the weekly Standard

SEPTEMBER 29, 2014 $4.95

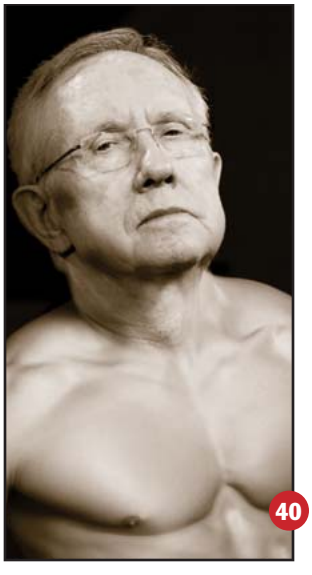
REPUBLICAN PROSPECTS
FRED BARNES • JAY COST
WILLIAM KRISTOL

MILLENNIAL MONGERS

ANDREW FERGUSON on the crackpot social science of generational analysis

Contents

September 29, 2014 • Volume 20, Number 3



Articles

Feature

Books & Arts

COVER BY DAVE CLEGG

Too Soon?

This week's Fashion Don't is awarded to our edgy friends at Urban Outfitters, who offered on their web catalogue a grungy pullover ("Get it or regret it!") for the uber-grungy price of $129. This was no ordinary sweatshirt, however: On the front was imprinted the name and seal of Ohio's Kent State University, surrounded by random holes in the fabric and splotches of red that could easily be mistaken for blood spatter.

To readers of a certain age, of course, the meaning was obvious: an allusion to the shooting deaths of four Kent State undergraduates, and the wounding of nine, by nervous National Guardsmen during a 1970 campus demonstration against the invasion of Cambodia.

The Scrapbook would be the first to acknowledge—ruefully, of course—that 1970 was 44 long years ago, and that the majority of Urban Outfitters' customers were neither alive at the time nor are likely to be aware of the connotations of Kent State and a bloodstained sweatshirt. Indeed, this astonishing garment got us thinking about the point at which such historical incidents become fit subjects for humor or (in this case) exploitation.

Everyone agrees that, by any measure, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln was a tragedy; but who has not laughed at the famous question: "Aside from that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?" The Second World War was a horror from beginning to end, but from Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* to the BBC's *Dad's Army*, it has not always been treated with solemnity.

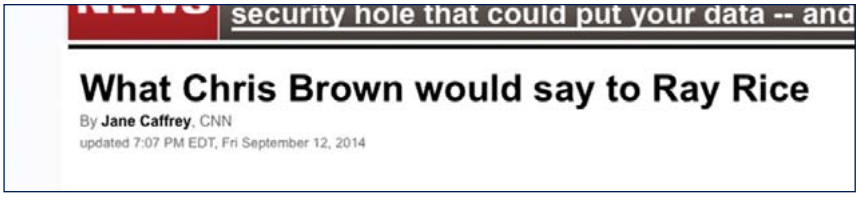
Distressed and distressing

Of course, the problem for Urban Outfitters is not just that the Kent State shootings remain indelible in many minds, but that the product in question is neither humorous nor respectful nor even quaint, but just unseemly. This is an industry, after all, that has tried to make heroin addiction, even female starvation, seem glamorous for profit. When the bloodstained Kent State sweatshirt became known, there was not much of a reservoir of understanding for Urban Outfitters.

Nor were things much improved when Urban Outfitters, after quickly yanking the sweatshirt from its website, plainly dissembled about it: The red stains are "discoloration" and the holes are "natural wear and fray," said a company spokesman. "It was never our intention to allude to the tragic events that took place at Kent State in 1970 and we are extremely saddened that this item was perceived as such."

Oh, sure. Out of the 4,000 or so colleges and universities in America, the name of Kent State just happened to bubble to the surface at Urban Outfitters. To one colossal lapse in corporate taste may now be added an insult to our intelligence. Yet another reason to lament the death, earlier this month, of Joan Rivers, the public scourge of such nonsense. ♦

We Didn't Get Past the Headline



Up in Smoke

Undoubtedly much to the chagrin of the former mayor, more New Yorkers are smoking these days. According to the latest data from the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, adult smoking rates in New York City have risen to 16 percent, from an all-time low of 14 percent in 2010.

That this is happening in a city where nanny-statist extraordinaire Michael Bloomberg spent a dozen years doing everything he could to limit cigarettes should serve as a

wakeup call for those still committed to doubling down on the current anti-smoking campaign.

New York banned smoking in nearly all indoor public places more than a decade ago. The city spends lavishly on advertising to encourage quitting and imposes so many taxes that a pack of name-brand cigarettes can cost $15. More recently, the city banned most e-cigarette use in public and raised the age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21. And yet, all of these efforts correlate with increases in an activity that poses dozens of serious health risks.

It is becoming clear that the kinds of tactics that once were hugely successful in reducing smoking rates—which are half the levels seen when the first stern health warnings were issued in the 1960s—have reached the point of diminishing, if not negative, returns. Smoking rates nationally have been stuck at around 20 percent for roughly a decade, even as overbearing Bloomberg-style tactics have spread.

Rather than resort to ever-more coercive measures, public health officials should consider the news out of New York as an impetus to explore new approaches. For people who just can't quit—likely a sizable portion of those who persist in smoking—it's time to consider a more tolerant and even welcoming approach to encourage switching to lower-risk products like chewing tobacco, nicotine lozenges, snus, and e-cigarettes. It's important to note that none of these things are perfectly safe and all are quite addictive. But an impressive amount of data strongly suggests they are as much as 98 percent less dangerous than tobacco cigarettes. Allowing and, in some settings, even encouraging their use could do a tremendous amount of good. ♦

Cosmically Dishonest

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson seems like an unlikely candidate for celebrity, but he's hawking something liberal America desperately wants: the sense of satisfaction that comes from pretending you're smarter than others, without actually thinking too hard. Tyson, the driving force behind the recent *Cosmos* reboot on network TV, regularly sells out auditoriums at $70 a ticket to lecture people on how a lack of scientific rigor is degrading our culture. Perhaps not surprisingly, Tyson is an obnoxious atheist and a political totem. In July, Bill Maher claimed that Republicans dislike Tyson simply because he is a black scientist (nothing to do with his baseless attacks on faith and climate-change credulity).

The devotion to Tyson is so great that America's other dubious pop scientist, Bill Nye the Science Guy, recently announced he was running for president with Tyson on his ticket. Nye was joking, but the idea received many a sincere endorsement from their fans.

Well, it turns out that Tyson's condescending shtick doesn't hold up too well when subjected to peer review. At the *Federalist*, writer Sean Davis has been chronicling a number of ways in which Tyson's lectures and anecdotes are more truthy than true. The most egregious is this anecdote about George W. Bush, which has been a staple of Tyson's lectures:

> George Bush, within a week of [the 9/11 terrorist attacks] gave us a speech attempting to distinguish we from they. And who are they? These were

sort of the Muslim fundamentalists. And he wants to distinguish we from they. And how does he do it? He says, "Our God"—of course it's actually the same God, but that's a detail, let's hold that minor fact aside for the moment. Allah of the Muslims is the same God as the God of the Old Testament. So, let's hold that aside. He says, "Our God is the God"—he's loosely quoting Genesis, biblical Genesis—"Our God is the God who named the stars." . . . The problem is that two-thirds of all stars that have names have Arabic names. I don't think he knew this. That would confound the point that he was making.

You really have to watch Tyson deliver the lecture on YouTube to see how emphatic and patronizing he is. But here's the real problem—nothing about this anecdote is true. George W. Bush did make a remark that bears a resemblance to this, but it was two years later, in his speech following the Columbia space shuttle disaster, a context that had nothing to do with 9/11 or with Islam. "The same Creator who names the stars also knows the names of the seven souls we mourn today," Bush said. What's more, there are two biblical references to naming the stars—in Psalms and Isaiah, but not in Genesis. But why let truth and literacy get in the way of bashing George W. Bush and his crazy sky-God?

Odds are good this is the first you've heard of the story, despite Tyson's celebrity. After Davis reported this falsehood, not a single mainstream outlet picked up on the story of one of America's most famous scientists fabricating this anecdote and recycling it for years. Moreover, after several behind-the-scenes debates, Wikipedia editors have rigorously deleted anything less than flattering from Tyson's bio.

On the few websites that have deigned to cover the story, the reaction has been mostly shrieking about how the right-wing is out to get Tyson and attacking the messenger. Tyson, however, is not entitled to his own facts. It will be interesting to see if he drops the Bush bit from his spiel. Based on the media silence and legions of Tyson defenders who prefer his made-up facts to honest inquiry, we're guessing he won't. ♦

Must Watching

Our friends at the Foundation for Constitutional Government have just released the latest in their "Conversations with Bill Kristol" series of videos. The Scrapbook's boss had a fascinating sit-down with PayPal founder and storied tech investor Peter Thiel, whose new book, *Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*, has just been published. As with the earlier installments in this ongoing series, you can see the video at conversationswithbillkristol.org. Those with attention-deficit issues will be pleased to know that the conversation has been conveniently divided into six chapters, the titles of which give a good flavor of the proceedings: The Story of PayPal, Against Conventional Wisdom, Facebook, An Innovation Slowdown?, The Need for Growth, and The Higher Education Bubble.

The Scrapbook is confident you'll find it an invigorating break from whatever you're binge-watching on Netflix these days. ♦

the weekly Standard

www.weeklystandard.com

William Kristol, *Editor*

Fred Barnes, Terry Eastland, *Executive Editors*

Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*

Claudia Anderson, *Managing Editor*

Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Victorino Matus, Lee Smith, *Senior Editors*

Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*

Stephen F. Hayes, Mark Hemingway, Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last, John McCormack, *Senior Writers*

Jay Cost, Michael Warren, *Staff Writers*

Daniel Halper, *Online Editor*

Kelly Jane Torrance, *Assistant Managing Editor*

Julianne Dudley, Ethan Epstein, Jim Swift, *Assistant Editors*

Judith Ayers, *Editorial Assistant*

Philip Chalk, *Design Director*

Barbara Kyttle, *Design Assistant*

Teri Perry, *Executive Assistant*

Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, Matthew Continetti, Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Michael Goldfarb, Mary Katharine Ham, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Yuval Levin, Tod Lindberg, Robert Messenger, P.J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*

MediaDC

Lou Ann Sabatier, *Chief Executive Officer*

Tom Fowler, *Chief Revenue Officer*

Grace Paine Terzian, *Chief Communications Officer*

Steve Sparks, *Chief Operating Officer*

Kathy Schaffhauser, *Chief Financial Officer*

Catherine Lowe, *Integrated Marketing Director*

Mark Walters, *Sr. V.P. Marketing Services & Advertising*

Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *V.P. Advertising*

T. Barry Davis, Peter Dunn, Andrew Kaumeier, Brooke McIngvale, Jason Roberts *Advertising Sales*

Advertising inquiries: 202-293-4900
Subscriptions: 1-800-274-7293

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Comic Relief

I met Chris in first grade. Both new to the school, we were wary of each other that year, but by the following September we had become best friends.

Chris and I were inseparable through our boyhoods, partly because our interests always seemed to evolve on parallel tracks: Just as we were giving up on G.I. Joes, we moved on to Transformers. Just as we were leaving video games, we started playing tennis. Just as we discovered girls, we wound up playing more tennis.

One of our longest phases was a descent into comic book collecting, a period that spanned roughly from third grade to Suzanne Jehl, who precipitated the aforementioned discovery. We went to the annual comic book convention in Philadelphia, and every Saturday we'd go to the local comic shops, pick through the racks, then take our prizes home to read and catalogue.

Coming from modest circumstances, I had to husband my resources: I'd hem and haw before spending 60 cents on a new issue. But Chris was rich. His mother would hand him a $20 bill every time she dropped us off at the comic shop. Twenty dollars! He wouldn't just buy new comics—he had the scratch to buy the high-value comics on the wall behind the counter, some of which cost five or even six dollars.

I didn't envy Chris's money, but I envied his comic books. My own collection was wonderful. By the time I stopped, I had perhaps 1,200 books, which were worth, at the time, close to $5,000. Chris's collection was so vast—we estimated it to be in the neighborhood of 10,000 comics—that he could have used it as the down payment on a small house.

Last summer Chris's mother, a lovely woman named Patricia, died quite suddenly. He had lost his father years before. An only child living in New York City, he sensibly opted to sell his boyhood home. Sensibly, perhaps, but not easily. Among the possessions that had to be disposed of were his comic books.

Which is how, 33 years later, I became custodian of the comic book collection of my dreams.

JORI BOLTON

Having a best friend is special enough, but having the same best friend for your entire life is a rare blessing. Before the handover, Chris and I spent a long while sorting through the comics, boxes upon boxes upon boxes, a grown-up version of the cataloguing we did as kids at the end of each weekend.

There were his classics: early *X-Men*, *Spider-Man*, and *Daredevil* runs along with an assortment of Silver Age Westerns that Chris, inexplicably, loved. There were curiosities: an issue of the 1950s noir *T-Man: World Wide Troubleshooter*. It's about the adventures of an agent from the Treasury Department. Which sounds ridiculous, sure. But no more ridiculous than *U.S. 1: High Adventure Trucking Down the Highway*. A short-lived series from the '80s, *U.S. 1* was about a guy who drives a tractor trailer and has a CB radio implanted in his skull. However terrible this sounds as a concept, the execution was worse. Except that as I examined the first issue, I remembered the afternoon Chris bought it at a shop called Hero's World, in our favorite mall.

Paging through the comics I found other tiny treasures. Inside an old issue of *The Avengers* was a small advertisement for a "Monster 7 feet tall in authentic colors . . . only $1.69."

Another issue carried an ad for something called "Yubiwaza." The handsome, tight-lipped pitchman is identified as "Yubiwaza master N.J. Fleming," who explains that "Yubiwaza is the secret, amazingly easy art of self-defense that turns just one finger or your hands into a potent weapon of defense." The full-page color spread concludes with a testimonial from "Yoshie Imanami," the "Pretty Japanese wife of N. J. Fleming." A few boxes later I found another ad for Yubiwaza. This one featured only the pretty, Japanese face of Yoshie, who claimed the Yubiwaza system as her own and made no mention of Fleming. Another casualty of the divorce revolution, I suppose.

As I lifted a stack of comics out of the last box, an old picture tumbled to the ground. It was one of those wallet-sized photos that everyone used to carry but have been replaced by iPhones. There, in black and white, was Patricia. She's smiling, and I can see Chris's face in hers. She's just a child, maybe 10 or 12. The age Chris and I were when we were buying *T-Man* and *Spider-Man* and all the rest.

The symmetry made me realize that my own son is now the age Chris and I were when we first met. In a sense, our thousands of comic books are his now. But I hope that someday he finds a Chris of his own.

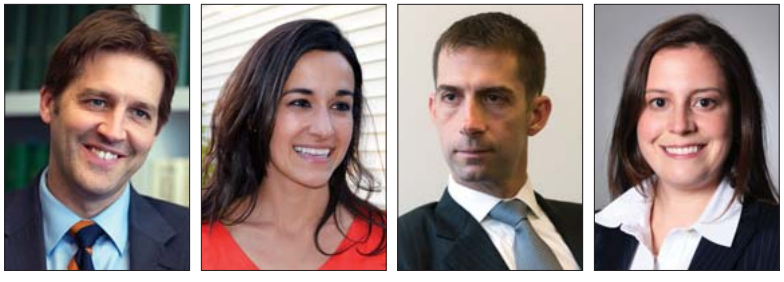
Jonathan V. Last

the weekly Standard

All Together Now

Republican voters are down on the sluggish GOP officials they elected, and the officeholders whine about the unreasonable people who voted for them. Republican backbenchers complain about their lame leaders, and GOP leaders grumble about their unruly followers. Right-wing pundits despair of unimaginative Republican pols, and the hard-headed pols are impatient with impractical commentators. Conservative activists loathe the GOP establishment, and the establishment is terrified and contemptuous of the base.

And there's more . . . Republican donors, memories fresh in their minds of 2012—when they were assured by GOP bigwigs that the public polls were wrong and that their hopes of ambassadorial appointments in a Romney administration would not be dashed—now disbelieve the same public polls that were right in 2012 and that in fact, contrary to media spin, suggest a good and perhaps very good result for the GOP in 2014. So the donors hesitate to reach for their wallets, lest they be disappointed again. The consultants complain about the donors. And the donors (not unreasonably) distrust the consultants.



Passing the torch: Ben Sasse, Marilinda Garcia, Tom Cotton, Elise Stefanik

SASSE, COTTON: NEWSCOM

It's just one big happy Republican family, moaning and groaning, sniping and whining, mumbling and grumbling.

And winning.

November 4 is likely to lead to a GOP takeover of the Senate after eight long years of Democratic control, and to perhaps the largest GOP majority in the House in modern times. It's an election that could—that should—set the stage for victory in 2016, as the Democrats' triumph in 2006 set the stage for victory in 2008. So even though it's contrary to interest for an opinion magazine to suggest a time out from groaning and sniping and grumbling—and even though we reserve the right to groan and snipe and grumble at our discretion—maybe it's a good moment for everyone out there who thinks the country is endangered by Barack Obama, that it is being damaged by Harry Reid, and that it would be ruined by another Democratic presidential victory in 2016 to take a deep breath, let bygones be bygones, leave future concerns to the future, and work to win in November.

Fear of the Democrats should be a sufficient motive. But is there anything else to be said to inspire voters to vote, donors to donate, and activists to activate?

Yes. The Republican class of 2014 candidates are very impressive. A glance at their biographies would show an unusual number of high-quality men and women, many of whom have real achievements outside politics, few of whom are career politicians or children of politicians. From Tom Cotton in Arkansas to Joni Ernst in Iowa; from Ben Sasse in Nebraska to Dan Sullivan in Alaska; from Elise Stefanik in upstate New York to Lee Zeldin on Long Island; from Marilinda Garcia in western New Hampshire to Martha McSally in southeastern Arizona—a new generation of Republicans has stepped forward worthy of support.

