *Capital* has reached number one on Amazon.com. It will provide the template for a lot of sweeping left-wing tax proposals in the coming years. It has been likened to Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* and Reinhardt and Rogoff's *This Time Is Different*. But in appearance and éclat, this staid, graph-and-table-clogged tome bears the strongest resemblance to Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's book on intelligence, *The Bell Curve*, published 20 years ago. Like that book it is a sober work of social science from which one or two points have been made the subject of polemic. Unlike that book, *Capital* is beloved of elites—which is curious, since it purports to be an attack on elites.

Thomas Piketty

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Piketty is a number cruncher. Economists who study inequality have argued over and cited his work for a decade and a half. This new book does something more ambitious than just compare rich and poor. Thanks to computers and the spread of English as an academic lingua franca, it has become easier to cross-compare vast economic databases across long periods of time. Piketty has used wills, census records, and tax documents to measure the distribution of wealth and income in dozens of countries over long periods—all the way back to the eighteenth century in the case of France and Britain. He defines capital (or wealth, which he uses as a synonym) as "nonhuman assets that can be owned and exchanged on some market." He has discovered that, in the societies we can measure, the importance of capital tends to be stable across time. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the stock of capital was worth about seven times the national income in Europe and about five times the national income in the United States. (The difference has to do with the availability of cheap land and higher levels of productivity.)

Those societies were unequal: In the United States and Britain in 1910, the richest 1 percent of citizens hauled in about a fifth of the income. And such societies tended to get more unequal because the rate of return on capital (r) is generally higher than the rate of growth (g) in the economy as a whole. Remember the formula

$$r > g$$

because it will soon be on T-shirts in college bookstores near you. Investments traditionally get a return of about 5 percent in Europe, 4 percent in the United States, while leading-edge economies grow, on average, at 1 or 1.5 percent a year. So the rich get richer.

The only reason we don't already have the class structure of a banana republic is that, for a few decades in the mid-twentieth century—roughly the years of the world wars and the Great Depression—capital stock was destroyed by bombs and its value undermined by inflation. But in recent decades $r > g$ has once more begun doing its insidious work. Our capital/income ratios are approaching those of a century ago. In the United States, "income from labor is about as unequally distributed as has ever been observed anywhere." At book's end Piketty puts forward a few suggestions for action. They are quite

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radical. One is a global tax on wealth. Piketty also suggests that European national budgets, which take up half of GDP in some countries, might have room to grow.

Certain reviewers have conflated Piketty's views with those of Karl Marx—hopefully in the case of the *Nation*, despairingly in the *Wall Street Journal*. The latter, in a piece called "Thomas Piketty Revives Marx for the 21st Century," claimed to see in his work "a moral illegitimacy to virtually any accumulation of wealth" and a hostility to growth. "Not that enhancing growth is much on Piketty's mind," the *Journal* adds, "either as an economic matter or as a means to greater distributive justice. He assumes that the economy is static and zero-sum." This is all wrong. Piketty, while a leftist of a kind, is explicitly anti-Marxist. He believes Marx's ideas of falling rates of profit are based on a primitive conception of productivity, and he runs down a variety of French leftist philosophers—Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser, Alain Badiou—in his footnotes.

Far from ignoring growth, Piketty is obsessed with it. He worries about demographic stagnation, and he worries about productivity. When societies don't grow, inherited wealth looms large.

Far from ignoring growth, Piketty is obsessed with it. He worries about demographic stagnation, and he worries about productivity. When societies don't grow, inherited wealth looms large. The societies right now in which it looms largest are geriatric Japan and Italy. Slow-growing societies become rentier societies. *Rentier* is the word Piketty uses in the original French to mean, neutrally, "living off rent." But it implies disapproval, too, and it gives off an extra air of decadence and corruption in English, much as "cowboy" turns into a special kind of slur when it passes into French.

Piketty's belief in the inevitability of certain capitalist processes is one sense in which he resembles Karl Marx. Extreme inequality is inherent to capitalism, in his view, not a product of corruption or chance. Noting that Mario Draghi, head of the European Central Bank, hopes to save the eurozone by promising to "fight against rents," Piketty writes:

> The fact that capital yields income . . . has absolutely nothing to do with the problem of imperfect competition or monopoly. If capital plays a useful role in the process of production, it is natural that it should be paid. . . . Rent is not an imperfection in the market: it is rather the consequence of a "pure and perfect" market for capital.

Piketty's objection to Draghi sounds in places more entrepreneurial than Marxist.

Yes, his data undermine the Panglossian position that capitalism is a perfectly self-correcting system, but this position is a straw man. A good proxy for the number of people who actually believe this would be the 1,275,951 people, or just under 1 percent, who voted for former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson, Libertarian candidate for president in 2012. But there is something more interesting about Piketty's arguments. They are as devastating to those who hail the book as to those who deplore it. In particular, Piketty questions the idea that mid-twentieth-century welfare measures, such as the New Deal, worked to trammel capitalism at all.

Krugman, in an otherwise glowing review in the *New York Review of Books*, accuses Piketty of an "intellectual sleight of hand." Krugman wants more on America's elites. "The main reason there has been a hankering for a book like this," Krugman writes, "is the rise, not just of the one percent, but specifically of the American one percent. Yet that rise, it turns out, has happened for reasons that lie beyond the scope of Piketty's grand thesis." There is actually plenty on America's elites in Piketty's book, but Krugman is otherwise right—what Piketty has to say about them doesn't have much to do with the model the book lays out.

For Krugman, the hinge-year of American inequality is 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected. "Since 1980 the one percent has seen its income share surge again," Krugman writes. The Federal Reserve has seen "a dramatic shift in the process of US economic growth, one that started around 1980. . . . After 1980 . . . the lion's share of gains went to the top end." Piketty is not so wowed by 1980. For him, the only break from the perennial depredations of capital comes in a period that shows up on a graph as a U-shaped trough, starting in about 1910 and lasting about a half-century. The ratio of capital to output falls dramatically—from its usual 7 to about 2 or 3 in Europe, and from its usual 5 to about 3 or 4 in the United States. We are now returning to pre-World War I ratios, but this has been a slow process, one that began sometime between 1950 and 1970, according to Piketty's charts.

It would be easy to read Piketty's work as a blueprint for a future leftism—but not as a vindication of historic liberalism. "It was indeed the two world wars that wiped the slate clean in the twentieth century," he writes. It is hard to draw any lessons from them for our own time. There has never been a successful program to tame

capitalism, at least no program one would dare to replicate. Consider inflation. It is an innovation of the twentieth century, Piketty shows. In the novels of Balzac and Jane Austen, the yield on land is so steady (5 percent) that it need not even be mentioned. To have an estate worth a million francs is to have a yearly income of 50,000. "The two measuring scales were used interchangeably," he writes, "as if rent and capital were synonymous, or perfect equivalents in two different languages."

Piketty has been a bit overpraised for these Balzac and Austen allusions. Their import stretches only to accounting matters. Piketty does not have a great literary style, as, for instance, John Kenneth Galbraith did. But he has a clear one. His book has been excellently translated by Arthur Goldhammer, translator of Tocqueville and the historians Jacques Le Goff and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. Goldhammer also writes, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, a well-informed and biting blog on French politics.

Piketty proposes a Europe-wide, and eventually a worldwide, annual tax on capital. It would start at 1 percent for fortunes from $1.4 million to $7 million, and 2 percent for bigger ones.

Where inflation is dangerous, so is debt. Many Americans have a vague feeling that there is something progressive and generous-hearted about permitting the government to take on debt. It allows us to go behind the backs of the greedy rich and do something for the poor. When inflation is high, it may work this way, but not in the nineteenth century and not now. Piketty—and here is another place he resembles Marx—takes a very dim view of government debt. When governments want to spend more, they have a choice. They can raise money through taxes. Or they can incur debt by issuing bonds. Doing the latter will entitle bondholders to an enduring claim on a country's assets. We are returning to a world in which the state pays out regular tribute, even if it is disguised by the way we keep economic statistics. Italy, for instance, has borrowed $2.8 trillion. Recent figures show private wealth growing in Italy. But a quarter of that growth was in government bonds, Piketty notes, meaning it was not so much an asset as "a growing debt that one portion of the Italian population owed to another."

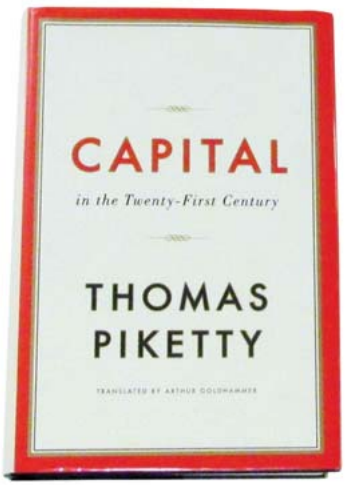
Piketty presents us with interesting ways of conceiving of property, vital for thinking about inequality. One of these is "Tobin's Q," named for the economist James Tobin. The measure compares the market value and the book value of assets, including companies. U.S. firms tend to be worth more than 100 percent of the sum of their parts, German firms less. This, Piketty asserts, is because German firms have, by law and custom, obligations to various "stakeholders" that limit and condition their prerogatives. A large part of the increase in inequality since the war has been an increase in the depth and security of private property rights. In 1948 in most Western countries, an efficient factory might have looked like a target for nationalization or punitive taxation. Now it is to be idolized and wooed with deductions and subsidies. The privatizations of industry in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse are notorious to us. But sometimes the change in property rights is so slow that it nearly escapes notice. "The privatization of national wealth in the developed countries since 1970," Piketty writes, "can be regarded as a very attenuated form of this extreme case."

Polemics around inequality have won attention for Piketty. But his book is ultimately more interesting as a meditation on history. Piketty, born in 1971, has said he wants to "put the two world wars into proper perspective." Many things that a quarter-century ago looked like "laws" of history now appear like overeager generalizations from two atypical episodes. He calls the aftermath of World War II a "reconstruction," in a way that recalls Francis Fukuyama's discussion of the redeployment of "social capital" in his 1999 masterwork *The Great Disruption*. Piketty prompts us to ask whether the inequality he describes—through some historic channel we have ignored in our focus on European imperial politics—might somehow have caused the wars of the twentieth century. This is a subtle, serious, and thought-provoking book.

That does not mean that Piketty is a particularly astute or subtle historian. Interviewed in the *New Left Review* about the mid-twentieth-century history he describes, Piketty seemed to have little interest in the question of whether communism, through public opinion or otherwise, had placed pressure on the capitalist West to make concessions to the working classes and the poor. He misrepresents something the economist Simon Kuznets said in a 1955 talk. Kuznets described certain countries as being "within the orbit of the free world." Piketty ascribes to him a desire "to maintain the underdeveloped countries 'within the orbit of the free world.'" Piketty offers a partisan narrative of the Socialist/Communist government of François Mitterrand in France after 1981, attributing its capitalist turn to a series of privatizations undertaken by conservatives in 1986, not to Mitterrand's own surrender after his economic program's failure in

1983. In establishing the common European currency, the euro, the European Union did not "neglect" taxation and debt in favor of currency. It pursued the euro because it lacked the legitimacy to pursue taxation and debt.

