the weekly
Standard

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THE ROAD TO APPOMATTOX
BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

LINCOLN & PASSOVER
BY MEIR Y. SOLOVEICHIK

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Contents

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COVER: THE FALL OF PETERSBURG

Rolling Stone's Disgrace

Readers are no doubt aware of the details of the gang rape that didn't take place at a University of Virginia fraternity house in 2012. It was the subject of a shocking account in *Rolling Stone* that dominated national discussion of the "rape culture" that permeates America's universities. The UVA president effectively shut down fraternities on her campus; the author of the piece made the rounds of the TV talk shows; and *Rolling Stone* basked in the approval of its peers.

Until, that is, people began asking the kinds of basic questions that the author, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, her editors at *Rolling Stone* (Sean Woods, Will Dana), and publisher Jann Wenner should have asked in the first place. The story collapsed, as very nearly every element was revealed to be false, unverified and unverifiable, or more likely invented. Even worse, it emerged that little or no effort had been made to confirm the story's sensational details.

Rolling Stone announced last December that it would "investigate" its discredited story, and asked the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism to review the whole affair. This month, Columbia issued its report, and in response, *Rolling Stone* officially withdrew the story. With good reason: The Columbia report makes it clear that "A Rape on Campus" violated nearly every tenet of reporting, beginning with uncritical acceptance of its premise and ending with the failure to separate fact from fiction. Every one of its assertions must now be regarded as a lie.

To be sure, *Rolling Stone* issued a statement of regret, and so did the author. The Scrapbook recognizes that their words were chosen carefully in light of probable lawsuits. But what they did not say is very nearly as significant as what they did say. Erdely seems most concerned that future rape victims may find their credibility challenged; *Rolling Stone* is retrospectively annoyed that its source—"Jackie," whose identity remains protected in the media—is (in the words of Wenner) "a really expert fabulist storyteller."

Undoubtedly so. But the primary fault here lies not with "Jackie" but with Sabrina Rubin Erdely and *Rolling Stone*. Erdely began with a framework—a frat house gang rape on a campus, preferably Southern—and went shopping for a fable to match her presumption. For its part, *Rolling Stone* failed to perform due diligence not because "Jackie" was an expert fabulist but because *Rolling Stone* didn't want the truth to spoil its story.

In short, the magazine and reporter are not the victims here. The victims are the students unjustly accused, and the University of Virginia, whose president reacted in panic and haste. The credibility of journalism has been injured as well, and the public's faith in the press—never especially high—has been lowered several notches. Not least since *Rolling Stone* announced, as well, that everyone involved with this malicious tale will remain on the job. ♦

Hair Trigger

The hot new word on campuses is "triggering." The current generation of special snowflakes wants to be excused from discussing violence and other terrible facts of life, lest such discussions "trigger" a recollection of their own personal traumas (real or imagined is anyone's guess).

The issue of triggering got a little too literal at the University of Michigan recently when the campus canceled a screening of *American Sniper*. The film is unavoidably violent inasmuch as it tells the story of Chris Kyle, a sniper and hero of the war in Iraq. However, it was also the highest-grossing movie of 2014, meaning that a great many Americans saw it and were somehow able to get on with their lives.

The other objection was that it's racist. "The movie *American Sniper* not only tolerates but promotes anti-Muslim . . . rhetoric and sympathizes with a mass killer. . . . Chris Kyle was a racist who took a disturbing stance on murdering Iraqi civilians," according to an online petition. This depiction of Kyle is flatly inaccurate. Much of his service—and this is explicitly how it was portrayed in the film—was spent endeavoring to eliminate Al Qaeda in Iraq, which was torturing and killing other Muslims to further its terrorist goals.

As if to conclusively illustrate what an infantilizing atmosphere America's universities are cultivating, the scheduled showing of *American Sniper* was replaced by a screening of *Paddington*. That movie, based on the popular children's book series about a family that adopts a stuffed bear found abandoned in a train station, presumably required no trigger warnings. However, according to *Tablet* magazine, *Paddington* author Michael Bond was inspired to create the character because of the "Jewish evacuee children he remembered seeing in the train stations of London during the Kindertransport of the late 1930s." Contemplating a generation of children whose parents were killed in the Holocaust could prove pretty damn triggering, to say nothing of the necessary and righteous violence dealt out by an earlier generation of Chris Kyles that put an end to the horror. Bond further says of his beloved creation, "Paddington stands up for things, he's not afraid of going to the top and giving them a hard stare." In that respect, at least, it turns out *Paddington* and *American Sniper* are not wholly dissimilar.

While this entire episode is embarrassing and depressing, it does have a happy ending. Shortly after it was announced that the *American Sniper* screening had been canceled, Michigan football coach Jim Harbaugh

tweeted: "Michigan Football will watch 'American Sniper'! Proud of Chris Kyle and Proud to be an American and if that offends anybody then so be it!" A number of his players echoed the sentiment, and soon the *American Sniper* screening was back on.

Harbaugh should be applauded, but it's a real indictment when the football program has to be the voice of reason in campus political debates. ♦

Fracking and Quakes

Over the past decade, huge improvements in hydraulic fracturing techniques used to unlock natural gas deposits have lowered energy prices and boosted the economy. They've been great for the environment, too. While it's not pollution-free, gas produces almost none of the particulates and much less of the greenhouse gas that comes from burning coal.

Portions of the environmental left, apparently unhappy with cleaner, cheaper energy, have looked for ways to attack fracking, and one of their most promising ideas has been that fracking causes earthquakes. Since the procedure involves injecting fluid deep into the Earth, nearly all seismologists agreed that such quakes were possible. When experiments confirmed that small quakes had actually resulted from fracking, left-wing environmental blogs and groups like the Center for American Progress reacted with barely restrained glee.

But a new letter from the California Earthquake Authority—a government-run, privately financed entity that's by far the nation's largest provider of residential earthquake insurance—should give pause to anybody who wants to say that damaging fracking-related earthquakes are a menace. In response to questions from Republican assemblyman Scott Wilk, CEA chief executive officer Glenn Pomeroy says that he is "not aware of any claims having been submitted . . . in which human activity [has] caused or [been found] to have contributed to damaging ground movement." This is true even though nearly all of California's fracking activity is concentrated in its very densely populated, earthquake-prone southern portion.

It's probably impossible to prove that fracking could never cause a major earthquake. But the CEA's letter does show that the burden of proof ought to remain on those making the claims. ♦

A SHEEP *in* SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

There's No Such Thing as a Free Video

Less than two months ago, Google launched YouTube Kids, a new app for tablets and smartphones aimed at providing child-friendly video content. Unlike Netflix, the service is free. Since YouTube Kids is not an act of charity, however, it does have commercials. And this is apparently not just intolerable, but illegal.

So alleges a Federal Trade Commission complaint supported by the Center for Digital Democracy, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and other advocacy groups. YouTube Kids is "the most hypercommercialized media environment for children I have ever seen," Dale Kunkel, a professor of communications at the University of Arizona, told *PCWorld*. For those of us who grew up in earlier eras, the suggestion of YouTube Kids being the ne plus ultra of inappropriate commercial environs seems laughable. Indeed, ads featuring the cartoon exploits of the Hamm's beer

bear regularly punctuated afterschool Bugs Bunny viewings during The Scrapbook's childhood.

The complaint also objects to YouTube's use of branded content, saying many of the videos available are "little more than program-length commercials." This isn't so much an indictment as a description of children's TV programming throughout history. *Sesame Street* licenses the likeness of its characters to air fresheners, for heaven's sake.

Not that any reasonable counterarguments will matter. All right-thinking people know that media and Internet companies are honor-bound to provide the exact intellectual property consumers want, royalty-free without advertisements.

Of course, there's a bigger issue at stake than sticking it to evil corporations. The bigger problem isn't so much that children see commercials as it is the time they spend staring at video screens, period. There is a raft of studies—not to mention good old common sense—confirming that excess screen-time contributes to terrible attention spans and otherwise impairs child development. Unfortunately, there's no shortage of parents who think of an iPad as a cross between a pacifier and a babysitter. If you're willing to let your kids watch so much video entertainment that a few seconds of ads become a cumulative problem, whether or not Google is raising your children is the least of your worries. ♦

Edward Snowden, Non-Martyr

Last week, Edward Snowden came out (or was let out) of his home in liberty-loving Russia to grant an interview to John Oliver, erstwhile Comedy Central *Daily Show* correspondent and current host of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. A few seconds in, the ever-so-earnest Snowden began to realize that Oliver, much like his mentors Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, was actually less interested in conducting a traditional interview than in needling him.

Oliver proceeded to pepper Snowden with questions about how much he missed the taste of Hot Pockets, people from the state of Florida, and "Truck-nutz" (a novelty item that the more aristocratic members of American society deign to hang from the rear bumpers of their pickups). The interview then took a much more interesting turn, with Oliver gaining Snowden's concession on the grave risk to national security he precipitated by handing over NSA documents to newspaper reporters.

As Snowden settled into the groove of the interview, his ever-present megalomania became a touch more pronounced, and at one point he contended that the overwhelmingly positive reception by Americans of his revelations felt like "vindication," and that if one asks Americans to make "tough decisions," "confront tough issues," and think about "hard problems," their level of engagement will "surprise." At this point the plucky Oliver pounced, playing for an increasingly crestfallen Snowden man-on-the-street interviews with "average" Americans, none of whom seemed to have any idea of his global "importance."

Snowden, who seems to believe he bestrides the narrow world like a Colossus, does not need to worry about an Oliver, Flavius, or Murellus plucking his garlands of fame too soon. Or maybe he should. Last week, a 100-pound bust of Snowden, placed by a group of "artists" in Brooklyn's Fort Greene Park (known for its Prison Ship Martyrs Monument, a lasting tribute to over 11,500 American prisoners of war who gave their lives during the War for Independence), was promptly covered and taken down. Later, a Snowden hologram was projected, but this, too, only lasted for 20 minutes.

And the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument? It remains standing, as it has done for over 100 years, a testament to the men and women who suffered to create the strong America Snowden so desperately faults for all the world's ills. ♦

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Their Finest Hour

"Keep our story going," implored Commander Dave Evans in his remarks closing the monthly meeting of the Korean War Veterans Association, General Brad Smith Chapter. At the meeting, one of us—Cita—had given a talk, as she often volunteers to do to veterans' groups, about Winston Churchill, based on her book, *Dinner with Churchill: Policy Making at the Dinner Table*. So it was that we found ourselves in a bar and meeting hall in a sparsely developed section of Scottsdale, Arizona.

The area set aside for the gathering included a table for nonmembers of the chapter—mostly wives and daughters who help the veterans (average age 86½, a few in wheelchairs) get to the meeting. Another table was occupied by eight Korean women, regulars who attend to show their appreciation to the vets who saved them from enslavement by the Communists. The Korean government also shows its gratitude. One vet told us that when he and his wife expressed an interest in revisiting battle sites, the Korean government provided round-trip transportation, a week's stay at a five-star hotel, and—when they learned he had played the accordion to entertain his mates during the war but was too weak to carry an instrument with him—an accordion on which he could play while in the country.

To see these veterans struggle to attention, then face and salute the flag and pledge allegiance to our country, "under God," was moving enough. Then came the invocation from the chaplain, a woman in her late-seventies. She asked God to protect "those in peril," and she asked all present to pray for Arizonan Kayla Mueller, held by Islamist fanatics, whose murder was not yet publicly known.

The vets clustered at tables in small groups, seated on folding chairs and surrounded by memorabilia. Budweiser had donated a large banner with a map of Korea on one side showing where every battle had occurred, with the words "Welcome Home Heroes." The other side showed a bottle of Bud with which to raise the toast "Here's to the Heroes."

The audience took a lively interest in Cita's talk. They wanted to know whether Eleanor Roosevelt had succeeded in persuading FDR to end the late-night sessions he and Churchill enjoyed during the prime minister's three-week stay at the White House after Pearl Harbor. Answer: "No." And whether Churchill drank as much as legend has it. The answer: "A lot by current standards, but never so much as to impair his ability to run the war."

U.S. ARMY / D. MYLES CULLEN

Korean War veterans salute during a ceremony at the Pentagon, June 24, 2010.

One vet, with a German accent, asked to speak. He had been in the U.S. sector of Berlin when the Allies occupied the city. He remembered the airlift of 1948 and '49, when the Soviets blocked Allied access to Berlin by road and rail, and Allied planes landed in the American sector every three minutes, bringing fuel and food and then immediately taking off. He eventually got to the States, he said, and when the Korean War broke out enlisted in the Army to fight for "the best country in the world."

On to new business, starting with two announcements. The first was a happy one: As soon as all of the World War II veterans in the Phoenix area have been accommodated on "Honor Flights" that take veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorial to their service, Korean War veterans in the area will be similarly honored. The second was disappointing: These heroes are trying to get a resolution passed by both houses of Congress that would allow them to add a Wall of Remembrance, with the names of the fallen, to the Korean War monument, the cost to be borne mostly by the Korean government, according to Evans, the balance by private contributions. So far, no luck.

Then came informal socializing. One vet regretted the recent death of a member who had fought his way from Busan to the Yalu without getting a scratch. Another had some unkind words for the military leaders' conduct of the battle around the Chosin Reservoir, where our 1st Marine and 7th Infantry divisions took heavy losses while battling the Chinese forces that had poured across the border.

The closing ceremony: the doffing of the distinctive caps these veterans wear, a roll call of the members who have recently passed away, the mournful ringing of a bell after each name.

We had been in the presence of America as it once was, with unassuming heroes who value God and country, and who showed us the courtesies that once characterized social relations all over America. We take heart from the fact that these veterans routinely have their children and grandchildren join them in parades and other displays of patriotism and love of country—so as to "keep our story going."

Cita and Irwin M. Stelzer

the weekly Standard

Unravel the Deal

What is to be done about Obama's Iran "deal"? We could, fatalistically, lament the collapse of American foreign policy. We could, indignantly, gnash our teeth in frustration at the current administration. We could, constructively, work to secure congressional review of the deal and urge presidential candidates to commit to altering or abrogating it.

Or we can stop it now.

How? The best chance is to prevent a final deal from being signed on June 30. And the best way to do that is to spend the next 80 days pulling on the loose threads and poking at the fraying parts of the framework announced last week in Lausanne. Those loose threads are the ambiguities, those fraying parts are the uncertainties, in what was agreed to. Those ambiguities and uncertainties are there to obscure concessions the Obama administration made to get Iranian acquiescence, concessions that the administration knew it couldn't sell at home. Can a final deal be achieved if the American public and Congress insist on clarity rather than ambiguity?

Perhaps not. We have the Obama administration saying Iran agreed not to operate advanced centrifuges, and the Iranians saying they will begin operating them the day after a deal is signed. We have the Obama administration saying sanctions can snap back, and the Iranians saying they'll be gone once and for all the very day the deal is signed. We have the Obama administration saying there will be a strict inspections and verification regime, and the Iranians saying there won't be anytime/anywhere inspections. We have the Obama administration trying to reassure us that it won concessions on the underground site at Fordow and the heavy-water reactor at Arak (and, indirectly, on the military testing site at Parchin), and the Iranians boasting they've given up nothing serious with respect to any of them. We have the Obama administration reassuring us that Israel will be fine—but saying that it's crazy to ask the Iranian regime to recognize Israel's right to exist.

It's hard to see Barack Obama or John Kerry ever walking away from a deal. But it might be possible to put enough pressure on Obama and Kerry that they would have to clarify various aspects of the deal in ways that might cause Iran's supreme leader to decide it's not worth it. Khamenei thinks we're the Great Satan. We can take a cue from this. We can find devilish details to highlight. We can heighten the contradictions, exacerbate the tensions, make unacceptable the ambiguities, and thus tempt the Iranians to decide to walk away.

All other fronts of opposition should be pursued as well. The case against the deal should be made comprehensively, emphasizing the nature of the Iranian regime, the overall impact of this deal on the Middle East, the ways the deal will make war more likely. But the best prospect for victory is to stop the deal before it happens. The three months until the planned final signing ceremony are an opportunity for disrupting, and indeed derailing, the deal.