And a glance at their birth dates would show that the Grand Old Party is this year the party of youth. For example: There are seven marquee Senate races in which the Republican candidate has a good chance to take a Democratic seat (on top of virtually certain pickups in West Virginia, Montana, and South Dakota). It is on these races that control of the Senate will hinge. In all of these contests—Arkansas, Alaska, Louisiana, North Carolina, Iowa, Colorado, and New Hampshire—the Republican challenger is younger than his or her Democratic opponent.

Looking at the GOP field in 2014, it's perhaps an exaggeration to invoke John F. Kennedy's words: "The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans . . . tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world."

But looking at these candidates, Republicans would be justified in thinking—as Democrats thought in 1958, two years before Kennedy's inauguration—that theirs is the party of youth and energy, of new ideas and bold imagination. In the 1958 off-year elections, Democrats increased

their majority in the House by 48 and won 13 Republican Senate seats, defeating 10 Republican incumbents. The GOP won't achieve a victory of that magnitude in 2014. But they can aspire to big gains, especially when polls show disapproval of Obama high, Republicans leading in the generic congressional ballot, and a slew of Democratic incumbents below 50 percent.

The danger over the next six weeks is that Republican strategists and donors will play it safe and fail to take advantage of the opportunities out there. Obviously the focus will be, as it has to be, on the seven swing Senate seats, as well as on making sure Republicans hold Kansas and Georgia. But there are opportunities beyond the big seven, in Michigan (an open seat) and in one or more of Minnesota, Virginia, Oregon, New Jersey, and Illinois—in all of which incumbent Democratic senators are under or only just above 50 percent in the polls. Most of these won't come through, but one or two could. And there are a dozen or so House districts now regarded as long shots that could also come into play.

This is the time to think big. With respect to Senate races in particular, Republican donors and activists should take as their motto not just the title but also the opening lines of the Beatles' "All Together Now":

One, two, three, four
Can I have a little more?
Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, I love you.

Forget about "I love you." Insincere professions of love are for Democrats. But 10 Senate seats for Republicans would be nice.

—William Kristol

Speak for Middle America

Pundits throw out all sorts of numbers to explain the Republican defeat in the 2012 presidential election. So here's our number: $65,000. That is a rough estimate of the household income of the average 2012 voter. Republicans lost because Mitt Romney did not do well enough with this voter or those near him on the income scale.

These middle class Americans have some but not a lot of property, who fret about the effects of economic forces outside their control, who worry about whether their kids will enjoy a decent standard of living, and who have been struggling one way or another since the recession of 2001-02.

An 'Audit the IRS' rally at the Capitol, June 2013

Say what you want about George W. Bush's domestic agenda, it was geared toward these people. Whether the policies were sound, Bush's middle-class tax cuts, his "ownership society," No Child Left Behind, and private Social Security accounts were all about making these people more prosperous and secure.

What did the GOP offer these voters in 2012? One struggles to think of anything. There was a lot of talk about small businesses. Indeed, much of the party's convention was designed to reply to Obama's "you didn't build that!" jibe. And there can be no doubt that helping small businesses succeed will help middle-class families—but only *indirectly*, which makes it hard to sell politically. So, in the end, middle-income voters backed Romney, but not as strongly as they had backed Bush eight years before, and not strongly enough.

Fast-forward two years and it is fair to ask: What has the party done on this front since its defeat? For that matter, does the party even recognize that this is its problem? Sure, its rhetoric is all about the middle class, but actions speak louder than words. In the current Congress, the Republican party has spent time trying to shut down the government, which creates confusion and uncertainty in the markets and thus agitates the middle class, and toying with comprehensive immigration reform, which would have had the effect of lowering wages for existing workers after more than a decade of middle-class wage stagnation.

Congressional Republicans would have better spent their time drawing up a middle-class agenda. They could start by adopting the *perspective* of families that make about $65,000 per year. These people's economic situa-

NEWSCOM

tion is uncertain, and they pay a goodly portion of their income to the IRS—not so much through the income tax, but through Social Security and Medicare taxes, which flow into the federal government's general revenues. So a middle-class agenda would aim to make these voters more secure and stop the government from wasting their money.

Economic security for this group primarily means lowering the cost of education, health care, and energy. Where has the Republican party stood on this in the last two years? Mike Lee has promoted interesting education reform ideas, but the leadership has not gotten behind them. The 2017 Project has put together a health care reform package that aims to contain costs for people like these, but the party leadership has offered nothing. About the only area where the party has done much is energy; not coincidentally, the energy sector is a major donor to the GOP.

What of cutting government? Republicans in Congress too often suggest that the first dollar to be cut come from programs that the middle class finds useful or worthwhile. Corporate welfare, meanwhile, which takes up a shockingly large portion of the budget, is almost never discussed. To wit, why did the congressional Republicans not make a full-throated assault on Obamacare's risk corridor program, which is a naked payout to insurance companies? Why did they cave on the Export-Import Bank, which is a payoff to Boeing? Why did they buckle on tax reform, an opportunity to excise tens of billions in payola to the well connected? Middle America would not miss these programs. Indeed, it would be glad to see them go. Ask the average American if he thinks special interests hold too much sway, and prepare yourself to be told, "Hell, yeah, they do!"

And what about Congress itself? Middle-class people get angry at the thought of Congress because they (correctly) regard it as corrupt and irresponsible. Republicans have an ironclad grip on the House. Why not pass some tough reform measures to make members behave better?

In 2014 Republicans look to be in reasonably good shape, with a decent chance of taking control of the Senate. In 2016 they will be helped by the odds against a party holding onto the White House for a third term. But if Republicans think they can fall backwards into power, they are likely mistaken. In recent years, Republicans have done a good job of stopping the president's leftist agenda. But that will not be enough in 2016. They will have to offer a positive alternative, something they too often have failed to do.

—Jay Cost

Rand Paul: A Politician After All

He's playing the game.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Manchester, N.H.

On the evening of September 11, Rand Paul sipped red wine out of a clear plastic cup as he wended his way through a bar full of 200 or so millennials. After snapping photos with admirers who had gathered to hear Paul speak and partake of free food and drink provided by Generation Opportunity, a libertarian-leaning nonprofit, the Kentucky senator took the stage.

"How many people here have a cell phone?" Paul asked at the beginning of his remarks. "How many people think it's none of the government's damn business what you do with your cell phone?" The crowd cheered.

"I really, really worry about Anthony Weiner. Because you know he likes to take the selfies," Paul said of the former Democratic congressman who accidentally posted lewd photos of himself on Twitter. "He's had trouble finding a place to put them where no one can find them. So I'm thinking maybe Anthony Weiner should put his selfies in Lois Lerner's emails."

The crowd loved it, but Paul quickly dropped the stand-up act and became an earnest civil libertarian. He denounced the Patriot Act, the NSA's surveillance program, and the drug war. He warned that American citizens could be detained at Guantánamo Bay someday without a trial. It was the anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks, but Paul didn't mention them. Generation Opportunity, the group hosting the event, primarily focuses on fiscal issues, but Paul devoted a single line to economics. Almost every word spoken by the likely Republican presidential candidate could have been uttered by the president of the ACLU. And that was the point.

Paul was surrounded by longtime supporters of his father Ron Paul's presidential campaigns, including the elder Paul's 2008 effort, which was born largely out of opposition to the Iraq war. But Rand Paul had recently announced his support for an air war against the Islamic State, despite his previous strong skepticism about airstrikes and his father's advice to "stay out." The message the Kentucky senator was sending to the loyalists gathered in New Hampshire was that he hadn't really changed at all—he was still the same old different-kind-of-Republican he's always been.

But it's impossible to deny that on the issue of airstrikes against ISIS, Paul's views have changed. On June 19, a week after Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, fell to ISIS, Paul took to the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* to warn that the United States should stay out of Iraq's civil war. He wrote that U.S. airstrikes could turn America into "Iran's air force" and that an effort to "transform Iraq into something more amenable to our interests would likely require another decade of U.S. presence and perhaps another 4,000 American lives."

On August 11, after Christians had fled death or forced conversion in Mosul and Yazidis had been massacred in Sinjar, Paul indicated he was ambivalent about the airstrikes President Obama had just ordered. "I have mixed feelings about it," Paul said. "I'm not saying I'm completely opposed to helping with arms or maybe even bombing."

As late as August 29, Paul suggested at an event in Dallas that he hadn't made up his mind about attacking ISIS: "I think the strategy has to be that you have an open debate in the country over whether or not ISIS is a threat to our national security. And it's not enough just to say they are. That's usually what you hear—you hear a conclusion. People say, 'Well, it's a threat to our national security.' That's a conclusion. The debate has to be: Are they a threat to our national security?"

But later that same day, Paul sent a statement to the Associated Press saying that if he were president, he would "seek congressional authorization to destroy ISIS militarily."

GARY LOCKE

John McCormack is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

"Some pundits are surprised that I support destroying the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) militarily. They shouldn't be," Paul wrote on September 4 in *Time* magazine. "If I had been in President Obama's shoes, I would have acted more decisively and strongly against ISIS."

Some of the pundits most surprised were Paul's libertarian allies. "The sudden evaporation of Paul's doubts reeks of political desperation," wrote Jacob Sullum, a senior editor at the libertarian magazine *Reason*. "Paul still has not explained why the problem of ISIS is one the United States has to solve."

In fact, the senator has taken a few different approaches to addressing the issue. First, he denied that he had changed his mind. "I still have exactly the same policy," Paul told me on September 9 in the Capitol. "And that is that intervention militarily should be through an act of Congress." Paul has always said any decision to go to war should be made by Congress, but that didn't explain why he now supports war.

Second, Paul has tried to change the subject, arguing that people shouldn't be surprised he backs war against ISIS because he's "not an isolationist." Whether or not it's ever been fair to call Paul an isolationist is debatable. Paul defines "isolationist" so narrowly—as someone who wants our military to be "nowhere any of the time," as he put it in an interview with the *New York Times*—that not even Charles Lindbergh would have qualified. When Paul speaks of isolationism he really means pacifism. But the debate is largely irrelevant to Paul's views about ISIS.

More recently, Paul has acknowledged that events have played a role in changing his mind. "Events do change your opinion. And your opinion of when a vital interest is being threatened is influenced by, you know, the beheading of two Americans," Paul told me following an event in New Hampshire on September 12. "There's a threat to our consulate that is very nearby, there's a threat to our embassy potentially, and also potentially a threat to us." But those threats existed back when Paul was warning the United States to stay out of Iraq in June and July. The beheading of two American journalists—which the world learned about on August 19 and September 2—are the only new events that Paul has cited to explain his shifting views.

So Paul wasn't convinced that ISIS—an offshoot of al Qaeda with genocidal aims and a jihadist army that numbers 25,000 strong—merited a military response when they were merely taking over large swaths of Iraq. But he would have us believe the murder of two Americans was enough to persuade him to support a war—enough to outweigh the risk of the United States becoming "Iran's air force." *Reason*'s Jacob Sullum highlighted the problems with this case for war: "Since American journalists, students, businessmen, and diplomats live and work in nearly every country on Earth, this strikes me as a dangerously open-ended rationale for military intervention."

A more plausible explanation of Paul's shifting views is that he, like President Obama, reluctantly followed public opinion, which increasingly demanded something be done about ISIS. As Jack Hunter, a former aide who coauthored Paul's 2011 book, wrote in 2013: "Some say Rand is not Ron because he is 'willing to play the game.' That's exactly right. That's the point—to play it, influence it, and win it as much as you can. The neoconservatives certainly do, to their advantage."

"The philosophy hasn't substantively changed [from Ron Paul to Rand Paul]," Hunter concluded. "The methods and style most certainly have."

Hunter resigned from his post in Paul's office in 2013 after a report by the *Washington Free Beacon*'s Alana Goodman revealed that Hunter was a neo-Confederate who celebrates the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and regrets that "whites [are] not afforded the same right to celebrate their own cultural identity" as minorities. But Hunter remains loyal to Paul, writing now that the senator has been "entirely consistent" on war against ISIS.

It's not clear how much of a price Rand Paul will pay among those who remain staunchly opposed to an American air war in Syria and Iraq. Libertarians and noninterventionists will have no one more dovish than Paul to turn to in the 2016 Republican primaries. But by "playing the game" on matters of war, Paul has opened himself up to potentially devastating attacks that could keep the rest of the GOP from giving him a second look. ♦

The Buddy System

Providence has changed. Has he?

BY ETHAN EPSTEIN

Providence

Buddy Cianci does not have a cold. In fact, the 73-year-old twice-convicted felon and six-term Providence mayor is in fine fettle on the early fall day that I catch him in his campaign headquarters. Cianci officially launched his comeback bid just this morning, though he's basically been in campaign mode since filing to run two months earlier for the mayoralty that he had to leave in 2002 after being convicted of racketeering and subsequently spending four and half years in the federal clink. Cianci's in particularly good spirits when I see him because he's personally counting the campaign checks that have come today, and he's landed quite a haul. As I take a seat in his office, he orders an underling to go make a deposit at the bank, handing over an impressively fat stack of checks. The staffer better get

Ethan Epstein is an assistant editor at The Weekly Standard.

him "something cold to drink" while he's at it, Cianci commands in his thick Rhode Island brogue.

Cianci may be in good shape—he insists that doctors have given him a clean bill of health, despite his battling colon cancer—but he looks a little frailer than the last time he ran for mayor, back in 1998. Gone is Cianci's famous toupee, the "squirrel." (He was forced to lose it when he went to prison, a traumatic experience—losing the toupee, that is—though he recently told the *New York Times* that he "enjoys life without the squirrel.") Instead, he now frequently sports eyeglasses; squint, and he almost looks distinguished. The epicurean ex-officeholder is now considerably skinnier than the last time around, as well. (That's not to say Cianci's taking care of his health, exactly—he maintains his decades-long Marlboro habit.) He is, he says, "a little older, a little wiser, a little more mellow."

Buddy Cianci

"Mellow" is not a word one would traditionally associate with Vincent "Buddy" Cianci. Wildly ambitious from a young age, the Cranston, Rhode Island, native began his career as a prosecutor before being elected mayor of Providence in 1974, at just 33 years old. More transactional than ideological, Cianci ran as a Republican because it made the most electoral sense. His brand was "anti-corruption" and clean government—he defeated the barfly incumbent, Democrat Joseph Doorley, and when he was still a prosecutor, Cianci even went after Raymond Patriarca, the don of the New England mafia. At the time, Providence's politics were positively Middle Eastern, dominated by ethnic conflict. Cianci was the candidate of the Italians; Doorley, the Irish.

After winning election, Cianci looked like he was destined for bigger things than mere mayor of a then-declining New England city. A rare Republican mayor, Cianci addressed the 1976 GOP convention and was even tipped as a possible vice president. Indeed, it was an open secret that he coveted one day becoming the first Italian-American president. All the while, he threw himself into his job, embracing the historic preservation of Providence's fabulous stock of architecture and trying, with mixed results, to lure development downtown. He also cultivated something of a cult of personality, showing up at parades, weddings, Little League games, business launches, and concerts. As the old joke goes, Cianci is the kind of politician who would have attended the opening of an envelope. While he lost a 1980 bid for Rhode Island governor, Providence voters rewarded his attention by reelecting him in 1978 and 1982, that last time as an independent.

But Cianci's frenetic energy has always had a disturbing dark side. In 1966, while a law student at Marquette University in Milwaukee, he was accused of raping a woman at gunpoint. Then there was the infamous incident in 1983, in which the then-mayor assaulted a man he suspected of having an affair with his wife. While a Providence policeman held the victim captive, Cianci burned him with a lit cigarette, attacked him with a fireplace log, and chucked an ashtray at him. For that charming conduct, Cianci was given a five-year suspended prison sentence and forced to resign his office, which he regained in 1990, running under the slogan "He Never Stopped Caring About Providence." Pulitzer Prize-winner Mike Stanton's exhaustive biography, *The Prince of Providence*, describes numerous instances of minor violence, tantrums, and petty tyranny. There was the time, for example, when a restaurant Cianci favored was too crowded to let him in, and he was turned away at the door. A little later, the Providence fire marshal shut the place down for overcrowding, and its entertainment license was revoked.

Cianci fell again—harder, this time—in 2002, after a multiyear FBI investigation of corruption in Providence city government brought down nine people, including the mayor himself. The linchpin of the case was a video recording of a top Cianci aide taking a $1,000 bribe. Though he was acquitted of the majority of the charges he faced, Cianci was found guilty of running a criminal enterprise from City Hall. Not only was he forced to resign again, but he was sent to federal prison for four and a half years.

In retrospect, it seems touchingly naïve to have thought that Cianci's imprisonment would have been the last that Providence would hear from him, that he'd simply slink away in disgrace. When he was released from prison in 2007, Cianci returned to Providence almost immediately and wasted no time in seizing the spotlight again. Within a few months of his release, he was hosting a daily radio show. (This was the same tack he took after his first conviction.) He also began appearing on local TV as a political analyst and released a memoir, *Politics and Pasta*. And even when he was in jail, Cianci's most ardent opponents couldn't avoid his visage in the grocery store aisles: He continued to market his "Mayor's Own Marinara Sauce," which features a smiling shot of Cianci on the label. Like a bizarro Newman's Own, Cianci's marinara sauce is ostensibly a charitable endeavor, but as the Associated Press revealed earlier this spring, "in recent years, no money from the sauce's sales has been donated to Cianci's charity scholarship fund." That hasn't spurred Cianci to remove the message Benefiting Providence School Children from the sauce's label, however. Cianci's comeback culminated this summer with his announcement that he would make a run at the mayor's office, again as an independent.