The very best review of Piketty's book to have appeared is the one the MIT economist Robert M. Solow wrote in the *New Republic*. Naturally—Solow shaped the modern way economists think about growth. For him, the great achievement of Piketty's book is its unity. Other explanations of inequality—technology here, globalization there—seemed "a little adventitious, accidental; whereas a forty-year trend common to the advanced economies of the United States, Europe, and Japan would be more likely to rest on some deeper forces within modern industrial capitalism." For this reason it will be good to fix *Capital*'s merits in one's mind. It is likely to become a political weapon in the hands of those whom the historian Jacob Burckhardt called, in 1889, "*terribles simplificateurs*."



Piketty has not exactly tried to dodge this outcome. He lauds radicalism and activism. He is full of admiration for the packet of "confiscatory" taxation on top earners passed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1937, even if "by its very nature, such a tax brings in almost nothing." At such moments the United States was in the world's left-wing vanguard. He notes that the country had top income-tax rates of 80 percent at a time when no country in the West had seen anything like it before. In the same spirit, Piketty proposes his own innovation: a Europe-wide, and eventually a worldwide, annual tax on capital. It would start at 1 percent for fortunes from $1.4 million to $7 million, and 2 percent for bigger ones. He wants to publish detailed accounts of corporate holdings, because "the accounting data that companies are currently required to publish are entirely inadequate for allowing workers or ordinary citizens to form an opinion about corporate decisions, much less to intervene in them." Intervene how?

Piketty is right that there is no technical reason why such a tax could not be put into place. In fact, it could fit seamlessly into the regime of financial surveillance that the Obama administration has urged—and many politicians of both parties have abetted—both in broadening sanctions against Putin's Russia and in forcing an end to bank secrecy in Switzerland. It is democratic politics at the national level that makes such schemes unworkable. Who would get to build the new international system of taxation? The people who know the most, and care the most, about international taxation. That means the people most subject to it. To take nation-states out of the business of revenue collection might actually be giving the wealthy what they've sought all along. Piketty seems insufficiently mindful of the risk of regulatory capture.

Or is he ambivalent, even conflicted, in his own attitude towards elites? On one hand, Piketty worries about the way "modern meritocratic society, especially in the United States, is much harder on the losers." He takes aim at yuppie elites who think that modern capital has somehow "become more 'dynamic' and less 'rent-seeking.'" On the other hand, he talks this way himself sometimes, calling our society "hypermeritocratic," to distinguish it from "hyperpatrimonial" societies. Although he admits there can be overlap, this sounds more like a defense of Western capitalism than a condemnation.

Piketty seems to draw his own ethics of inequality from Article I of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which he quotes several times in the course of the book. "I have no interest in denouncing inequality or capitalism per se," Piketty writes, "especially since social inequalities are not in themselves a problem as long as they are justified, that is 'founded only upon common utility.'" He keeps finding different ways to say this. "Democratic modernity," he says, "is founded on the belief that inequalities based on individual talent and effort are more justified than other inequalities." Whose democratic modernity? Ayn Rand's? And then: "I want to insist on this point: the key issue is the justification of inequalities rather than their magnitude as such."

There is a Christian distrust of wealth that you can find in the Gospels and R.H. Tawney. There is of course a Marxist case against exploitation. But it gets harder to justify an all-out expropriation once you are, as they used to say in France, without Marx or Jesus. Amartya Sen and John Rawls, whom Piketty invokes in passing, are poor substitutes. In the end, it would help to know more about the ethical basis for Piketty's argument against inequality—especially since a depression and two doses of world war seem to be the only proven antidote for the ailment he has diagnosed. ♦

Wars Within Wars

In northern Syria, the Kurds try to carve out a territory and fend off the jihadists

By Jonathan Spyer

Kobani, Syrian Kurdish Region

With Syrian presidential elections scheduled for June, the incumbent and shoo-in for reelection, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, is campaigning on the promise that 2014 will be the year in which military operations in Syria end. However, the situation in northern Syria, exemplified by the conflict in the canton of Kobani, an area stretching from the Turkish border to south of Kobani city, and from Tell Abyad in the east to Jarabulus in the west, casts doubt on Assad's optimism.

Kobani is under Kurdish control, but cuts into a larger section of territory controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, a jihadist organization. ISIS aims to hold a clear, contiguous area stretching from Syria's border with Turkey into western Iraq, where it controls territory in the provinces of Ninewah and Anbar. The existence of the Kurdish canton of Kobani interferes with this plan, and since March ISIS has launched daily attacks against positions held by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) at the edges of the enclave. The Kobani situation offers a window into the Syrian conflict, a fragmented reality where in large parts of the country the regime is little more than a memory, and well-organized rival militias representing starkly different political projects are clashing. Last month, I traveled to the Kobani enclave, entering from the Turkish border with Kurdish smugglers. The road was short but perilous—a sprint toward the border fence in the dark and a rapid, fumbling climb over it.

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Kobani was the first of three cantons established by the Kurdish Democratic Union party (PYD) since the Assad regime withdrew from much of northern Syria in the summer of 2012. There are two other such enclaves: the much larger Jazeera canton to the east, which stretches from the town of Ras al-Ain to the border with Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, and the smaller area around the city of Afrin further west. In all three of these areas, the PYD has set up a Kurdish-dominated autonomous administration. The intention of the Kurds is to consolidate their independent government and eventually to unite the three cantons.

In the meantime, however, the stark reality of siege conditions in the Kobani canton was immediately apparent to me. The main electricity supply had been cut off, with only intermittent power from hastily rigged-up generators. The water supply, too, had been interrupted, and the local Kurdish authorities were busy digging wells in the hope of reaching natural springs located deep underground.

Yet for all this, life in the city functions in a way closely resembling normality. The two hospitals in the city lack medical equipment and medicines, but they are open. "We are improvising, we are innovating, and we are not dying," a doctor told me at Ayn al-Arab hospital in Kobani city. The school system is functioning, too, and in northern Syria at present these are no small achievements.

The Kurdish enclaves are almost certainly the most peaceful and best-governed areas in Syria. However, the Kurds are aware of the precariousness of their achievement. Ali, a member of the Kurdish Asayish paramilitary police, told me that "Assad doesn't want to open another front now. But if he finishes with the radical groups, then he'll come for us, inevitably." In the meantime, as one PYD official said, "We take a third line, neither with the regime nor with the Free Syrian Army. We hope in the future to unite all the cantons. We accept a role for the Arabs, so we

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don't see a problem with this. And right now, we have one goal—keeping out ISIS."

The PYD's "democratic autonomy" project in northern Syria put it on a collision course with ISIS, which is trying to lay the basis for an Islamic state run according to its own floridly brutal interpretation of *sharia* law. The resulting conflict then is not simply about territory, or who will rule northern Syria; it is also about how this land will be ruled.

Mahmoud Musa, a Syrian political analyst and a refugee from the town of Jisr al-Shughur, told me that "there are three serious and well-organized forces in Syria today—the Assad regime, ISIS, and the Kurds." The last two regard themselves as at war with the regime. In reality, the rival mini-states they have carved out of a fragmented Syria are mainly in conflict with each other.

A YPG fighter fires during an ISIS attack on the village of Haj Ismail in western Kobani.

ISIS has emerged as one of the strangest and cruelest of the many political-military movements now active in Syria. I spoke with a young Kurdish man named Perwer who had spent a week in ISIS captivity. He was arrested at the Jarabulus border crossing, while returning to Syria from Istanbul. First detained by members of another Islamist unit, the Tawhid Brigade, he was then handed over to ISIS and kept for five days in one of the movement's jails in Jarabulus town, just west of the Kobani enclave.

Perwer related that a Kurdish man who had been caught raising the YPG flag in a village near the border with the Kurdish enclave was tortured to death. He also noted that among his fellow prisoners were Arab residents of Jarabulus held for drinking wine. They too were tortured. The Kurdish prisoners were regularly insulted and called apostates by the ISIS guards, who came from a variety of countries. Copies of the Koran were handed out to the Kurdish detainees, and the days in their crowded cell were broken up by prayer sessions, in which ISIS would seek to instruct their Muslim captives in what they regard as the correct method of Muslim prayer.

ISIS's mini-state reaches from the edges of Kobani to deep inside western Iraq. I visited the frontlines on the eastern edge of the Kobani enclave, where the positions of the YPG and ISIS push up against each other. In Tell Abyad, the two sides are camped in abandoned villages, where the ruined landscape has a slightly lunar quality. Eyewitnesses told me that ISIS forced the villagers to leave when the fighting began. Young fighters of the YPG moved carefully around their positions in the abandoned village, ever mindful of the presence of ISIS snipers. In places, the two sides are less than 500 meters apart. ISIS favors mortar fire by night and sniping by day. This has taken a toll on the male and female fighters of the YPG. Around 80 of them have died since the fighting erupted in March. Many more ISIS men, however, have been killed in their wild and uncoordinated attacks.

In Jarabulus on the western side, the frontline villages are still inhabited. Some of the local Arab clans are backing ISIS. A sort of de facto mini-transfer of populations has taken place in the area, largely, though not solely, along ethnic lines. I met a couple of Sunni Arabs among the ranks of the YPG fighters. There are also Kurdish volunteers among the ISIS men, including some commanders. They hail mainly from the villages of Iraqi Kurdistan, in particular from the Halabja area. Yet these details aside, it is clear the main dynamic of the conflict in this area is ethnic and sectarian, with Kurds faced off against Sunni Arab Islamists. The attitude of the YPG fighters to their ISIS enemies combines a certain contempt for their military prowess, with a sort of fascinated horror at their savage practices.

"They outnumber us, often. But they lack tactics," said Surkhwi, a female fighter and the commander of the Kurdish fighters in the village of Abduqli. "We think many of them take drugs before entering combat, and they attack randomly, haphazardly. They desecrate bodies of our fighters, cutting off heads, cutting off hands. They don't respect the laws of war," Surkhwi told me. "We also know that ISIS look at us women fighters as something not serious, because of their Islamic ideology. They think that if they are killed by a woman, they won't go to paradise."

The YPG fighters themselves, meanwhile, are clearly experienced and well trained. While interviewing one YPG commander, Nohalat Kobani, I had the chance to witness his troops in action. The position in the village of Haj Ismail where we were conducting the interview came under attack from small arms fire as we were talking. I

PHOTOGRAPHS: JONATHAN SPYER

followed the YPG fighters as they raced to their positions to return fire. The coordination and discipline were impressive. The YPG blasted back at the ISIS position, 500 meters away, with rifles and a medium-caliber machine gun. After a while, the shooting from the other side stopped. Nohalat Kobani, a large, corpulent man and a veteran PYD activist, was amused and unperturbed by the incident. We recommenced our interview as soon as the shooting stopped.

I met two ISIS fighters in an apartment in Kilis in the south of Turkey, two days after the skirmish at Haj Ismail. It was strange to be sipping tea and smoking with men whose comrades had been shooting at me a short time earlier. It was also fascinating to gain an insight into the appeal that ISIS has managed to exercise over some Syrians, and the way that the movement views the situation in northern Syria.