Members of Congress have a major role to play. Let them by all means advance the Corker-Menendez bill to ensure a congressional vote on a deal if there is one. But let them also try to prevent a deal. Why not simple pieces of legislation that say: No closing of the underground site at Fordow (which President Obama himself said was unnecessary for a peaceful nuclear program), no deal. No anywhere/anytime inspections, no deal. No sanctions that remain for at least the first couple of years, no deal. No cessation of support for terror, no deal. No visit by a congressional delegation, accompanied by impartial experts and scientists, to Fordow and Parchin, no deal. No recognition of Israel, no deal.

As to why the deal should never be allowed to come into existence, don't take our word for it. Read the devastating analysis published on April 8 in the *Wall Street Journal* by Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, perhaps the first time in modern American history that two former secretaries of state—and distinguished ones at that—have come out against an agreement negotiated by a president with a foreign country.

And read the powerful article by the liberal Israeli journalist Ari Shavit in the left-wing newspaper *Ha'aretz* on April 9. Since American readers are less likely to have seen this piece, let me quote some key paragraphs:

> Since the Lausanne deal was announced a week ago, it has provoked innumerable worrisome questions. Why is there no similarity between the Farsi and English versions of the text? Why do the Iranians insist that the sanctions will be lifted immediately and that they will be able to continue enriching uranium in high quantities and developing advanced centrifuges without restrictions?
>
> Why, even according to the American version, will the Iranians be able to keep an underground nuclear facility at Fordo and a nuclear reactor at Arak? Why, even according to the American version, is it not clear whether the fissionable material (approximately 10 tons) will be leaving Iran and whether international inspectors will have free access to every site in the country?
>
> And what's supposed to happen 10 years from now?

> Don't we want to live after 2025? Doesn't the Lausanne deal pave the way for a nightmarish not-so-distant future in which Iran is nuclear, the Middle East is nuclear and the world order collapses?

Shavit continues:

> The next 80 days are critical. History is watching us all closely. Where did we stand, what did we say and what did we do when the most important decision of our time was made? There will be no forgiveness for our mistakes. There will be no pardon for weakness, apathy or pettiness.

It's wonderful, in politics, to be able to say "Yes," to seek to achieve positive things, to pass legislation, to ratify treaties, to take a step forward arm-in-arm with others into the broad, sunlit uplands of peace and prosperity. But there are times when the greatest contribution one can make is to strongly and decisively say "No," in order to prevent disaster and a descent into the abyss. This too is statesmanship. This too can be a political movement's duty, and a democracy's finest hour.

—William Kristol

War with Iran

Ever since it announced the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran last month, the Obama administration has flooded the news media with technical details elaborating the many virtues of the proposed framework agreement. Indeed, the White House sent its energy secretary, Ernest Moniz, a nuclear physicist, onto the Sunday shows to helpfully explain the knotty fine points that are likely to be lost on laymen—or anyone who doesn't celebrate its signal accomplishment.

If you don't think it's a good deal, said CIA director John Brennan, you don't know the facts. The science is in! But like it does with so much else, the White House is using "science" as a smokescreen to obscure its failure in Lausanne. John Kerry and the American negotiating team were supposed to lock down not technical details but political arrangements, like the pace of sanctions relief and inspectors' access to Iranian nuclear sites. None of these issues has been resolved—nor, says Iran, will it accept White House demands.

As the deans of American foreign policy, Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, wrote last week in an important *Wall Street Journal* article: "Debate regarding technical details of the deal has thus far inhibited the soul-searching necessary regarding its deeper implications." It's time then to look at the bigger picture that the proposed deal points to—a new Cold War.

Advocates of the deal make Panglossian assumptions about the nature of the Iranian regime. As Kissinger and Shultz note, to some, a deal would represent "a moderation of Iran's 3½ decades of militant hostility to the West and established international institutions, and an opportunity to draw Iran into an effort to stabilize the Middle East."

That's a pipedream. Iran now boasts of controlling four Arab capitals. Tehran and its allies have fomented war throughout the Middle East, from Beirut and Damascus to Baghdad and Sanaa. The White House's coordination with Iran in the campaign against ISIS hardly conceals the fact that Iran is targeting American allies, especially Israel, Saudi Arabia, and now Jordan.

Some argue, write Kissinger and Shultz, that "the nuclear deal is a way station toward the eventual domestic transformation of Iran." The opposite is true. Domestically, a deal strengthens the hardliners who actually manage the nuclear weapons program.

"Some advocates," Kissinger and Shultz explain, "have suggested that the agreement can serve as a way to dissociate America from Middle East conflicts." But this is not what happens when a state goes nuclear. Rather, such a state only becomes a bigger threat.

Right now, that means primarily in the Middle East—from the shores of the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. An Iranian bomb will push Riyadh to acquire one as well, setting off a nuclear arms race that may come to include the UAE, Algeria, Egypt, and Jordan. Accordingly, the regional Sunni-Shia conflagration now embroiling Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon will be funded and fought by two or more nuclear powers.

As a nuclear power, Iran will find new friends eager to sign on to its project of challenging the established order—an order underwritten by American power. In effect, an Iranian bomb will engender another empire in thrall to evil.

Tehran has already seeded assets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A Defense Intelligence Agency assessment contends that within a year, the Iranians will have a ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States.

The White House argues that the only alternative to its terrible deal is war, but that's nonsense. Iran has no ability to make war on the United States except as a continuation of the terrorist war it has been waging against us for the last 36 years. As the former prime minister of Israel Ehud Barak and Senator Tom Cotton have argued, the White House is overstating both the nature of the military strike that would bring Iran's program to a halt and Iran's capacity to retaliate.

But all that changes once Iran gets the bomb. At that point, as Kissinger and Shultz know only too well, we must contend with the prospect that they will use it. A similar prospect caused the United States and the Soviet Union to engage in a high-stakes struggle on four continents for nearly half a century. Obama's foreign policy legacy, enshrined by a deal that opens the door to an Iranian nuke, wouldn't be a historic reconciliation with an adversarial regime, but a return to the nightmare of the Cold War.

—Lee Smith

Hostages? What Hostages?

The unfinished business of compensation for the Americans held in Tehran. BY FRED BARNES

Former hostage Dave Roeder shouts upon arriving in Frankfurt, January 21, 1981.

There were many horrendous moments for the American hostages held by Iranians for 444 days at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. One of the worst occurred when Iranian captors showed a hostage a photo of the school bus that took his son to and from school. If the hostage didn't cooperate, his son's fingers would be chopped off and sent, one a day, to his wife.

On January 20, 1981, the day Ronald Reagan became president and Jimmy Carter departed, the crisis lifted and 52 Americans came home. And a few other good things happened. U.S. banks with investments in Iran were reimbursed, 100 cents on the dollar. Through an international tribunal, American corporations were compensated for their losses.

But the hostages were left out. It was as if they'd been quickly forgotten, blotted from national memory. And the Algiers Accords—the U.S.-Iranian agreement under which the hostages were released—offered no relief. That pact, negotiated by the Carter administration, barred the former hostages from suing Iran for compensation.

When they sought help in federal court, they were blocked. The State Department under presidents from Reagan to George W. Bush intervened time and again, but not in their favor. The Algiers Accords, which Congress never ratified, were upheld.

Last December, it appeared justice might be served. Funds for hostage compensation were put in the U.S. budget. The money would come from fines collected from violators of sanctions against Iran—money not covered by the Algiers Accords. But that compensation was yanked from the budget at the last minute.

Now, with the Obama administration and Iran on the verge of a deal aiming to curb the Iranian nuclear program, Congress may act. A bill introduced by Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) would provide compensation. How much? In recent years, a consensus among federal judges has been reached on the amount a hostage, if injured, should receive. Each of the 39 hostages still living—all of whom endured physical or mental injury—would get $10,000 for each day in captivity, and spouses and children would get half that figure.

"As we debate our foreign policy toward Iran, it seems more appropriate than ever that we compensate the Foreign Service personnel who . . . were forced to endure unimaginable fear, despair, and torture for 444 days," Isakson said in a statement. His bill would "demonstrate our support for the brave men and women who represent our country abroad."

But the bill's fate is uncertain. Isakson plans to attach it to legislation requiring Obama to submit the nuclear deal with Iran to Congress for a vote. And President Obama has vowed to veto any measure granting Congress an up or down vote on the pact with Iran.

He could act on his own by issuing an executive order to pay the hostages and their families—a total of 151 people—with money from sanctions fines. Or with money from the U.S. Treasury, for that matter. But he's not considering it.

What the White House and the State Department have promised to do is refrain from impeding Isakson's bill. Administration officials spoke to former hostages in a conference call when Iran tried to install Hamid Abutalebi

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

as ambassador to the United Nations. The hostages opposed Abutalebi because of his role in their captivity. A year ago, he was denied a visa to enter the United States and take his seat as U.N. ambassador.

On the compensation issue, the Iranians are no help. They're unrepentant. They've never apologized for their actions in attacking and then persecuting Americans—quite the contrary. They still celebrate the anniversary of the day the Tehran embassy was invaded and the hostages imprisoned, November 4, 1979.

Senior Iranian diplomat Ali Kohorram talked about those celebrations last November. "From the view of the Americans, this is an old wound," he told an Iranian newspaper. Americans just "cannot ignore" the matter. "We have to take into consideration the view from outside" Iran. "Sooner or later, we will have to be forced to do this. If we want to think about working with international society, this has to be on the agenda." But so far, it's not.

For the hostages, the compensation package—the money—is secondary to recognition of the sacrifice they made and the ordeal they endured. "The hostages and their families—who arguably suffered more than any other group—have yet to receive their full measure of justice," said Tom Lankford, their lawyer.

They slipped through the cracks in Washington. For decades, honoring them has been a low priority at the White House and on Capitol Hill. And when Hollywood took up their case in 2012, it focused on "the escape of 6 embassy personnel, not the 52 Americans who spent 14 months in captivity," Matthew Wald of the *New York Times* wrote. He was referring to the movie *Argo*.

By the way, the brave hostage who was threatened with having his son's fingers cut off—he called the bluff of his jailers. He refused to answer their questions, and nothing came of their depraved threat. His son still has 10 fingers. The hostage was Lt. Colonel Dave Roeder, an Air Force military attaché at the embassy. ♦

Iran's Cheating

Can't trust, can't verify.

BY MICHAEL MAKOVSKY

Is President Barack Obama right that the so-called framework nuclear agreement with Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) announced on April 2, will "cut off every pathway Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon"? Some will assess the truth of his statement by crunching the centrifuge and uranium stockpile numbers. However vital such analysis will be, it is important not to lose sight of the nuke for the centrifuges. For integral to Obama's argument is his claim that this deal "provides the best possible defense against Iran's ability to pursue a nuclear weapon in secret. . . . If Iran cheats, the world will know," and "If we see something suspicious, we will inspect it." But the promised inspections regime will not be intrusive enough to detect Iranian cheating or to thwart any breakout attempts in time.

Iran has a long and proud history of cheating on its international nuclear agreements. Olli Heinonen, a former deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) who once monitored Iran's nuclear program, observed in 2013: "If there is no undeclared installation today . . . it will be the first time in 20 years that Iran doesn't have one." Indeed, Iran's main enrichment facility at Natanz was a covert facility that was only discovered in 2002, by the Mojahedin-e-Khalq, an Iranian opposition group. A year later, the European Union struck a deal with Iran to prevent it from spinning its centrifuges and beginning to enrich uranium. Yet for much of the deal, Iran was busy mastering its uranium supply chain. "While we were talking with the Europeans in Tehran," wrote Iran's nuclear negotiator and now president Hassan Rouhani, "we were installing equipment in parts of the [uranium conversion] facility at Isfahan. . . . In fact, by creating a calm environment, we were able to complete the work in Isfahan." In 2009, the world learned of yet another clandestine enrichment plant, under a mountain at Fordow, that Iran was trying to construct.

Now, however, President Obama would have us believe that Iran is a changed country. Pushing back against "skeptics [who] argued that Iran would cheat, that we could not verify their compliance, and the interim agreement would fail," the president insisted on April 2 that "Iran has met all of its obligations." This is demonstrably false.

In the past year alone Iran has violated its international agreements at least three times. First, even though the interim Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) prohibited Iran from enriching uranium in any centrifuges that were not in use at the time the deal went into effect in January 2014, last November the IAEA caught Iran operating a new centrifuge—worse still, it was an advanced IR-5 model. Second, the JPOA required Iran to process any low-enriched uranium it produced during the deal's term from the gaseous form used for enrichment into a solid that can be used as reactor fuel, so that it would not be readily available for further enrichment and potential breakout. As of February 2015, Iran had an excess of some 300 kilograms of low-enriched uranium, in violation of the deal's terms. Third, in parallel to the JPOA, the IAEA and Iran signed a Framework for Cooperation under which Iran agreed to answer outstanding IAEA concerns about the possible

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military dimensions of its nuclear program. Iran answered only one question to the IAEA's satisfaction and, for the past six months, has been stonewalling on the rest. This recent record of cheating, while Iran was negotiating a comprehensive arrangement and thus incentivized to be good, bodes poorly for the future under a new accord.

Obama claims, "International inspectors will have unprecedented access not only to Iranian nuclear facilities, but to the entire supply chain that supports Iran's nuclear program—from uranium mills that provide the raw materials, to the centrifuge production and storage facilities that support the program." He added, "With this deal, Iran will face more inspections than any other country in the world."

Heretofore, the largest and most intrusive monitoring effort ever set up was the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) created after that 1990-91 Gulf war to verify the dismantlement of Iraq's WMD program. It had dedicated personnel based in Baghdad with their own helicopters and even a U-2 spy plane and with authority granted by the U.N. Security Council and backed by the U.S. military to go anywhere at any time to inspect anything. And yet it failed to gather an accurate understanding of the capabilities that Saddam Hussein did or did not have. As Charles Duelfer, who served as UNSCOM's deputy executive chairman, recently wrote, "UNSCOM and the IAEA after more than seven years of operations inside Iraq could not verify that Saddam had completely disarmed."

The inspections regime contemplated in the JCPOA seems woeful in comparison. Its central component is an understanding that Iran will "implement the Additional Protocol of the IAEA." Every signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including Iran, is legally obligated to sign a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Recognizing that the original agreement, which dates to the 1970s, was insufficient to monitor modern nuclear programs, the IAEA developed added measures in the 1990s, known as the Additional Protocol. Applying these to Iran would represent a major advance beyond the current, inadequate inspections regime. But there are problems. First, there is no such thing as *the* Additional Protocol. There is a *model* Additional Protocol that the IAEA uses as a basis for negotiating a specific agreement with each individual country tailored to its situation. Indeed, this provision opens the door to yet another round of haggling with Iran, making it impossible to know what exact measures Iran will end up being bound by.

But we do know, and this is the second concern, that no Additional Protocol contains the sort of "anytime, anywhere" inspections that UNSCOM provided for and that experts agree is necessary to police Iran's program. What an Additional Protocol would likely contain, according to the framework agreement, is an expansion of the number of facilities subject to inspections—to include Iran's uranium mines and centrifuge factories—and stricter requirements for advance notice of any nuclear facilities Iran plans to construct.

If Iran decides to sprint for a nuke, however, it won't do so in a uranium mine; it will do it at one of its enrichment plants, most likely a clandestine plant, potentially hidden on a military base. It is precisely such sites that the IAEA has been trying, unsuccessfully, to get access to for years. Of particular concern has been the Parchin military complex, where the IAEA suspects Iran tested high-explosives for a nuclear weapon. Yet inspectors have never been allowed to set foot on the site, watching instead as satellite imagery showed Iran demolishing the suspected site and paving it over to conceal any evidence of its cheating. The Additional Protocol will be no more successful in getting Iran to open up its facilities to inspectors. Obama claims that "Iran's past efforts to weaponize its program will be addressed," but that is so vague as to be meaningless. In fact, Iran claims the JCPOA does not require inspections of military facilities and such access will not be granted, with the defense minister calling it a "red line." Without full knowledge about possible military dimensions of Iran's program and access to all of its facilities, whether they are declared nuclear sites or not, it will be impossible to conduct proper verification.