This run, Cianci has some bona fide successes to point to: When he was mayor, particularly in his second go-around, Providence underwent so much positive change that many took to calling it "America's renaissance city." (Opinions differ, of course, on how much credit Cianci can legitimately claim.) A modern-day Xerxes, Cianci literally moved water for his most famous project—he oversaw the rerouting of three rivers downtown and the opening of the beautiful Waterplace

Park. Today, that project is looked to worldwide as a model of urban redevelopment. Hotels, a skating rink, and a shiny new shopping mall also opened under his watch. (Though as Stanton's book shows, it's not exactly a healthy business climate when entrepreneurs can have their businesses messed with if they fall out of favor with an ill-tempered mayor.) And he can make a reasonable case that he stanched the city's decline: The population stabilized and even began to grow when he was mayor, from 160,000 in 1990 to more than 180,000 today.

Cianci talks a solid game on a lot of issues, too. "Raising taxes is not an option," he tells me. "Our taxes are too high. The property tax is high. The commercial property tax is the fourth-highest in the country; up until last year it was the highest. Dropping to fourth-highest isn't exactly something to write home about." He also makes a good case for consolidating and privatizing various services, slicing the unwieldy administrative staff of Providence Public Schools, putting more cops on the beat, and filling potholes. Okay, so it's not the stuff of the White House—but it sure beats Fort Dix Correctional Facility.

And he's still the charismatic and witty pol he was 30 years ago. When his press secretary comes into his office to relay an invitation to appear on a radio show, Cianci shoots back, "You could open a window and yell out the window and have more listeners than [that program]." (The quintessential gladhander, he went on the show anyway.)

But, of course, there's Cianci's disquieting criminal past. His strategy is both to minimize the gravity of his convictions and to characterize anybody concerned about his rap sheet as dwelling on "ancient history."

"I was found guilty of *one* charge," he stresses. "I've always proclaimed my innocence . . . frankly, I'm not shy about it. It's the truth: I did go to jail. Having said that, I paid the price." Referring to journalists who raise the issue, he says, "I thought they were in the news business, not the History Channel." (That's a variation of an old line; in 1990, he said those concerned about the assault conviction should go to "The Rhode Island Historical Society.") "The law says I can run. I paid the price, and I can run. If you don't like that, change the law," he continues. When asked at a press conference how the people of Providence can trust him given that he's already been convicted of racketeering, he doesn't have much of an answer, saying only that he'll appoint good people.

Cianci almost lucked out with a Democratic opponent who has his own alleged ethical lapses, albeit on a different scale than Cianci's. Providence City Council president Michael Solomon, who is under investigation for failing to disclose that a real estate partnership he's involved in received an economic development loan from the city, nearly won the Democratic primary. Instead, Cianci is facing his electoral nightmare, in the form of one Jorge Elorza. In a city with as much corruption as Providence, it's helpful not to have a history as an elected official. Elorza is a housing judge, and he comes from a genuinely inspiring background: The son of Guatemalan immigrants, Elorza grew up in poverty and was a troubled teenager who dabbled in petty crimes like shoplifting. But he later attended the Community College of Rhode Island before working his way to the University of Rhode Island and eventually Harvard Law School. Elorza will also have an ethnic advantage; Providence is rapidly on the way to becoming a majority-Hispanic city. (The current mayor, Angel Taveras, is of Dominican descent.) Cianci, for his part, says that his campaign is spending a lot on Spanish-language television and radio ads.

Cianci charges to me that "the progressive types" (presumably Elorza) want to keep hiking taxes, despite his opponent's insistence that he wants to do no such thing. It's also mordantly amusing to hear him use "progressive" as an epithet—not 20 minutes before, I had witnessed Cianci, when talking to a Democratic voter, call himself the "original progressive," citing his earlier administration's pro-gay policies. But then last week, Cianci was playing the *conservative* culture warrior; his campaign initiated a telephone push poll, which, as local TV station WPRI reported, asked voters to "press 1 if they agree with Cianci that teaching about the existence or nonexistence of God 'does not belong in schools,' or press 2 if they agree with Elorza that it would be acceptable 'to teach in schools that there is no God.'" (Elorza wrote a 2010 law review article exploring the issue.)

Trying to be everything to everyone carries more than a hint of desperation. Is Cianci worried he's on the path to defeat? He says no. "One thing I don't need is name recognition," he quips, before saying that "this race is winnable." In contrast to the old days of ethnic-based allegiances, today, he says, "It's a sociological war. Elites against the not-so-elites." Cianci makes it clear he's the candidate of the not-so-elites.

But that points to one of Cianci's biggest problems: While it is by no means a rich city, Providence just isn't as "blue collah" as it used to be. People with Ph.D.s now live on the West End, where, when I was growing up on the East Side of Providence in the 1990s, people with *bachelor's* degrees didn't dare to tread. Downtown, which in my day made Allentown look cosmopolitan, is now downright hip. A sagging old parking garage now houses a gaggle of trendy restaurants on its ground floor, including a wood-fired pizza place and a Tokyo-style ramen joint where lines can stretch out the door. The Sportsman's Inn, a notorious "gentlemen's club" across from the *Providence Journal* building, has recently re-opened as a boutique hotel housing an upmarket coffee bar. (Note: The online reviews of the Sportsman's Inn live on, and they merit a chuckle.) Cianci's core supporters come from a fading Providence; at a barbecue fundraiser of his I attended, Sinatra played over the loudspeakers and the largely Italian-American crowd threw back wine in paper cups. But almost all of the attendees were older than 60.

In a way, the myriad changes in Providence are a testament to the renaissance that Buddy Cianci at least helped spur. But, unfortunately for Buddy, highly educated Bobos who live in nice places don't tend to vote for twice-convicted felons. ♦

Go Big or Go Home

The case for GOP boldness.

BY FRED BARNES

Big ideas sometimes play a role in political campaigns, but not in this year's midterm elections. Republican candidates concentrate on linking their opponents to President Obama and his policies. That's it. Democrats are understandably wary of defending Obama. They go after Republicans on minor or trumped-up issues, often in unscrupulous TV ads.

This formula is working for Democrats. For them, victory in the elections would be holding Republicans to minimal gains and retaining control of the Senate. If nothing changes, they have a shot. So Republicans need to break the pattern of the campaign. They can do it by attaching themselves to a few big ideas. They've done this before.

In 1978, the Kemp-Roth tax cut was introduced. It proposed to slash individual income tax rates by one-third, across the board. Conceived by Jack Kemp, then a Republican congressman from Buffalo, and cosponsored by Senator Bill Roth of Delaware, it was a big idea—bold, radical, and controversial. Yet national chairman Bill Brock adopted Kemp-Roth as official GOP policy in that year's elections, and scores of the party's candidates campaigned on it.

Republicans grabbed onto a second big idea in 1978: reversing the national security policies of President Carter. This included support for a hefty military buildup, rejection of an arms control treaty with the Soviet Union (SALT II), approval of the B-1 bomber whose production Carter had canceled, and adoption of a hard-line policy against Soviet expansionism.

Now there's a rallying cry.

The idea of such an abrupt turnaround stirred vigorous debate.

It was a gamble to make these big ideas the centerpiece of their campaign. Republicans could have spent their time criticizing Carter and his policies. But by offering credible alternatives they fostered Republican unity and elevated the seriousness of the campaign. Republicans won 3 seats in the Senate that fall, 15 in the House—a modest success though not quite a GOP wave.

But the two big ideas were crucial in a second election. Over the next two years, tax cuts and defense were the constant focus of Republican activity. And in 1980, they became the foundation of the GOP campaign. This time there was a wave. Ronald Reagan won the presidency with a mandate to cut taxes and enlarge the military. Republicans won a dozen seats and control of the Senate. They picked up 34 House seats.

There's a message here for Republicans in 2014. They can stick with their cautious strategy, and it might lead to a Senate majority. Or they can seek a larger victory this year and an even larger one in 2016 by embracing big ideas. I have two in mind.

(1) Abolish the IRS as we know it. This was once a crazy idea of right-wingers, but no longer. The Internal Revenue Service has always been unpopular. But now it's notorious for being arbitrary, inefficient, and glaringly corrupt. Does anyone with an IQ over 50 believe all those emails from IRS officials involved in harassing conservative groups were erased by accident?

Turning the IRS into an agency of ethical accountants wouldn't require an entirely new government bureau. The framework of the IRS and even the name could stay. Two sweeping changes would transform it. One is to narrow sharply the discretion of IRS officials. The other is to simplify the tax code in a way that leaves the IRS with responsibilities an accountant can handle without advice from political appointees.

(2) Revive America's ability to project power and influence in the world. Just as Republicans called for turning away from Carter's policies in 1978, they should make reversing Obama's a major theme. He has shrunk the military to its pre-Pearl Harbor size and backed away from American leadership abroad. This is a historic retreat from our role of protecting world order since World War II.

Robert Kagan of the Brookings Institution and Bret Stephens of the *Wall Street Journal* have written persuasively about America's decline as a benign force in the world. "Unless

AP / AL BEHRMAN

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at The Weekly Standard.

Americans can be led back to an understanding of their enlightened self-interest, to see again how their fate is entangled with that of the world, then the prospects for a peaceful 21st century in which Americans and American principles can thrive will be bleak," Kagan wrote in the *New Republic*.

Stephens's view is captured in the title of his new book, to be published by Sentinel in November: *America in Retreat: The New Isolationism and the Coming Global Disorder*. An excerpt from the book in *Commentary* is aptly titled "The Meltdown." Obama, Stephens writes, "assumed high office with so much global goodwill" and squandered it.

The opening for Republicans is clear. Americans don't want to engage in another war, but neither do they want a weak and cringing America led by a president fearful of acting without the approval of the "international community." Restoring American strength in the world—both military and moral—should become a relentless Republican theme. So should the urgent need for a military buildup.

There are other big ideas. House majority leader Kevin McCarthy has suggested energy independence that spotlights steps taken by House Republicans but opposed by Obama and Democrats. Tax reform is big enough an idea, but it has a problem as a campaign theme. People love the concept, but hate the specifics. And Democrats would target (and exaggerate) the specifics.

The beauty of abolishing the IRS and restoring American influence is that Democrats would be left without a good response. They're unlikely to rush to the defense of the IRS. And they'd have trouble claiming, à la Woodrow Wilson, that Obama kept us out of war just as he is getting into one.

There's real risk in embracing big ideas. They may cause you to lose. But promoting ideas you believe in as critical to the country's ascendency and the willingness to take a political hit in advancing them—that's the mark of leadership. For Republicans in 2014, it's also good politics. ♦

From Robespierre to ISIS

Edmund Burke's war on terror—and ours.

BY GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

The war on terror is over, the president assured us a year ago. Now, we are told, that war is very much with us and will be pursued with all due diligence. The president was obviously responding to the polls reflecting the disapproval of the public, but also to critics in his own party. Dianne Feinstein, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, sadly commented on his admission that he had "no strategy yet": "I think I've learned one thing about this president, and that is: He's very cautious—maybe in this instance too cautious."

Two centuries ago, in the midst of another "war on terror"—or so he thought of it—Edmund Burke rebuked his prime minister for a similar failing. He had admired William Pitt for his leadership in the war with France, but now, out of excessive caution, Pitt was seeking peace with that "regicide" regime. "There is a courageous wisdom," Burke wrote in his "Letters on a Regicide Peace," but "there is also a false reptile prudence, the result not of caution but of fear. Under misfortunes it often happens that the nerves of the understanding are so relaxed, the pressing peril of the hour so completely confounds all the faculties, that no future danger can be properly provided for, can be justly estimated, can be so much as fully seen."

That misplaced caution, or false prudence, was all the more serious in the case of a "great state" like England, which had to behave in a manner commensurate with its power.

> The rules and definitions of prudence can rarely be exact; never universal. I do not deny that in small truckling states a timely compromise with power has often been the means, and the only means, of drawling out their puny existence; but a great state is too much envied, too much dreaded, to find safety in humiliation. To be secure, it must be respected. Power, and eminence, and consideration, are things not to be begged. They must be commanded: and they who supplicate for mercy from others can never hope for justice through themselves.

It is an odd argument to come from Burke, and perhaps the more telling for that. If there is any one political principle associated with Burke, it is prudence. "Letters on a Regicide Peace" was written in 1796. Five years earlier, in his "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," he had pronounced prudence the first of all virtues. "Prudence is not only first in rank of the virtues, political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all." But prudence was associated with a corollary principle, "circumstances," which determine what is wise and prudent in any particular situation. On this occasion, in a war with an implacable enemy, a misplaced prudence was not a virtue but a fatal flaw.

The war with France was such an occasion, Burke believed, because France was the consummate enemy, the very embodiment of terror. The idea of the "Reign of Terror" (*la Grande Terreur*) was not, as some have suggested, the invention of disaffected

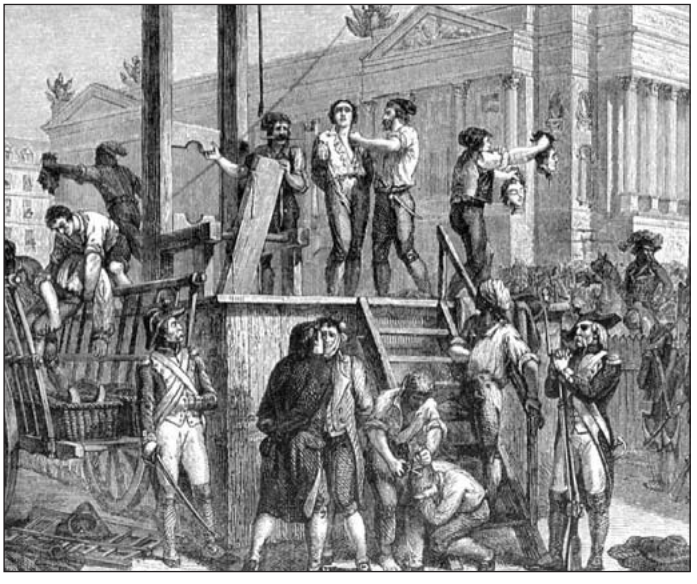
Gertrude Himmelfarb is the author, most recently, of The People of the Book: Philosemitism in England from Cromwell to Churchill.

emigrés or hostile historians. "Terror" was the term the revolutionaries publicly and proudly applied to themselves. In December 1793, with the executions well under way (they amounted to 30,000 or more in a two-year period), the "Constitution of the Terror" officially inaugurated the "Government of the Terror." Robespierre, the head of the Committee of Public Safety, explained why terror was the necessary instrument of the revolution—the "Republic of Virtue," as he saw it. "If the spring of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the springs of popular government in revolution are at once *virtue and terror:* virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible." (Robespierre was executed shortly after, one of the notable victims of the Terror.)

Burke agreed with Robespierre about this, if about nothing else: There was a necessary connection between the revolution and terror, as there was between the Revolutionary Wars and terror. Burke's "Letters on a Regicide Peace" (like his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*) may be accused of hyperbole. But if his account of the "scourge and terror" of the Revolutionary Wars seems exaggerated, it is not at all exaggerated applied to the current wars waged by the Islamic State. Indeed, it is uncannily prescient. With only slight changes of wording, we can adapt and update Burke's tract. "Out of the tomb of the murdered Monarchy in France [read: "Out of the womb of the murderous Islamic State"] has arisen a vast, tremendous, unformed spectre, in a far more terrific guise than any which ever yet have overpowered the imagination and subdued the fortitude of man." (One can also imagine the Islamic State, as it imposes *sharia* law upon its terrain, assuming for itself the title of "Republic of Virtue.")

It was not only a murderous war, Burke insisted, it was a "peculiar" war, and that made it all the more threatening.

> We are in a war of a peculiar nature. It is not with an ordinary community, which is hostile or friendly as passion or as interest may veer about; not with a State which makes war through wantonness, and abandons it through lassitude. We are at war with a system, which, by its essence, is inimical to all other Governments, and which makes peace or war, as peace and war may best contribute to their subversion. It is with an armed doctrine that we are at war. It has, by its essence, a faction of opinion, and of interest, and of enthusiasm, in every country. To us it is a Colossus which bestrides our channel. It has one foot on a foreign shore, the other upon the British soil.



The execution of Robespierre

Burke's words can be echoed almost exactly today, for it is just such a peculiar war we are waging against just such a peculiar enemy. The Islamic State is not an ordinary state with which we can negotiate or compromise, not a "manageable problem" we can resolve gradually and temperately, but an "armed doctrine," a "system," a "faction of opinion," which knows no compromise and cannot be managed. With such an enemy, there cannot be a "red line" defining how far, and no further, we may go; a "no troops on the ground" policy, limiting our involvement in the war; an "end-of-war" strategy that prescribes at the outset when and how the war will be terminated. On the contrary, a war with such an enemy is a total war—and, Burke insisted, a "*long* war" (his italics). "I speak it emphatically, and with a desire that it should be marked, in a *long* war; because, without such a war, no experience has yet told us, that a dangerous power has ever been reduced to measure or to reason." The purpose of the war must be nothing less than to "destroy that enemy" or it will "destroy all Europe," and to do so "the force opposed to it should be made to bear some analogy and resemblance to the force and spirit which that system exerts."

The pamphlet containing the two "Letters on a Regicide Peace," published in October 1796, was Burke's last published work. He died the following year. (Two other letters were published posthumously.) He had described himself to a friend as "a dejected old man, buried in an anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten in an obscure and melancholy retreat." The "Letters on a Regicide Peace" gives no hint of that. It is as bold and vigorous as the *Reflections*—and it was surprisingly popular, considering the fact that Burke was urging upon England a long, dangerous, and costly war. The mood of the American public today, to judge by the polls, should be receptive to his message, understanding our war on terror as he understood his, and willing to pursue it with the commitment and energy it deserves. ♦

The Senate and the Courts

The federal judiciary will follow the election returns. BY EDWARD WHELAN

With little fanfare, President Obama has enjoyed remarkable success in his project to remake the federal courts in his own ideological image. How much more he achieves during his final two years in office depends in large part on whether Republicans win control of the Senate this November.