Both men were Syrians. Abu Muhammad was clean-shaven and wearing a black tracksuit. Abu Nur sported a short beard. I remarked to my contact afterwards that I would never have taken them for Islamists. He told me that ISIS men customarily shave their beards and adopt western dress when entering Turkey from Syria, so as to avoid the attention of the Turkish security services and police.

Female members of the Kurdish 'Asayesh' paramilitary police force in Kobani

Abu Nur outlined his reasons for joining the organization. He had been a member of the Northern Storm militia, a notoriously corrupt non-Islamist militia group that had controlled the Bab al-Salameh border crossing from Turkey. The incident that had compelled him to leave Northern Storm and join ISIS, he said, was Senator John McCain's visit to Bab al-Salameh in the spring of 2013. Abu Nur explained that he is suspicious of foreign governments using Syrians for their own ends, so when fighting began between ISIS and Northern Storm in his hometown of Azaz, he joined ISIS, which laid waste to his former colleagues in the subsequent weeks. He had stayed with ISIS, he told me, because it "imposes *sharia*, acts against criminals and robbers, and has no contact with any foreign government."

When I asked Abu Muhammad about ISIS's practice of cutting off hands and heads as lawful punishments, he told me that "the media have exaggerated this. In certain areas they cut hands off, in others not," he said. "We have tried our best to apply *sharia* law. Of course there have been some mistakes."

ISIS has recently carried out a strategic retreat in parts of northern Syria, which in some ways resembles the earlier redeployment by the regime. In January of this year, under pressure from other rebel brigades, ISIS began to withdraw its fighters from Idleb and much of Aleppo provinces, concentrating them in its Raqqa stronghold and further east. Abu Mohammed explained the reasons for ISIS's redeployment. "If there are powers against me, I have to retreat and protect my back. And perhaps in the future I will return again."

ISIS rules over large swaths of western Iraq's Anbar and Ninewah provinces, where its fighters are engaged in an insurgency against the government of Nuri al-Maliki, who has been employing sectarian tactics against the Sunnis. So there is a strategic logic to ISIS contracting its forces and drawing down in northwest Syria. The problem for the Kurds is that the Kobani enclave falls within the area that ISIS still seeks to dominate.

Abu Muhammad expressed the matter clearly: "The YPG wants to establish a Kurdish state. This is completely unacceptable. We want the caliphate, something old and new, from the time of Mohammed. The Europeans created false borders. We want to break these borders."

Still, ISIS's plan to destroy the Kobani canton is unlikely to succeed. The Kurdish administration and its militia are capable and well organized, and will continue to defend the enclave's borders with weapons and supplies smuggled from across the Turkish border. There are veterans of the Kurdistan Workers' party war against Turkey advising the PYD on both civil and military matters. They appear more than able to stave off ISIS, and to continue to develop the institutions of their autonomy.

Bashar al-Assad may please himself with the farce of elections, but the wars within wars, competing worldviews, and irreconcilable projects, in northern Syria are testimony to the fact of the country's fragmentation. They reflect also the rapid change still underway in the Middle East, as old ideas and regimes contract and fade, and new contenders for power make war among the ruins. ♦

Growing Pains

Britain's UKIP raises the question: Can an anti-political party ever be a political success?

By Ted R. Bromund

Lewes, Sussex

"So, what are you going to do about the problem of dog fouling?" I was following Donna Edmunds, a district councilor and a United Kingdom Independence party (UKIP) candidate for the European parliament, as she went door to door in the center of Lewes, a picturesque town nestled just below the South Downs, on the edge of the London commuter belt. There weren't many votes for UKIP in prosperous Lewes, and there was one less after Edmunds said that while her party was definitely opposed to dog poop, they didn't actually have a policy on it.

The next house didn't go any better. "What are you going to do about Page 3 girls?" Edmunds allowed that, as a believer in individual freedom, she wasn't planning on doing anything about the topless young ladies that grace the inside of the *Sun* newspaper. As we turned away, we agreed that if you didn't like Page 3 girls, the appropriate thing to do was not to buy the *Sun*. But it was another vote lost.

A UKIP billboard in Lincolnshire, England

NEWSCOM

On May 22, Britain—and Europe—will start to vote in elections to the European parliament. Actually, most people won't bother with the voting: Across the EU, turnout has fallen continuously since 1979. But in Britain, UKIP is looking forward to the day. Polls put it neck and neck with Labour for first place. If UKIP wins, it will be the first outright victory in a national election for any party other than Labour or the Tories since 1906. Admittedly, it's only a European election—the obvious irony is that UKIP, like many insurgent parties across the EU, will do best in elections to a legislature it despises. But with the next British general election scheduled to be held in May 2015, UKIP could be more than a flash in the pan protest. With the near collapse of the Liberal Democrats, part of David Cameron's coalition government, UKIP has a chance to become Britain's third party. What is less clear is whether UKIP is ready to seize that chance.

UKIP was founded in 1993, but it endured a chaotic and poorly led first 15 years. It won over 16 percent in the 2009 European elections, but it drew barely 3 percent of the vote in the 2010 general election, and it rarely figured in national opinion polling until 2012. Then, suddenly, UKIP shot ahead, impelled in part by the near-simultaneous collapse of every other alternative. The far-right British National party (BNP) fell apart; Labour had the turgid Ed Miliband as its new leader; the Liberal Democrats imploded as they were forced to take responsibility for governing; and the Tories bungled the 2012 budget by imposing new taxes on the elderly. From low single digits, UKIP surged in national voting intentions to the mid-teens, and in European voting intentions to 30 percent.

That surge has spurred on the world-class British psephological industry, as pollsters try to figure out where the voters are coming from. UKIP, naturally, celebrates itself as the voice of Britain, drawing support from all regions, classes, and parties, and there is a bit of truth in that claim. But only a bit. The reality is that a substantial plurality of UKIP's support—over 43 percent, according to a massive survey by Populus and the *Financial Times*—comes from former Conservative supporters. Former Liberal Democrat, core UKIP, and nonvoters and former supporters of minor parties add a bit more than 15 percent each, and former Labour voters well under 10 percent. By the same

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token, UKIP is strongest in the Tory heartlands in the South, weaker in the Labour North and Wales, and almost nonexistent in Scotland.

So while the first academic analysis of UKIP, *Revolt on the Right*, recently published by Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin, finds that it poses a serious long-run threat to Labour, today it's primarily a problem for the Conservative party. It would be a bigger problem if it were better organized on the ground: One UKIP activist described the party to me as "aggressively amateur." Peter Catterall, a distinguished historian of modern Britain and a Tory councilor in the London borough of Bexley, estimates that if UKIP got its act together locally, it could poll 20 percent. As it is, UKIP has perhaps 5 percent in Bexley. UKIP's surge reflects the party's sudden fame—or notoriety—more than it does the building of a permanent institution.

UKIP leader Nigel Farage

EURO REALIST NEWSLETTER

The Conservative party is very much a permanent institution, and in politics you don't become an institution without a well-developed sense of paranoia. After all, they really are all out to get you. Cameron has tried to respond to UKIP by promising to hold a referendum on British membership in the EU if he wins the next election, and by pledging to cut net migration into Britain to the "tens of thousands." But neither appeal has worked, because neither is credible. As Cameron freely admits, he doesn't actually want to leave the EU, and as long as it's in the EU, Britain lacks the right to control its borders: Annual net migration jumped by late 2013 to over 200,000, more than half of it from within the EU.

While UKIP is often described as Euroskeptic—and it is, intensely so—there is no evidence that Britain will vote en masse for a party that bases its core appeal on hostility to the EU. The EU is ignored, disliked, and resented in Britain, but except for a stout band of believers, the preservation of British sovereignty and parliamentary democracy are too abstract to win votes. What mass immigration has done, for the first time, is connect the EU to economic, social, and identity issues, which voters do care about.

And the leader of UKIP, Nigel Farage, is a genius at making that connection. Like him or not, you cannot watch him without realizing that, as a performer, he is simply in a different league from Britain's other party leaders. When the leader of the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg, unwisely challenged Farage to a series of debates earlier this year, Farage squashed him comprehensively. His penchant for troubling remarks—such as his expressed admiration for Vladimir Putin's political skills, which made waves in late March—is an unpleasant facet of his appeal as the pint-drinking, politically incorrect disturber of the political establishment. As I found on the doorsteps of Lewes, he alienates three voters for every four he attracts, but that's still a net win.

The heart of UKIP's appeal, as Ford and Goodwin rightly put it, is both antipolitical and working class. It bears similarities to Enoch Powell's rebellion in the late 1960s, in that it comes from the Tory party but, by opposing the EU and mass immigration, appeals strongly to those conventionally held to be on the left. It is anti-EU because the EU is the doyen of Britain's postwar establishment, and it opposes mass immigration because the elites have—on occasion furtively—supported it. It speaks most clearly to the voters alienated by Tony Blair's metropolitan liberalism, Clegg and Miliband's oleaginous insignificance, and Cameron's Etonian privilege. The prime minister famously dismissed UKIP as "fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists," and UKIP supporters—Kippers—return the compliment with interest. Speaking with me over a pint, one Kipper put it thus: "I hate David Cameron, and I hate his fat face too."

Every calculation of political interest tells the Tories—and especially Euroskeptic Tories, who are in the majority in the party—that they need to do a deal with UKIP before 2015, lest it turn victory from an improbability to an impossibility, lose them their shot at a referendum, and hand the government to Labour. But powerful instincts in both parties are against an alliance. So far, Labour has lost few votes to UKIP: It is out of power, and core Labour voters are more tribal in their loyalties than the swollen Tory vote that won the ambiguous victory of 2010. But in the long run, if Britain's major parties continue to define themselves as elite, professional, and metropolitan, none will be well-placed to win back voters who have drifted to UKIP.

Yet that doesn't stop them from trying. If UKIP can be loved, it is mostly for its enemies. There is the EU, of course, but—centrally—there is the British political establishment, which has over the past six months done its unavailing best to rubbish UKIP. There is much in UKIP that deserves rubbishing, but when the Europhile *Financial Times* argues that UKIP is secretly composed of professional politicians—it's really not—or when Tory columnist Matthew Paris describes it as an "unpleasant mutiny within the Conservative Party"—as though party

members should shut up and obey—they make UKIP's case for it.

But UKIP is its own worst enemy. To his credit, Farage has stayed clear, as Goodwin acknowledges, of Powell's rhetoric and the extremist territory of the BNP, and UKIP has refused to form ties with the French National Front. Its problems are not ideological, but political and structural. After a day of canvassing around Lewes, every single UKIP supporter I had met conformed to the stereotype: male, white, older, Tory-leaning, and on the border between working and middle class. The Conservative party of Margaret Thatcher commanded that vote—and it could do so again, if it did its job—but that is a limited constituency.

More fundamentally, UKIP is also trapped by its own appeal and sincere self-definition as an anti-political pressure party. Time and again, UKIP activists privately bemoaned the party's factionalism, and its amateurism on matters of both organization and policy. But to mature as a party is to become what they genuinely dislike, and might damage their everyman appeal. It also risks exposing the cleavage between its younger activists—who incline towards libertarianism—and its older supporters, who dislike mass immigration in part because they believe it means the British state has less money to spend on social services for them. The more the party takes votes from Labour, the worse that tension will become.