Third, there is the ambiguity of the term "implement." Iran has previously "implemented" an Additional Protocol. In 2003, about the same time it was cheating on its agreement with the Europeans, Iranian leaders signed an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. Indeed, for the next two years they actually observed it. But in early 2006, Iran announced that it would no longer abide by the Additional Protocol and curtailed inspectors' access. They could well try to pull the same stunt again. And according to a "fact sheet" released by the Iranian foreign ministry, Iran believes it has only committed "to implement the Additional Protocol on a voluntary and temporary basis for the sake of transparency and confidence building."

U.S. intelligence services have a dismal track record of detecting clandestine nuclear efforts and predicting breakout—in North Korea, Pakistan, and India, for example. Israeli security officials have admitted in private that they too have significant gaps in their knowledge about Iran's facilities. This is not an indictment of American or Israeli intelligence capabilities; it is simply very challenging to detect covert nuclear activities. Permitting Iran to keep its vast nuclear infrastructure largely intact, as the JCPOA does, only compounds the challenges the United States and the world will have in detecting Iranian cheating.

An intrusive inspections and verification regime is the sine qua non of any arms agreement, especially with a congenital cheater like the Islamic Republic of Iran. Unfortunately, the JCPOA fails on this crucial issue, by not demanding complete information about the extent of Iran's past nuclear weapons research and eschewing "anytime, anywhere" inspections of all facilities. In other words, it is currently worth no more than the paper it might have been written on. ♦

Take Them at Their Word

The nature of the Tehran regime.

BY PETER WEHNER

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered this assessment of the American-led negotiations with Iran the day before a deal was announced:

> Yesterday an Iranian general brazenly declared, and I quote: "Israel's destruction is non-negotiable." But evidently giving Iran's murderous regime a clear path to the bomb is negotiable. This is unconscionable.

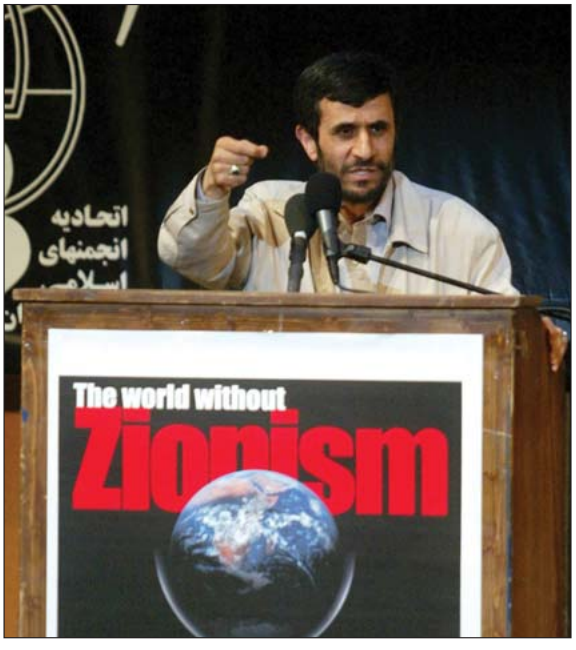
The statement from Brig. Gen. Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij militia of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, came just over a week after Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—responding to an audience chanting "Death to America"—said, "Of course, yes, death to America."

Of course.

What was the White House response to Khamenei's comment? The statement, we were told, was "intended for a domestic political audience."

This is a rather clumsy explanation, particularly since a theocracy like Iran is unlikely to worry about a "domestic political audience." But it does serve to illuminate the dangerous mindset of the president, his administration, and modern liberalism more broadly.

Among progressives there is a reflex to downplay and dismiss the grotesque anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism that is a routine part of the rhetoric of the Iranian regime. It doesn't matter how explicit the Iranian leadership is; the Obama administration and its supporters simply maintain the rhetoric shouldn't be taken seriously. But they never explain *why* it shouldn't be taken seriously.



Former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, October 26, 2005

After all, this is not a relatively benign government that merely uses loose words now and again. We're dealing with a regime that is oppressive, expansionist, and violent. Iran is the world's leading sponsor of terrorism, bankrolling Hezbollah and Hamas, mortal enemies of the Jewish state. It has been responsible for the death of American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's propping up some of the most brutal leaders on the planet, including Syria's Bashar al-Assad. (The current death toll from the Syrian civil war is roughly a quarter-of-a-million.) So it's not as if Iran's record is at odds with its rhetoric; they are fully consistent.

But there is another, frequently overlooked element here, which is the fundamental nature of the regime. The 1979 Iranian revolution marked a move away from the "quietist school" of Shia Islam to a far more militant and lethal form. Followers of the latter strain see their mission as paving the way for the return of Muhammad al-Mahdi, the "Twelfth Imam," a messiah who will make all the world Muslim. As the distinguished political scientist Matthias Küntzel has written, Ayatollah Khomeini "vested the myth with an entirely new sense: The Twelfth Imam will only emerge when the believers have vanquished evil. To speed up the Mahdi's return, Muslims had to shake off their torpor and fight."

For two generations that fight has been primarily (though not exclusively) targeted at Israel and the West. Many on the left discount this, trying to detach the Iranian regime from its core, animating beliefs. They ignore the power of political Islam and the role eschatology plays in it, as well as the fierce hatred for Jews and Christians.

That's a potentially perilous blind spot. It's not like we haven't been down this road before. *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) was written by Adolf Hitler while in prison and published in 1925. In it the future chancellor of Germany outlined his political ideology and malevolent intentions. Here is some of what Hitler wrote:

> If . . . the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men.
>
> Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands.

NEWSCOM

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Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.

In the case of Nazi Germany, the guiding beliefs were not religious but a toxic mix of nationalism, Aryan racial superiority, and social Darwinism. But militant Islam and Nazism share certain common features, including imperialism, anti-Semitism, and a deadly utopianism.

No one can say for sure that if Iran gets a nuclear weapon it will use it. The Iranian revolution happened more than three-and-a-half decades ago, and Iran's leaders have not shown suicidal tendencies. At the same time, a nuclear weapon would give them a destructive capability far beyond anything they have ever possessed. Even today, without nuclear weapons, Iran is pursuing its expansionist aims with a ruthless and lethal efficiency. It is a regime that shows no signs of making its peace with the current world order, international and moral norms, or the existence of Israel. It remains at its core a revolutionary and deeply dangerous nation. It is beyond reckless to assume, as the president does, that Iran's rulers don't mean what they say. That there are heretofore hidden moderate and modernizing impulses that Barack Obama will summon from the vasty deep. And that the true desire of the mullahs is rapprochement with Israel and America.

In his introduction to the English translation of *Mein Kampf*, the outstanding Nazi-era historian Konrad Heiden wrote that "in its pages Hitler announced . . . a program of blood and terror in a self-revelation of such overwhelming frankness that few among its readers had the courage to believe it." *Mein Kampf*, Heiden said, "was written in white-hot hatred."

Iran's leadership has announced with utter frankness its program of blood and terror. The question now, as it was in generations past, is whether those who hear words spoken with white-hot hatred have the courage to believe them. ♦

A Nuclear Turning Point

The longstanding, bipartisan nonproliferation standard is dead. BY MATTHEW KROENIG

If there is one thing on which Democrats and Republicans can agree, it is that it is undesirable for countries other than the United States to possess nuclear weapons. For this reason, America's nonproliferation policy has traditionally been characterized by strong bipartisanship. It is notable, therefore, that support for the recently negotiated Iran deal splits along party lines. But on closer inspection, what is truly puzzling is that anyone supports the agreement at all. In striking this deal, the Obama administration abandoned a decades-old mainstay of U.S. nonproliferation policy, and opponents are right to reject it. The United States has always opposed the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies—uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing—to all states, including its own allies, and it is a mistake to make an exception for Iran.

GARY LOCKE

From the beginning of the atomic era, American scientists understood that these sensitive nuclear technologies could be used to make fuel for nuclear energy or for nuclear weapons, and the United States immediately began working to close off this pathway to the bomb. The McMahon Act of 1946 made it illegal for the United States to share nuclear technologies with any country. Even countries like Britain and Canada that had helped America invent the bomb during the Manhattan Project were cut off.

Later, under President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program, the United States loosened restrictions on nuclear cooperation somewhat, but it always drew a bright line at uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing because the risk of proliferation was simply too great.

When other advanced industrial countries succeeded in developing sensitive nuclear technologies and, in some cases, the bomb without American help, Washington came to understand that international coordination was needed. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signature in 1968, and when India conducted a nuclear test using plutonium reprocessed from a Canadian-supplied nuclear reactor in 1974, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger convened other nuclear powers to establish the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a cartel designed to restrict the international transfer of sensitive nuclear technologies.

These controls have mostly proved effective, but when they were insufficient, the United States went on the offensive to stop the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies on a case-by-case basis. It even played hardball with friends, forcing Taiwan and South Korea to shut down reprocessing programs in the 1970s and convincing France to cancel the sale of a reprocessing plant to Pakistan in 1978. As one

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Taiwanese scientist remarked at the time, "After the Americans got through with us, we wouldn't have been able to teach physics here on Taiwan."

To be sure, Washington has been willing to barter with outlaw states over illegal nuclear programs in the past, but its terms remained clear and uncompromising: Sensitive nuclear technologies are not allowed. The 1994 Agreed Framework with North Korea permitted light-water nuclear reactors, but not plutonium reprocessing. When it became clear that Pyongyang had been cheating on the deal from day one by secretly enriching uranium, Washington sought to shut that program down, demanding nothing less than "complete, verifiable, and irreversible disarmament."

In an agreement with Libya in 2003, a textbook example of successful nuclear diplomacy, U.S. military aircraft transferred over 55,000 pounds of nuclear equipment out of the country, including its stockpile of centrifuges and centrifuge parts, within weeks of concluding the deal.

Washington's unbending position on sensitive technologies always sat in uneasy tension with the "inalienable right" to peaceful nuclear technology granted in Article IV of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but when a superpower is willing to enforce its interpretation of international law, it can, and in this instance did, have a profound effect.

This history helps explain why, when the existence of Iran's covert nuclear program came to light in 2003, the United States immediately and reflexively declared that Iran would not be permitted to enrich uranium. It was not an unreasonable or unexpected demand; it was simply a restatement of U.S. nonproliferation policy over the past half-century.

The international community understood America's position and slowly climbed on board, demanding that Iran suspend enrichment in six separate U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The P5+1 resolutely held this line for nearly a decade as the pressure began to mount on Iran, but then, suddenly, the Obama administration abandoned this cornerstone of American foreign policy.

In the interim agreement struck in November 2013, Washington granted Iran the right to enrich, and over the past 18 months it has engaged in the unprecedented act of bargaining over the scale—not the existence—of an aspiring proliferator's enrichment program.

This decision will prove disastrous. A deal that allows enrichment in Iran will not solve the problem it is intended to solve. It was with good reason that Washington prohibited sensitive nuclear technologies in the past; permitting the possession of a large nuclear program, complete with sensitive fuel-making capabilities, will make it much harder to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons if and when it decides to do so. Moreover, verifying compliance with such a deal will be challenging. When enrichment or reprocessing is prohibited altogether, detecting a violation is relatively easy. Enforcing an agreement that permits 6,104 centrifuges but not 6,105 (as this deal does) is a fool's errand.

Perhaps more important, the Iran deal sets a dangerous precedent. The United States is making this exception to its nonproliferation policy not for just any country, but for Iran, a longstanding U.S. enemy, a leading state-sponsor of terrorism, a country that has violated its nonproliferation commitments in the past, and a country that at present stonewalls the International Atomic Energy Agency's questions about the military dimensions of its nuclear program.

In the wake of the Iran deal, it will be difficult for Washington to explain that it trusts Tehran with sensitive nuclear technologies, but not other countries, including its allies and partners. Other countries will inevitably demand a similar right to enrich, further weakening the global nonproliferation standard and inviting a possible cascade of nuclear weapons proliferation.

This is not a theoretical concern. Officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have already demanded the exact same nuclear rights and capabilities granted to Iran in a final deal, and South Korea is expressing an interest in reprocessing for peaceful purposes. This is only the beginning. Expect additional bids for enrichment and reprocessing programs as countries follow Iran's example and assemble the components of a nuclear weapons capability under the guise of "peaceful" nuclear power.

The Obama administration claimed a zero-enrichment deal with Iran was impossible. Perhaps it was; there is not always a deal to be had. It would have been much better, however, for Iran to enrich in the face of strong international condemnation than for its dangerous enrichment program to receive the solemn blessing of the international community.

More important, the Obama administration never properly tested whether a zero-enrichment deal could be achieved. In an attempt to improve their bargaining position, Iran's leaders said it was impossible, and the Obama administration naïvely accepted their claims at face value. It was not easy to get zero-enrichment or reprocessing deals with Libya and Taiwan, but we did not compromise on our principles, and we eventually succeeded. The United States should have held equally firm with Iran.

Defenders of the accord have argued that there was no viable alternative short of war. But this is not true. If the United States had given Iran a choice between, on the one hand, continued international isolation, increased economic sanctions, and, all else failing, military strikes on its nuclear facilities and, on the other hand, a zero-enrichment deal that lifted sanctions and provided other face-saving goodies, including nonsensitive nuclear technologies, Iran would have eventually chosen the latter.

Instead, we gave up the game. Iran out-negotiated us. We abandoned a clear international standard we had established in order to meet Iran halfway in its unreasonable demands. What we have to show for it is not a historic deal, but the death of a 70-year-old bipartisan pillar of American foreign policy. ♦

The Fix Is In

Unreformable Medicare.

BY JAY COST

On March 23, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a permanent "doc fix." Now it heads to the Senate, where it is expected to pass easily. This bipartisan effort will end the yearly ritual of bypassing Medicare reforms imposed by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Much of professional Washington greeted it with a cheer—a sign that comity in the capital is still possible.

Professional Washington is wrong. While the BBA was a clunky attempt to amend Medicare, the program remains in need of reform—and the permanent doc fix illustrates that neither party is prepared to do what needs to be done.

The BBA imposed a "sustainable growth rate" on doctor payments under Medicare Part B. The SGR mandated that payments be limited by a function of broader economic growth. Because medical costs typically increase faster than the rest of the economy, this put doctors in a squeeze. The American Medical Association leaned heavily on Congress to walk back reforms.

Thus the doc fix was born—and grew bigger every year, as the gap between what the SGR mandated and doctors' actual prices kept widening. The annual effort to pass the fix generated a lobbying bonanza as provider groups pressured Congress to keep reimbursement rates from falling precipitiously.

A permanent doc fix is probably necessary. The BBA is badly designed law on this front. It is one of those pieces of legislation that enable politicians to declare today that they've solved a problem, while pushing hard choices well into the future. The annual fix is also extortionary. Legislators prefer short time horizons for many programs—like agricultural and transportation subsidies, as well as corporate tax preferences—because they ensure industry groups keep coming to Congress and making campaign donations.

The problem with this permanent

doc fix is that it does not address the real problem: Medicare providers have too much say in what they shall be paid. This conflict of interest has driven the program's costs far beyond its architects' wildest imaginings. The SGR is an ineffective way to deal with this problem, and it needs repealing. But it also needs replacing. Sure, there are some modest reforms in the permanent fix—Medicare means-testing for upper income brackets—but these skirt the real issue.

In this way, the permanent doc fix is entirely unexceptional. For 50 years, politicians looking to expand or reform the welfare state have lived in abject fear of the medical services industry. And for good reason—political success has always depended heavily upon the industry's approval.

After his surprise election in 1948, Harry Truman proposed a national health insurance system, which the AMA vehemently opposed. Truman's idea went nowhere. John F. Kennedy backed an early version of Medicare during his brief tenure; the AMA balked, and again the proposal went down to defeat.

It was only after his 1964 landslide election that Lyndon Johnson had the numbers in Congress to pass a Medicare plan, and even this program was highly favorable to providers. Under Medicare's original 1965 terms, the government was forbidden from discriminating between providers based on performance and could not set limits on prices, instead relying on the usual and customary rates providers set. Providers did not have to deal directly with the government, either, but through third-party processors like Blue Cross Blue Shield. Medicare was basically a blank check handed to the medical services industry.