Obama's success is most marked in the federal courts of appeals, the intermediate level of the national judicial hierarchy. When Obama took office, only 1 of the 13 appellate courts had a majority of Democratic appointees. Now 9 do.

Obama's number of confirmed appellate nominees—53—only slightly exceeds President George W. Bush's six-year total of 51. But according to a midyear Congressional Research Service report, Obama's success rate in getting his appellate nominees confirmed is much higher than Bush's—83.1 to 68.7 percent. Even more notably, the pace of confirmations has increased dramatically since last November, when Senate Democrats abolished the filibuster for lower-court nominees.

The influence of appellate courts (also known as circuit courts) should not be underestimated. They decide nearly 60,000 cases each year. The Supreme Court's total docket (including cases from state-court systems) contains fewer than 100 cases per year. So the courts of appeals provide the final word in 99.9 percent of their cases.

An appellate court usually has three-judge panels decide cases, and it's common to have a panel majority with a different ideological bent than the court as whole. But, as the D.C. Circuit's recent grant of en banc review in the Obamacare exchange-subsidies case illustrates, the court retains the authority to override panel decisions. So a court with a liberal majority has broad leeway to establish liberal circuit precedent on new or open legal questions. Further, ideological conformity among the courts of appeals makes it less likely the Supreme Court will intervene, as the existence of a conflict between circuits is an important factor in its decision to review a lower-court ruling.

Justices Sotomayor, Ginsburg, and Kagan

If the Senate remains under Democratic leadership after November's elections, look for the floodgates to open even wider, with Obama swamping Bush's eight-year total of 61 confirmed appellate judges. In addition to 8 current or impending vacancies, there are more than 30 Clinton and Carter appointees on the circuit courts who are, or will soon be, eligible to take senior status and thus open up vacancies for Obama to fill. Any judge who takes senior status by the end of 2015 could confidently expect Obama to fill the vacancy. While any such appointments wouldn't alter the party composition of a court, they would keep the positions in Democratic hands for another 15 to 20 years.

There will likely be some additional vacancies created, one way or another, by sitting Republican appointees. On the four courts of appeals that still have Republican appointees as a majority, there are 19 Republican appointees, some already older than 75, who will be eligible to take senior status. So Obama might be able to flip these courts to Democratic majorities.

By contrast, if Republicans win control of the Senate in November, they will be able to use their majority on the Senate Judiciary Committee—and, if need be, on the Senate floor—to block objectionable Obama nominees to the lower courts. The White House would have no choice but to consult extensively in advance with Republicans about whom to nominate. Bush appointed only 10 federal appellate judges in his last two years (and 1 of the 10, a former Clinton nominee, was really a Democratic pick). Republicans ought to have little difficulty holding Obama to the same number.

Obama hasn't yet been able to transform the Supreme Court, but by replacing liberals (and, alas, Republican appointees) David Souter and John Paul Stevens with Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan, he has entrenched their seats on the left for the next two or three decades. The Court remains roughly divided between a bloc of four liberal justices and a less unified group of four conservative justices, with Anthony Kennedy swinging sometimes left and sometimes right to form narrow majorities in most of the contentious cases.

The justice most likely to retire

Edward Whelan is president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a leading contributor to National Review Online*'s* Bench Memos *blog.*

over the next two years is Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who is now 81. If Obama is able to replace her, the ideological composition of the Court won't change, but the liberal cohort will get markedly younger.

If Obama gets the opportunity to replace a conservative justice (Scalia is 78) or Kennedy (also 78), a dominant liberal majority on the Court becomes a possibility. And once there are five left-wing votes, any hints of moderation from the liberal justices are likely to disappear.

Senate Democrats didn't abolish the filibuster for Supreme Court nominations, so in theory 41 Republican senators could unite to block any Obama nominee. It might therefore seem that the question of who controls the Senate over the next two years isn't important with respect to Supreme Court nominations. But that impression would be badly mistaken.

For starters, the principle that underlay the abolition of the filibuster for lower-court nominees—the plenary power of the Senate majority to revise or override its rules at any time—would likewise enable a Democratic majority to abolish the filibuster in the very midst of a battle over a Supreme Court nominee. If Democrats are running the Senate, moreover, they will be able to schedule and stage-manage the confirmation hearing and floor action to benefit the nominee and maximize the political costs that opposing senators will incur.

If, instead, Republicans control the Senate, Obama will face a much greater challenge getting a Supreme Court nominee confirmed. Indeed, Ginsburg will be much less likely to retire in the first place. Republicans will leave in place the filibuster and, if unified, will be able to exercise simple majority power to defeat any nominee. Depending on the circumstances, Republicans might well face pressure to keep any vacancy open until after the 2016 presidential election.

If a Republican president takes office in 2017 with a Republican Senate, then the project of restoring the courts to their proper role can resume. ♦

A Friendship Grown Less Warm

Are evangelicals turning against Israel?

BY MARK TOOLEY

Senator Ted Cruz's vigorous defense of Israel at a recent conference for persecuted Middle Eastern Christians in Washington, D.C., provoked jeers from a loud minority in the audience, made up largely of Catholics and Orthodox, many of them from the region or of Middle Eastern background. In June, the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to divest from three firms doing business with Israel to protest Israeli policies towards Palestinians. More politically significant than those events, however, is a shift underway among some evangelicals, who traditionally have been Israel's strongest Christian boosters in America.

The late Rev. Jerry Falwell, a founder of modern conservative religious activism, often boasted that America's Bible Belt was Israel's safety belt. But Falwell's zeal for conservative red meat causes has become passé for much of the current generation of evangelical elites, who eschew the confrontational politics of the old religious right.

Polls show that evangelicals remain strongly pro-Israel and are America's strongest pro-Israel demographic by far, with the possible exception of Jews. But there are few if any pro-Israel evangelical leaders today as outspoken and prominent as Falwell. And an increasing number of evangelicals in parachurch groups and evangelical schools are endorsing pro-Palestinian activism or at least a more neutral stance between Israel and its foes. Often the new evangelical perspective is premised on concern for Palestinian Christians, who number about 50,000, or just over 1 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Palestinian population.

One relatively new voice for evangelicals is the Telos Group, based in Washington, D.C., and winsomely advocating a "pro-Israeli, pro-Palestinian, pro-American, pro-peace movement." Its founder is a U.S.-born Palestinian Christian attorney, and its executive director is Todd Deatherage, who was chief of staff to Senator Tim Hutchinson, the Republican senator from Arkansas, and later worked in the State Department under George W. Bush. Two evangelical bishops, one of whom is Hispanic, serve on the Telos board.

Deatherage belongs to a large orthodox Anglican church outside Washington attended by many prominent conservatives. Part of Telos's mission is to send "influential Americans from across the political and theological spectra on high-touch, multi-narrative pilgrimages to the Holy Land," where they are exposed to sympathetic Palestinians.

"The work of Telos is to contribute to the creation of a new paradigm, one in which Americans get to know real Israelis and Palestinians, respect them as individuals, and take in their stories," Deatherage explained earlier this year. "There are some who believe our pro-Israel, pro-Palestine approach is nothing more than slick marketing, covering a more sinister (and one-sided) agenda," he admitted. "Not only has our methodology been questioned, but so has our funding," he added, obviously referring

Mark Tooley is president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the author of Methodism and Politics in the Twentieth Century.

to grants to Telos by George Soros's Open Society Institute. "And we make no apologies for welcoming financial support from any who will affirm freedom, security, and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians alike."

During the recent Gaza conflict, Deatherage benignly blogged that a "ceasefire is needed immediately." Neither "acts of terrorism nor aggressive military campaigns" can displace the need for "addressing the fundamental issues underlying the years of violence," he noted, as "each side needs friends who will challenge them to do what is best for their own people, and, at the same time, who will encourage visionary leadership which realizes that the future of the two people is interconnected, that neither is going away, that the pain of grieving mothers is always the same, and that freedom and security for one people cannot be found at the expense of the other."

Such agreeable appeals for peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis from the new-style melodious evangelical activism are different from the denunciations of Israel by harder-line critics on the old religious left, especially the curia of Mainline Protestant agencies, whose constituencies are limited and lack political influence.

"Christ at the Checkpoint" is a conference in Bethlehem on the West Bank hosted by U.S. and Palestinian evangelicals every other year since 2010. It once featured anti-Israel rhetoric from Palestinian and U.S. church activists. Now the tone is softer, and hundreds of evangelicals from the United States attend. Speakers at this year's conference, in March, featured a Dallas-area Southern Baptist pastor, the president of Oral Roberts University (who defended Israel), and the head of the World Evangelical Alliance. Also present was Palestinian Christian activist Sami Awad of the Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem, a popular and effective speaker at U.S. evangelical events, such as the annual "Q" forum for culture-minded young U.S. evangelicals. Awad largely avoids direct criticism of Israel while citing Palestinian hardships and benevolently urging reconciliation.

Also at Christ at the Checkpoint this year was Porter Speakman Jr., producer of *With God on Our Side*, a film that criticizes Christian Zionism for giving "uncritical support to Israeli government policies, even those that privilege Jews at the expense of Palestinians, leading to great suffering among Muslim and Christian Palestinians alike and threatening Israel's security as a whole." The film has been popular at many evangelical churches and schools for several years.

AP / GREG GIBSON

The good old days: Bibi and Falwell, 1998

Appearing in the film is Gary Burge, a New Testament professor at evangelicalism's prestigious Wheaton College and the author of a popular 2013 book, *Whose Land? Whose Promise? What Christians Are Not Being Told About Israel and the Palestinians*. Burge took dozens of Wheaton students to the conference this year. Endorsers of *With God on Our Side* include evangelist Tony Campolo, Emergent church guru Brian McLaren, author and National Prayer Breakfast speaker Carl Medearis, and World Vision vice president Steven Haas, who attended Christ at the Checkpoint this year.

Support for Palestinian advocacy among evangelical missions groups like World Vision—which declares itself "pro-Israel, pro-Palestine, pro-peace, pro-justice, and pro-Jesus"—is increasingly common. Evangelical missions personnel who work among Palestinians are sympathetic to their plight and often experience difficulties with Israeli authorities. Lynne Hybels, cofounder with her husband Bill Hybels of the nationally influential Chicago suburban megachurch Willow Creek, is a frequent spokesperson for World Relief, the relief arm of the National Association of Evangelicals and an advocate for thousands of rape victims in the Congo. Hybels recounts that five years ago Deatherage "introduced me to Israelis and Palestinians who said, 'If you're here to pick sides, go away. We don't need you. But if you want to learn to be a common friend to us both, we welcome you.'"

Last fall, Hybels addressed Evangelicals for Social Action's "Impact Holy Land" conference in Philadelphia, where she recounted having spoken at Christ at the Checkpoint and been derided there as a "threat to the state of Israel, a subtle (and therefore extremely dangerous) anti-Semite, a spokesperson for the PLO, and a Christian Palestinianist who traffics in anti-Israel propaganda and historical misinformation." She also said she'd been chided for leading a "massive effort in the heart of the evangelical church to lure its members—especially its youth—away from the pro-Israel position God commands to an uncritical and unbiblical support for Palestinians."

Speaking softly and thoughtfully, Hybels said she simply hopes for a time when Jews and Arabs are "living peacefully and equally as brothers and sisters," which will be hard since "Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the continuing blockade of Gaza is a violation of human rights." Palestinians must be "free from military occupation" and "have an equally valid right to live in the land and should have the same civil rights that are afforded to Israeli Jewish citizens, whether that's in one state, two states, or however many states." She rejected "any violence against

civilians, whether carried out militarily or through guerrilla tactics."

Statements like this from Hybels and most other evangelical critics of Israel usually sound nice and reasonable. They're aimed mostly and often effectively at young, educated evangelicals looking to opt out of traditional culture war issues. Evangelical millennials esteem collaboration and reconciliation. Choosing sides in ancient conflicts can seem unappealing. Why not choose both sides equally, with a slant towards the less powerful?

Except that such professed neutrality is another form of choosing. Shifting America's largest religious group away from its longtime partiality towards Israel could have important political and geostrategic implications. It also ignores history and today's reality. The older evangelical generation recalled the Holocaust, Israel's miraculous rebirth under U.N. auspices, and the equally miraculous Israeli victory in the 1967 war. They lived through the Cold War and thought of Israel as a key U.S. strategic partner.

Postmodern young evangelicals mostly see the two sides as competing, faraway peoples with equally valid narratives. That one side seeks coexistence while many on the other side seek eradication of their adversary is usually a part of the story not shared at "pro-Israel, pro-Palestine, pro-peace events," often featuring earnest Palestinian Christians and sometimes supportive Israeli peaceniks.

Countering the push to shift evangelicals away from Israel will require more than old-style "the Bible says" arguments. It will require intellectually substantive explanations as to why Israel merits survival and support in a fallen world often hostile both to Jews and to ordered liberty as lived out in democracies. It will require explaining that Palestinians don't benefit from implausible dreams about returning to pre-1947. And it will require reminding even evangelicals that neither Providence nor the Bible is neutral between a people striving to survive and others striving to eliminate them. ♦

Which Way Will Seoul Go?

The diplomatic courtship of South Korea's president.

BY DENNIS P. HALPIN

Park, left, and Abe with Obama: a match made in . . . Washington

NEWSCOM

America's "pivot" to Asia is rapidly going nowhere, but diplomatic challenges in the most economically vibrant region of the world still cry out for attention. These include the brash assertiveness of a rising China, the emergence of an erratic, nuclear-armed young North Korean leader, and the embrace of neo-nationalism in an aging and insecure Japan. One nation stands out as a source of balance—South Korea, personified by its astute and pragmatic president, the first woman to hold the job.

The diplomatic courtship of Park Geun-hye drew worldwide attention in March when President Obama arranged a three-way meeting with her and Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, during a summit at The Hague. One could almost hear a chorus singing "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" in the background as the Western press gushed over the "breakthrough meeting."

Most Koreans knew better. They were aware that Park Geun-hye normally would not be caught anywhere near the nationalistic Japanese leader, who had just three months before visited Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni war shrine. The stilted meeting required the American president to assume the Yente role at the behest of a worried State Department. In an official photo of the event, a barely smiling Park stares straight ahead, while a rather befuddled looking Abe watches as Obama does most of the talking.

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye's intelligent, strong-willed eldest daughter resists her father's promotion of the wealthy but boorish butcher in favor of a more dashing suitor. Park Geun-hye also apparently has a mind of her own, despite pressure from the elders of Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon. The Washington gurus reportedly told Seoul's diplomats that South Korea is "not a team player" in the alliance for not embracing Abe. They seemed to imply, like Tevye, that she should

Dennis P. Halpin, a former adviser on Asia policy to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is a visiting scholar at the U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS (Johns Hopkins) and a consultant with the Poblete Analysis Group.

defer to "The Papa!" i.e., Uncle Sam.

But The Papa in Washington could do little when a more dashing suitor came courting in Seoul in July. There was nervousness in Washington as Chinese president Xi Jinping received the red carpet treatment from America's South Korean ally. The sting is potentially even greater; Korean friends have said that any announced South Korean trip by Japan's Abe would see the streets of Seoul flooded with so many protesters that the visit would have to be canceled (rather like President Eisenhower's aborted visit to Tokyo in 1960 in the midst of contentious security treaty negotiations being handled by Prime Minister Abe's own grandfather). Korean government officials, for the record, have asserted that bilateral relations with Tokyo are not as strained as claimed on the Seoul street and that, given the right circumstances, Abe would be welcomed.

Still, Washington should be concerned given President Park's reported affection for Chinese culture and her noted fluency in Mandarin Chinese. And, as with any earnest suitor, Xi brought gifts guaranteed to dazzle. He had already approved earlier in the year the opening of a memorial hall in northeast China dedicated to the Korean independence fighter Ahn Jung-geun, who assassinated Japanese statesman Ito Hirobumi at Harbin train station in 1909. Xi has further plans for memorial sites in China dedicated to the Comfort Women, a key concern of the South Korean public, and to the Korean Provisional Government-in-exile, which was established in China during the period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea.

And soon after his Seoul visit, Xi Jinping, in a direct snub to his disrespectful and impulsive North Korean ally, allegedly allowed a group of North Korean refugees caught on China's southern border, including a child, to be turned over to South Korean diplomats. They reportedly gained safe passage to Seoul rather than being sent back to the North Korean gulag. If true, this represents a clear triumph for Park Geun-hye's quiet diplomacy on the refugee issue. Xi also holds the key to the ultimate prize for Seoul—Chinese acquiescence in a unified Korean peninsula one day under Seoul's administration. While still a pipe dream, this possibility remains the holy grail of emerging Sino-South Korean friendly relations.

So will a bilateral Park-Abe summit ever take place? If Park Geun-hye were a descendant of independence fighter Ahn Jung-geun, she could be on a flight to Tokyo tomorrow, just as Richard Nixon, with his impeccable anti-Communist credentials, was the only American president who could go to China. But the uncomfortable fact is that President Park's father, former president Park Chung-hee, was a graduate of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy and served as a lieutenant with Japan's Kwantung Army in Manchuria—the same region where Prime Minister Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, headed industrial development and stood accused of exploiting Chinese slave labor.

The Manchurian family connection has opposite effects on President Park and Prime Minister Abe. Abe is tempted to whitewash the crimes of Imperial Japan's past in order to exonerate his grandfather and his contemporaries from the Tojo war cabinet. President Park, on the other hand, must strongly demonstrate her anti-Japanese-colonialism bona fides in order to leave the more controversial aspects of her father's legacy at rest. Yet Tokyo—and Washington—are surprisingly dense when it comes to understanding how family biography limits Park's diplomatic flexibility with regard to Japan.