An anti-UKIP protest in Edinburgh, Scotland

BRIAN MCNEIL

Nor is it clear how UKIP will do what political parties exist to do: win. Whether you believe it will work or not, the Tea Party, to which UKIP is often compared, does have a strategy: Use the U.S. primary system to take over the Republican party. But Britain, crucially, lacks real primaries that could encourage buy-in to the main political parties, so UKIP has to work from the outside. Both in this approach and in its appeal to disaffected, apolitical, lower-middle-class voters, UKIP is closer to Ross Perot's campaigns of the 1990s than the Tea Party of 2010, whose supporters, Gallup found, were demographically "quite representative of the public at large." Farage argues that UKIP can win victories by pressuring the major British parties, but if UKIP genuinely believed that claim, it would be nicer about David Cameron. In theory, a UKIP that takes enough seats in Parliament could be a viable coalition partner for a populist Tory party that had jettisoned Cameron—but that implies UKIP plans to build for the long haul.

Which brings me back to Lewes. Successful parties in Britain have strong constituency roots: The Liberal Democrats toiled for years in local government before they made their national breakthrough in 1997. But though UKIP does have a few local councilors—217 at last count—and will have more after local elections are held on May 22 in combination with the European vote, no one supports UKIP because they care about dog fouling or Page 3 girls. They vote UKIP because they care, passionately, about national issues. For most parties, success at the local level in May would presage later national victories. Unless UKIP's leadership and membership start taking base-building and seat-targeting far more seriously, it will ride high only as long as immigration—atypically, even irrationally—ranks with the economy as the most important issue facing Britain, as it has done for the past few months. Immigration may be a good starter issue—and Britain's legal inability to control its own borders is an entirely legitimate and reasonable subject on which to campaign—but it's likely to be a bad finisher.

Above all, UKIP is a reflection of the rising power and intrusiveness of the EU, certainly, but also of the broader decay of political parties and political deference across Europe, and in Britain in particular. In a parliamentary system, the decay of parties is intensely problematic, because it is parties that make governments: UKIP could never have come into existence in 1955, when the Tories and Labour commanded 96 percent of the vote, as opposed to the 65 percent they won in 2010. It is remarkable that the two most vital politicians in Britain today, London mayor Boris Johnson and Farage himself, are both outside Parliament.

On the other hand, the decline of political deference, which Tory MP Douglas Carswell has rightly described as the application of the conservative principles of choice and competition to politics, is far more healthy—and healthy or not, it is a trend politicians cannot stop. But it means that UKIP is trying to build a party in an era of party disintegration. There is much to applaud in UKIP's desire to free the Parliament of Westminster from the toils of Brussels. But there is nothing about this mission that is going to be easy. Whether it wins or not on May 22, UKIP has a narrow and testing window of opportunity before the next general election. If UKIP is going to do the job, this needs to be the year it grows up. ♦

Let's Tax Carbon

It's the worst form of energy policy, except for all those others that have been tried

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Having lived through and survived Richard Nixon's promise of energy independence, Jimmy Carter's effort to substitute a hair shirt and a woolly sweater for a thermostat set at comfortable levels, George W. Bush's insistence that Americans surrender their incandescent light bulbs, other presidents' support for subsidies for ethanol and nuclear power, and the current administration's plan to substitute subsidized wind and sun for fossil fuels, I thought I had seen it all—every technique imaginable for interfering with free markets and consumer choice. I was wrong.

Now we have the Third National Climate Assessment, making the case for further intervention by our government, and every other government for that matter, in the energy markets. The assessment comes in at a thumping 829 pages, succinctly summarized in a 137-page "Highlights" section, and concludes that the globe is warming—and freezing; we are experiencing more severe droughts—and floods; our forests, many of them "within urban areas," are being destroyed; our winter storms are more severe; "Native Peoples' access to traditional foods and adequate water" is threatened. If you experience weather of any sort, an experience hard to avoid, it is sure to change. You are experiencing climate change. It's happening "right now," not in some far-off future, says the president.

There's no mention of slaying of the first born, lest the authors be accused of plagiarizing from the Passover Haggadah's nasty plagues (bugs, hail, locusts, et al.) visited by God on the Egyptians who mistreated the Israelites. But that's all that's left out of the parade of horribles.

Supporters of both the 300 experts and 60-member federal advisory committee that produced the assessment like to claim that the science is "settled," which commentator Charles Krauthammer has pointed out science never can be (witness Copernicus, Galileo, and Einstein, among other unsettlers of "settled" issues). Anyone who questions the models and conclusions of what the president calls "the 97 percent of scientists" (I think he meant to say "97 percent of reporters") is a "denier," a disgusting echo of the term usually reserved for the anti-Semites who deny the Holocaust. Although the assessment refers to evidence that "tells an unambiguous story" of climate disaster and disrupted lives, it concedes, "There has been no universal trend in the overall extent of drought in the continental U.S. since 1900 . . . [and] trends in severe storms, including the intensity and frequency of tornadoes, hail, and damaging thunderstorm winds, are uncertain and are being studied intensely," a conclusion essential lest the continued flow of grant money to the assessors and advisers dry up along with large sections of the country.

Fortunately, there is little prospect that the call to arms will be heard: Polls show that climate change is low on Americans' list of worries. But that does not mean the assessment will prove harmless, for it lays the basis for a more complete takeover of energy industries by a president who knows how to deploy the regulatory process to impose his vision on the country, to "transform" it, as he promised even before winning his first presidential election.

The president is fortunate in his opposition, which specializes in doing just that—opposing—but only that. Republicans and many of their conservative allies quite rightly question the science underlying the claims of the president but offer no alternatives to his call for more and more regulations on the production and consumption of energy. One is available, and should not be hastily rejected: a carbon tax.

Conservatives can maintain their skepticism about global climate change, but that does not mean that a bit of prudential action might not be appropriate should it turn out that carbon emissions are indeed having a negative effect on climate. A carbon tax would allow for rebating a portion of the regressive payroll taxes that are job-killers, while further reducing our still-heavy dependence on oil imported from countries that don't like us, and providing a market-based substitute for costly subsidies and regulations that are piece-by-piece turning the energy sector over to government control. They say that in politics you can't beat something with nothing, which is what Republicans and conservatives have been doing when it comes to energy policy.

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Meanwhile, self-styled progressives, some of them very smart indeed, think they can successfully intervene in energy markets without imposing huge costs on consumers and on industries, and that such intervention is the only route to a cleaner, more efficient energy economy. They're delusional. In Germany, the decision to shut down nuclear plants and rely on wind and solar has produced a massive increase in energy costs, so politically indefensible that Germany now has 10 coal plants under construction in an effort to prevent its poorer citizens from suffering in the winter and its energy-intensive industries from fleeing to more hospitable climes, including natural-gas-rich America. Worse: The coal these plants will burn is the dirtiest version of the stuff that can be found. In Britain, the government's decision to make a gesture—one that can have no possible effect on global greenhouse gas emissions—by ordering a massive cut in that nation's emissions has made it 63 percent more expensive to heat a home and driven 25 percent of households into what is called "energy poverty"—spending more than 10 percent of their disposable income on energy. Not to mention scarring the beautiful countryside with unwanted wind machines that are slaughtering birds and interfering with the military's radar installations. In this country, hard-working Joe-the-plumbers, driving unsubsidized pickups, are paying taxes that help finance the purchase of $80,000 Tesla all-electric automobiles by Hollywood moguls and other high-earning greens and energy bills swollen by all sorts of regulations the cost/benefit justification for which the EPA refuses to reveal. With more bills to come: A few weeks ago the Department of Energy's experts, hot off their Solyndra success, pledged up to $47 million to each of three offshore wind projects. Even the green-friendly *New York Times* noted that "an Energy Department grant to develop a new technology can be helpful but is certainly no guarantee of success." No surprise there.

A windy day in Scotland

STUART MCMAHAN

In short, costs are rising, the poor are suffering the most in our country and elsewhere, all because government bureaucrats refuse to return the allocation of energy resources to the markets. The bureaucrats believe that they can accomplish what some of the hardest-headed (in the better sense of those words) investors the nation has ever seen cannot: predict how energy markets will react to new developments, including regulations. Legendary hedge fund operators, deal-makers, and Masters of the Universe were so certain that natural gas prices would rise and stay elevated, generating huge profits for lower-cost coal-based power, that they bet billions on the acquisition of a Texas utility, TXU, that is now bust. Along came fracking, moving the natural-gas supply curve in an unanticipated direction, and making electricity generated by the utility's coal plants uncompetitive with natural gas in electricity markets. At least the taxpayer will not pick up the tab for this misadventure, although it is never wise to underestimate the inventiveness of these deal-makers, who have already announced that they will need some complicated favors from the IRS and from regulators to pull off their bankruptcy plan. If the smartest guys in the room, with an enormous personal incentive to get their forecasts of energy markets right, can't succeed, how can we expect bureaucrats, with only taxpayers' skin in the game, to shape efficient, fair energy markets?

Consider the road not taken by our political dabblers in energy policy: Let the market decide who uses energy, and how much, and how it is supplied. But not the market as it is now structured, for it is rife with what economists call market failure—the sending of price signals to consumers and producers that do not reflect the true cost of producing and using energy. One set of distortions makes some forms of energy seem more costly than they are by imposing inefficient regulations on them, driving up costs and prices. Just load regulations on coal producers and generators who burn it, then more regulations, and sooner or later they will give up the one-sided game and put what is left of their capital to more profitable uses. Another set makes some energy sources seem less costly than they are by using taxpayer money to subsidize their production, as is the case with nuclear power, wind, and solar. Set standards for automobile fuel efficiency that make safe, comfortable cars unaffordable for lower-income buyers, who end up with less car than they would have had thanks to policies imposed by politicians, many representing big-city constituents who can walk to the nearest Whole Foods and who use taxpayer-subsidized public transit to get to work.

Suppose, instead, policymakers say to consumers: Consume all the energy you want, in whatever form. But pay the full cost that you impose on society by so doing. Buy your Tesla electric car, but don't expect taxpayers to bear part of the cost or provide you with roads to which you do not contribute because you use no gasoline. Keep your thermostat at 60 degrees in the summer and 80 in the winter, but don't expect to get taxpayers to help out with your utility bills.

And to producers: Generate electricity any safe way you find most efficient, but don't look only to your

narrow-visioned accountants to calculate the cost of what you are doing. Factor in the cost of carbon emissions when you plan future investments in order to account for the risks to the value of those investments from costly future regulations. Some companies, among them ExxonMobil, have started to do just that. A carbon tax would enable you to do that, without worrying that your competitors might not be so forward-looking. Are you pleased with the current system of regulation that will reduce the coal industry to a shadow of its former self, stall or perhaps in the end prevent oil flowing to us from Canada to displace stuff from unstable, hostile countries, or would you prefer to pay for what you do to the environment in exchange for a removal or reduction of uneconomic regulations? Do you really think you can provide the mining and refining capacity the country needs, and the associated infrastructure under the current system, or would you rather offer a trade—carbon taxes for less stringent regulation on new investments, and perhaps lower corporate taxes?