Little wonder that it ended up costing so much more than anybody imagined. But this was the prerequisite to making the program work. The government was not going to provide care directly to seniors; it lacked the capacity, and anyway the public hotly opposed socialization of medicine. The only solution was to delegate the task to private parties, whose participation is voluntary and predicated upon an expectation of profit. Legislators had to write Medicare to win providers over, and after the previous defeats they wrote the friendliest law imaginable. By allowing providers to set their own prices, the architects of Medicare institutionalized a conflict of interest.

The costs of the program became so obscene that by the 1980s, enough was enough. The government finally found the wherewithal to impose some restraints on providers, in the form of formulas meant to base reimbursement rates on the value of the procedures. These modest cost controls are budgetary measures imposed from the top down, making them a variant of Richard Nixon's early 1970s price freezes. Accordingly, they create all sorts of perverse effects as providers look to game the law to their advantage. In many cases, seniors receive substandard care as a direct consequence.

ELWOOD H. SMITH

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More important, providers still have immense authority over reimbursement formulas. The government simply lacks the expertise to develop payment rates for every medical procedure under the sun. So it leans heavily on providers to supply the necessary information. The American Hospital Association has great power in determining reimbursement rates under Part A; the AMA sets upwards of 90 percent of all rates under Part B, in a process closed to public scrutiny.

And the government still lacks the ability to discriminate between providers based on quality or efficiency. It barely even pursues fraudulent claims. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates that about 10 percent of all Medicare payments are "improper": $36 billion in 2013 alone. But it does precious little to get this money back. Indeed, CMS is not built for such a task. Medicare now costs about $500 billion per year—more than the GDP of all but the wealthiest countries—yet the staff of CMS is less than 5,000. The agency suspended its recovery audit program in 2013, earning a stinging rebuke from the watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste:

> Despite the enactment of two improper payment improvement laws since 2010, hundreds of politicians from both sides of [the] aisle (many of whom claim to be staunch opponents of government waste) are colluding with CMS bureaucrats to allow the Medicare program to bleed billions at a time when taxpayers and seniors finally have an effective tool to stop the hemorrhaging.

It would not be overly cynical to conclude that our government does not actually want to control Medicare costs. Indeed, Occam's razor demands such a conclusion: From the original law's blank check and laissez-faire regulatory structure, to the weak budgetary caps of the '80s and '90s, to suspension of audits, and now to the permanent doc fix, government has bent over backwards to woo the medical services industry. The exception is, in fact, the SGR, but even this was a punt, a poorly designed, top-down budgetary mandate. The SGR did not do the hard work of figuring out how to get a handle on Medicare payments; it just required that somebody figure out how to get a handle on them. When nobody did, the government began walking the reform back, through the doc fix.

The permanent doc fix, then, is not an extraordinary event. It certainly is not an instance of the two parties working together to do good. Rather, it is yet another example of how potent the medical services industry is in Washington.

Conservative reformers must understand this political context if they hope to fix our welfare state, which—thanks to the ongoing retirement of the baby boomers—will soon drive the deficit sharply higher. It is not enough for a conservative initiative to receive a good score from the Congressional Budget Office. A host of interest groups effectively have a veto over reform. If the endless array of acronymic "stakeholders"—the AMA, AHA, AHIP, PhRMA, and so on—oppose a plan, it is all but doomed to failure. Thus fixing the nation's terribly inefficient entitlement system is not simply a matter of designing reforms just so. It requires taking power back from the industry groups that dominate public policy for private interests.

This might also be the greatest challenge to the effort to repeal Obamacare. Conservatives are right to oppose this law, but the sad truth is that, on a political level, it is of a piece with just about every welfare program in the postwar era. The president and congressional leaders secured industry buy-in at every step of the legislative process. The medical services industry supports Obamacare because it believes the law is good for its bottom line. Powerful industry groups are not left wing; they play both sides, and of late they have favored the GOP. The Republican congressional majority depends heavily upon their support—for campaign money, for information, for post-political career prospects. If these groups say no to repeal, will Republicans have the strength to stand up to them? ♦

Remember the Carter Doctrine

A better way forward in the Middle East.

BY MAX BOOT & MICHAEL DORAN

The ouster of ISIS fighters from Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, has been widely celebrated. Although this victory was brought about in no small part by American airpower, it was a triumph for Iran more than for the United States. The vast majority of fighters on the front lines belonged to Shiite militias, many of them trained, equipped, and advised by the Iranians. Their de facto commander is Gen. Qassem Suleimani, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps's Quds Force, which is charged with exporting the Iranian revolution. He has become a seemingly ubiquitous presence on the front lines, his appearances celebrated through a clever Iranian social media campaign. Iranian T-72 tanks and even Fajr-5 artillery rockets and Fateh-110 missiles are now appearing in Iraq as well.

What's Iran up to? Most commentators emphasize the fight against ISIS, but the transfer of heavy weaponry, which is of limited use in the Tikrit campaign, implies a wider agenda. A few observers have suggested that Tehran wants to "Finlandize" Iraq. But that's not quite right. Iran won't be satisfied if Iraq merely adopts a neutral posture. Tehran wants to achieve something more ambitious: It seeks nothing less than to "Lebanonize" Iraq.

Although Lebanon and Iraq are very different, they have striking resemblances. Both were cobbled together out of provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and both are complex ethnic mosaics in which a large Shiite underclass was denied power for decades. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Lebanon was in the throes of a civil war and Iran was undergoing a revolution. Even as they were fighting to take power in Tehran, Iranian revolutionaries exploited the chaos in Lebanon to organize Hezbollah (the Party of God), a Shiite militia subservient to Tehran. For local consumption, Hezbollah emphasizes its popular, Lebanese roots and claims that it sprung up spontaneously to resist the 1982 Israeli invasion. By presenting itself as the defender of all Arabs against the "Zionist entity," Hezbollah seeks to overcome the traditional Sunni distrust of Shiites.

For many years, Western analysts tended to take Hezbollah's propaganda at face value. Today, however, Hezbollah's deep participation in the Syrian civil war (in which Israel is largely a bystander) demonstrates that it has no qualms about training its guns on fellow Muslims in order to protect Iranian interests. Its intervention in Syria was the key factor that saved the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Iran's greatest ally, and it has also supported Iranian initiatives elsewhere in the Arab world, including in Iraq.

But of course its primary mission is to keep Lebanon in the orbit of Tehran. It does so not by ruling directly but by using extortionate methods, forcing Lebanese leaders to give it complete freedom of action in key domains, security first and foremost. Thus it deploys, with no governmental oversight, some 50,000 Iranian-supplied missiles and rockets aimed at Israel. To maintain the support of its Shiite constituents, Hezbollah runs hospitals, schools, and other social-welfare activities funded by Iran as part of a subsidy believed to total $100 million a year.

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq gave Iran the opportunity to export this Hezbollah model to its Arab neighbor. Starting in 2003, Iran supplied money, weapons, and training to numerous Shiite militias in Iraq, such as the Mahdi Army, the Badr Brigades, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and Khataib Hezbollah. At first, the chief goal of the militias was to drive out U.S. forces, which served as the major obstacle in their path to power. They accomplished that objective in 2011 when President Obama failed to negotiate a Status of Forces Agreement. Today it is the Sunni jihadists who preoccupy the militias. But just as Hezbollah was never simply the homegrown counterweight to Israel that it pretended to be, so we should not today see the Iraqi militias as bands of local boys spontaneously organizing to protect embattled Shiites from ISIS. Iran has larger purposes. It seeks, in the near term, to consolidate its control of Iraq. After that, it will use Iraq as another springboard to further expand its power in the Arab world.

The first part of this plan is already far advanced. The Iraqi Army, which had been compromised by corrupt and sectarian officers appointed by the Iranian-backed prime minister Nuri al-Maliki, all but collapsed after the fall of Mosul in June 2014. Iranian-backed militias are now the dominant military force in Iraq, with estimates of their strength at 100,000 to 120,000, while the Iraqi Army's effective strength has fallen under 50,000. The Obama administration was proud of helping to oust Maliki from power in September 2014. And it is true that his replacement as prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, is a more moderate and less sectarian Shiite. But he is far from the most powerful man in Iraq. That honor belongs to General Suleimani, followed by his

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top henchmen, such as Hadi al-Ameri of the Badr Organization. Not only do they control a vast network of militiamen, they also indirectly control Iraq's police forces: The minister of interior is a Badr member.

Instead of actively opposing Iranian designs, the White House gives every indication of acquiescing in them, because it views Iran as a valuable ally in the war against ISIS and because it does not want to hinder the possibility of a nuclear accord with Iran. By bombing in Tikrit, Obama turned the U.S. Air Force, in effect, into the Iranian Air Force—a model that is likely to be followed in Mosul as well.

Turning a blind eye to Iran's growing role in Iraq is a far greater miscalculation than allowing Iran to consolidate its power in Lebanon, a much smaller and less strategically important state. Iraq has the world's fifth-largest proven oil reserves and the second-largest in OPEC. With Iran now dominating the security sector of Iraq, it is only a matter of time until it takes control, directly or by proxy, of the southern oil fields, which lie in the Shiite heartland. With these oil reserves under its control, and with nuclear sanctions lifted, Iran would become overnight the dominant player in OPEC and hence one of the dominant forces in world energy markets.

And it is not just the Iraqi oil fields that we need to worry about. Remember that Iranian domination of Lebanon has allowed Hezbollah to project its power against both Israel (in the form of rocket attacks and cross-border raids) and Syria (in the form of military aid that allows Assad to remain in power). Iraq is nextdoor to Kuwait, the country with the seventh-largest proven oil reserves, and Saudi Arabia, with the second-largest proven oil reserves. Imagine if Iran were to use its newfound power base in Iraq to intimidate or even invade its oil-rich neighbors—something that is by no means unthinkable given that many Iraqis (and not just the late Saddam Hussein) regard Kuwait as their country's 19th province, and given that Saudi Arabia's oil fields are located in that country's eastern provinces, where there is a substantial Shiite underclass. Iran, whose leaders still chant "Death to America," would then cement its position as the dominant force in the Middle East, giving a sinister meaning to the term Persian Gulf.

Hezbollah partisans in southern Lebanon, 2002

AP / SAMER WEHBI

Rather than giving Iran a free hand to "Lebanonize" Iraq (and its neighbors), Obama would be better advised to hark back to an alternative policy enunciated by another Democratic president—Jimmy Carter. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Carter proclaimed: "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

The Carter Doctrine was aimed explicitly at the Soviet Union because of fears that the Soviet conquest of Afghanistan was only a prelude to a thrust toward the Gulf and its oil riches. But it was also a response to developments such as the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the temporary takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by Juhayman al-Utaybi, a precursor of Osama bin Laden. Fearing that U.S. allies such as Saudi Arabia could fall, Carter set up the Rapid Deployment Force, which morphed under the Reagan administration into Central Command, the U.S. military organization charged with defending American interests in the Gulf region.

Thus the Carter Doctrine laid down a "red line": No single power would be allowed to dominate the Gulf, much as Britain for centuries hewed to a policy of allowing no single power to dominate the European continent. The Carter Doctrine, if it were still operative, would necessitate the Obama administration's coming up with a strategy to prevent the Lebanonization of Iraq and the expansion of Iranian power to Syria, Yemen, and other countries as well.

The keystone of this strategy would be for the United States to do more to support its traditional allies against Iran—not only states such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, but, even more important, Sunni communities in Iraq and Syria that are most directly threatened by Iranian designs. Some analysts are now claiming that the United States has gotten a start in this direction by offering intelligence and other help to Saudi forces bombing Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen. But the Saudis took the decision largely on their own. According to General Lloyd Austin, the commander of Central Command, Riyadh gave him only one hour's warning before launching the intervention. Clearly, the Saudis no longer trust Washington. Regaining the trust of traditional allies should be the first order of business for the United States. But that would require the Obama administration to rethink its policy of outreach to Iran, which has left the United States to take a back seat in the region to Qassem Suleimani and the Quds Force. ♦

A General and a Democrat

An old soldier is chosen to clean up Nigeria—and defend it. BY ROGER KAPLAN

In winning Nigeria's presidency on his fourth try, Muhammadu Buhari, former military dictator and proponent of *sharia*, may have answered the Nigerian question: Is the big West African country more than a geographical entity—does it have a sense of nationhood transcending sectional and religious differences?

Buhari argued that the failure of the ruling party to defeat a devastating jihadist insurgency in the northeast while permitting incorrigible mismanagement to lead the country into economic ruin was not a regional or religious problem but a political one. Having secured a popular mandate in late March's presidential election—even as his party won control of the federal senate—and with a strong showing by his party expected in the April 11 gubernatorial elections in the 36 states, Buhari should have a chance to make his case that Nigeria is at last ready for reform.

Muhammadu Buhari

Although many observers assumed the race would go to the wire and even require a runoff, Buhari, at the head of the All Progressives Congress party, won throughout the north and southwest, losing only in the southeast, home of incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, and in the federal center of Abuja.

The landslide demonstrated a certain willingness to trust the process and accept alternation in power. Nigerians have matured politically faster during the past 15 years of democratic government than many seem to have realized.

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Jonathan's People's Democratic party (PDP), in power at the federal level and in a majority of states since the transition out of military rule in 1999, ran a traditional campaign based on patronage. Jonathan himself played down regional and religious issues. He conceded early, mindful of the murderous riots that allegations of electoral irregularities caused following his 2011 win.

Actually, cross-regional majorities and balanced tickets are nothing new in Nigeria, a country balanced between Christians and Muslims. The APC vice-president-elect is a southern Christian, and Jonathan's running mate was a northern Muslim. Jonathan was the vice presidential candidate on the 2008 ticket headed by Umaru Yar'Adua, a northern Muslim who died in office, propelling Jonathan to the presidency. Former general Olusegon Obasanjo, a Christian Yoruba who led the transition to democracy in the late 1990s and was the first PDP president, threw his support to Buhari during the campaign.

Austere, stern, humorless, Muhammadu Buhari is the quintessential African Big Man, with certain critical differences. In a country that became, to the embarrassment of most of its people, synonymous with corruption and fraud, he never enriched himself despite ample opportunities.

Buhari's fellow generals, during the years of military dictatorship, were shameless in helping themselves to the state's oil revenues. They cared little about spreading the wealth to their own states, mainly in the poorer north. But the politicians of the current democratic period have been no better. Yet neither dictatorship nor fraud seems to have defeated the idea that if the system offers a chance for change, you might as well try it.

You might try a tough old soldier, too, if neither younger ones nor politicians are able to put down mass murderers. Since 2009, an Islamist organization based in the Shekau area of Borno state has rampaged across northern Nigeria. As bandits cloaking themselves in Muslim jihadism, or as jihadist Muslims making use of traditional Saharan banditry, the Boko Haram, whose name signifies that Western ways are corrupt and therefore forbidden, appeared by 2014 to be on an unstoppable offensive—comparable to the advance in 2012 of the Ansar aldine Tuareg, who temporarily gained control of half of Mali before French and Chadian troops wrested it back.

It seemed possible Boko Haram would seize Maiduguri (pop. one million), the capital of Borno state, in the new year. It claimed allegiance to al Qaeda, to ISIS; it threatened black Africa. At the very least, the insurgents would disrupt the elections, plunge the nation into crisis. Adding to the sense of impending doom, oil prices began falling in late 2014, emptying state coffers.

U.S. military assistance to Nigeria was suspended during the Jonathan years as a result of accounting scams and alleged human rights violations in the fight against Boko Haram. Buhari blamed the failures of the Nigerian Army and police squarely on the Jonathan administration, which he also criticized for the growing economic gulf between north and south.

The irony is that for all the mismanagement of the federal and state governments, Nigeria's economy never stopped growing, if unevenly, surpassing South Africa's as the continent's first. It is a symptom of modernization that things seem to be getting worse when they are improving. Economically if not politically, and in the minds of its urban citizens, Nigeria is moving into the mixed zone between

NEWSCOM

third and first worlds that most countries inhabit. Messy, cynical, with every aspect of the system seemingly "unfair," the country has achieved a kind of normality that might be jeopardized by an excess of reforming zeal—something Buhari, in contrast to his reputation, claims he recognizes.

Jonathan kept repeating that reforms were on the way, but his refusal to disclose his personal wealth undercut his credibility, as did his petroleum minister's inability to explain $20 billion in oil revenue that the central bank said had vanished into thin air.