Prime Minister Abe's actions have certainly made President Park even more wary of conciliatory gestures than she would already naturally be. Abe went to Yasukuni last December, despite American pressure. It was also recently revealed that he sent a letter to a ceremony honoring convicted war criminals, including Hideki Tojo, who issued orders to attack Pearl Harbor. The letter reportedly expressed sympathy with "the spirit of the Showa Era martyrs who became the foundation of their fatherland by sacrificing their souls for the sake of peace and prosperity of today's Japan." Another less-than-reassuring report on Abe's recent cabinet reshuffle indicates that the new lineup contains a couple of suspected neo-Nazi sympathizers.

As President Park knows, Tokyo did not treat the last woman who wielded political power in Korea very well. At the end of the 19th century, a weak Korean monarch was paralyzed with indecision during a political crisis which threatened his people. The queen consort sought help against an encroaching Japan from Beijing, which sent troops. China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 meant that the Korean queen's days were numbered. Tokyo, under Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi, looked for revenge against the "anti-Japanese" queen. As witnessed by a Russian officer, in the early hours of October 8, 1895, Japanese paramilitary forces entered a Seoul palace, found Queen Min, and sliced her with samurai swords. Some reports indicate that she was still alive when she was dragged to a nearby pine forest and set afire. A decade-and-a-half later, Ahn Jung-geun stood for his own day of reckoning on the platform at Harbin train station. He listed the murder of the Korean queen as his number one reason for shooting Ito Hirobumi.

President Park will take the world stage on September 24, when she addresses the U.N. General Assembly on her vision for peaceful Korean reunification. There is some speculation that she might use this opportunity to have a meeting on the sidelines in New York with Prime Minister Abe.

Another possibility for a meeting would be in Beijing. With China hosting the annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November, Xi Jinping may hold a bilateral meeting with Japanese prime minister Abe. Some suggest President Park might follow the Chinese—not American—lead and finally do her own one-on-one sit-down meeting with Abe. But in the end, it may be more prudent for President Park to repeat the prayer of the rabbi for the czar in *Fiddler on the Roof*: May God bless and keep him—far away from us! ♦

Allah and Woman at Yale

Ayaan Hirsi Ali speaks.

BY DANIEL GELERNTER

New Haven, Conn.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali spoke at Yale last week, and there was mild annoyance in the press section that no screaming protesters appeared to punch up the headlines. A small group distributed leaflets to people waiting outside; inside, all was quiet.

The lack of disturbance was in part thanks to good planning—every seat was filled, but no standing room was allowed, and the aisles were kept clear. In the main, there was no disturbance because Ayaan Hirsi Ali is hugely admired. The hundred or more people who were turned away for lack of seats, some clutching copies of *Infidel*, her autobiography, had hoped only to listen respectfully (and perhaps collect an autograph). A great international thug syndicate has told Hirsi Ali that, if she keeps talking, she's dead. And she keeps talking. That alone should win the admiration of every American.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Perhaps another reason the anti-Hirsi Ali protest fizzled is that its front-line soldiers at Yale made fools of themselves. Yale's Muslim Students Association (MSA) was widely condemned for an open letter that argued against her appearance on campus, claiming she lacked the credentials to speak about Islam. (Never mind that she was raised Muslim and now has a *fatwa* out against her.) The letter referred to her childhood experiences of genital mutilation and forced marriage as "unfortunate circumstances."

The MSA's letter was cosigned by 35 student organizations. Except not really. On the morning of Hirsi Ali's appearance, the *Yale Daily News* reported that many student groups—including Yale Hillel, Yale Friends of Israel, and the Women's Leadership Initiative—had been listed as cosigners without their permission.

The attempts over the last decade to silence Ayaan Hirsi Ali range from death threats to polite suggestions that she be barred from campuses. They have served only to heighten her stature—and Hirsi Ali is already impressively tall. She has a stately bearing, dresses quietly and tastefully. She speaks slowly, with a rich and robust accent. And you'll never see a less affected speaker at a podium.

She began by thanking Yale in contrast with Brandeis University. The latter had, only a few months earlier, first offered and then rescinded an honorary degree and an invitation to appear at their commencement ceremony. Yale will probably get more credit than it deserves for the comparison: It was not the university but William F. Buckley, Jr. Program, a conservative undergraduate group, that invited her to speak on campus. Perhaps Yale will follow through and do the decent thing and award her a degree this spring term. That would mean something. It would turn Yale into a bastion of freedom overnight, at a time when American universities are threatening to become an elaborate, extremely expensive practical joke.

Hirsi Ali was introduced by Harvey Goldblatt, a professor of Slavic languages, who praised her courage and especially her work on women's rights, and reminded the audience that part of a serious academic environment is listening to opposing viewpoints. That this reminder should be deemed necessary on a university campus is striking, but even more striking was the almost pleading tone. There was a hidden acknowledgment of helplessness, like a Wild-West saloon owner sidling up to the local outlaws and saying, "Please, y'all, we don't want any trouble here."

The protesters who had warned against a rabble-rousing speech to be delivered by an ideological firebrand must have been doubly disappointed. Hirsi Ali is a gentle, thoughtful speaker. There were no red-meat "applause lines"—though she did often get applause. Her thesis was simple: Any attempt to deal with Islamic terrorism is doomed unless we acknowledge its connection to Islam. Every religion has a "core," and the core of Islam is to submit to the will of Allah. (That is, in fact, what the word "Islam" means—*submission* to God. Hence also the title of Hirsi Ali's film collaboration with Dutch director Theo van Gogh criticizing the treatment of women in Islam. Van Gogh was subsequently murdered by an Islamic extremist.)

She insisted that there are *not*, as some suggest, "many Islams"—but there are several sets of Muslims: The first group are radicals who want to force the entire world into Islam by eradicating everything else. The second group, the vast majority, are in a "state of cognitive dissonance"—torn between the strict teachings of the first group and their own consciences, which revolt at the terrorists' behavior. The third group, perhaps the smallest, are reforming Muslims, who suggest, for example, that mosque and state should be separate. Members of the third group are excommunicated, exiled, threatened, murdered.

NEWSCOM

Daniel Gelernter is an artist and CEO of a tech startup.

Hirsi Ali associates the rise of Islamic terrorism with the rise of the first group. This new order represents a striking change from the attitudes she knew growing up. In her early childhood in Somalia, the attitude had been lenient: You kept what rules you could. "If you neglected your religious duties, you were left alone." Then a new figure appeared, "the preacher teacher." Most often he'd been trained in Saudi Arabia. He would insist not only that all laws be followed to the seventh-century letter, but that friends and family who didn't meet standards be snitched on immediately. If they would not reform, ties must be broken. Christians must be converted or else ties broken. Jews must simply be destroyed.

Hirsi Ali places the students of the MSA squarely in group two—Muslims who should resist the radicals, but often unthinkingly (or fearfully) direct their attacks in the wrong direction. Islamophobia, she says, is a disingenuous term. Of course there are bigots of every sort—there always have been. But why shouldn't we criticize Islam as we would any other religion? If we refrain from criticizing Islam alone, *that* expresses fear of Islam. *That* is true Islamophobia.

She concluded with a challenge to the MSA: Who is doing the real damage to the image of Islam? Should these students protest against reforming Muslims, or should they rather protest Boko Haram's sandwiching a Koran between two AK-47s on their flag? The flag's inscription reads "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." The Saudi Arabian flag has the same inscription underlined with a sword—in both cases, an ordinary theological inscription turned into a threat. So, she asks, "will you submit—passively or actively—or will you finally stand up to Allah?" Will you let the preacher teachers destroy your communities, or will you tell them to bugger off?

It was an inspiring speech and I think it would have given the MSA food for thought, if they'd been there. I hope they get their hands on a transcript. ♦

No Winners Yet in Ukraine

Putin's success has been exaggerated.

BY CATHY YOUNG

The conflict in Ukraine took some dramatic turns this month that led many observers to conclude that the Kremlin was succeeding in its effort to keep Ukraine under Russia's thumb, with the collusion of a spineless West. Actually, while Russia has wrested some concessions, the handwringing is largely unwarranted—so far. But much depends on the West's willingness to continue applying pressure to Russia and offer meaningful aid to Ukraine. And, even in the best-case scenario, a "frozen conflict" zone in eastern Ukraine is a likely and troubling outcome.

In the final days of August, when Ukrainian forces seemed close to routing the pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, their successful push against the insurgency was abruptly and brutally reversed; all available evidence indicates that, despite Moscow's implausible denials, the counteroffensive was led by invading Russian troops. With Ukrainian fighters demoralized and reeling from their sudden losses, President Petro Poroshenko agreed to ceasefire talks. On September 5, representatives of Ukraine, Russia, and the self-proclaimed "people's republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk signed an agreement that suspended Kiev's "anti-terrorist operation" and at least temporarily left pro-Russian separatists in control of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Then, on September 12, came the news that key parts of Ukraine's about-to-be-ratified comprehensive trade agreement with the European Union would not take effect until the start of 2016, in consideration of Russia's economic interests. This is, of course, the same agreement that former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych backed out of in late 2013 because of Kremlin pressure and bribery—a move that sparked the "Euromaidan" protests and sealed his political fate. Does the delay mean that Vladimir Putin has won and the revolution has lost?

Some believe so. A *Time* column by the magazine's Moscow correspondent, Simon Shuster, was titled "How Putin Got His Way In Ukraine." Shuster—whose *Time* cover story in late July portrayed Putin as having a near-supernatural ability to win and grow more formidable with each crisis—argues that the compromise made in Brussels gives the Russian strongman exactly what he wanted in the first place: a say over Ukraine's relationship with Europe. This theme is echoed by European commentators such as Deutsche Welle's Bernd Johann, who wrote, "The EU has bowed to pressure from Moscow. Ukraine can evidently become European only with the consent of Russia."

Many Ukrainians share these concerns; deputy foreign minister Danylo Lubkivsky resigned in protest against the trade deal postponement, saying it sent "the wrong signal" both to the Russian aggressor and the citizens of Ukraine. The symbolism was reinforced when Ukraine's parliament, the Rada, approved the agreement with the EU on the same day that it passed the law on the "special order of self-government" in the rebel-held parts of eastern Ukraine.

In a blog post on the *Ukrainska Pravda* website, Poroshenko adviser

Cathy Young is a columnist for Newsday *and* Real Clear Politics *and a contributing editor to* Reason *magazine.*

Yuri Lutsenko urged his compatriots to "stop the cries of 'all is lost.'" Lutsenko pointed out that the law applies only to parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, and only for a three-year period—a far cry from Putin's expansionist intent—and argued that the truce would give Ukraine a chance to recover from hostilities and shore up its military.

To some extent, this is spin control. But some independent Russian commentators critical of the Kremlin also believe Ukraine is gaining, not losing, from the Minsk agreement, whose terms are largely identical to the ones Poroshenko offered, and the rebels rejected, in June. Historian Mark Solonin argued on his blog that the deal spells the end of Putin's quest to reclaim *Novorossiya* ("New Russia," the czarist-era name for territories in eastern and southern Ukraine that many Russian nationalists regard as Russia's own). The insurgents are required to disarm, disband, and allow local elections with proper monitoring—presumably by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which organized the negotiations. It seems unlikely they will comply; but, while the survival of the illegal Donetsk/Luhansk enclave certainly poses problems for Ukraine, these problems are by no means fatal.

Civilians training to fight Russian-backed rebels in eastern Ukraine

While Ukraine was at a clear military disadvantage when it accepted the agreement, one should not overrate the strength of Russia's position. A surprise attack to shore up the insurgency is one thing; a full-scale, long-term military operation that entails huge expenditures, extensive casualties, and de facto world pariah status is very different. The Kremlin's propaganda machine has been frighteningly effective so far, and Putin's approval ratings still hover around 85 percent. But it is far from certain that a population grown accustomed to stability and even relative affluence will remain docile in the face of an economic downturn and a steady stream of dead and wounded young men returning home. Surveys by the Levada Center, Russia's most respected polling agency, show support for sending Russian troops into Ukraine dropped from 74 percent in March to just 41 percent in August.

From this perspective, the mass incursion of Russian troops into eastern Ukraine in late August looks less like a prelude to conquest than a face-saving stopgap measure to prevent Ukrainian troops from crushing the insurgency, retaking rebel-controlled territory, and dealing Russia and its proxies a humiliating defeat. Extending the insurgency's lease on life allowed Putin to force Ukraine into negotiations in which Russia would ostensibly get to play peace broker.

The delay in the full implementation of the Ukraine-EU agreement might also be something of a face-saver for Russia. In many ways, argues pro-Maidan Ukrainian journalist Sergii Gorbachov, it also helps Ukraine. Postponing tariff-free imports from Western Europe (which Putin has claimed would flood Russian markets with cheap goods) and adoption of EU regulatory standards will give Ukraine breathing room to phase in economic reforms; meanwhile, the EU already allows tariff-free import of Ukrainian goods. The compromise also temporarily protects trade with Russia, the sudden loss of which would be a serious blow to Ukraine's already ailing economy.

The delay will not affect Ukraine's political integration into Europe, with a view—reiterated by Poroshenko on his visit to North America—to eventual EU membership. Thwarting that alliance, not stopping cheap imports, was Putin's real goal when he strong-armed Yanukovych into rejecting the EU deal last year and agreeing to join Russia's alternative "Eurasian Customs Union" with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The compromise on the trade agreement does not even come close to fulfilling those ambitions—just as the separatist enclave in eastern Ukraine, shrunken to about half the size it was in June, hardly fulfills his ambitions for *Novorossiya*.

That doesn't mean Ukraine, or the West, has won. There is little doubt that Putin will do further mischief, whether by trying to undermine Ukraine's EU trade agreement or by trying to destabilize Ukraine through his proxies in Donetsk. The West must not let up on sanctions—which, contrary to pessimistic predictions, are starting to have some real bite—and must make it clear that there is a steep price to pay for continued Russian intervention, including covert intervention, in Ukraine. The OSCE must do what it can to monitor the situation in rebel-held areas. Ukraine must be given vitally needed aid, including defensive weapons.

As we enter a new Cold War, we should not underestimate Vladimir Putin. But it would also be wise not to overestimate him. ♦

NEWSCOM

Millennial Mongers

The crackpot social science of generational analysis

By Andrew Ferguson

As far as newspaper corrections go, it was a whopper. On August 24, the editors of the *New York Times* sucked the air out of a windy essay that had blown through its pages a few days before. The original article bore the headline "Generation Nice." It was adorned with color photos of fresh-faced teens and twenty-somethings. All of them looked nice. In case *Times* readers were confused (they're not getting any younger), the subheadline drove the point home: "The Millennials Are Generation Nice." And that was the theme of the article, too. The millennials—all those people born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s? You've never met a nicer bunch.

"An article last Sunday about the millennial generation's civic-mindedness included several errors," the editors wrote in the correction. The writer of the original story, a *Times* staffer and "public intellectual" named Sam Tanenhaus, had illustrated the selflessness of millennials by citing the dramatic upswing in applications to AmeriCorps, the government agency that hires young people to volunteer to do good works. The correction pointed out that the agency can't document such an increase, presumably because there isn't one. Tanenhaus had also told his readers about the millennial-fueled surge in applications to the Peace Corps and Teach for America, a teacher-training group that finds jobs for recent college graduates in poor schools.

"Applications to the Peace Corps recently have been in decline," the correction read, "with a 34 percent decrease from the peak in 2009, and applications to Teach for America decreased slightly last year; neither organization has seen 'record numbers of new college graduates' applying for jobs."

Published corrections carry a sly implication, as many newsmen have pointed out. The admission of error, and the display of conscientiousness, together suggest that every other assertion in the story is pristinely factual. And sure enough the revised article survives in the *Times* archives, the sutures barely visible where the misstatements were removed. But it is a slender and much-diminished thing, for the correction deprived the article of the only real-world evidence the writer had presented to support his thesis. Now that we have the correct application figures—which seem to prove that millennials will dive out a second-story window rather than face a Peace Corps recruiter tapping at the front door—should we continue to call them, as the *Times* still does, Generation Nice?

Yes! That's the wonderful thing about the millennial generation. They are nature's gift to "generational analysts," those big thinkers who are able to grasp entire national cohorts in their meaty arms, lift them up, turn them upside down, and shake them till every last cultural insight falls from their pockets. Generational analysts can make any assertion they want about the 80 million people they identify as millennials and then dare somebody to disprove it, though hardly anyone ever tries. Since the *Times* story on Generation Nice, I've thrashed my way through much of their work. In a single morning the other day I read that "millennials would dump a friend to get ahead at work," that they have a "deep sense of entitlement," and that they "will take credit for other people's work"—three assertions

---

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard *and the author of* Crazy U: One Dad's Crash Course in Getting His Kid into College.

from three articles based on three different social science studies. I learned that bad millennial behavior arises from their "selfishness" and "narcissism," which also causes them to overestimate their own "specialness" and "uniqueness." Generation Not Nice! At All!

I read on. Long experience playing online video games with faraway strangers has inspired in millennials the desire to "create communities built around shared interests," although their millions of hours slumped in front of the TV playing online video games with strangers has left them feeling isolated and atomized. Reality TV has stoked their hunger for wealth and fame as ultimate virtues. They are the least materialistic generation in American history, thanks to the diversity in their ranks. The great recession has left them anxious and depressed and pessimistic, and their faith in technology makes them far more upbeat about the future than earlier generations. Overprotective child-rearing has crippled them socially, and a lifetime of self-esteem classes means they interact across the generations with tremendous ease. Technology has aggravated their tendency to be self-involved; social media have deepened their fellow feeling.