To those who blanch at the thought of any tax, not least a carbon tax, I ask: What is your plan when it becomes clear that we can't finance an adequate military from current revenues? Worried about Chinese expansion at the expense of America's allies? A resurgent Russia that has its eyes on the territory of some of our NATO allies? Beefing up our southern borders so that we can proceed with immigration reform without triggering a new wave of illegal entry? Larger deficits? Then you will need money. Would you prefer higher income taxes? Increased wealth taxes? Or a tax that merely incorporates the social cost of carbon consumption into its price, so that the polluter pays and consumers see real prices when they decide between consuming and abstaining from consumption of carbon-heavy products?

Should we favor policies that will certainly make our enormous coal resources less available, or policies that force producers and consumers to pay for any damage coal usage does to the environment, with only such reduction in consumption as might result from the free exercise of consumer choice? Should taxpayers continue to subsidize renewables so that once fossil-fuel facilities have been decimated we will be left with the unpalatable choice of continuing such subsidies indefinitely or doing without the energy provided by the departed fossil-fuel industries?

There's more, but you get the idea. Germany has gone as far as it can go in ignoring markets, and now has to build 10 coal plants as its penance. Britain has gone as far as it can go in substituting ministers for markets, and now can keep the lights on only by guaranteeing a foreign firm the right to charge perpetually rising electricity rates if it will only build a nuclear plant in the United Kingdom. If the history of energy policy here and abroad teaches anything, it is that smarter policies are not within the grasp of the political class. Better to rely on efficient pricing, which means a carbon tax that puts the burden of energy use where it belongs, on the people and industries using it.

The National Climate Assessment makes it clear that unless conservatives offer a market-based alternative, we will get more government control. Yes, some regulations have succeeded in reducing pollution. But too often at the enormous cost of denying consumers freedom of choice, and of wasting billions we can no longer afford on solutions that cost multiples of price-based solutions that produce more efficient results.

So now is the time. But not for extending the costly mass of regulations the president has been weaving around the fossil-fuel industries and American consumers, which he intends to do to limit fracking, the transport of oil by train (it seems no Keystone pipeline is available), natural gas drilling, and production from existing coal plants. Do not mock when the president says he has a pen and he will use it. Instead, we should begin thinking about where we want energy policy to go after the November elections. Fortunately, it just may be that the pressures and opportunities to develop and implement a sensible policy are coming together.

Funds are scarcer, reducing the affordability of continued subsidies of a variety of uneconomic green projects and increasing the attractiveness of new sources of revenue.

China, its cities so choked with horrible air that expats are demanding premiums to work there, seems willing to discuss a deal on global taxation of emissions; more and more companies are toying with pricing-in carbon, treating emissions as a risk factor either because of shareholder pressure or for fear of making investments that will prove uneconomic when the next regulation hits the books.

This presents an opportunity to rid ourselves of the numerous distortions created by the subsidies and regulations that clutter the road to the more rapid economic growth that would propel the rate of development and introduction of newer, less environmentally intrusive equipment. And to reduce the intrusion of government into our daily lives. And to generate revenue that can be used for deficit reduction, to scupper the regressive payroll tax on work, for social programs, the military, or for whatever purpose leaps to the fertile minds of our politicians.

It would be Panglossian to argue that this can be accomplished all at once by a carbon tax. But the layering of new errors on the policy mistakes of the past several decades surely can be slowed and perhaps prevented if the opposition sets out a principled case for more growth and less government, strengthened market forces, taxes on bad stuff rather than on work and investment. If there's a better, realistic way of achieving those goals than a carbon tax, let's hear it. ♦

The 100th anniversary of Wrigley Field (April 23, 2014)

WARREN WIMMER / NEWSCOM

George Will at Bat

Wrigley Field and the national pastime. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

You can tell George Will is a serious baseball fan because—I wish I could find another way to put this—he is serious about baseball. The statement isn't (quite!) as fatuous as it sounds. Lots of people who profess their love of baseball are mere romantics and mythologists. They'll well up at the thought of the greatness of the game and how its history interweaves with the greatness of America, and they gravely tug their chins at baseball's qualities of timelessness (there's no game clock) and infinitude (in theory, the mythologist will tell you, the foul lines extend into infinity).

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A Nice Little Place on the North Side
Wrigley Field at One Hundred
by George F. Will
Crown, 224 pp., $25

Serious seriousness like Will's isn't dour or grim. As a writer, George Will has a deep appreciation for absurdity generally, and for the many comic absurdities of baseball in particular, and he is a practiced *griot* of the game's colorful characters and history. But where the romantic is content to be high-minded, abstract, and goopy, Will is hardheaded, practical, and precise. The hardheadedness and precision turned *Men at Work*, his detailed 1990 study of how fielders, managers, and hitters do their very difficult jobs, into one of the half-dozen essential books for anyone who wants to understand the game—not the mythology of the game, not the Game as a Key to the American Character. Just the game.

Will's new baseball book is an informal history of Chicago's Wrigley Field, published on the 100th anniversary of its opening. Nothing taps the waterworks of a baseball romantic like Wrigley Field. It is a monument to baseball quaintness, a museum of the game as it once was. The ivy clinging to the outfield walls is just for starters. In place of the vast, dizzying HD screen loom-

ing over the modern ball field, fans at Wrigley gaze up, as their grandfathers did, at a hand-operated scoreboard just above the center field bleachers. A lilting, calliope-like organ pumps happily away in place of the punishing soundtrack of bad music that every other ballpark uses to rouse the tone-deaf fans from their seats.

Wrigley's charm is undeniable, but a little puzzling. Until 20 years ago, Wrigley Field wasn't even the most evocative baseball park in Chicago. Comiskey Park, where the White Sox played for more than 75 years, had witnessed more history—when it was torn down in 1990, it stood as the last ballpark Cy Young had pitched in—and it offered just as much antique atmosphere. The discomforts endured by the fans (suspicious food, overtaxed bathrooms, cramped concourses, hip-pinching seats) rivaled Wrigley's. You could say the same about several old baseball piles that survived into the 21st century, from Tiger Stadium to Yankee Stadium.

Wrigley's reputation for singularity arose from other factors, only one of them perverse. Even as the neighborhoods around baseball's first-generation urban parks (including Comiskey) deteriorated during the 1950s and '60s, the neighborhood surrounding Wrigley stayed relatively safe and livable. The elevated train dropped off fans only two blocks away, the streets to and from the park were lined with handsome old brownstones, and for blocks around, a welcoming, leafy ambience was maintained if you were quick enough to dodge the vomiting Cubs fans who spilled from the doorways of local saloons.

As Will points out, the abiding neighborhood was a mixed blessing for Chicago baseball, for it contributed to the second factor in the sentimentalist swoon. For decades, neighbors resisted management's plans to put lights in the park, and even now, 25 years since illumination, their touchiness restricts the number of night games played there. The same neighborhood pressure limits the advertising in and around Wrigley, the stadium's seating capacity, and the space available for private parking. All of this severely depresses the amount of money an owner can make and, crucially, reinvest in the team to build a winner. The result has been seven decades of nearly unbroken failure on the field. And it is this failure that the romantics truly love.

"Before the Cubs moved into Wrigley," Will writes, "they were what the New York Yankees were to become: a byword for excellence." Over one five-year span, ending in 1910, the Cubs logged what remains the winningest percentage in the history of baseball. The excellence was not to last. The Cubs moved into Wrigley Field, then known as Weeghman Park, in 1916, and the long decline commenced.

> Thus from 1948—encompassing Truman's defeat of Dewey, the Marshall Plan, and the reelection of Chicago's Barack Obama as president—through 2013, they were 693 games under .500, with a winning percentage of .467.

The failure has, it's true, sometimes produced amazing feats. Consider a single season, 1942. One Cub, Lou "The Mad Russian" Novikoff, tried to steal third base even though the bases were already loaded because, he said, "I had such a good jump on the pitcher." A teammate, the shortstop Lennie Merullo, managed to commit four errors in one inning. Will writes appreciatively of such wonders. But as a man essentially serious about the game, he cannot countenance the sustained mediocrity—and worse—that has made the Cubs the cutesy-pie mascots of baseball's romantics. It offends against the game, insults the very qualities that make baseball fun to watch and ponder. True Cubs fans aren't charmed by habitual failure; they want to win.

The man who owned the team the longest, the chewing-gum magnate Philip Wrigley, acculturated the majority of Chicagoans to the hopelessness of his team's condition. He did this, in part, by selling them on the pleasantness of his ballpark. "He was a promoter," Will writes. "The product was actually the Wrigley Field experience." Assembling a winning team was beyond his talents or interests. So he instituted Ladies Days to broaden the team's appeal, admitting hundreds of thousands of wives, mothers, and daughters for free "to the prettiest ball grounds in the world." He approved the ivy that still covers the outfield walls, and recast the datedness of his facility as proof of its timeless charm.

"Our idea," Wrigley said, "in advertising the game, and the fun, and the healthfulness of it, the sunshine and the relaxation, is to get the public to see ballgames, win or lose." The customers he most desired, he admitted, "are people not interested in baseball." Will quotes the former pitcher Jim Brosnan on Wrigley: "His slogan was 'Come Out and Have a Picnic'—and the other teams usually did."

Wrigley is just one of the characters who make Will's book such an agreeable ramble. A *griot* should always be open to digression, so in reading about a century of Cubs and their jewel box of a ballpark we also get the stories—some sad, some hilarious, nearly all of them fresh—of the great baseball genius Bill Veeck, the "human fireplug" Hack Wilson, the unavoidably cheerful Ernie Banks, and so on, down to Ray Kroc and, weirdly enough, Jack Ruby. Will even reprints, word for word, though with appropriate asterisks, the entirety of the most celebrated recorded rant in the history of the game, a tirade by the Cubs manager Lee Elia against jeering Cubs fans in the days when only afternoon games were played at Wrigley:

> The motherf—ers don't even work. That's why they're out at the f—in' game. They ought to go out and get a f—in' job and find out what it's like to go out and earn a f—in' living. Eighty-five percent of the f—in' world is working. The other fifteen come out here.

Lee Elia was not a romantic, as you can see (or hear, if you call up the recording on the Internet). As a pro, he took the game seriously and hoped for fans that would do the same. "Baseball fans," Will writes, "are given to gushing." George Will does not gush. Exactly for that reason, though, he does enlighten and gratify his readers by writing endlessly enjoyable books about the game he (seriously) loves. ♦

B&A

Up from the Ashes

Pompeii's second life, in fact and fiction.

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

'The Last Days of Pompeii' by Karl Briullov (1830-33)

Probably in the seventh grade, Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* appeared on my summer reading list. I read the 1834 novel of ancient Roman life, adventure, mystery, and horror with the rapt attention of a boy drawn to a fictitious tale (which I doubt I knew was fictitious). But even had I escaped the book, could I have possibly escaped that portentous title, by which the Western world, since Bulwer-Lytton's day, has known of the volcanic explosion that buried parts of the Neapolitan region in 79 A.D.? Like the cloud that once hung over Vesuvius, and has many times hung there again, that book, and the Karl Briullov painting that inspired it, hovers over all subsequent attempts to get at the genuine story of that far-off eruption and its continuing significance—"this combination of beauty and danger," in Ingrid Rowland's words, that clings to the place still.