Overreaching, Boko Haram in the new year struck villages around Lake Chad as well as in Niger and Cameroon. Niger and Chad are the two Sahelian countries whose armed forces you would not want to tangle with. It took only a few weeks for their mobile assault units to chase the terrorists back into Nigeria's desolate northern savannah, where they must be contained and, eventually, defeated.

Can Nigeria embark on the kinds of political reforms that Obasanjo launched 15 years ago, sustaining credible institutions for a united nation?

When the time came to lower the Union Jack, on October 1, 1960, the British knew they had fallen short of their goal, which was to leave behind a centralized, unitary state. Each of the four big regions was stronger than the federal center, which became the prize of successive strongmen.

Buhari has had two shots at becoming the representative leader of a strong clean center, the first under the guise of military regimentation and the second under the banner of Islam. He was viewed as the *sharia* candidate as late as 2011, when he ran against Jonathan and several others.

Buhari now states that both Nigeria and he have changed, and the unifying principle must be democracy and effective republican institutions, not military or religious discipline. Notwithstanding earlier gestures that suggested a conciliatory approach to Boko Haram, he has stated that crushing the movement (which tried to kill him last year) is a national cause.

As president-elect, Buhari presents himself as a Nigerian, not a Fulani Muslim from Katsina state. Without apologizing for his past, he seems determined to forge a future based on modern principles. This may be a basic requirement of success in democratic regimes, but at 72, Buhari does not strike observers as having developed appetites that were not in evidence when he was a young general known for a character bordering on the ascetic.

Buhari's economic platform consists of a war against corruption, but he has indicated that the better part of wisdom is to apply a generous measure of forgiveness. He does not seem bent on wasting energy persecuting and prosecuting scoundrels who lived by the rules (or nonrules) they found. Rather, he knows that Nigeria is big enough, young enough, rich enough (170 million people, at least half under 30) in resources natural and human to turn the page. ♦

Strangers in a Shared Land

Estonia's Russians.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Tallinn

"We could have been Bosnia," said Eerik-Niiles Kross, a center-right Estonian politician, former intelligence chief—and much more besides. He didn't have to tell me why. Estonians remain haunted by the memory of their doomed interwar republic. It inspired their drive for independence from the Soviet Union, but it reminds them that what was lost can never be truly restored.

The early stages of Soviet occupation saw some 60,000 Estonians killed, imprisoned, or deported (primarily to Siberia and Kazakhstan) out of a population of 1.1 million. Even more escaped to the West. In their place hundreds of thousands of mainly Russian settlers moved in, transforming Estonia's demographics as they did so. By 1989 the Estonian share of their own country's population (by then expanded to more than 1.5 million) had shrunk to a little over 60 percent, down from close to 90 percent in 1939.

As Estonia slid towards independence in the late-perestroika era, some 300,000 of its Russian inhabitants voted in a poll organized by a pro-Soviet organization to stick with the USSR. Immediately after the break with Moscow in 1991, there was a strong push for autonomy in Ida-Virumaa, a predominantly Russian-speaking region of the northeast. Russian troops stayed in Estonia until 1994. Meanwhile, the revived Estonian state was operating as the legal continuation of the interwar republic, a constitutional arrangement that denied automatic Estonian citizenship to those who had settled there during the Soviet occupation (or their descendants). The scars of Soviet rule were very raw. Estonia could indeed have become Bosnia.

An election banner for a candidate backed by Estonia's Russian-leaning Center party, January 25, 2011. The banner reads 'Enough of Poverty!'

That it did not owed much to (relative) Russian restraint, a product both of weakness and the comparative liberalism of the Yeltsin years. (A plaque honoring Boris Yeltsin was put up here in Tallinn, the Estonian capital, in 2013; Vladimir Putin will not be remembered so fondly.) Estonia's Russians also understood that Estonia was headed West, a shift that promised something better than the lawlessness and seemingly perpetual economic crisis engulfing the land of their forebears. What's more, Estonia's new Western partners were adding to the pressure for more liberal citizenship laws. This was hard for a people with a dread that they might be the last of the last, but Estonians tend to be a pragmatic bunch: Naturalization has been made easier, although language, residency, and civic knowledge tests remain.

Of Estonia's "Russian-speakers" (roughly 28 percent of the population), about half are Estonian citizens and some 25 percent are Russian citizens. Most of the rest are "noncitizens" holding what are known as "gray passports," a status that Putin has denounced as "shameful," although not so shameful that some of its holders don't prefer to hang onto it. Unlike either Russian or Estonian citizens, they can travel visa-free to both Russia and almost everywhere in the EU (which Estonia joined in 2004). It is already easy for the children of gray passport-holders to become Estonian citizens. Next year it will be automatic. Not so for those where one or more parent is a Russian citizen (a twist resulting from the interplay of Estonian and Russian citizenship laws). To some, that risks storing up trouble for the future. To others, it involves too few people to be of significance.

Regardless of citizenship, permanent residents can vote in local elections and are entitled to the same social benefits as Estonian citizens, but the sense of exclusion still stings. Unable or unwilling to empathize with the Estonian fear that demography might finish what Stalin began, many Russian-speakers resent being required to apply for a fresh citizenship of the country in which they had lived (and maybe even been born) as full citizens of a now-vanished empire. "What have I to do with Stalin?" asked Valeri Tšetvergov of the Union of Russian Compatriots as we sat chatting in Narva, the most populous city in Ida-Virumaa and the third largest in Estonia.

Narva was a jewel of the Northern Baroque flattened during the Second World War, purged of ethnic Estonians

NEWSCOM

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(perhaps 4 percent of its population today), and rebuilt in Soviet concrete and gloom. Divided from Russia by an alarmingly narrow river, it is, along with Daugavpils in eastern Latvia, regularly identified as the next Crimea. "We have had a lot of journalists here," sighed one local, as we discussed a slew of recent articles about her adopted hometown.

Talk to Estonians working on the country's defense, and they will argue that Putin's interest in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia—NATO members since 2004—is concerned less with recreating Moscow's old imperium than with using these three small countries' vulnerability to break the North Atlantic Alliance, a pillar of that American global preeminence to which the Kremlin so objects. If NATO's collective security guarantee fails in the Baltics, it fails everywhere. For it to fail in the Baltics, Putin knows that he has to give NATO members an excuse not to respond to Russian aggression there. A purported insurrection by the area's Russians demanding a purportedly fairer deal might just do the trick

On the face of it, that's not an impossible ambition. Some 20 years ago, I attended a meeting between Estonia's then-foreign minister and a group of Scandinavian investors. Asked somewhat condescendingly about the relationship between ethnic Estonians and the country's Russians, he replied with characteristic Estonian bluntness that they did not "get on." This was more, he explained, than anger about the past. Starting with separate school systems, the two populations had, so far as was possible, lived separate lives throughout the Soviet period.

They continue to do so. "Voluntary apartheid" was the description I was given in Tallinn earlier this month. To take one indication, compared with most of the European USSR, rates of intermarriage in Soviet Estonia were low. Using neighboring Latvia as a post-independence benchmark, they still are, a phenomenon reinforced by language, social class (many of the Russian settlers were industrial workers), profound cultural differences, and geography. Russian-speakers may dominate Narva, but a young ethnic Estonian in the education ministry told me that she remembers few Russians from her childhood in Tartu in the southeast. Tallinn's large Russian-speaking population is mainly concentrated in suburbs some distance, geographically and otherwise, from the city's fairytale center.

Estonian governments do not appear to have been too uncomfortable with, in the Canadian phrase, these "two solitudes," a division that in effect helped preserve the Estonianness of their state. Estonia's Russians may not have been "happy," to borrow the delicate word used by one Estonian journalist to me last year, but apart from an outbreak of rioting that followed the relocation of a Soviet-era statue of a Red Army "liberator" from central Tallinn to a military cemetery in 2007, there had been no interethnic violence.

Yes, the pace of naturalizations slowed dramatically in the 2000s, but it was hoped that the Russian problem would slowly fade as the Soviet generation died off and younger Russians gradually integrated into independent Estonia, the only country they had ever known. That integration was taking longer than anticipated was of no great concern until Russia's war with Georgia. Anxieties were then heightened further by the annexation of the Crimea, the invasion of eastern Ukraine, and Putin's declaration of some sort of protectorate over a loosely defined "Russian World" (*Russkiy Mir*) beyond Russia's borders, a world that comprised Russian-speakers everywhere, including, certainly, some or all of modern Estonia.

But Narva is not Donetsk in 2014, a city in a failing state. Narvans know that they are paid more than their kin across the river in Russia. Their lives are better, and, for that matter, longer. The same is broadly true of most of Estonia's Russians. Moreover, as much as ancestral tradition and Russian television (Ainar Ruussaar of ERR, Estonian Public Broadcasting, told me that a large number of the country's Russian-speakers live within a "Russian information space") might lead many ethnic Russians to applaud Moscow's adventures abroad, the devastation in eastern Ukraine has been a powerful reminder that Russian "liberation" is nothing to aspire to.

But over the longer term their loyalty to Estonia will need to be built on more than relative prosperity and fear of the alternative. ERR will shortly be launching a Russian-language television channel, but it will struggle to compete with the lavishly funded and dangerous dream world of Russian TV, where "fascist" Estonians are a regular nightmare. Estonia's culture ministry will also be working hard on its latest integration efforts, even if there is a whiff of midnight basketball about them, well-intentioned, but . . .

The issue of language, so central to the survival of the Estonian people, will continue to bedevil a state too small and too fragile to be bilingual but too weak (and, in some respects, too liberal) to force through a properly functioning alternative. Sixty percent of the curriculum in Russian-language upper secondary schools now has to be taught in Estonian, but finding teachers willing and able to do so to a high enough standard is a challenge. Their pupils would have done better to have begun with intensive immersion in the language at an earlier age.

Efforts to create an idea of Estonian nationality independent of ethnicity have faltered, something reflected in data that suggest that only around 50 percent of Russian-speakers have achieved a reasonable degree of integration. That the nominally Estonian Center party (a party with close ties to Putin's United Russia) has flourished by fostering a solid "Russian" vote has not helped. That's not to suggest that the other 50 percent are ready either to rebel or to welcome the arrival of Crimea-style "little green men" (they clearly are not), but there are always, said one Russian-Estonian to me in Tallinn, enough disaffected "guys who live with their mothers and spend too much time in the gym" to make mischief if Putin wants them to give him an opportunity.

Estonia's task—and NATO's, as well—is to make sure that he is not tempted to try. ♦

End at Appomattox

It was a fight to the finish

By Geoffrey Norman

The two armies had been in almost constant contact for the first week of what would become known as "the Forty Days." The Battle of the Wilderness had been inconclusive, as, thus far, had the one at Spotsylvania, with the epic struggle for "the Bloody Angle" still to come. Neither commander had been able to accomplish his ultimate objective: namely, victory in a battle of annihilation. What had so far been accomplished was attrition, and a woeful amount of that.

Robert E. Lee, in a meeting with some of his officers on May 11, 1864, at the end of a day of more hard fighting, was discussing information about the movements of Union forces and what should be done to counter them when a staff officer said something about how General Grant had been throwing his troops against Confederate defenses like a "butcher."

"I think," Lee said, "that General Grant has managed his affairs remarkably well up to the present time."

A.P. Hill, one of Lee's corps commanders, spoke up. "General Lee," he said, "let them continue to attack our breastworks. We can stand that very well."

Lee, as always, insisted on the offensive, saying, "We must attack those people. . . . This army cannot stand a siege. We must end this business on the battlefield, not in a fortified place."

So the two armies continued to maneuver for position and to fight when they were not on the move. The bloodiest and most futile of these fights came in early June, at Cold Harbor, where Grant's army took some 7,000 casualties in 20 minutes. If it was a Confederate victory, it was not the kind that Lee desired or needed.

Shortly before the battle, he had said to Jubal Early, another of his generals, "We must destroy this army of Grant's before he gets to the James River. If he gets there it will become a siege, and then it will be a mere question of time."

General Grant wanted what Lee dreaded. If he could put his army between Lee and Richmond and force him to fight in the open, or if he could pin Lee's back to the Confederate capital, then his superiority in numbers, firepower, logistics—everything, it seemed, except will where the forces were equal—would lead to a conclusive victory and the end of the war. He had said that he intended "to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," and no one doubted his word. But he never said that he preferred this course.

Shortly after the disaster at Cold Harbor, Grant began working on a plan to leave his earthworks and move his entire army across the James River, below Richmond, to take the rail hub at Petersburg, then lay siege to the city. It was the sort of thing that Lee had done, almost routinely, and it involved substantial risk. It meant dividing his forces in the presence of the enemy, and it required movement that was both secret and speedy. Lee and Stonewall Jackson had become almost mythic for this sort of thing. The Army of the Potomac, on the other hand, had built a reputation for caution and for ponderousness, especially on the march. President Lincoln had remarked of one of its previous commanders, George McClellan, that he had "the slows."

McClellan had failed, dismally, on some of the same ground over which Grant hoped to speedily and stealthily march his army. That had been two years earlier in the Seven Days battles, Lee's first campaign as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. McClellan had superior numbers but was indecisive and cautious to the point of cowardice, and had been chased out of Virginia by superior generalship and harder marching.

Grant's reputation was for direct action. He was thought to disdain maneuver warfare and had been quoted as saying, "I never maneuver." But he was selling himself short (his victorious Vicksburg campaign was the proof). Still, here he was, back in the low country east of Richmond where the place names conjured up dark memories for the Army of the Potomac: Gaines's Mill, White Oak Swamp, the Chickahominy River. This was the country through which Grant proposed to move his army, leaving the earthworks around Cold Harbor that were foul with the stink of the dead.

As he explained in a letter to his nominal superior in Washington, Chief of Staff Henry Halleck, "My idea from the start has been to beat Lee's army, if possible, north of Richmond." However, Grant admitted, "without a greater sacrifice of human life than I am willing to make, all cannot be accomplished that I had designed."

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McClellan could never have written those words. When he had been frustrated by Lee in this same country, he said it was because he had been betrayed by people in Washington.

Grant went on to explain his intention to cross the James and come at Lee from the south, cutting off his supplies through the vital rail hub of Petersburg. Lee would be trapped with his back to Richmond and slowly be starved out or, more likely, come out into open country and fight. Grant was confident he would win that fight and the war.

Halleck didn't like the plan. He imagined Lee marching rapidly for the Potomac, for Washington, while Grant was moving his army across the James. Lee had, after all, done it before, twice, and both times it had been, in Wellington's phrase, "a near-run thing," ending first at Antietam and then at Gettysburg. Halleck wanted Grant to keep his army between Lee and Washington.

"We can defend Washington best," Grant wrote back, "by keeping Lee so occupied that he cannot detach enough troops to capture it. I shall prepare at once to move across James River."

If "audacious" was the single word that best captured the essence of Lee, the word for Grant would be "decisive."

The ruins of Richmond, April 1865

He ordered troops put to work creating a second set of earthworks behind those the army occupied. These were to be strong enough that they could be held by a thin, stay-behind force if Lee were to learn that the rest of Grant's army was on the move and go on the attack. Then, he sent out two officers from his staff, both engineers, to reconnoiter the route of the army's march and to select a site for the construction of what would be the longest pontoon bridge in military history, which his engineers would throw across the James.

The scouts returned to report they had found a suitable place for the crossing. One of them, who had been with Grant for a long time, later wrote that the general "showed the only nervousness he ever manifested in my presence. . . . We could hardly get the words out of our mouths fast enough to suit him. . . . At the close of the interview, he informed us he would begin the movement that night."

That movement was one of immense complexity and would have been difficult enough even in peacetime, with no requirement for stealth. Five corps of almost 100,000 men would be involved. Almost all of them would leave the positions they occupied without tipping off the enemy. Some of them would cross the Chickahominy, and that would call for the construction of bridges. When these elements reached the James, some would be ferried across the river while others waited on completion of the pontoon bridge. Another element would remain on that bank and move upriver to screen the crossing. Meanwhile, other troops that had marched for the York River on leaving their entrenchments would have boarded ships for transport down that river and then up the James to take their place in the coming attack on the thin ranks of Confederates holding a line in front of Petersburg. If all went well, that line would be broken before Lee had time to react.