You thought the stock market collapse of 2008 was bad? It is seared in the souls of millennials. As a consequence they fear risk-taking. A crumbling economy has instilled in them a sense that they have nothing to lose, leading them to take lots of risks. They are fiercely libertarian and entrepreneurial, and want the government to regulate business and raise taxes to provide a job for everyone who wants it. They are alienated from all of society's big institutions, especially government, which owing to the failed Bush presidency they consider an overgrown anachronism, except when it's giving people jobs and free medical care. The judgmentalism of organized religion chased them away from church and synagogue, even as the sterility of secularism is pushing them back to organized religion.

Plus, they have tons of sex. They're rabbits, these kids.

You have to give it up (as baby boomers say) for these generational analysts, these millennial mongers. It's not easy to piece together a unitary cliché from such a dog's breakfast of conjecture, research-trolling, and poll sifting. And maybe it's not fair to single out Tanenhaus, certainly not for his factual errors—my own mistakes in print would make your hair stand on end. But life isn't fair. His millennial thumb-sucking presents us with a perfect illustration of the monger's method.

All that's required is a catchy theme—"Generation Nice" is perfect—and a thick filter to block distractions or contrary evidence from entering in. As corrected, Tanenhaus's story begins by denouncing the common charge of millennial narcissism. It is a canard, he insists, a cheap shot. How does he know?

"Exhibit A may be LeBron James," Tanenhaus writes. During four years as a basketball star in glamorous Miami, he "developed a vocabulary of civic obligation and social responsibility." Now he has packed up his vocabulary and ditched the nightclubs and the palm-dappled lidos and the topless beaches and returned home, to the postindustrial drab of Cleveland—because that's the kind of thing millennials do, sacrificing self for the greater good, especially if they're getting paid $21 million a year. It indicates their deep-seated moral sense. Note too, Tanenhaus continues, that when the simian billionaire Donald Sterling was exposed as a racist lout, "tellingly, James reacted forcefully on Twitter."

To generalize about millennials, all that's required is a catchy theme—'Generation Nice' is perfect—and a thick filter to block distractions or contrary evidence from entering in.

James is just one (very large) man, of course—and even a millennial monger needs more than a single millennial to instantiate an entire generation. Tanenhaus also offers quotes from those fresh-faced young folk who were brought in and photographed to illustrate his *Times* article. (A monger never has to reach far for material.) Again the moral sense overwhelms. In their conversations, he writes, "empathy was the theme." The empathy the millennials were eager to talk about was their own. A typical remark: "One said he hoped to succeed because 'the better you're doing, the more you can help other people.'"

Pollsters call this "self-reporting"—a respondent characterizing his own intentions and tendencies and states of mind. It is a staple of generational analysis. A respondent tends to look pretty good when he describes himself; pollsters rarely hear a respondent say, for example, that when it comes to other people, he really doesn't give a damn. ("And you can quote me!") Indeed, for the generational analyst, the quickest way to determine how empathetic a millennial is, is to ask him. Most of the piles of data analysts use to prove the vastness of millennials' social conscience comes from the mouths of the millennials themselves.

Now, a cynic might note that all this self-reported selflessness could as easily be counted as evidence of the famous millennial narcissism that Tanenhaus denies. Saints always consider themselves the most accomplished sinners, and vice versa. This is why the surge in Peace Corps applications was crucial to Tanenhaus's original portrait of Generation Nice: It betokened behavior in the real world rather than mirror-gazing. But the need to quantify

is like a fever in the generational analyst. So Tanenhaus reaches for a basic text of millennial scripture, a 149-page report from the Pew Research Center, "Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change," published in 2010. It is the summit of millennial mongering, a definitive exemplar of generational analysis. In it Pew claimed to unveil the "personality" of millennials, through polling data: They were "confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat, and open to change." Generation *Really* Nice.

The report's authors never make clear precisely how they were able to discern this personality in so many individual Americans, tossed together using nothing more than two arbitrary dates as boundaries—anyone born after 1980 but not after 1992. It is a cohort that embraces both the 32-year-old gay chemist who grew up orphaned in Compton, California, the divorced 26-year-old Iraq war veteran enrolled in a rural community college, and the 17-year-old pipehead sitting in his parents' $22,000 home theater in Scarsdale. Generational analysis is a lot like astrology. Personal traits are determined by date of birth. The categories aren't Libra or Capricorn or Aries but Generation X and the baby boom and, of course, Generation Nice, and the guides aren't bejeweled Gypsies behind beaded curtains but Ph.D.s in offices gleaming with flat screens and natural light.

The Pew Research Center employs many sober-minded demographers, and the report contains hints here and there that they recognized the arbitrary absurdity of generalizing about unsearchably vast collections of individuals, simply by calling them a generation.

In a seldom-cited section called "Some Caveats," the authors first defend "generational analysis" as "often highly illuminating." And yet, they go on, "there is an element of false precision in setting hard chronological boundaries between the generations. . . . [T]here are as many differences in attitudes, values, behaviors and lifestyles within a generation as there are between generations." And even assuming such categories as "generations" exist in any identifiable sense beyond a chronological accident, "we can never disentangle completely the reasons generations differ."

These aren't caveats; they're disavowals. If the category called "a generation" isn't really a category, and if human life studied within the noncategories is too various to afford generalization, and if we can't know whether the nongeneralizations were caused by the arbitrary labeling of the categories, then . . . isn't this all rather pointless? Can't we just pack it in and go home?

Well, no. Generational analysis is a journey, the Pew authors write. "We believe the journey is worth taking." At Pew, social scientists get paid by the mile.

Mongers who rely on the Pew report never mention the Pew caveats, of course, so Tanenhaus doesn't either. Still, he must quantify, quantify. He cites more studies, studies that are little more than citations of other studies. Generational analysts live in a cozy little world; everybody helps everybody else, like Hobbits in the Shire. Tanenhaus invokes the heavyweight authority of the Brookings Institution, which manages to hold onto its reputation for intellectual integrity despite publishing "governance studies" such as "How Millennials Could Upend Wall Street and Corporate America." Like the Pew study, the Brookings paper identifies and explains what it calls "the unique millennial sensibility," thus burying with a single phrase two assumptions that are almost certainly untrue: that there is a meaningfully discrete entity called the millennial generation, and that it has a unique sensibility.

It's never pretty when journalists cross-pollinate with academics. The hacks, clutching "data" and "studies," take on the bogus authority of the eggheads, and the eggheads, startled by the thought that somebody might at last pay attention to their work, reach for the mindless sensationalism of the hacks. Entire segments of *Good Morning America* and the *NBC Nightly News* often result. Things only get worse when the academics and the journalists collide with marketing consultants, each of them appealing to the authority of the others. The sharp-edged world in which people live and act slips away, and a gauzy world of focus groups and surveys takes its place.

Tanenhaus quotes Brookings as Brookings quotes the marketers. Again the theme is the selflessness of Generation Nice. Tanenhaus writes: "'Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of millennials said they would rather make $40,000 a year at a job they love than $100,000 a year at a job they think is boring,' the Brookings Institution recently noted in a report."

From this odd but quite popular statistic we are to conclude that millennials reject the crass materialism of earlier generations for a simpler, humbler life. Unfortunately, on examination, the number yields nothing about the world

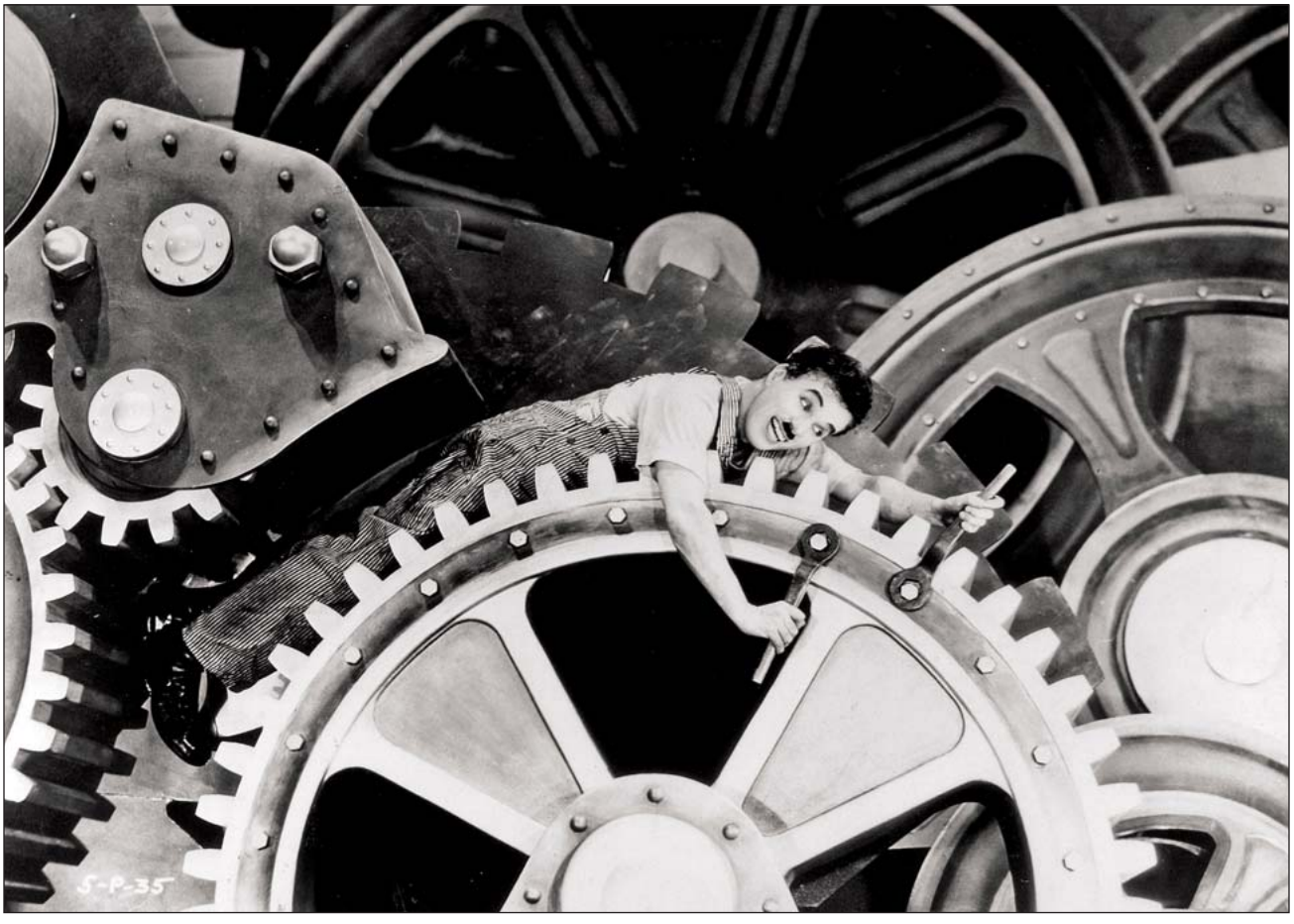
or the millennials' relationship to it. It just tells us that an unspecified number of young people, at an unspecified time, were asked a strange question, and two thirds of them answered one way and not another. We don't know whether the respondents will in fact decline a $100,000 job in favor of another paying $40,000, and we don't know why they would do so if given the chance. We do know that two-thirds of them believe they might do so someday, or at least are willing to tell a pollster they believe it. A truer measure of their idealism and otherworldliness will come when they are actually faced with the unlikely choice. Until then the statistic may indicate nothing more than the youthful capacity for self-delusion.

Or maybe not. Who knows? Where did the Brookings scholars get such a silly statistic anyway?

From what I can tell, generational analysts seldom follow the footnotes in the studies they cite, for the same reason that I never ask what's in a Nathan's hot dog. The Brookings scholars credit this statistic to an article in the *Columbus Dispatch*, which in turn cites a "study" by the "Los Angeles-based Intelligence Group, which studies generational trends." The Intelligence Group says its methods of producing its data are proprietary, so we will never know how it discovered that 64 percent of millennials want to top out their careers at $40,000. But we can say a few things for certain about Brookings's go-to source for social science. Its name notwithstanding, The Intelligence Group is a branch of Creative Artists Agency, a talent agency for show business personalities. It has a chief strategy officer who says this: "Millennials want to make meaning, not just money"—and other sentences just like it. Its chief sociological discovery, after much research, is that millennials are "venture consumers."

Not to be outdone, the scholars at Brookings use the term "spend-shifters" to describe millennials. Neither coinage has solid meaning. Indeed, the true lesson of millennial mongering lies in how seamlessly the think-piece by a public intellectual in the *Times* blends into the scholarly study by a once-great think tank that relies for its data on a firm that uses phrases like "fauxsumerism" to attract corporate clients. None of them any longer speaks the language of cultural criticism or even of social science—it is the language of advertising, buck-hustling, commerce without end. They are Exhibit A, as Tanenhaus might say, of the tragic figures of our time, people paid to say something when they have nothing to say.

But what else did we expect? They're all baby boomers. You know how they are. ♦



Charlie Chaplin in 'Modern Times' (1936)

Automation Nation

When it comes to error, machines are only human. BY MARK BAUERLEIN

On a cold February night in 2009, a turboprop commuter plane out of Newark was only a few miles from Buffalo when the "stick shaker" suddenly triggered. The plane had slowed to 135 knots after the crew had lowered the landing gear and extended the flaps, and the plane threatened to enter an aerodynamic stall. (That's not when engines stop working, but when the wings cannot maintain lift.)

The Glass Cage
Automation and Us
by Nicholas Carr
W.W. Norton, 288 pp., $26.95

The automatic pilot disengaged, as it should have, and the pilot seized his shuddering control yoke, dragging it back to raise the nose and increase altitude—a fatal mistake. The plane needed speed, not height. Dipping the nose might have sacrificed a few hundred feet but provided the velocity to recover. The pilot's reaction only further slowed the plane: The automatic stall-avoidance system activated and tried to pull the yoke forward, but the pilot fought it and ensured a stall would happen. It took only a few seconds for the plane to roll right and left, pitch up and then down for good, plummeting into a suburban home and killing 50 people.

When the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigated the crash, it identified another cause besides the pilot's immediate response to the trouble. In the minutes leading up to it, the pilot and copilot showed "a significant breakdown of

Mark Bauerlein, professor of English at Emory University, is the author, most recently, of The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future.

their monitoring responsibilities" and missed "explicit cues" of impending danger. At the critical moment, the pilot reacted incorrectly; but in the preceding 30 seconds, pilot and copilot failed to pay attention to the flight instruments showing airspeed and pitch attitude. The NTSB simulation of the final moments of the flight—which you can download at the Wikipedia page about the crash—indicates that, as the plane rapidly lost speed on the final approach, they didn't seem to notice. Not until the stick shaker activated and the automatic pilot deactivated did the crew realize the problem, and it startled the pilot without warning. To prevent future disasters like this one, the NTSB recommended tighter monitoring procedures during flights and more training for pilots in monitoring skills.

Nicholas Carr takes that 2009 crash as a prime exhibit of a perilous trend. In previous books—*The Big Switch* (2008) and *The Shallows* (2010)—he examined digital innovations often hailed and hyped in the tech world and sounded a contrary judgment. (The title of his widely read 2008 *Atlantic* essay, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" indicates his angle.)

The Glass Cage applies a similar skepticism to a broader development. To Carr, a deeper cause was to blame for the slack supervision in the cockpit that night, and it applies more widely than we realize. It is simple: The crew relied too much on the automatic pilot. They relaxed their awareness because the automatic pilot handled so many things for them so well, as it does on every flight. Computers in aviation have become so advanced, in fact, that pilots typically control a plane only briefly, for a minute or two on takeoff and landing. Computers maintain speed, stability, and direction, scan for nearby aircraft, adjust cabin pressure, and alter flight paths. Pilots don't turn a plane, they tell a computer to do it. Yet for all the gains in efficiency and cost (cockpits no longer need navigators and radio operators), automation creates a risk in that the better it works, the more a human operator slackens his effort and the more his skills decline.

This is the warning of *The Glass Cage*. Carr emphasizes the airline industry because, while pilots seem like an extreme case, they "have been out in front of a wave that is now engulfing us." The cockpit reveals dramatically a deterioration that subtly affects us all, more or less: When you use a calculator too much, arithmetical skills slip; a GPS dulls your sense of direction; computer-aided design software mars the hand's ability to draw; digital cameras loosen the "discipline of perception." If we don't exert motor skills, they lag. Moreover, our concentration changes. As computers increasingly shoulder our labor, we suffer automation complacency ("when a computer lulls us into a false sense of security") and automation bias ("when people give undue weight to the information coming through their monitors") as a natural consequence.

It's a common complaint, as mathematics teachers who object to calculators and English teachers who deplore spell-check well know, and Carr's summations come off as strong and precise, but familiar:

> As we grow more reliant on applications and algorithms, we become less capable of acting without their aid—we experience skill tunneling as well as attentional tunneling. That makes the software more indispensable still. Automation breeds automation.

What makes *The Glass Cage* nonetheless fresh and powerful are the high-stakes, newly relevant cases Carr invokes. The aviation episodes touch deeply when we ponder how split-second responses needed to keep us alive may be dulled by digital advances we otherwise extol. A few months after the Buffalo crash, an Air France flight from Rio to Paris hit a storm, and the plane's sensors, wrapped in ice, mis-recorded flight speed, leading the automatic pilot to shut off. The copilot panicked and yanked the stick backward to gain altitude, even as the stall warning blared. If he had released the stick, the plane probably would have leveled off and accelerated; but according to investigators cited by Carr, the crew had reached a "total loss of cognitive control of the situation." Another pilot seized the controls as the plane dropped 30,000 feet in 180 seconds.