From Pompeii
The Afterlife of a Roman Town
by Ingrid D. Rowland
Harvard, 352 pp., $28.95

Rowland, who could probably write another entire book about what's known of the geologic and historical realities of the Bay of Naples in the first century—about pyroclastic flows and lapilli—has chosen to put Bulwer-Lytton's last-days conceit behind her and, instead, capture what she can of the "afterlife" of the Vesuvian explosion. A nice term, that "afterlife"—better than what one historian has termed "after-history," as if there can be such a thing. Like all events and human lives, this one had its own reality, and then its following life, made up of what has been preserved, rediscovered, recalled, and simply made up (as was Bulwer-Lytton's tale) for later consideration. But until 50 or so years ago, historians still wrote only about lives and events, not much about the history of the memory, reconstruction, or our reimagining of events after they happen. That's all changed in our day. *From Pompeii* fits snugly inside a now-large body of literature about the afterlives of just about everything that interests historians.

There's probably no one more qualified to have a go at this subject than Rowland. A member of the faculty of Notre Dame's School of Architecture in Rome, and a historian of the Renaissance and early modern Europe, she's the polymathic author of books on Giordano Bruno, Roman gardens, and forgery, among other subjects. She possesses unsurpassed knowledge of whatever she takes up, and this work is no exception. If it sometimes staggers under the weight of detail—some of it repeated, some of it superfluous (must we know that Leopold Mozart misspelled the name of a monastery?)—it will delight any reader who likes the serious laced with the macabre and bizarre, the ancient with the modern.

Rowland manages to retain a straight face through it all, even when, for example, she tells of the liquefaction and re-solidification of the blood of San Gennaro, the patron saint of Naples. Humane bemusement at the ways of humans, but never criticism of what she must find hard to credit, underlies every sentence. If, sometimes, her factualism tires us for want of some overall view, we never tire of her deeply knowledgeable entertainment.

Rowland's genial, learned travelogue commences, as it must, in the Roman era of the great Vesuvian eruption, but it quickly moves into the 17th century and the first attempts since 79 A.D. to discover what had happened in that fateful year. Her initial hero is Athanasius Kircher, a devout German Jesuit whose religious convictions did nothing to dampen his rationalistic investigation of the causes of the mountain's explosion, one that wiped out many communities, the most enduringly known,

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besides Pompeii, being Herculaneum. Though caught, as so many have been, between newly established fact and belief—between the implacable imperatives of research and the summons of religion—Kircher nevertheless pioneered in the geological explanation of Vesuvius's eruption and (in the view of some) anticipated the basis of what became the science of plate tectonics.

Other little-known figures came after Kircher. Rowland is as much the archaeologist of their stories as they were the excavators of Pompeii's past. There's Giuseppe Fiorelli, an early and great practitioner of stratigraphy, the archaeological method of delicate excavation that exposes the minute changes in color and composition of layers of earth and, thus, reveals the age and sequence of under-surface deposits. It was Fiorelli who first understood, then preserved in plaster casts (which still rivet, sometimes repulse, tourists), the remains of people encased forever in their last moments by the volcanic effusions that engulfed them.

There's also Bartolo Longo, known now (if at all) as a religious figure but who was, in fact, "a phenomenal organizer and an urban planner, and, as such . . . an exemplary nineteenth-century social reformer." It was Longo's efforts to bring education, employment, and institutions, as well as the towering Pompeii basilica known as the Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rosary, into being that transformed the Pompeii Valley from a region of poor villages into the touristy towns beside the excavations we know today.

Finally, there was August Mau, a great, if now-unheralded, scholar who put the art of ancient Pompeii on the historical map by showing that, like the Roman art from which it sprang, it had a strength, beauty, and history independent of the Greek tradition from which it had been thought to be derivative.

The result of these men's work was that, in the shadow of Naples (until the 18th century one of the world's largest and most significant cities, and a center of art and music), arose one of the great tourist sites of the Western world. By the 19th century, especially after the unification of the Italian states into the Kingdom of Italy, Pompeii and Herculaneum were increasingly taken to be national treasures, not least because of the tourist income to be gained by their excavation and accessibility.

It's one of the pleasures of Rowland's tour that we get to meet with Pompeii's visitors over the centuries, as varied a cast of characters as might be dreamed up. There's the boy genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart traveling with his father; Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, the latter of whom would indelibly inscribe his wonderfully skeptical impressions in *The Innocents Abroad*; Hirohito, pictured here looking out of place in a bowler—a Japanese prince in Italy *à l'anglaise*; the various film stars, like Ingrid Bergman, Roberto Rossellini, and Sophia Loren, who would use the site as setting; and the millions of nameless tourists, some of them no doubt drawn by word of the erotic art.

Ingrid Bergman, George Sanders among the ruins (1954)

EVERETT COLLECTION

Not to be satisfied with a mere catalogue of those who came as tourists, Rowland, ever the art historian, shows how the art of Raphael and Renoir drew on the draughts of inspiration each found on the walls of the destroyed site's structures. Pompeii lives in many corners of our world.

Rowland closes her book with reflections about conditions today on the Vesuvian plain and its active human life. It's a familiar tale of normal human heedlessness. As in the past, the mountain will erupt again (it did most recently in 1944). But this time, even with all the seismic monitoring that's now in place, well over a half-million people, and Naples itself, will be in peril, and an entire nation will have to be summoned to assist those who can be saved and protect the historic site that stretches back more than two millennia.

Rowland, with a characteristic light smile in her words, is optimistic that people, artifacts, and natural life will somehow pull through. She accepts, with perhaps a bit too much complacency, the tawdriness, tourism, and traffic that now surround the mountain and its priceless history. Should the labors of those scholars and administrators who have unearthed the riches of ancient Pompeii be buried once again, it would be an immeasurable loss to the world. But, as I think Rowland would say, human curiosity, perseverance, and resilience gave us moderns the site to begin with, and there's no reason to think that they would not do so again. So, while this is in no sense a guidebook to Pompeii and Herculaneum, anyone planning to visit Italy's southwest coast will gain from taking Rowland's fast-paced historical tour beforehand.

Yet be forewarned: Like too many books these days, whether from an esteemed university press or from a commercial house, it's short, very short, on what's essential in any work covering the geopolitical landscape: maps. There's but a single one here, a plat of ancient Pompeii, so small that the names of its streets are scarcely legible. Rowland leads us around the Bay of Naples, up and down Italy's west coast, all the while assuming that we know where we are, how the towns and sites she writes about are spatially related to each other, even how and where modern travelers move about the principal archaeological and historic remains of which she writes. In an era when cartography has made such extraordinary advances, the lack of useful maps in books like *From Pompeii* cannot be justified and, given the number of quite wonderful other illustrations, is not defensible on grounds of cost. It's a failure of craft and thought, and a serious shortcoming of an otherwise splendid book. ♦

B&A

Misrule of Law

A dose of medicine for 'runaway legalism.'

BY ROBERT WHITCOMB

The Rule of Nobody
Saving America From Dead Laws and Broken Government
by Philip K. Howard
W.W. Norton, 256 pp., $23.95

At least since his 1994 best-seller *The Death of Common Sense*, the New York lawyer, author, and founder/chairman of the reform group Common Good Philip K. Howard has been trying to rescue Americans from ever-denser laws, regulations, and litigation. (Disclosure: I have known Howard for half a century and, several years ago, worked with him on a project.) General principles, based on widely accepted views of morality and wedded to common sense, should be the guiding force in our public life, he writes—not a rigid legalism created on the fool's errand of trying to anticipate and micromanage all human problems. Howard says that our runaway utopian rules and regulations hamstring urgently needed decision-making and ingenuity, and dehumanize our relationships with each other and with government.

He sometimes seasons his points with (entertaining) hyperbole, but he's basically, and alarmingly, correct. He argues that legislators, bureaucrats, and others have become so eager to avoid any legalistic second-guessing, PR problems, and/or lawsuits and to please powerful interest groups (many of which profit richly from our bureaucratic bathos) that Americans are becoming paralyzed in the face of society's problems.

Howard provides many examples of "automatic government," including the legal barriers to addressing a big, outdated bridge in New Jersey or removing a tree that fell into a stream, causing flooding; the legalism that helps make our medical care the world's most expensive and erodes our electrical grid; the banning of children's lemonade sales on sidewalks; the incomprehensible "Volcker Rule," *meant* to stop banks from irresponsibly speculating with federally insured funds; the regulations that entangle caregivers *trying* to address the unpredictable needs of children in daycare or residents of nursing homes; and—the *coup de grâce*—a California man drowning because of potential rescuers' fear that to help might jeopardize their jobs.

He mixes folksy stories with philosophical discussions based on his wide reading in history, philosophy, and other fields. James Madison, for example, is quoted as writing that "it will be of little avail to the people, that the laws are made by men of their own choice, if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood." In analyzing the "catastrophic mismatch between the ideology and the reality of automatic government," Howard quotes the late Václav Havel's call to "abandon the arrogant belief that the world is merely . . . a body of information to be fed into a computer in the hope that sooner or later it will spit out a universal solution."

Howard wants to reenergize officials' authority to use their moral and practical *personal judgment* to make *decisions*, of all things. We must, he writes, give "responsible officials—real people—the authority to make practical choices." The "core flaw" of our current approach is that "it aspires to make choices without human judgment at the moment of action." And we must accept "a lack of perfect uniformity among public choices. These differences are inherent in the idea of each human taking responsibility." He accurately blames liberals and conservatives alike for their roles in creating the mess: liberals for underestimating life's complexity, and conservatives for being so afraid that government officials, including judges, will overreach that they overly limit their ability to act.

Then there are cowardice and sloth, which he could have discussed more. Many officials want to avoid any heat from making controversial decisions, so they tend to delegate responsibility to impersonal regulation even when they *could* make a decision. They can blame their inaction by citing a rigid adherence to The Law, even though they themselves may not understand its application to the issue at hand. Administrators' aim in such an environment is to get it off their desks by claiming powerlessness.

Given the entrenched interests that prosper in our regulatory/legal swamp—trial lawyers, accountants, some big companies, environmental perfectionists and other NIMBYs, politicians' anxiety about advocating structural change—I share Howard's view that things probably must get worse before our leaders will address our runaway legalism. But he holds out hope. He shows how some other developed countries have much simpler, more flexible, and more effective rules. And he proposes amendments to the Constitution that would "sunset" old laws and regulations, give the president power to manage the executive branch more effectively, widen judges' power to dismiss unreasonable lawsuits, and create a council of citizens to act as an advisory body that would make recommendations on how to improve government.

I have reservations about that last idea, but the others sound alluring. ♦

Robert Whitcomb, a writer and former newspaper editor, is a management consultant in the health care industry.

B&A

Take the 'E' Train

A definitive life of the great American composer.

BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

Duke Ellington (seated) and the band (ca. 1940)

Terry Teachout is a remarkable man of letters whose interest in the arts is multi-directed. Officially, he serves as drama critic for the *Wall Street Journal* and has reported on theater performances all over the country. He is also critic at large for *Commentary*, where he publishes a regular column covering the arts. He has shown his literary and biographical savvy in an excellent biography of H. L. Mencken (*The Skeptic*), a small book on George Balanchine (*All in the Dances*), and a delightful memoir of growing up in a small town, *City Limits*.