It went well. Indeed, it was a masterpiece of military movement.

The withdrawal from the Cold Harbor line began in darkness on June 12. Until the order to move, almost none of the Union troops knew it was about to happen. In three years of war, the army had become wise in many things. Not least, security. "It was not now the custom," in the words of one veteran, "to inform the rank and file, and the newspapers, and the enemy, of intended movements."

When the main force reached the point designated for the crossing, the transports were there and the engineers were already at work on the pontoon bridges. Some of the men doubtless remembered how in the days of late 1862 General Burnside had waited for days for the arrival of the pontoons that would be laid across the Rappahannock. By the time they arrived, Lee's men had made the high ground so strong that "even a chicken could not live" under their fire, as one of his officers put it.

Its ponderous movements before the Battle of Fredericksburg had led to one of the Army of the Potomac's most dismal defeats, which Lee had watched from a spot of high ground, observing famously, "It is well that war is so terrible—we should grow too fond of it."

Now facing Grant on a river further south, Lee was informed that the Union army had left its entrenched positions around Cold Harbor in the night. But while he knew that much, he still did not know enough to act. He suspected Grant might be moving to cross the James, but he could not be sure. And until he was, he was unwilling to cross with his forces and leave Richmond open to attack from the river's north side.

Grant had bought some time and, with it, a glittering opportunity. When he arrived on the banks of the James, he wired Halleck, "The enemy show no signs yet of having brought troops to the south side of Richmond. I will have Petersburg secured, if possible, before they get there in much force. Our movement from Cold Harbor to the

James River has been made with great celerity and so far without loss or accident."

The response, when it came, was not from Halleck:

Have just read your dispatch of 1 p.m. yesterday. I begin to see it. You will succeed. God bless you all.

A. Lincoln

There were some Confederate forces in front of Petersburg under the command of General P.G.T. Beauregard. They amounted to fewer than 5,000 men, and they had been holding off a larger Union force under the command of General Benjamin Butler, who had a manpower advantage of around two to one. But he was one of those political generals who had handicapped the Union effort throughout the war. He was far more skillful as a politician than as a general. Grant had sent him moving up from the south against Beauregard and Petersburg as part of his overall plan for breaking the South—a plan that included sending General Sigel up the Shenandoah, General Banks against Mobile, General Sherman against Atlanta, and General Meade, with whom he would march, against Lee. The main effort was to be made by Sherman and Meade. The others were secondary, and if Grant did not expect much of them, they did not disappoint. All had failed so far, including Butler.

He had gone on the attack against Beauregard shortly before the crossing by Grant's army and had been turned back, at one point by forces that included people who had come out of hospitals and jail (the battle of "patients and penitents"). Butler remained a presence in the Petersburg campaign and a burden on Grant until he was, finally, able to send him and his army off to the North Carolina coast where he was ordered to take Fort Fisher. Butler failed, predictably, to do this and Grant relieved him.

If Beauregard and his ad hoc force had been able to turn back Ben Butler, the Army of the Potomac was another thing. Not long after Grant received that message from Lincoln, nearly 20,000 Union troops were across the James and ready to attack the Confederate defenses of Petersburg. When they did attack, they took ground and captured guns and prisoners, so easily that it seemed to their commander that he "held the key to Petersburg."

Beauregard, recalling the battle later, agreed. "Petersburg was clearly at the mercy of the Federal commander, who had all but captured it."

But as with so many of the big actions in this war, things came down to "not quite enough" and "just in time." The frictions of war intervened and that great opportunity was missed. In one instance, the largest corps in the Army of the Potomac was slow to reach a position from which it might have overwhelmed the meager Confederate defenses. First, it was ordered to halt its march and wait on the delivery of some 60,000 rations that it did not need. The order had come at dawn but by 10:30 in the morning, the rations still had not arrived. The men moved out without them, nearly half a day wasted. The unit marched off in one direction and then another, losing more time because, as the commander, General Hancock, put it in his report, "I spent the best hours of the day marching by an incorrect map in search of a designated position which, as described, was not in existence."

The first attacks had succeeded in pushing the Confederates back, but only enough to shorten their lines. Still, by June 17 there were 80,000 Union troops across the James and bearing down on Beauregard, who had, even with reinforcements, a total of fewer than 15,000 men. Grant seemed strangely indifferent to the loss of momentum, saying at one point, "I think it is pretty well, to get across a great river and come up here and attack Lee in the rear before he is ready for us."

But if Lee had been beaten to the march and mystified as to Grant's intentions and the location of the Army of the Potomac, once he learned, for sure, that it was across the James, he acted and did so decisively. He reinforced Beauregard and eventually took command himself of the defense of Petersburg.

The Army of the Potomac had by then recovered from the confusions and lackluster operations of the previous days. It was ready to attack the Confederate positions and take them, as orders specified, "at all costs."

The attack went forward and took more abandoned trenches. Went forward again and ran into heavy resistance from elements of the Army of Northern Virginia that had come down by train overnight and dug in that morning. The Union troops were ordered to attack, but this looked to them like Cold Harbor all over again. They knew, by now, that such frontal assaults were suicidal. Those orders to attack were, at best, carried out without much conviction and, in some cases, flatly ignored by men who, as one put it, "knew that we had outmarched Lee's veterans and that our reward was at hand" and were now demoralized.

Still, later that day, another attack was ordered and organized, and a regiment from Maine went forward against the entrenched Confederate troops, taking the heaviest casualties of any Union regiment in any single action of the entire war. Of 850 men, 632 were killed or wounded.

The attack failed, and the great opportunity that had been seized by the night march and the crossing of the James was lost. Grant said he was satisfied and that it was now time to "rest the men and use the spade for their protection until a new vein can be struck."

His army had suffered another 11,000 casualties since pulling out of the Cold Harbor lines. From the beginning of the campaign, which had opened with the Battle of the Wilderness, the Army of the Potomac had taken over 66,000 casualties, and it was now twice as far from Richmond as it had been when it left its lines around Cold

Harbor. As it was digging in again and preparing for a long fight, a visitor from Washington arrived.

The president had taken a boat down the Potomac and then up the James. The visit was unannounced and its purpose was unclear. He may have just wanted to get out of Washington. He made no criticisms, and when Grant said, "You will never hear of me farther from Richmond than now, till I have taken it," Lincoln seemed reassured. "I cannot pretend to advise," he said, "but I do sincerely hope that all may be accomplished with as little bloodshed as possible."

There would be more bloodshed and more fighting. That would not change until the end, which was still some 300 days off. But there was a change in the nature of the fighting. When the war began, soldiers fought out in the open in the old way, and it was thought that the bayonet was a decisive weapon. Modern rifles and artillery had forced men to go to ground and then to dig into it and get as much earth between them and the enemy as possible. By Cold Harbor, troops had learned to dig deep trenches and to reinforce them with timbers. Combat in what came to be thought of as the "siege of Petersburg" anticipated the war in Europe 50 years later. Trench lines were extended and strengthened with timbers. Elaborate dugouts were excavated to provide shelter for the troops. Strongpoints were created and given names such as Fort Hell and Fort Damnation.

There were "battles" within the greater battle as Grant (mostly) would attack and attempt to break the Confederate line, flank it, or extend it until it broke. Lee would launch counterattacks, to shore up his lines or to catch the attacking formations in their flanks. The battles had names—Jerusalem Plank Road, First Deep Bottom, Hatcher's Run, and others—and they succeeded or failed to varying degrees. But none could be called in any way decisive, though they did increase the bloodshed that Lincoln had wanted to avoid. The bleeding and dying went on, in fact, even when there was no attack by either side. Artillery exchanges were a routine part of life on the line. Large trench mortars were employed to provide "plunging fire." And snipers, using scoped rifles that were accurate to ranges of 300 yards, would take out men who carelessly exposed themselves.

The life of men in the trenches was one of perpetual mud, filth, danger, and boredom. One Confederate officer described the trenches as places where "vermin abounded" and "digestive organs became impaired by the rations issued and the manner in which they were prepared. Diarrhea and dysentery were universal."

The Union troops had the better of it. They were supplied through a massive depot created at the junction of the James and Appomattox rivers. They were well fed, and they could count on shoes and uniforms to replace those that were worn out. Many Confederates went barefoot and wore rags. And as the weeks and months went on, they grew hungrier and hungrier. Lee's troops had always been lean, but in the trenches around Petersburg they became emaciated and almost cadaverous, sustaining themselves on cornmeal and rancid bacon and whatever else the strained logistical apparatus of the Confederacy could supply. One of Lee's veterans said, "I thanked God I had a backbone for my stomach to lean up against."

His commander, in frustration, appealed to Richmond, again and again. But the Confederacy itself was slowly being starved into submission. And the machinery of its government, which had never been particularly efficient, was breaking down.

From the beginning, Lee's army was never actually trapped, so there was no true "siege" of Petersburg. Lee might have attempted a breakout at any time, but doing so would have led to the capture not only of Petersburg and the vital rail lines but also of Richmond. And at first, there was a strategic case to be made for holding the line and forcing Grant's attempts to break it.

The North was war weary, and Lincoln's reelection in 1864 was by no means certain. Late that summer, in conversation, he'd said, "You think I don't know I am going to be beaten, but I do, and unless some great change takes place, beaten badly." The war dragged on. Sherman's march proceeded, but slowly. Jubal Early had marched up the Shenandoah all the way to Washington and beyond, forcing Grant to send men from in front of Petersburg off to defend the capital. And Grant, with the Union's signature force, was bogged down around Petersburg, launching attacks that inevitably failed. Futility, it seemed, was everywhere, and nowhere more acute than in the action known as the Battle of the Crater.

It came early in the long ordeal, when the form of the stalemate was becoming clear. The Army of the Potomac needed to break the Confederate line and, once that had been accomplished, capture Petersburg, cut the rail lines, take Richmond, and end the war.

It was not possible to break the lines by frontal assault. The lesson of Cold Harbor had been validated often since then. The line might be turned, but so far attempts to do this had merely extended it. An officer from a Pennsylvania unit had a suggestion. Why not dig a tunnel under the ground between the lines, then dig a chamber under the enemy's position, fill it with explosives, and blow a hole in the line so troops could move through to the enemy's vulnerable rear and, also, roll up the exposed flanks on either side of the breach?

Grant was not enthusiastic when the proposal was presented to him. But the project went ahead, and in time, the tunnel had been dug—more than 500 feet of

it—and the chamber at the end had been packed with some four tons of powder. The tunnel was in the section of the line occupied by the IX Corps of the Army of the Potomac, Ambrose E. Burnside in command.

Burnside was the quintessential political general, a man of obvious gifts, few of them martial. He had been in command of the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg, and one of his subordinates had been General George Meade. Those roles were now reversed, and relations between the two generals were strained. At best.

Burnside presented a plan of attack around the pending explosion of the mine and the rupture it would create in the Confederate line. Meade overruled an essential element of the plan. Burnside wanted to send a unit composed of African Americans in first to exploit the breach, and he had trained and rehearsed the men in their mission. Meade worried that the unit might take heavy casualties, something his political enemies in Washington would use against him. With time running very short, orders were changed. A new lead unit was selected by the unmilitary method of drawing straws.

Before dawn on June 30, the fuse was lit. The explosion, however, did not occur as planned. Time passed and, finally, a couple of very brave men went down into the tunnel to find out what had gone wrong. There was a break in the fuse. They repaired it.

At 4:44 A.M., the mine exploded and tore a gap in the Confederate line. Burnside's men moved into it. They did not, however, do what the African-American troops had been trained to do: fan out, expand the breach, and then go for the high ground 500 yards in the Confederate rear. Taking that ground would threaten the entire Confederate line and lead, almost certainly, to the fall of Petersburg.

The troops who moved forward did not know quite what to do, and their commander was not there to lead them. He remained in the rear, with a bottle of rum. His inadequately prepared and led troops entered the crater that had been created by the explosion and were trapped there by the steepness of the banks, the crowding of so many men, and the increasingly heavy fire from the Confederates, who, having recovered from the initial shock of the exploding mine, were now counterattacking.

The unit of black troops went in and made progress toward that high ground that they knew, from their rehearsals, was the objective. But by now, the resistance had become too heavy for them to take it unsupported. They retreated, back toward the breech, the crater, and slaughter. Black troops who tried to surrender were killed on the spot, and a Confederate officer reported, "there was, without doubt, a great deal of unnecessary killing of them."

Grant called off the attack and later said, in a wire to Halleck, "It was the saddest affair I have witnessed in war. Such opportunity for carrying fortifications I have never seen and do not expect again to have."

Grant relieved Burnside, in whom he had never had much confidence. Grant, on the other hand, continued to enjoy that of President Lincoln, who endorsed a decision not to release troops in Virginia for other action, saying in a wire, "I have seen your dispatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bulldog grip, and chew and choke as much as possible."

Then, even as the stalemate around Petersburg and Richmond continued, the North's fortunes suddenly improved elsewhere, especially in Georgia. Atlanta fell in early September, and Sherman sent his famous telegram to Lincoln: "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won."

Then Early lost conclusively to Sheridan in the Battle of Cedar Creek less than a month before the election. The Shenandoah was no longer a source of supply or an avenue of invasion for the Confederacy. Sherman and Sheridan had, between them, sealed Lincoln's reelection. Then, in December, down in Tennessee, General Hood suffered the single worst defeat by any Confederate army in the entire war at the Battle of Franklin.

The New Year, 1865, would be the end, surely.

Lee and his army still held out. But he was stretched thin, and his men were starving and deserting. Still, he continued shifting troops as needed and launching counterattacks where possible. He was also warning Jefferson Davis that the end was near for Richmond and that to save his army he would be obliged to abandon the city. He hoped to leave his lines around Petersburg and move south to join with the small force commanded by Joseph E. Johnston and resisting, feebly, Sherman's advance through North Carolina.

If Lee could make his escape and accomplish this linkup . . . It was a long gamble. Lee had taken long gambles before, but the war had gone on for a long time, and he had lost so many of his best leaders and soldiers, and there was less and less of a nation behind him. He and his army were, increasingly, on their own.

The end came in a cascade of defeats and death. On April 1, at a battle known as Five Forks, the division under command of George Pickett was defeated, with 2,950 of his men killed or wounded and perhaps as many as 4,000 taken prisoner. General Pickett was not at the scene of the debacle. He was off eating shad at a picnic with some other officers.

On April 2, Lee began moving his units out of the lines they had held around Petersburg and Richmond for almost 300 days. In the confusion of movement, attack, and counterattack, General A.P. Hill, who had saved the day for Lee at Antietam, was killed. When informed of this, Lee said, "He is at rest now, and we who are left are the ones to suffer."

Stonewall Jackson, dead. A.P. Hill, dead. The Army of Northern Virginia itself was very close to the end of its life.

For a week, the two armies maneuvered in open country—something they had not done for almost a year, since Grant's bold march away from Cold Harbor and down to Petersburg, where the armies went to ground. The maneuvers by Lee were meant, now, not to mystify and surprise his enemy but to escape it and, somehow, live to fight another day.

But Lee met the enemy everywhere he went. In one battle, Sailor's Creek, he lost almost 8,000 men, including eight generals killed, captured, or wounded. Lee had watched the battle from an adjacent piece of high ground, much as he had at Fredericksburg. But on this day he witnessed his once magnificent army routed and said, "My God! Has the army been dissolved?"

With what remained of his army, he resumed the march. The objective was as much to secure food as it was to escape Grant's forces. On April 7, the army arrived in a town called, hopefully, Farmville. Rations had been left there for the men, but they were so harried by Union cavalry that they had to resume the march before many got anything to eat.

The McLean House

They pushed on, but while at Farmville, Lee received a communication from Grant. It read:

General: The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle.

Lee read the letter asking for his surrender and handed it, wordlessly, to General James Longstreet, a man Lee called affectionately "my old warhorse." Longstreet read the letter and said, simply, "Not yet."

Their last, forlorn hope was to reach Appomattox Station ahead of Union troops. What was left of the army would, perhaps, find something to eat there and then move on toward the desired link-up with Johnston. But Grant's cavalry had taken a shorter route, won the race, and cut him off. Lee ordered one last, desperate attack to make a breakout. He had 8,000 infantrymen under his command.