"This can't be happening," he said, as the first pilot responded, "But what *is* happening?"

If they had been in at least partial control of the plane during the storm, they wouldn't have been so unnerved when the sensors malfunctioned. In other incidents of overreliance Carr recounts, the opposite problem occurs: not a quick emergency disorienting human operators, but a slow, unobtrusive mistake putting them to sleep. In 1995, when a GPS antenna wire on an ocean liner came loose and gave inaccurate readings for 30 hours (!), only one person realized it, a mate who couldn't spot a location buoy the ship should have passed. But he didn't report it because he trusted the GPS more than his own eyes. And others didn't wake up to the fact until the ship foundered on a sand bar near Nantucket.

Another, less acute, example of inattention potentially takes place every time someone enters a doctor's office. As a patient describes his or her symptoms, the doctor or nurse taps them into a computer, and software identifies patterns and warning signs in the process of pinning down the problem. The patient's history is readily available, too, which can be assimilated to diagnosis and treatment. The practice is the result of 10 years of technological advances and federal programs aiming to streamline record-keeping and improve care. In 2004, President Bush created the Health Information Technology Adoption Initiative, which would deliver millions of dollars to physicians and hospitals for the digitization of medical records. In 2009, President Obama added $30 billion to the kitty.

"A frenzy of investment ensued," Carr writes, "as some three hundred thousand doctors and four thousand hospitals availed themselves of Washington's largesse."

Five years later, enthusiasm has waned. Systems were supposed to share information, but proprietary formats and conventions block it, leaving

"critical patient data locked up in individual hospitals and doctors' offices." Advocates predicted that costs would drop, but they rose sharply, in part because the software automatically recommends tests and procedures that the doctor alone wouldn't perform (because they are unnecessary). Automation also promised to enrich a patient's history, enabling physicians to load detailed, individualized information about each visit. But instead, doctors' notes have become more generic, often made up of the same phrases, copied-and-pasted again and again, so that we end up with (in the words of one researcher) "increased stereotyping of patents." Additionally, software that was designed to warn physicians against errors—for instance, signaling a dangerous combination of drugs—has proven to highlight so many false or irrelevant dangers that doctors suffer "alert fatigue" and ignore the function altogether.

Finally, we have evidence of doctor-patient relations becoming *more* impersonal, not less. With physicians tasked with transferring a patient's self-description to a screen, the predictable happens: Attention divides. A study in Israel charted doctors looking at screens, and not at patients, 25-55 percent of the time, while a Veterans Administration study found patients and doctors agreeing that electronic note-taking makes a consultation "feel less personal." Worse, Carr adds, a physician depending too much on the machine loses the empathy and intuition necessary to the art of medicine, especially in complicated cases such as those in which patient statements aren't entirely trustworthy.

The program demonstrates a typical gain-and-loss pattern for automation that is all-too-often unappreciated. Because the benefits outweigh the drawbacks and tend to be more tangible as well—compare the immediate result of using a GPS with the long-term effect of losing mapping skills—emphasizing the harm sounds pessimistic and unimaginative, especially when influential voices echo claims such as Google's Michael Jones's assertion that Google tools have given people a 20-point IQ boost. There is a long tradition of automation zeal, and Carr provides revealing examples, including Oscar Wilde's prediction that "while Humanity will be amusing itself, or enjoying cultivated leisure . . . or making beautiful things, or reading beautiful things, or simply contemplating the world with admiration and delight, machinery will be doing all the necessary and unpleasant work."

Nicholas Carr's warnings run against that pleasing vision, which puts him in a minority of culture-watchers. Wouldn't life be wonderful if we didn't have to work so hard and could be saved from human error? Well, of course. But there's no getting rid of the need for someone to monitor the machines, and if his attention lags, and he doesn't maintain his own skills, problems will occur. "An ignorant operator is a dangerous operator," Carr insists.

The future he paints is a dicey one: We may soon reach a point at which automation—in hazardous settings from cockpits to battle zones—allows mistakes to happen less frequently but more catastrophically, because humans are unprepared to resume control. The technophile's solution is to augment the automation, thereby decreasing the very toil that keeps humans sharp. Better to think more about the human subject, Carr advises—whether it is a pilot flustered at a critical moment or a young cashier who can't make change after punching the wrong key. ♦

B&A

Go East, Young Man

Jewish studies takes a new look at the Old World.

BY SUSANNE KLINGENSTEIN

For digital natives, studying classic English and American literature in college is about as attractive as mowing the lawn. When authorities require it, digital natives will do it as a chore: They find a command of humanistic knowledge irrelevant to their sense of self. They see no compelling reason to know the difference between George Eliot and T.S. Eliot. This has effectively sidelined college English departments—although it's not much of a loss, since their relentless emphasis on body studies and white guilt left those departments hollow shells of what they were a half-century ago.

If the story of English departments is one of gradual and (at this point) irreversible decline, the story of Jewish studies departments is the opposite. Jewish studies has exploded and pulled vibrant young researchers and smart students into its orbit. This is, in large measure, due to the sharp increase in diverse secular subjects of inquiry in a field once largely devoted to the parsing of religious texts. While the obsessive pursuit of the latest "isms" hollowed out English departments, their cautious integration rejuvenated Jewish studies. It helps that, for energetic and deracinated fourth-

Susanne Klingenstein is a lecturer in the Harvard/MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

The Golden Age Shtetl
A New History of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe
by Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
Princeton, 448 pp., $29.95

Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia
Select Documents, 1772-1914
edited by ChaeRan Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris
Brandeis, 664 pp., $40

generation Americans, post-Soviet Russia was, and continues to be, an enticing area of research and enterprise.

The opening of Russian archives and the introduction of superbly trained literary scholars from Russia to American Jewish studies departments have produced a slew of books that bring 18th- and 19th-century Eastern Europe to life, in all its madness and oppressive stink. The problematic but thrilling *The Golden Age Shtetl* and the unnerving and crucial collection of documents in *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia* are part of this tidal wave. Earlier works by Benjamin Nathans, David Assaf, Immanuel Etkes, Gershon Hundert, Harriet Murav, Shaul Stampfer, and others have already exposed readers to the realities of Jewish life in Russian society, the fiery discontent of young Hasidim, the inner dynamics of Hasidic courts, the social infrastructure of Polish towns, the struggle of Jews in the lion's den of Russian literature, and the intricacies of the Lithuanian Talmud academies that once trained the Jewish intellectual elite.

Before immersing oneself in the new scholarship about Jews in Russia and Poland, it is worth taking a quick look at the expanse of the intellectual graveyard of Eastern Europe—that is, at the hundreds of tightly argued 19th-century Hebrew works printed in places like Warsaw, Vilna, Lyck, Lemberg, Shklov, Dubno, Zholkiev, Slavuta, Zhitomir, Berdichev, and Odessa currently offered for a pittance on eBay, frequently by dealers linked to Hasidic communities. The Hebrew outpouring makes one's head spin, and the great 19th-century centers of German intellect—Göttingen, Jena, Weimar, Leipzig, and Berlin—begin to look like sparsely populated sandboxes. These Hebrew books, from reprintings of Maimonides' 12th-century *Guide for the Perplexed* to Nachman Krochmal's *Guide for the Perplexed of the Time* (1851), used to dominate Jewish studies. With the help of the newly accessible Russian documents, and the cultural dispensation to study ordinary people, new scholarly works are resurrecting those Jews who once constituted the readership of these orphaned Hebrew books, many of them dumped by the libraries of venerable institutions, such as Boston's Hebrew College, into the cardboard boxes of dealers. Like so many ghosts, the real Eastern-European Jews are stepping out from behind the Hebrew tomes, demanding recognition of the lives they led and killing (one would hope) Broadway's fantasy of the singing Fiddler.

In Jewish studies, the Shtetl Reality Show is now playing, and nowhere more so than in the documents assembled in *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia*. The collection is prefaced by a superb short history of Russia's relationship to the Jews it acquired with the three partitions of Poland between 1772 and 1795. It also touches on the two major revisions in Russian-Jewish historiography: the reevaluation of Czar Nicholas I (1796-1855), long the Jew-hating villain in the story, as "pre-reform" and earnestly intent on integrating the Jews into the Russian empire (if only they agreed to give up the Talmud, their language, and their sidelocks) and the reassessment of his successor Alexander II (1818-1881), long cherished as a reform-minded liberator of serfs and Jews, but now outed as a "cautious conservative, driven only by military defeat [in the Crimean War] to admit the need for reform."

The reforms implemented during the 1860s were slowly taken back during the 1870s. After the assassination of Alexander in 1881, his successor's counter-reforms tightened the bureaucracy's grip on the Jews, while sharp expressions of anti-Semitism ricocheted through all layers of Russian society. In hundreds of pogroms, an increasingly impoverished peasantry vented its frustration and anxiety.

Yet, within the narrow confines of the geographical and economic space that the Russian government had set aside for the Jews, a life of singular religious and social intensity developed. The documents compiled by ChaeRan Freeze and Jay Harris in *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia* reveal it in all its painful details. In 1898, a female patient, raped by her doctor, goes to see her rabbi to inquire if she must do penance; the rabbi rules that "she was permitted to her husband and that she has the legal status of someone raped." In 1888, a rabbi releases a woman from her fate as an *aguna* (an abandoned wife who cannot remarry), certifying that her insane husband was found dead. In 1910, a widowed mother appeals to the provincial administration to have the property she inherited, together with her son, placed under a trusteeship to prevent

Shtetl marketplace, Galicia (ca. 1910)

GETTY IMAGES

her dissolute son from squandering it.

In 1909, a man in a Moscow prison asks the state rabbi of Moscow to help arrange a divorce from his wife because he cannot take her to Siberia. In 1879, Sosha Lubshitz is accused of killing her child born only five months after her wedding. In 1897, the recently widowed Rivka Khaet is accused of infanticide. In 1888, a rabbi rules a ritual bath near a turpentine factory ritually fit, basing his decision on a section in the *Yoreh Deah* (a law compilation dating to 1300) and on Moses Maimonides. In 1901, the peasants of Stepashek load the property of the eight Jewish families in their village onto carts and dump it on the banks of the Bug River because a Jewish girl, who had converted to Christianity and married a peasant, has disappeared.

The lives contained in these 182 documents call for a novelist. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, born in Kiev in 1962 and awarded doctorates from both Moscow University and Brandeis, is certainly a narrator; but at times, one wishes he would let the document he unearthed do more of the talking. His book, *The Golden Age Shtetl*, is conceived on a principle of academic production—you take the most perverse point of view you can and prove it with three examples—and argues that the shtetl (*mestechko* in Russian) wasn't always down-and-out, but had a golden age. Between the first partition of Poland in 1772, which brought a large number Jews under Russian domination, and 1835, when Russia promulgated its Statute on the Jews and began to pursue its policy of integration by destroying the traditional structures of Jewish society, the shtetl was a liminal, unregulated space. In its crevices, economic opportunities were found and exploited by Jews, causing the shtetl to attain, if not financial well-being, at least a modicum of economic stability.

It's a strange thesis, because every example marshaled by the author documents the endangered status of the Jews. They thrived (if one can call it that) because they undercut competition by lowering their prices while still providing a better product, especially in the vodka industry. They operated on profit margins so thin that merchants not driven by a deep sense of existential threat wouldn't touch the business. The Jews knew that, to Russians and Poles, their lives had monetary value: If they couldn't pay the bribes, the taxes, and the fines, their lives were worth dirt. Does this constitute a golden age?

Nevertheless, Petrovsky-Shtern's chapters on the vital economies of smuggling and alcohol production and distribution, and on the use of violence in shtetl society and Jewish crime and Russian justice, are full of mesmerizing stories and are gratifying to all who have long suspected that there was something not quite right with the conventional portrayal of the shtetl Jews as sheep. Where there are sheep there are wolves, and Petrovsky-Shtern shows that plenty of the wolves were Jewish.

At the end of his hugely entertaining, informative work, Petrovsky-Shtern opens a window into the 19th-century Hasidic book business. Books were precious. For five books, you'd get a young white cow; for three books, an old grey cow. Books were the central nervous system of the Jews, the live wires that kept them energized and together. Those days are over, and the books are now up for grabs. Their images are coursing through the Internet like so many lost souls. But who cares? ♦

B&A

Journey's End?

Visions of life from encounters with death.

BY EDWARD SHORT

Glimpsing Heaven
The Stories and Science of Life After Death
by Judy Bachrach
National Geographic, 256 pp., $25

In this foray into what Hamlet famously styled the "undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns," Judy Bachrach looks at recent accounts of those claiming to have returned from the undiscovered country in order to suggest what her readers'—and, indeed, her own—"impending itineraries" might be like.

A sworn agnostic, for whom religious faith is unappealing, Bachrach prides herself on her adamantine skepticism. "I am a journalist," she declares, "have been since age 22, and if there's one thing I've learned, it's not to trust anyone completely on any subject they haven't either witnessed or experienced." Consequently, she looks at the accounts of various individuals' experiences beyond the living from a decidedly untraditional point of view. This makes her an ideal recorder of testimony that most religious readers (your humble reviewer included) might be inclined to discredit.

Of course, in the West, since at least the 18th century, faith-based readings of what death might portend have undergone more or less continual attack. John McManners, in his witty study *Death and the Enlightenment* (1981), nicely characterized how the traditional view of the afterlife fared vis-à-vis the rise of scientific investigation when he observed how it had "advantages corresponding to its disadvantages," by which he meant that "while it could not be incorporated or enriched by new systems of thought, it also could not be contradicted by

Edward Short is the author of a forthcoming collection of essays, Adventures in the Book Pages.

them. It was in the powerful defensive position, from the point of view of abstract logic, of being irrelevant."

This is certainly Judy Bachrach's view—or at least the view with which she began this study of the scarcely chronicled afterlife. At the end of her labors, she is honest enough to admit to her dissatisfaction with plenary unbelief. And indeed, her most striking observation is in the final chapter, where she confesses,

> [D]eath is not the worst thing that can happen, and from the research I've done, I've come to conclude that it is not really death many of us fear. It's emptiness. That is what my mother feared. She was afraid of the nothing. And by the time I learned that there was no nothing, it was too late to tell her. She wouldn't have understood.

This may not be an entirely unambiguous intimation of immortality, but it is certainly a recognition that nihilism hardly offers a tenable alternative to the traditional readings of these matters.

Another striking thing about the testimony here is how reminiscent it is of the experiences of soldiers who fought in the trenches during the Great War, many of whom, like Bachrach's "death travelers," never felt comfortable trying to convey to noncombatants what it was like to undergo something so foreign to ordinary, sublunary experience. Wilfred Owen became so exasperated with what he regarded as the invincible ignorance of civilians that he even extended his contempt to their favorite poet, charging Tennyson with having been "always a great child," adding only, "so should I have been, but for Beaumont Hamel."

Again and again in Bachrach's pages, one hears a similar impatience in the attitudes of her subjects to those unfamiliar with the afterlife. One can be skeptical about any number of things pertaining to the testimony of these death travelers in this meticulously researched book, but that nearly all of them exhibit this shared reticence, this shared detachment from the land of the living, is deeply compelling.

In all events, *Glimpsing Heaven* is full of lively, vivid, engaging reporting. And it is delightfully funny. As here, where a death traveler named Jayne recalls meeting a tall antinomian beyond the bourn, to whom she says:

> "Everything since I came over to this side—everything has been beautiful with perfect love. But what about all my sins?"
>
> The tall man responded: "There are no sins, not the way you think of them on Earth. The only thing that matters is what you think. What is in your heart?"
>
> Jayne looked into her heart. She cannot explain to this day how she quite managed this feat, but she says that's exactly what happened. She gazed straight into it. And it amazes her now when she speaks about it because, as she explains, her voice tinged with irony, "I was an Episcopalian, and it's a very nice religion, but we don't get into things like that."
>
> But there she was, a dead Episcopalian high on a hill in Wonderland "enabled to look into the core of me."

Judy Bachrach

Then again, in another, rather more serious, passage, Bachrach relates how a former English teacher described her afterlife experiences. It was as though she were in an airplane, flying higher and higher. First, she could see over the rooftops of the hospital where she had been treated; then over Peekskill, the old Hudson River valley town where she had taught her English classes, married her husband, and brought up her children. Then, she could see the planet itself, which in its austere, Cimmerian beauty left her gasping with awe.

This arresting vision, however, was cut short when she was met with "a group of large circles, perhaps half a dozen, each one measuring . . . 18 inches across." And the message they had for Bachrach's Congregationalist witness was disconcerting to say the least: "You are not real. This is all a joke. You were allowed to believe you were real, but it was never true. This is all there is. This is all there will ever be."

Where was God? According to Bachrach's witness, God was present, but so aloof as to be effectively absent. Bachrach presses for more information, and the aggrieved woman admits to feeling embittered by the whole experience.

> "Now why did I not call out," she asks rhetorically. "Because I'm the oldest child of a Congregationalist minister who is not supposed to bother people on my own behalf! Now that's as true a statement as I can give you. So I'm sure Jesus has many other things on his mind. A busy schedule."

Bachrach adds that the voice with which her revenant delivered these words was "flat with suppressed rage." Unlike many other death travelers, this poor woman's brush with the afterlife was the reverse of inspirational, and as she herself admits, there was nothing spiritual about it. Instead, it seemed only a summons to lonely skepticism. Nevertheless, it is striking that, despite her disappointment, she still manages to avow that she has a "pretty unshakeable certainty that there is something we call God."