More recently, he has turned his attention to jazz, with satisfyingly full biographies of Louis Armstrong (*Pops*) and now Duke Ellington. He has also been a hands-on musician, playing string bass professionally as a young man. My acquaintance with his work began when I came across his profile of Woody Herman, who led the great swing band of my youth: Teachout wrote about the last days of the Herman band, with its leader ill, financially strapped, and surrounded by musicians many of whom didn't know the great records of their predecessors, the first and second Herman Herd bands of the middle 1940s. Teachout's writing is filled with buoyancy, with deep knowledge of his subjects, a useful wit, and an omnivorous memory—in his ear as well as his mind.

Duke
A Life of Duke Ellington
by Terry Teachout
Gotham, 496 pp., $30

William H. Pritchard is Henry Clay Folger professor of English at Amherst College.

It seems inevitable, then, that he would turn to Ellington, the most important jazz composer of the 20th century and a person of intense aspirations and rich achievement; someone whose life scarcely took second place to the music he wrote and the musicians he led.

There has been an enormous amount of writing about Ellington since his death in 1974, all sorts of testimonies from musicians, more than one biography, and critically focused analyses of his compositional structures. In an afterword, Teachout makes clear that his book is "not so much a work of scholarship as an act of synthesis, a narrative biography that is substantially based on the words of academic scholars and other researchers." If he downplays this book as scholarship, Teachout's own source notes come to almost a hundred pages. The few extended descriptions of pieces, as with "East St. Louis Toodle-Oo" and "Ko-Ko," are subordinated to the ongoing narrative, but they show what Teachout is capable of doing if he chooses to do it. He brings to the subject, along with careful delineation of the music and musicians, a stylish verve, as when he refers to an early piece ("The Mooche," 1927) as being marked by the muted trumpeter Bubber Miley's "foul growling," or, when speaking of the great band of 1940-42, he notes, apropos of the alto sax man Johnny Hodges:

> In any other band, Hodges would have been the undisputed star of the show, but the entire Ellington band was a murderer's row of soloists, each of whom was determined to rise to the occasion.

Hodges's companion in the sax section, the tenor man Ben Webster, is described as "an enthusiastic and inspirational ensemble player" who "hit the bull's eye whenever he stood up to solo," as in the "damn-the-torpedoes swinger 'Cotton Tail.'" The drummer Sonny Greer ("consistently underrated," says Teachout, accurately) supplies a "propulsive rhythmic impetus that turned every up-tempo tune into a stampede."

GETTY IMAGES

The circumstances of Ellington's upbringing and his entrance into the musical world are familiar, and Teachout attends carefully to Ellington's middle-class family, one of the light-skinned black bourgeoisie in the U Street/Shaw district of Washington, D.C. Ellington's impulse toward becoming, in Teachout's words, an elegant, cultivated gentleman would be importantly furthered by his association with Irving Mills, the canny manager of Ellington's operation from the late 1920s until World War II. Mills's marketing idea was to present the Duke as a different kind of black man, "fine-spoken and expensively tailored," someone whom "broadminded white folk" could accept.

Decades later, Ellington's son Mercer wrote that his father thought of music as "a good way to get a girl to sit beside you and admire you as you played the piano." (As a pianist I, too, had such dreams of glory.) Ellington lost his virginity, so he claimed, at the age of 12, and throughout his lifetime was a "tireless philanderer," which his marriage to Edna Thompson in 1918 did nothing to hinder. They soon separated, though never divorced, and Teachout speculates that he might have found his nominal marriage useful in fending off girlfriends who hoped to ensnare him maritally.

From a six-man group, The Washingtonians, in 1926, Ellington's orchestra would eventually, at its peak of brilliance, reach 14. In his first electrical recording, "East St. Louis Toodle-Oo," we can hear contributions from three players preeminent in their styles: Miley, who practiced "foul growling" with his muted trumpet; Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, who did a similar thing with the trombone throughout his long career with the band (Miley died young); and Otto "Toby" Hardwick, whose playing on the alto and soprano sax provided many identifiable touches of what Gunther Schuller has called "his slick, slightly oily tone and lip slurs." Hardwick was seldom a major soloist, although he played with the band on and off for decades; but his touch—not appreciated by all fans of Ellington—is one of the distinct pleasures of listening to the band.

This pleasure in idiosyncrasy, the listener's pleasure in identifying individual soloists, is one way of accounting for the difference between the Ellington band of whatever era and the bands of his contemporaries. Teachout's way of putting it is to contrast Ellington's operation with the more smoothly blended styles of Benny Goodman or Artie Shaw or Jimmie Lunceford. He calls Ellington's sound, by contrast, "a loose festive ensemble sound." Rather than the clean precision of a Goodman piece, Ellington's way was different:

Duke Ellington (1963)

> He preferred to hire musicians with homemade techniques that were different to the point of apparent incompatibility, then juxtapose their idiosyncratic sounds as a pointillist painter might place dots of red and green side by side on his canvas, finding inspiration in their technical limitations.

Interestingly, the great trombonist Jack Teagarden didn't like the Ellington band: "He never had a band all in tune, always had a bad tone quality and bad blend," he complained. Whether or not the "pointillist" comparison justifies Teachout's claim that Ellington's blend, far from "bad," was, rather, unconventional, it's significant that Teachout reaches out for an impressionistic metaphor to get at the specialness of Ellington's sound. My own listening to Big Band swing in the 1940s was concentrated on three groups: Stan Kenton's, Gene Krupa's, and, above all, Woody Herman's. Each of these had a more streamlined feel in its "blend" than did Ellington's. And he seldom played as fast or as loud as Kenton, Krupa, or Herman. For me, and perhaps for others, Ellington took some getting used to.

Reviewing *Duke* in the *New Yorker*, Adam Gopnik posed a large question: "What was it in this dance music, heard in short takes on scratchy 78s, that left its devotees devoted to some larger set of human values?" By way of suggesting the improbability that Ellington's band could inspire such transcendent values, Gopnik feels compelled to play down, even demean, what he thinks are facts about the band and its leader in the late 1920s and '30s, producing hundreds of recordings while playing countless gigs all over the United States and Europe. A look at Gopnik's "facts" doesn't inspire assent: "Ellington was a dance-band impresario who played no better than O.K. piano, got trapped for years playing 'jungle music' in gangster night clubs, and at his height produced mostly tinny, brief recordings."

One hardly knows where to start in refuting these claims, but a beginning would be to insist that Ellington's original style at the piano was a lot better than "O.K." His was not the technical brilliance and flash of a Fats Waller or Art Tatum, and it's true that, occasionally, there's not much to be said about his solos. But more often, his unobvious rhythms and muted tone are essential to the "thicker-textured" (Teachout's phrase) colorings of the orchestral arrangement—again, to be distinguished from Goodman's full-speed-ahead procedures on "Don't Be That Way" or "King Porter Stomp."

But the most ludicrous of Gopnik's claims is that all these years produced little more than "tinny, brief recordings." Tinny? "Mood Indigo"? "Solitude"? "Rockin' in Rhythm"? Is there no more to be said for the virtues of three-minute recordings than that they are "brief"? In fact, Ellington got into trouble when, time and again, he tried to extend his brief pieces into suites with some sort of thematic content, the

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best known of which is *Black, Brown and Beige: A Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro*.

Whitney Balliett found Ellington's three-minute events to contain "an incredibly rich sound that is one of the delights of Western music." No musician, wrote Balliett, "regardless of his skill could reproduce the timbre, tone, and inflections of Ellington's musicians." Gunther Schuller called it a "perfect balance between composition and improvisation."

What, by general consensus, represents the Ellington band at its greatest is known as the Blanton-Webster band of 1940-42. Jimmy Blanton was a 19-year-old bass player whose life was cut short by tuberculosis in 1941, less than two years after joining Ellington, and whose memorable, plucked-bass solos are most vividly heard on a 1940 recording, "Jack the Bear." Ben Webster, already a veteran tenor man and fresh from making a number of sides with Billie Holiday and Teddy Wilson, provided a gutsy, full-throated voice to add to the other saxes: Hardwick, Hodges, and Harry Carney.

With Ray Nance having replaced the trumpeter Cootie Williams, the band played a remarkable date, in frigid February 1940, at the Crystal Ballroom in Fargo, North Dakota. This performance was recorded by two young engineers on a portable disc cutter and features standbys such as "Cotton Tail," "Never No Lament," and "Harlem Airshaft." The result, heard 70 years later, is as fresh and full as the band would ever sound. After the concert, a local fan left a description of the seemingly casual array of musicians before the concert began, galvanized when Carney, the baritone sax player with a truly noble tone, "began to tap his foot and suddenly the orchestra burst into full cry." That fan, named Daniel Halpern, said, "I felt cheated by the records to which we had been listening for so many months. They were nothing like this."

My credentials as an Ellington listener are somewhat suspect, in that I've never listened to very much of what he produced after World War II. Teachout is obliged to describe the origins and contents of a number of orchestral suites, which have not inspired many listeners. More exciting was the Newport Jazz Festival of 1956, in which Webster's replacement on tenor sax, Paul Gonsalves, took 27 choruses of "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue," originally an eight-minute extended piece, electrifying the audience and bringing the band to a renaissance of popular acclaim, short-term though it was.

Unless my own case is untypical, I think Ellington will continue to be listened to mainly for the short, three-minute numbers from 1927-42. Teachout says about "Ko-Ko," perhaps the most impressive and most praised recording from this period, that it constituted "a relentless procession of musical events that contained not a wasted gesture." Repeated listenings to its propulsive excitement prompted me—as when reading a poem notable for its diction and rhythmic movement—to look for critical help in unpacking some of its richness. But, of course, any attempt to break down and represent technically what the music makes us hear so powerfully is difficult—especially if the chordal structure, the chromatic sequences, are as dense as they are in not just "Ko-Ko" but in any number of similarly thickly textured arrangements.

Teachout does very little of such musicological analysis, although his commentary on particular recordings is always shrewd. What he does do, aside from keeping the narrative moving along, is provide telling portraits of Ellington's sidemen as they came, stayed, and eventually left. He calls Johnny Hodges Ellington's greatest soloist, with Cootie Williams, "Tricky Sam" Nanton, and Ben Webster not far behind. Rex Stewart's "half-valve" performance on cornet is but one example of the "idiosyncratic" mix that different styles of playing produced. The veteran Harry Carney, whom Teachout calls the first great baritone-sax player in jazz, is beyond praise, and there is the curious, rather special contribution by Juan Tizol, the only non-African American in the band (he was from Puerto Rico), who invented attractive solos on the valve trombone. The drummer Sonny Greer was, from the first, one of the band's great drinkers—"all our horn players were lushes," declared Ellington—but Greer deserves a place of honor because he had a tendency to fall off the stand. Ellington finally had to get rid of him, but his array of percussive contributions was admirable. Billy Strayhorn, who did 300 compositions for the band and played occasional piano, has latterly received his due, which he didn't always get for one or another piece he invented. And there are others.

Outshining these luminaries is the trombonist Lawrence Brown, who joined Ellington in 1932—the same year as the band's finest singer, Ivie Anderson—and stayed with him, on and off, for four decades. They never got along; and, indeed, Brown kept his distance from other band members, since he was a minister's son who neither drank nor smoked, earning him the nickname "Deacon," which he disliked.