The attack made some early gains, then faltered. General John B. Gordon sent a message to Lee, telling him that "my command has been fought to a frazzle, and unless Longstreet can unite in the movement, or prevent these forces from coming upon my rear, I cannot go forward." Coming from Gordon, one of Lee's most aggressive and able generals, the larger message was plain.

"There is nothing left for me to do," Lee said, "but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

He listened to a proposal by one of his officers that the army simply disband, the men taking their weapons with them, into the familiar countryside, where they would become guerrilla fighters. Lee rejected it, saying that it would, "bring on a state of affairs it would take the country years to recover from."

The only course, he went on, was for him to "go to General Grant and surrender myself and take the consequences of my acts."

The formal surrender took place at the home of a man named Wilmer McLean, who had once owned a farm in Manassas. It had been shelled during one of the first great battles of the war, so he had moved here to get away from the fighting.

Lee was dressed in a spotless uniform. Grant's was muddy. They were, in this and so many ways, a picture in contrasts, but alike, too, in the essential thing: both warriors. Grant, whose generous terms allowed Lee to keep his sword—and his officers to retain their mounts and sidearms—later wrote of Lee that "it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result and was too manly to show it . . . [but] my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant . . . were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought."

Three days later, the remaining Confederate infantrymen grounded their arms and colors in a ceremony presided over by Joshua Chamberlain, the hero of Round Top at Gettysburg, where the Union was saved in an epic of "just in time" and "not quite enough."

Chamberlain had been shot in one of the early battles outside of Petersburg, when it had again been "just in time" and "not quite enough" and Grant's masterful march had almost finished the war. After he was hit by a bullet that passed through both hips, Chamberlain stuck his sword into the ground and used it as a crutch before he passed out from loss of blood. While he was in the hospital, he was promoted to brigadier general, his superior officer said, in "recognition of his services . . . before he dies."

He lived and returned to duty.

On April 12, 1865, he ordered his men to "carry arms" as a gesture of respect to the Confederates whose "decimated brigades, as they reach our right, respond to the 'carry.' All the while on our part not a sound of trumpet or drum, not a cheer, nor a word nor motion of man, but awful stillness as if it were the passing of the dead." ♦

When Lincoln Died on Passover

How Jews loyal to the Union mourned

By Meir Y. Soloveichik

As America prepares to mark the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's death on April 15, fresh insight into the events that occurred a century and a half ago can be gleaned by seeing that entire week through the eyes of America's Jews, and especially of those Jews who attended America's oldest and most historically distinguished congregation.

On Sunday, April 9, 1865, Generals Grant and Lee met in Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. Lee surrendered, and the Civil War came to an end, with 360,000 Union and 260,000 Confederate soldiers dead. The news broke all over the United States on April 10, which, in the Hebrew calendar, was the morning before the eight-day holiday of Passover was to begin. We can imagine the elegant symmetry that those Jews sympathetic to the Union cause saw in the advent of their Festival of Freedom, commemorating the Israelite exodus from slavery, coinciding with the Confederacy's defeat. Thinking of their own relatives, who like other Americans had fought, bled, and died for several terrible years, we can imagine their finding a double meaning at their Seder tables that Monday evening, as they uttered the immortal words of the Haggadah: "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

It was four days later, on Friday evening, when the president ventured out into a joyful, festive Washington for an evening at Ford's Theatre, that he was shot. Carried to a boarding house across the street, Lincoln died at 7:22 A.M. on Saturday. It is often told that all those crowded around his deathbed turned to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who said simply, "Now he belongs to the ages." As the writer Adam Gopnik has noted, these words are the best-known epitaph in American history, and probably the finest: "They seem perfectly chosen, in their bare and stoical evocation of a Lincoln who belongs to history alone, their invocation not of an assumption to an afterlife but of a long reign in the corridors of time, a man now part of eternity."

Conveyed by telegraph, the news soon reached the rest of the country. Jews heard it from their fellow Americans on the day of the celebratory service held on the Sabbath during Passover. Bertram Korn, in his *American Jewry and the Civil War*, describes the scene:

> Jews were on their way to synagogue or already worshipping when tidings of the assassination reached them. . . . Jews who had not planned on attending services hastened to join their brethren in the sanctuaries where they could find comfort in the hour of grief. The Rabbis put their sermon notes aside and spoke extemporaneously, haltingly, reaching out for the words to express their deep sorrow. . . . Samuel Adler of Temple Emmanuel in New York began to deliver a sermon but he was so overcome that he could not continue. Alfred T. Jones, Parnas of Beth El-emeth Congregation of Philadelphia, asked [the well-known Jewish scholar and writer] Isaac Leeser to say something to comfort the worshippers; he did, but it was so disconnected that he had to apologize: "the dreadful news and its suddenness have in a great measure overcome my usual composure, and my thoughts refuse to arrange themselves in their wonted order."

Because the president died on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, the first utterances from the pulpit in response to the assassination were heard in synagogues, as Isaac Marken explains in *Abraham Lincoln and the Jews*. One of the most striking—and indeed, controversial—moments took place in Congregation Shearith Israel, in New York, the oldest Jewish congregation in America. There, Marken recounts, "the rabbi recited the Hashkabah (prayer for the dead) for Lincoln. This, according to the *Jewish Messenger*, was the first time that this prayer had been said in a Jewish house of worship for any other than those professing the Jewish religion." This seeming deviation from tradition in Shearith Israel—known to this day for its fierce devotion to preserving religious and liturgical tradition—was noted by many, and defended by the aforementioned Isaac Leeser, who also edited American Jewry's most prominent newspaper:

> It is, indeed, somewhat unusual to pray for one not of our faith, but by no means in opposition to its spirit, and therefore not inadmissible. We pray for the dead, because we

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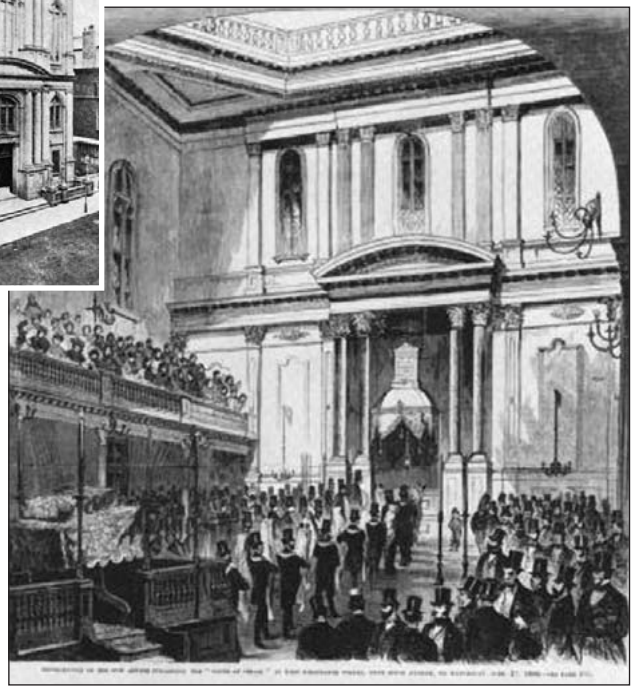
believe that the souls of the departed as well as of the living are in the keeping of God. . . . The prayers, therefore, offered up this day for the deceased President are in accordance with the spirit of the faith which we have inherited as children of Israel, who recognize in all men those created like them in the image of God, and all entitled to His mercy, grace and pardon, though they have not yet learned to worship and adore Him as we do who have been especially selected as the bearers of His law.

The prayer for Lincoln, in other words—one of the first religious reactions to Lincoln's death—embodied the belief in human equality that lay at the heart of Lincoln's worldview: that this was a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the idea that all men are created equal. At the same time, the reciting of the prayer—which asks on behalf of the deceased for a "goodly portion in the life of the World to Come"—also embodied the belief the members of Congregation Shearith Israel had in Lincoln's spiritual immortality. A focus on spiritual immortality may have been Stanton's original intent as well; because, as Gopnik himself has noted, as perfect as our version of Stanton's epitaph may seem to us today, it very possibly is not quite accurate. The closest source we have to an eyewitness is a Corporal Tanner, a soldier, who took dictation from Stanton. Tanner described the final moments of Lincoln's life in his own words:

The Reverend Dr. Gurley stepped forward and lifting his hands began "Our Father and our God" and I snatched pencil and notebook from my pocket, but my haste defeated my purpose. My pencil point (I had but one) caught in my coat and broke, and the world lost the prayer, a prayer that was only interrupted by the sobs of Stanton as he buried his face in the bedclothes. As "Thy will be done, Amen" in subdued and tremulous tones floated through the little chamber, Mr. Stanton raised his head, the tears streaming down his face. A more agonized expression I never saw on a human countenance as he sobbed out the words: "He belongs to the angels now."

Stanton's original reference, then, may have been to Lincoln's place amongst the angels, not the ages. The question of what Stanton actually said, Gopnik notes, "leads to the most vexed question in all the Lincoln literature, that of his faith. How religious—how willing to credit more than metaphoric angels—did the men in the room think that Lincoln was?" After all, as anticlerical as Lincoln may have been in his youth, there is no question that his most famous speeches are laced with biblical references, and he began to see the work of Divine Providence in the history of the United States and the elimination of slavery from a nation conceived in liberty. "The Second Inaugural," Gopnik notes, "is the most famous instance, with its insistence that 'if God wills that [the war] continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."'" It was this Lincoln about whom Stanton likely said, "Now he belongs to the angels"; and if he did not say it, then perhaps the first ones to say it were the members of Congregation Shearith Israel.



Congregation Shearith Israel dedicates its synagogue (inset), 1860.

As terrible as it was, Lincoln's death on Passover, and the Jews' joining their observance of this holiday with their mourning of his death, is curiously fitting. For as Britain's former chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, notes in his commentary on the Haggadah,

In a strange way civil religion has the same relationship to the United states as Pesach [Passover] does to the Jewish people.

It is first and foremost not a philosophy but a story. It tells of how a persecuted group escaped from the old world and made a hazardous journey to an unknown land, there to construct a new society, in Abraham Lincoln's famous words, "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Like the Pesach story, it must be told repeatedly, as it is in every inaugural address. It defines the nation, not merely in terms of its past but also as a moral, spiritual commitment to the future. It

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> is no accident that the founders of America turned to the Hebrew Bible, or that successive presidents have done likewise, because there is no other text in Western literature that draws [on] these themes. . . . Israel, ancient and modern, and the United States are the two supreme examples of societies constructed in conscious pursuit of an idea.

The Passover story, in other words, has always been linked to that of America. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin first suggested that the seal of the United States depict Pharaoh drowning at the Red Sea, with the motto "Rebellion to Tyrants Is Obedience to God." Matthew Holbreich, a scholar at Yeshiva University's Straus Center, and Yale's Danilo Petranovich, note in a coauthored article that even before the Civil War, Lincoln drew on the same biblical imagery to predict the possibility of divine punishment for slavery; in his eulogy for Henry Clay in 1852, Lincoln reflected that "Pharaoh's country was cursed with plagues, and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea for striving to retain a captive people, who already served them more than four hundred years. May like disasters never befall us!" The eternal link between Lincoln's life and Passover—the fact that Lincoln's death, marked in the Hebrew calendar, coincides with Passover every year—is certainly fitting, and perhaps even part of the providence that Lincoln began to see in his own life, and the life of his nation.

With this in mind, we are now able to glean one more fascinating link between Lincoln's life and death and the Passover holiday. In his famous "House Divided" speech, delivered on June 16, 1858, when he accepted the nomination of the Republican party for a seat in the U.S. Senate, Lincoln reflected on the new political party that had been born to fight slavery:

> Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of *strange*, *discordant*, and even *hostile* elements, we gathered from the four winds, and *formed* and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all *then* to *falter* now?—now—when that same enemy is *wavering*, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail—if we stand firm, we shall not fail [italics in the original].

As Holbreich and Petranovich have noted, Lincoln's phrase "gathered from the four winds" is biblical, a reference to the story in Ezekiel where the prophet sees a field full of dry bones, a symbol of Israel's loss of hope following exile. As the bones come together to form bodies, Ezekiel is told:

> "Prophesy to the spirit, prophesy, O son of man, and say to the spirit, 'So says the Lord God: From four winds come, O spirit, and breathe into these slain ones that they may live.'"
> And I prophesied as He had commanded me, and the spirit came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a very great army, exceedingly so.

In invoking this image, Holbreich and Petranovich write, "Lincoln envisioned the eradication of slavery in terms of a moral resurrection."

Here, however, is what no scholar has noted before: The story of the Valley of the Dry Bones from the Book of Ezekiel is read in synagogues all over the world when the Sabbath takes place in the middle of Passover, as it did the year Lincoln died. The tale in Ezekiel is read on Passover because the holiday itself commemorates, for Jews, our moment of national resurrection, our new birth of freedom. The prophetic portion is read immediately after the reading from the Torah and the recitation of memorial prayers, so at Congregation Shearith Israel in 1865, it would have almost immediately followed the memorial prayer for Lincoln.

We are now able to reconstruct what happened in Shearith Israel that day. The news of the assassination broke as services were beginning. The rejoicing over the Passover holiday and the Northern victory were all of a sudden turned to mourning. A traditional Jewish prayer was recited for the soul of a Gentile, the Gentile who embodied for these Jews the best of humanity. By saying the prayer on his behalf, Jews expressed their faith both in his spiritual immortality and in the posterity of his principles; they were, one might say, stressing that he belonged both to the ages and to the angels. These Jews then read the first half of Ezekiel's 37th chapter, the story of the Valley of the Dry Bones, a tale embodying a new birth of freedom, at the moment that the civil war came to an end. Holbreich and Petranovich reflect that Lincoln, in referencing Ezekiel's Valley of the Dry Bones in his "House Divided" speech, surely knew that chapter's final verses. The prophet concludes by referencing ancient Israel, which had been split into a northern and southern kingdom; and one can conceive of no more fitting verse with which to capture Lincoln's legacy:

> And I will make them into one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as a king; and they shall no longer be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore.

This Passover marks the one 150th anniversary of Lincoln's death, 150 years since the end of the Civil War, 150 years since American Jews first said a prayer for the soul of a non-Jew, a man named Abraham. Seeing these events through those Jews' eyes helps this profound moment of our history to remain fresh in our own eyes and invites us to dedicate ourselves with renewed vigor to the principles for which Lincoln stood, and for which he died, that they shall not soon perish from the earth. ♦

Armenian village of Sheyxalan, eastern Anatolia (1915)

A Great Calamity

One century since the Turkish genocide of the Armenians.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

"Who," asked Hitler in August 1939, "speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Raphael Lemkin did, and in 1944, Lemkin, a Polish-born Jew, published his theory of genocide. Lemkin's models were the ongoing Holocaust of Europe's Jews and the *Meds Yeghern*, or "Great Calamity," of 1915-16: the systematic murder of Armenian Christians by the Ottoman Turkish state and its local helpers.

Dominic Green, the author of Three Empires on the Nile, *teaches political science at Boston College.*

"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else"
A History of the Armenian Genocide
by Ronald Grigor Suny
Princeton, 520 pp., $35

In 1914, some two million Armenians lived in Ottoman Turkey, three-quarters of them in six provinces of eastern Anatolia, on the borders of Russia and Persia. By 1918, 90 percent of them were gone. More than one million were either murdered in their towns and villages or killed by disease, starvation, or death marches into camps in the Syrian desert, where the survivors were massacred. Hundreds of thousands of women and children were forced to convert to Islam; tens of thousands fled to the Russian Caucasus as refugees. Yet to this day, the Turkish government claims that there was no genocide and that it was the Armenians' fault.

This year is the centenary of the Armenian Genocide; the commemoration falls on April 24. On that day in 1915, the Ottoman government arrested hundreds of prominent Armenians in Istanbul. This April 24, when memorial ceremonies are held in Armenia and in the cities of the Armenian diaspora, the Turkish government will be

STR / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

congratulating itself with diversionary celebrations of the Gallipoli campaign. The centenary has raised the diplomatic temperature and precipitated many books. Ronald Suny's is the best of them: Balanced, scholarly, and harrowing, it should be read by all serious students of modern history.