Such testimony may not wrest confirmed Nietzscheans from their unbelief; but it should convince others, religious and irreligious, that there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in Nietzschean philosophy. And for that we can be thankful to Judy Bachrach and her fascinating, well-told, haunting book. ♦

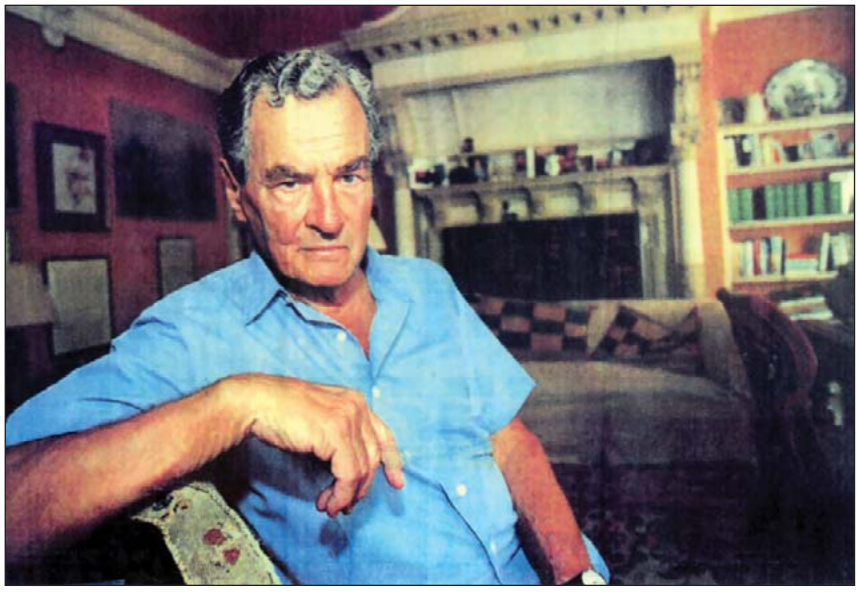
DIRCK HALSTEAD / GETTY IMAGES

B&A

A Place in the Sun

The very slow progress toward a permanent retreat.

BY DOMINIC GREEN



Patrick Leigh Fermor (1915-2011)

Kalamitsi, Greece

Under the peak of Mount Taygetus, the wooded Vyros Gorge tumbles into the Gulf of Messinia at the small port of Kardamyli. Around the headland is a blue cove and the hamlet of Kalamitsi. A flock of low, white houses, their pantiled roofs the color of burnt orange, huddle under stripes of gray-green olive trees. A stony track declines sharply from the road. Then, as stones turn to sand, a narrow path forks uphill along the flank of a promontory. From the house at its summit, the olive terraces slide seawards towards a cliff.

The Mani, a rocky peninsula hanging from the southern coast of the Peloponnese, is often compared to the Highlands of Scotland. The landscape is mountainous and mottled with scrub. The people are insular and excel at the arts of feud and hospitality. Their homes are crenellated with towers and battlements, fortifications against the Franks, the Turks, and the neighbors. The exterior of this particular house is a thick-walled cross between a farmhouse and a fortress. A door of medieval solidity stands sentry at the gatehouse; a metal grille permits parley with strangers.

Passing the gatehouse, however, the lines soften and the stone curves. On the left, a Moorish colonnade marches to the sea, past a file of bedrooms and a dozing cat, the last arch framing a blue half-circle. Along the central axis are more bedrooms. In one, a weathered tweed jacket and a pair of walking boots wait in the closet; on the lavatory wall is a sun-paled genealogy of the kings and queens of England.

The right wing is a single oblong, a library-cum-sitting room. Bookcases are cut into stone recesses. A table dressed in Cycladic swirls of green and white marble carries enough booze to float a battleship or an English house party. At the shaded eastern end of the room is a cushioned divan; at the western end, a wooden, windowed balcony of Balkan provenance floats over the azure sea like the cabin of a pirate captain.

The mantelpiece is jammed with photographs, souvenirs, and scraps of paper with friends' phone numbers. On the Cycladic table, the host's favorites, Famous Grouse and Stolichnaya, wait among half-empty evocations of the British Empire: Rose's Lime Juice Cordial, Angostura bitters, a Greek variant of tonic water. But the bubbles in the tonic have long evanesced into the lemony Greek air: The host, the legendary soldier, traveler, and author Patrick Leigh Fermor, died in 2011; his partner, Joan Eyres Monsell, predeceased him in 2003. Their house is empty but for the cat, the orphan of Joan's once-plural brood. The Leigh Fermors' housekeeper, Elpida Beloyannis, tends their home like a shrine. Outside, the gardener, Christos, clips and prunes beneath a straw hat.

The British are famous for removing ancient monuments from Greece, not for donating modern ones. The Leigh Fermors bequeathed their house to the Benaki Museum of Athens as a retreat for writers. But its future is not written in stone.

Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor, OBE, DSO—known to friends, retainers, and a global army of readers as Paddy—was the last living contender for the kingdom of literature's Habsburg crest, the double-headed crown of man of letters and man of action. A conscientiously Byronic inheritor of the British romance with Greece, Leigh Fermor was a warrior-writer in the line of Philip Sidney and T.E. Lawrence. He was also one of the great stylists of 20th-century English prose.

Leigh Fermor's writing, like his biography, is one of the last monuments of the imperial age, when the British were not merely worldly, but global. His tone is a late outcrop of Bloomsbury—delicate, languid,

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BENAKI MUSEUM

Dominic Green is the author of The Double Life of Doctor Lopez *and* Three Empires on the Nile.

melodious, precise—but purged of provinciality. His clauses flow with a French rhythm, the *décadence* of Second Empire Paris, and are studded with a cosmopolitan glitter of linguistic borrowings and historical speculations. Leigh Fermor was a travel writer in the sense that Pepys was a diarist. Every turn of his road evokes reflections on history, art, religion, and language. Investigations of folk songs, dances, and cheeses lead to anecdotal hunts for a pair of slippers that might once have shod Lord Byron, or a fisherman who might be the lineal descendant of the last emperor of Byzantium.

Always the language rises to the occasion, be it scenic, romantic, antiquarian, or philological. Always the present is excavated to reveal the fragments of memory. No philhellene has written better on Greece than Leigh Fermor in *Mani* (1980) and *Roumeli* (1973). Few have eulogized lost youth and interwar Europe more elegantly than Leigh Fermor in *A Time of Gifts* (1977) and *Between the Woods and the Water* (1986), the record of his walk, aged 18, from the Hook of Holland to the Iron Gates of the Danube. A posthumous and incomplete third volume, *The Broken Road* (2014), carries the narrative into Greece through shepherds' huts, urban mansions, and fishermen's caves.

Leigh Fermor wrote his "great trudge" trilogy at Kalamitsi, in his writing studio and on collapsible tables in his garden. He also hosted several shelves-worth of scholars, artists, and travelers, including George Seferis and John Betjeman, the poets laureate of Greece and Britain. The house, its contents, and the books that were written here are the complete works of a unique sensibility and a museum of a literary era. If the house were in Britain, the National Trust would already have restored it. There would be a ticket booth in the gatehouse, a shop selling organic figs and artisanal olives, and perhaps a tea room as well. But the Benaki is a private museum. Along with many properties in Athens, it is akin to a penurious Getty or an expansive Stewart Gardner. The Leigh Fermors left no endowment. The Benaki did not create one in the three decades between the bequest and Leigh Fermor's death. It did, however, fund its expansion with a bank loan of €15 million (around $20 million). In 2008, the Greek economy collapsed, and so did the Benaki's finances.

Beyond the colonnade, the July sun flattens the sea into a two-dimensional blue wall. An island, necklaced with ruined walls and vegetation, floats in the bay like a green brick. From the cliff, a staircase snakes down the rock to a small beach. "Paddy used to swim around the island and back," Elpida explains proudly and unprompted. She exhales in mourning.

Outside, the crickets clatter, a maraca orchestra so loud and constant that it becomes unheard. The fringes of the house abound in shaded spots for between 1 and 20 people: solitary nooks for contemplation and reading, sociable niches for sitting and dining. It is a home to be shared—when not struggling scrupulously at his writing studio, Leigh Fermor was a relentless entertainer—but it is empty of life. The stones, saturated in a human presence as strong and invisible as the crepitations of the crickets, are silent, crepuscular.

In September 2011, the Benaki commissioned plans for the restoration of the house, costing an estimated $800,000, and catalogued its library and papers. They fumigated and stored the most important items in Athens, including that poignant testimonial to sedentary toil, a first edition of Betjeman's *High and Low* (1966), inscribed by the "pile-ridden poet." The Benaki also signed a five-year memorandum of understanding with the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies at Princeton for planning lectures on Paddy-related topics. Meanwhile, the publication of both *The Broken Road* and a biography by Artemis Cooper revealed a vast reservoir of affection. In Britain, a committee of Paddy's friends offered to create a charity to raise funds for the restoration.

'. . . a museum of a literary era.'

And then nothing happened.

Part of the garden wall fell down, and visitors trickled in through the breach. In Britain, the natives grew restless. A *Guardian* journalist climbed the cliff stairs and peered through the locked windows. The *Daily Telegraph* described the house as "sad and neglected," its shutters "rotting and falling off their hinges." Artemis Cooper, a lifelong visitor, responded that the Benaki was doing its best, but Greece was amid "economic catastrophe." The plans had not been abandoned, and the house, always a little ramshackle, was not

neglected. Guests had stayed there, and Richard Linklater had filmed parts of *Before Midnight* (2013), with Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke, there.

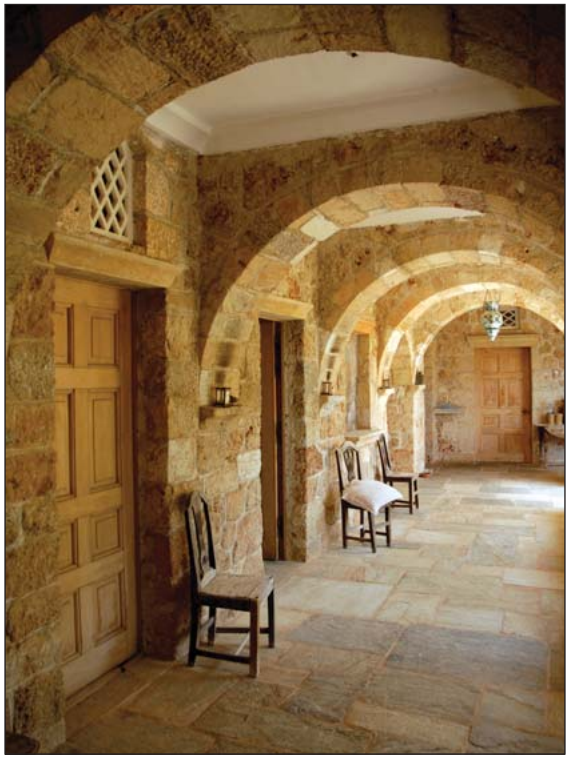
Tom Sawford runs an unaffiliated website for Paddy's admirers. The talkbacks describe books moldering in an outhouse. There are offers of money and help, sympathy for the Benaki's problems, and allegations of mismanagement. Sawford believes that if the museum had accepted the British group's offer, the house would be "up and running" by now, its future secure: "Instead, the Byzantine structure of the Benaki has resulted in the house being left to rot."

The Benaki's English website places 16 individuals in the "front ranks of its benefactors" for giving "considerable property" to the museum. Patrick Leigh Fermor is not on the list. The museum has launched a global fundraising campaign. On the website, donors can choose among 10 projects. Patrick Leigh Fermor's house is not among them.

Irini Geroulanou is the deputy director of the Benaki. She returns my phone call immediately, puts me in touch with Elpida, and volunteers her own cell phone number, just in case. The Benaki, she says, has "finalized" its restoration plans and engaged a local firm of builders. There has been "positive" but "not final" interest from universities and foundations in Britain and America, and from the British Council and other foreign institutions in Athens.

"We plan to have five writers in the winter months, when Kardamyli is quiet," Irini explains, "so they can keep each other company." At other times, two "famous writers" will have the run of the place; presumably, the Benaki will check whether they are on speaking terms. There will be events for the villagers and an annual or biennial symposium, featuring "prominent artists and academics."

All this is a thorough and conscientious reflection of Leigh Fermor's wishes. But the "first and basic problem" remains: "the funding of the restoration." The house is cooled only by its walls and the breeze. The wiring is erratic, a museum piece from the first age of electrification. The plumbing is functional, but explosive. The window frames and roof need replacing. The bedrooms are spartan: a bed, a table, a sink in a closet, and shelves of books. Writers would enjoy living and working in these hermit cells—the literary traces are an inspiration—but who else would want to squat among the ruins of someone else's life? The electrics contravene EU regulations, and strangers keep climbing the garden wall.



'Beyond the colonnade, the July sun flattens the sea . . .'

Recently, Elpida Beloyannis unlocked the medieval door and found a young Englishman asleep in the gatehouse. He was resting before walking from Kalamitsi to England, in a pedestrian tribute to his idol. Paddy's books have this effect on people.

Patrick Leigh Fermor lies in a Worcestershire churchyard, like a knight returned from the Crusades. But his readers, a pagan cult drawn to the gods of literature and the English ideal, come to Kalamitsi. They telephone Elpida at home, asking politely for access. They wish only to pay tribute, to inhale the atmosphere. They seek no material souvenirs here, or at the subsidiary shrine, the chapel in the hills above the village, where Leigh Fermor scattered some of Bruce Chatwin's ashes.

Unfortunately, there are uninvited visitors, too. Snoopers are drawn by the barbaric talisman of celebrity, especially since the Benaki advertised the house by renting it for *Before Midnight*. The place is architecturally and historically unique, but the Benaki refuses to install a resident caretaker. Though the Benaki's long-term commitment cannot be doubted, the house's isolation and emptiness are tempting fate. Sooner or later, there may be damage: by the elements, by admirers, by looters. Byron's slippers survived; Leigh Fermor's books and boots may not.

If the Benaki opened the house to visitors, ticket sales might support a resident caretaker. If Paddy Leigh Fermor's readers could donate to an online fund, the house could be repaired. If writers or interns lived there while the Benaki finds donors, the house would be guarded and its new life could begin.

"We are all quite optimistic that things will go as planned," Irini Geroulanou says from Athens. "The PLF House will be open again to the public and used in the way that PLF desired and stated in his will."

At Kalamitsi, the crickets rattle among the olives. Patrick Leigh Fermor's legacy is caught in the aspic of its significance and the stagnant Greek economy. A secure posterity, or an avoidable scandal? In an example of life imitating art, I bump into Julie Delpy on returning to my hotel. "You've been there?" she asks. "The house is so beautiful. It's my favorite place in the world." ♦

B&A

Badfellas

Apparently, the criminal life has its downside.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

James Gandolfini, Tom Hardy

There's nothing quite so pointless as a movie about gloomy and depressed criminals. Why watch two hours about life on the other side of the law if there's no kick to it? Crime movies are fun because they acknowledge the pleasures of transgression even as they show the wages of sin. So crooks on screen can be stupid, crazy, violent, funny, and even have panic attacks—but if the point the movie is making is that they're withdrawn and brooding and in need of an SSRI, then it's time to look for the exit.

Alas, that's the case with *The Drop*, a crime drama set in and around a Brooklyn bar used by gangsters to launder money. This is an anachronistic Brooklyn—one full of working-class Italian and Irish guys who live in houses with furniture covered in protective plastic and go to Mass every morning at 8 A.M.; in real life, these types have long since decamped to Long Island. The only odd note is that the organized-crime family running things is Chechen.

The Drop
Directed by Michaël R. Roskam

The proprietor of the bar is played by James Gandolfini, in his final film performance. He's such a joy to watch he almost makes you overlook the bleakness. But then the camera cuts back to the star, Tom Hardy, and back down you go into the slough of despond.

This is a shame, because the 37-year-old Hardy is a remarkable actor, one of the best of his generation. He can play villainous (he was Bane in *The Dark Knight Rises*), arrogant (a rogue intelligence agent in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), a tough but lovable Marine (in *Warrior*), and a backwoods moonshiner (in *Lawless*).

Most impressive is his performance in last year's *Locke*, which you can now see on demand through your cable box. He is the only person on screen in this extraordinary movie, and over the course of an 85-minute car ride punctuated by many phone calls, he (and writer-director Steven Knight) lays bare the life of a very good man trying to do the right thing by his work, his wife, and his life in the aftermath of one very bad decision nine months earlier. It is one of the towering feats of acting in memory.

But here Hardy's ability to play shades—and do flawless accents—deserts him. His character, Bob, is a seemingly slow-witted, decent guy who is loyal and courteous and true. Hardy slides from "dese-dem-dose" Brooklyn to a general African-American urban accent to the coal-country tones he used in *Lawless*. The movie's director, Michaël R. Roskam, is Belgian, so he probably didn't have any idea Hardy's accent kept going off the rails.

Roskam has a very good eye for unsettling camera angles and for creating a sense of unease and menace. But his movie is as lugubrious as Hardy's Bob, who goes to church, takes good care of a dog, is nice to a troubled young woman in the neighborhood (the deeply boring Noomi Rapace), and buys old ladies drinks at the bar. Hardy plays this stuff like Sylvester Stallone in the original *Rocky*, only Rocky is rueful and funny. Bob is just the drip of *The Drop*.

The twist in the movie, and it comes out near the end, is that Bob is more complicated than we supposedly thought. But it's not much of a twist, as the movie sticks so close to him any canny viewer will have long since figured out that Bob Did Something in the Past He's Trying to Repent For in the Present, and that the climax will come when Bad Bob comes out from his shell.

The Drop was written by the crime novelist Dennis Lehane, whose Boston-set books were the source material for *Mystic River* (2003), *Gone Baby Gone* (2007), and *Shutter Island* (2010). He has a gift for making ludicrous and unbelievable plots seem oddly realistic. *The Drop* could have used some of Lehane's purple plotting, if only to allow us to climb out of the dreary pit of despair into which he, Hardy, and Roskam have chosen to plunge us. ♦

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

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

"Study: Conservatives and liberals smell different"
—News item