Brown mapped out his solos in advance, could repeat note-for-note the same solo on future occasions, and was formidably skilled as a technician. (One of the trombonists who sat next to him said that, in five years, he never heard Brown make a mistake.) Teachout describes his tone as "chocolate-smooth" and "cello-like," and some of Ellington's more rigorous critics thought he was too smooth to be featured in a jazz band. On occasion, Brown produced a fast-moving solo, as in "The Sheik of Araby," "Rose of the Rio Grande," and the final chorus of "Main Stem." But his trademark contribution was slow-paced, somewhat meandering, in tone, gorgeously full in its unfolding. He is heard on some of Ellington's most famous hits—"Sophisticated Lady," "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," "In a Sentimental Mood"—but also on less-known gems, chromatic subtleties such as "Prelude to a Kiss," "Serenade to Sweden," and "A Gypsy Without a Song" from the 1930s, and "Dusk" and "Moon Mist" from the 1940s. Readers of *Duke* are invited to listen for themselves to determine if Lawrence Brown was unique. More generally, they will surely be stimulated by this fine book to reacquaint themselves with the astonishing achievement that was Duke Ellington's over the years. ♦

B&A

Hero and/or Martyr

One desperate act and its unintended consequences.

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

Who was Herschel Grynszpan? He was a 17-year-old Polish Jew, born and raised in Germany, who in November 1938 walked into the German embassy in Paris, where he had been living for two years, and shot a 29-year-old diplomat named Ernst vom Rath, who died two days later. Vom Rath's assassination was the immediate pretext for *Kristallnacht* in Germany, the Nazi pogrom in which some 90 Jews were killed, 1,300 synagogues were burned, and nearly 8,000 businesses destroyed.

The fact that Grynszpan's name is not widely known is puzzling to the author of this brief study, Jonathan Kirsch. He believes that the shooting of vom Rath was not an isolated murder but an act of Jewish resistance in the face of Nazi tyranny, a symbolic gesture of defiance on the eve of the Holocaust. "We are obliged to remember Herschel Grynszpan," he concludes, "and to regard him as the hero he sought to be."

Far be it from me to decide who should, or should not, be identified as a Jewish hero. But the fact that Grynszpan's reputation, such as it is, remains ambiguous in the long history of the Jews is no great mystery. It is not clear, and will never be known, whether his futile act was the impulsive gesture it appears to have been or a principled self-sacrifice. As a practical matter, however, it was disastrous. *Kristallnacht*, in some form or another, would have come in due course in Hitler's Germany; but the direct consequence of Grynszpan's random act of violence merely deepened the misery of Jews in the Third Reich.

The Short, Strange Life of Herschel Grynszpan
A Boy Avenger, a Nazi Diplomat, and a Murder in Paris
by Jonathan Kirsch
Liveright, 352 pp., $27.95

Like more than a few assassins in history, Herschel Grynszpan was a curious combination of self-drama and inconsequence: Vain, argumentative, and ineffectual, he had some reason to be self-pitying. The Grynszpans were a poor family, forsaken by their Polish homeland and unwelcome in Germany—Grynszpan's father eked out a living as a tailor after 1911 in Hanover—where *Ostjuden* such as the Grynszpans were scorned even by fellow Jews. At 15, Herschel left school and, unable to emigrate to Palestine, was sent to live with an uncle in Paris, where his situation was equally marginal. Uneducated, unskilled, and scarcely competent in French, he found himself, by the fall of 1938, in a twilight existence: an illegal alien, unable to work, fearful of discovery by the Paris police, devoid of a Polish passport, barred from returning to Germany.

In the Reich, meanwhile, "direct action" against Jews soon swept up the Grynszpan family in Hanover: Some 18,000 *Ostjuden* were arrested and transported east to the border—where Poland initially refused to admit them. Stranded in a refugee camp, and kept from starvation by the Red Cross, Herschel Grynszpan's sister wrote her brother in Paris a sorrowful postcard describing the family's plight.

At that instant, Grynszpan seems to have conflated his own misery with the tragic predicament of Europe's Jews, and after a sleepless night in a Paris hotel—"Again and again, I ask myself, 'What have we done to deserve such a fate?'"—he concealed a pistol in his raincoat, walked to the German embassy, and announcing that he possessed "important papers" that he needed to show someone, was directed to the third secretary on duty, vom Rath. After the shooting, police found a note in Grynszpan's pocket addressed to his father: "I must protest so that the whole world hears my protest, and that I will do."

In some respects, the most astonishing aspect of the story is its aftermath. The Germans demanded the extradition of Grynszpan, which the French refused, hoping that time might lessen the political implications of a German diplomat murdered in Paris. The case did become a minor *cause célèbre*—the American journalist Dorothy Thompson raised funds for Grynszpan's defense—but no trial had taken place by the time the Germans arrived in Paris in June 1940. Grynszpan, along with other prisoners, had been removed to the south of France; and when the Gestapo tracked him down, he was immediately transported to Berlin, where Joseph Goebbels made plans for a show trial.

Which left Grynszpan one last futile gesture. Aware, no doubt, that he was likely to die, Grynszpan bought himself some measure of time by insisting that, far from being a political act, his shooting of vom Rath had been the culmination of a lovers' quarrel between the two. Of course, this frustrated Goebbels's plans for a public tribunal, and the Nazi machinery of state seems to have grappled with the problem of what to do with Grynszpan at least until December 1942, when he was presumably killed.

One instructive irony remains. Because the elder Grynszpans had been stranded in Poland, and were shipped further east, they fell into the hands not of the Wehrmacht but of the Red Army—and survived the war. In 1961, Grynszpan's aged father, Zindel, was the first Holocaust survivor to take the stand as a witness in the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. ♦

Philip Terzian is literary editor of The Weekly Standard.

B&A

Tasty Metaphor

A 'food-cart-as-spiritual-salvation' idea that works.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The new movie *Chef* is about a hotshot cook who loses his way and then finds himself anew selling Cuban sandwiches off a truck. The food-cart-as-spiritual-salvation trope became a pop-culture cliché a couple years ago: Jason Segel did exactly the same thing with tacos in *The Five-Year Engagement*, and Michael Ealy peddled pork in *Think Like a Man*. If purification-by-Cubano were all there was to *Chef*, it would be pretty thin gruel.

Chef turns out to be far more interesting, though, because it's not really about a chef or a food truck at all. It's nothing less than a *cri de coeur* about the high-wire act of living on the Hollywood A-list, a bulletin from the front by its writer-director-star Jon Favreau.

The soulless and routine menu Favreau's chef is presenting to diners at his L.A. eatery is a perfect parallel to the soulless and routine films Favreau himself made immediately before this one—the dreadful *Iron Man 2* and the unwatchable *Cowboys & Aliens*, which would cause any sensible person to think it was time to go back to the drawing board.

For the glory days of the chef's gritty street-level cooking in Miami, before he took L.A. by storm, you can substitute Favreau's spectacular debut as writer-actor with the low-budget indie *Swingers* in 1996, as well as his first Hollywood directorial triumph at the helm of Will Ferrell's *Elf* in 2003. And the chef's food truck, which reignites his creative spark? Why, that's what *Chef* is supposed to be for Favreau.

In one sense, then, *Chef* is just another lamentable example of what the critic Todd McCarthy called the "west-of-the-405" movie—films like James L. Brooks's *Spanglish* (2004) and Judd Apatow's *This Is 40* (2012) that ask their viewers to share the suffering and hardships of the insanely rich and gorgeous and famous residents of Los Angeles's most glamorous neighborhoods. (Adam Sandler's protagonist in *Spanglish* is a chef riven with anxiety about his upcoming review, just like Jon Favreau's is in *Chef*.) Insufferable navel-gazing by people who should wake up every morning thanking God for the improbable bounty that has rained down upon them is what makes the west-of-the-405 the third-worst genre in the history of the motion picture, after the snuff film and porn.

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

Chef
Directed by Jon Favreau

Emjay Anthony, Jon Favreau

But Favreau proves cannier and more self-knowing in this regard than Brooks and Apatow were, and unlike those two disastrous films, *Chef* is a true crowd-pleaser. It sizzles, the way the chef's fried sandwiches do. The chef is of unknown ethnicity, but his loving ex-wife is a Cuban from Miami (played by the impossibly gorgeous Sofía Vergara), and the movie is awash in Latin music and culture.

More important is Favreau's portrayal of the lives of these kitchen workers *as workers*. The chef is a working-class guy, as are his sidekicks (played winningly by John Leguizamo and Bobby Cannavale). They labor with their hands and they like it. They are skilled and confident and respect each other because of their mutual competencies.

When the chef's 10-year-old son joins him in the food truck's kitchen, he has to learn quickly that this is a serious business in which you actually get burns and cuts and bruises—and your job is all-consuming and all-important. This is the first movie in ages in which a father is shown teaching his son how to master a trade, and it's thrilling to watch.

Favreau is a terrific actor who manages the difficult feat of conveying both soulful sensitivity and a big man's obnoxiousness. He has written a terrific part for himself and some truly juicy small roles for Dustin Hoffman (as his onetime boss), Robert Downey Jr. (as the flake who gives him his food truck), and Scarlett Johansson (as the girl who would be his girlfriend if he didn't still love his ex-wife).

In the end, this isn't a movie about cooking. It's really a movie about how Twitter is making life harder for Favreau and his friends in Hollywood. Just as bad social-media buzz destroyed *Cowboys & Aliens* long before it opened, *Chef* features a restaurant review that somehow goes viral.

Favreau's chef doesn't understand Twitter or how it works, so without knowing it, he starts an out-and-out flame war with the critic—and ere long is letting the critic have it for his savage cruelty to people who are working their hearts out in the kitchen in a public rant that is seen by everyone on earth.

Not to worry, for the answer to the problem of Twitter is just more Twitter: Once the chef and his son figure it all out, they use social media to promote the food truck, and it becomes a sensation as they drive it across the country. This overlong movie's last half-hour is sheer wish fulfillment—Favreau's hope that he can remain an A-list director making $10 million a picture while retaining his street cred as an indie hipster.

You'll probably love *Chef*. But don't fall for it. ♦

OPEN ROAD FILMS

"[W]hat will [recently fired New York Times editor Jill Abramson] do with her New York Times tattoo?. . . Abramson revealed that she had not just one but four tattoos, including a New York subway token, the Crimson Harvard 'H' and the iconic New York Times 'T.'"

—**International Business Times**, *May 15, 2014*

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Sterling stunner: 'Some of my best friends are best friends with black people'

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BUMP & RUN: Michael Sam heads to NFL

SEE PAGE 5

JILLTED BY THE TIMES

EX-EDITOR SEEKS TATTOO REMOVAL

By Keith J. Kelly

Jill Abramson, the recently canned editor of the New York Times, was spotted entering a plastic surgeon's office on Park Avenue yesterday morning. Sources tell us she plans to remove the "T" that stood for the Times as well as a few other ill-planned tattoos. These supposedly include a Whitesnake logo, a cursive "L" from Laverne & Shirley, YOLO!, and the question "Where's the Beef?" located on her

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