There are two schools of genocide scholarship. "Intentionalists" trace a direct path from thought to deed: The premeditated plans of the principal actors lead to genocidal events. "Functionalists" see a longer, "crooked path"; before unarmed civilians can be despoiled, raped, tortured, starved, and murdered, they must be imagined as an existential enemy. Genocidal policies emerge from the structures of mental and social life: prejudice, political improvisation, individual opportunism, and the emergencies of war.

Suny is a functionalist. The Ottoman state inculcated in many Turks an "affective disposition" against the Armenian minority. In 1915, with the future of Turkey at stake in the First World War, this contempt curdled into hatred, and led to an intentional, state-led slaughter.

This murderous affect stemmed from the disposition of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians had always been inferior. In Ottoman law, they were a *millet*, a non-Muslim "nation," regulating their own legal affairs and paying the *cizye* poll tax, "separate and unequal, but protected." In the 19th century, this medieval system weakened. The sultan's "Well-Protected Domains" were penetrated by European empires and imports, notably new ideologies of nationalism and liberalism. When the Christians of Greece and Bulgaria rebelled, the Ottomans responded with "indiscriminate massacres of largely defenseless people." At Chios in 1822, tens of thousands of Greeks were slaughtered and enslaved. In the "Bulgarian Horrors" of 1876, dozens of Bulgarian villages were destroyed and their populations massacred with ingenious sadism.

The *Tanzimat* program of European-style reforms failed to cure the Sick Man of Europe. The reforms promised equality but intensified mutual suspicions. Non-Muslims remained discriminated against in practice and continued to speculate in nationalism. Muslims resented the loss of their privileges and the prevalence of Christians and Jews among the new economic elite. After Turkey's defeat by Russia in 1878, a multinational empire, containing more Christians and Jews than Muslims, became a "national empire," with a Turkish Muslim majority. The new sultan, Abdul Hamid II, a sly and suspicious tyrant, adopted pan-Islamism as a strategy to unite the faithful and repress the infidels.

Genocide memorial, Yerevan

In eastern Anatolia, Turkey ruled through proxies, Kurdish tribes who tyrannized the Armenian majority. The loss of the Balkans intensified Turkish suspicions of the Armenians, whose leaders appealed to the European empires for protection. The Ottomans resettled Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the Russian Caucasus in eastern Anatolia, and recruited Kurds into *Hamidiyya*, Cossack-style cavalry units who perpetrated Cossack-style outrages. As nationalism spread among young Armenians, the state responded with exemplary violence. In the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-96, around 100,000 Anatolian Armenians were murdered amid looting, torture, rape, and forced conversions. The *New York Times* called the slaughter a "holocaust"—the first time that term had been used to describe the annihilation of a people. When Armenian rebels seized a bank in Istanbul, Turkish mobs killed more than 5,000 Armenians in the streets of the imperial capital.

The Armenians were no safer after the revolution of 1908 and the rise of the Young Turks of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP restored the liberal constitution, but its leaders were Darwinian nationalists who viewed the Armenians as a racial enemy within. Further Turkish defeats in the Balkans increased the influx of Muslim refugees into eastern Anatolia and amplified CUP incitement against the Armenians. In 1909, as many as 30,000 Armenians were slaughtered in riots at Adana, on the Mediterranean coast.

In 1913, the CUP deposed Abdul Hamid II. Turkey fell under a triumvirate of dictators: the interior minister, Mehmet Talat Pasha, a former postal clerk from Salonika; the war minister, Enver Pasha; and the minister for the navy, Djemal Pasha. The European powers were so afraid for the Armenians that they obliged Turkey to accept European observers in eastern Anatolia. Suspecting that the Europeans intended to dismember eastern Anatolia, and convinced that the Armenians were party to this plan, the "Three Pashas" led Turkey into a fatal alliance with the kaiser's Germany, and into World War I.

The Armenians became pawns in the 13th Russo-Turkish war. Turkey simultaneously conscripted Armenians into its army while demonizing them as traitors. Across the border, Russia's Armenians volunteered for the czar. As the battle lines moved back and forward, Turkish troops and paramilitaries massacred Christian populations in reprisal for imagined treacheries. The "affective disposition" for genocide had formed. So, too, had its instrument: Before entering the war, the CUP had recruited the Special Organization, a mixture of Kurdish tribesmen, Circassian refugees from the Russian Caucasus, and "prisoners, criminals, and bandits." The course of the war pushed CUP leadership along the "crooked path." Fearing the collapse of the Ottoman state, the

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CUP moved towards what Holocaust scholar Christopher Browning calls "cumulative radicalization."

In January 1915, Enver Pasha's inept winter campaign against the Russians floundered in defeat at Sarikamis. In February, the British landed in the Dardanelles. Through March 1915, the massacres increased. At Salmas, an American missionary described how Ottoman troops shot Christian men in batches of 25.

> Others were tied with their heads sticking through the rungs of a ladder and decapitated, others hacked to pieces or mutilated before death. In this way practically every Christian man remaining in Salmas was massacred. You can imagine the fate of girls and women.

In late March or early April 1915, the CUP's Central Committee decided to deport the Armenians for the sake of Turkey's "national ideals." Talat Pasha's interior ministry issued the deportation order "openly and in the official fashion." Immediately afterwards, the Central Committee circulated the order "to all parties," including the armed gangs of the Special Organization. The governor-general of the province of Van ordered his subordinates to "exterminate all Armenian males of twelve years of age and over." Foreign consuls and missionaries observed thousands of bodies, many mutilated, along the roads.

In April, the CUP disarmed all Armenian soldiers and transferred them to labor battalions, where they were murdered in small groups. At Istanbul, the parliament was suspended and the entire cultural and political leadership of the Armenians arrested; after being taken east in small groups, they, too, were killed. The Armenians, deprived of their military muscle, their political brain, and the chance of parliamentary protest, were defenseless.

Talat Pasha installed a personal telegraph office in his home so that he could direct CUP committees in Anatolia and keep count of the killings. He told the German ambassador that he planned to make a "clean sweep of internal enemies" while the war prevented diplomatic intervention from other countries. Germany, the only power that might have restrained Turkey, became a complicit partner in the genocide. After the German vice-consul at Erzurum reported that the deportations from his region had been "nothing but a massacre," his foreign minister, Theobold von Bethmann-Hollweg, ridiculed the idea of hampering the Turkish campaign against the Russians.

When the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau protested, Talat explained that the Armenians must pay for reversing the rightful hierarchies of Turks and *millet* peoples, Muslims and non-Muslims. They had "enriched themselves at the expense of the Turks." They were determined both to "domineer" over the Turks, he said, and to declare independence. They had "largely" caused Turkey's military "failure" in Anatolia: "It is no use for you to argue," Talat told Morgenthau, "we have already disposed of three quarters of the Armenians. . . . The hatred between the Turks and Armenians is now so intense that we have got to finish them. If we don't, they will plan their revenge." Genocide was a blunt tool for the creation of a Turkish Muslim state.

In May 1915, as the Russians advanced into Erzurum Province, Turkish troops and militia drove the entire Armenian population into the wilderness. Kurdish gangs bayoneted the men and robbed and raped the women, some of whom threw themselves into the Euphrates. Children under 5 were adopted into Muslim families. At the end of the month, Enver Pasha wrote to Talat, reporting the verbal decision to exile Anatolian Armenians to remote locations in the south. Talat's orders described the deportations as securing the "foundational interests of the State."

"Burn—Demolish—Kill," Talat ordered. The slaughter intensified throughout the summer and autumn of 1915. The men were usually led away and executed outside their towns and villages, the women and children marched southeast. In Bitlis Province, Armenians were herded into barns and burnt alive. Women were prostituted to Turkish soldiers, then poisoned when they contracted venereal disease. Children were hunted down and thrown into the Bitlis River. At Trabzon on the Black Sea, boatloads of Armenians were taken out to sea and drowned. The Armenians of Ankara were driven into the countryside and murdered with axes.

At the walled city of Diyarbakir, Circassian gangs under the command of a CUP loyalist arrested and tortured the Christian leaders of the city by nailing horseshoes into their feet and forcing them to run. Others had their heads crushed in olive presses or were flayed alive. The Armenian bishop was dragged through the streets, doused in gasoline, and burnt. More than 600 prominent Armenian citizens were sent down the Tigris on rafts to be murdered downstream by Kurdish tribesmen.

"The Armenian question no longer exists," Talat told the German ambassador at the end of August. In the same month, American missionary families reported trainloads of deportees on their way to railheads in the Syrian desert:

> The refugee trains were made up of cattle trucks, and the faces of little children looked out beseechingly from behind the bars. The side doors were open, and we could plainly see old men and old women, young mothers with small babies, men, women, and children all huddled together . . .

Talat told Morgenthau that no Armenians would remain anywhere in eastern Anatolia: "They can live in the desert, but nowhere else," he declared. When Morgenthau warned that Turkey was making a "terrible mistake," Talat replied, "Yes, we may make mistakes, but we never regret."

By late 1915, almost all of eastern Anatolia's Armenians had been killed or displaced. Yet the Ottoman state still saw them as a demographic threat. Those women and children who did not succumb to hunger, disease, torture, or robbery were driven towards the towns

of the Syrian desert on endless forced marches. These "way stations towards extermination" offered no shelter and little food or water. The end of the line was Der el Zor, deep in the desert. The toll of the final "orgy of killing" in the spring and summer of 1916 is unclear: "tens if not hundreds of thousands." Jesse Jackson, the American consul at Aleppo, estimated that 300,000 Armenians reached Der el Zor; by September 1916, only 12,000 survived. The Turks slaughtered this remnant as well.

Despite the denials of successive Turkish governments, Ronald Suny presents detailed and convincing documentation of the culpability of the CUP leadership and its accomplices. Foreign eyewitnesses, most of them missionaries and consuls, reported the genocide as it was taking place. All of these accounts confirm the intentionality of the CUP in Istanbul and the guiding role of its field agents, who directed the militias of the Special Organization. In May 1915, the Russians, British, and French denounced Turkish "crimes against humanity," the first use of the phrase. Winston Churchill suggested using mustard gas against the Turkish defenses at Gallipoli, in retaliation "for the massacres of Armenians, as well as the killing of many British soldiers after they had tried to surrender." Henry Morgenthau resigned his post in order to publicize the Armenian tragedy in the United States. Johannes Lepsius, a German missionary, printed a detailed account of the genocide, which his government did its best to suppress.

When the war ended, Germany spirited seven of the top CUP leaders to Berlin. The postwar Ottoman government acknowledged the killings and indicted the perpetrators, but the prosecution fizzled out. The German government refused to extradite its erstwhile allies for trial, Istanbul was under British occupation, and a nationalist insurgency had begun. In 1921, Talat Pasha was murdered, shot outside his Berlin apartment by Soghomon Tehlirian, a survivor of the massacres at Erzincan. After being tried, Tehlirian was acquitted by a jury appalled by survivors' testimonies. Armenian nationalists assassinated almost all the other major leaders, too.

Instead of a modernized Ottoman "national empire," a modern Turkish republic emerged in the 1920s. Its leader, Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk, insisted that his movement had no connection to the CUP. Yet, in many ways, the Kemalists were the CUP's fraternal successor. Links between the CUP and the Kemalists were tight: The CUP helped to initiate the nationalist revolt in Anatolia, and many Young Turks joined the Kemalists. Like the CUP, Atatürk blamed the Armenians for their sufferings: They had pursued "separatism" in a "savage manner." Nor is modern Turkey disposed to forgive the Armenians for their own genocide.

The "holocaust before the Holocaust," Suny concludes, was the "foundational crime that, along with the ethnic cleansing and population exchanges of the Anatolian Greeks, made possible the formation of an ethnonational Turkish republic." The governments of many Western democracies have defined the Armenian horrors as genocide, but the United States and Israel have not. For strategic reasons, the United States continues to indulge what Suny calls "the most reactionary and nationalist, anti-democratic forces in Turkey."

"I will recognize the Armenian Genocide," Barack Obama promised during his 2008 presidential campaign. In his last years in office, he is bound to no electorate; but the president who claims that the arc of the universe "bends towards justice" persists in being bound to Turkey, and in bending to its denial of history. This month's centenary would be the right time for Obama to correct the United States' long and shameful refusal to recognize the state-organized murder of the Armenians for what it was: genocide. ♦

B&A

Gray Matters

The brain knows what people think, and vice versa. **BY TEMMA EHRENFELD**

Our fascination with the brain seems to come from a longing to make psychology more like a hard science and hence, we assume, more useful. Physics gave us electricity, skyscrapers, and the Internet. Chemistry gave us medicine and more fresh food. Psychology is still taking baby steps, designing empirical tests of unsurprising observations. It may be too much to expect science to reliably save marriages, but how desperately we need the secret to stopping people from burning others alive.

What we do know is, indeed, fascinating. *Great Myths of the Brain* is a kind of primer that teaches neuroscience by debunking neurononsense, beginning with ancient ideas like "Thought Resides in the Heart." You'll learn that much of the neuroscience you hear is trivial or wrong, and also see the useful research threads to follow. The word "brain" isn't entirely giving us false

Great Myths of the Brain
by Christian Jarrett
Wiley Blackwell, 352 pp., $24.95

The Wandering Mind
What the Brain Does When You're Not Looking
by Michael C. Corballis
Chicago, 184 pp., $20

Temma Ehrenfeld is a writer in New York.

hope. A neuroscientist-turned-writer, Christian Jarrett is editor of the British Psychological Society's *Research Digest*, a blogger, and the father of baby twins. His elegant, enthusiastic prose doesn't shy from controversy.

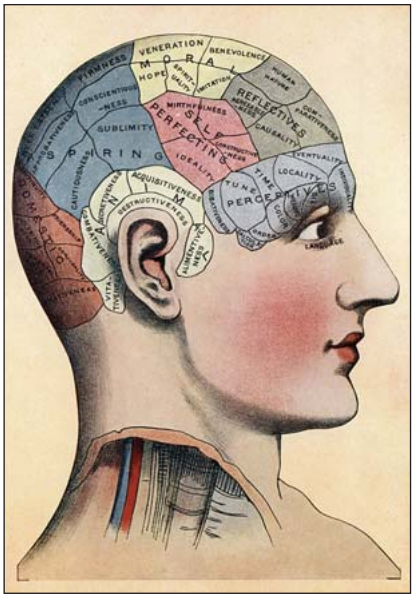
Michael Corballis, author of *The Wandering Mind*, is a New Zealand neuroscientist best known for his thesis that language evolved from gestures. He has the grace and wit of a successful man approaching 80. If you've ever heard someone say something such as "So what if I'm spacey? I'm creative," he would reassuringly agree.

Although *The Wandering Mind* is a conversational essay, it doesn't wander. Corballis, like Jarrett, distills to essentials. Memory, thinking about the future, reading other people, storytelling, dreams, hallucinations, and creativity each get a chapter. Each is a function of our "default-mode network," a large swath of brain not dedicated to perception or responses to the immediate environment. "The brain is a bit like a small town," he explains, "with people milling around, going about their business. When some big event occurs, such as a football game, the people then flock to the football ground, while the rest of the town grows quiet." Then we mill around again.

> We are programmed to alternate between mind-wandering and paying attention. . . . [W]e need to escape the here and now, and consider possible futures, mull over past mistakes, understand how other people's minds work.

You *can* get your best ideas washing dishes. There are studies.

Corballis is polite, and it may be his comforting bent that led him to avoid the most troublesome question about wandering minds. Noting that "the Freudian idea that dreams are symbolic disguises of shameful or forbidden thoughts has largely lost favor," he writes that dreams "may serve . . . to activate the unconscious, to create the internal terrains for later mental meanderings." I wish he had addressed whether (or how) the unconscious may take the controls, still the core claim of much psychotherapy and a major theme in behavioral finance—which has convinced me that even people who consider themselves financially sophisticated have no idea what they're doing with their money. In Corballis's most revelatory chapter, on hallucinations, he suggests that "perception is fundamentally driven from within, with information from the world serving merely to guide what we see, hear and smell." He adds, characteristically, "Perhaps that's an exaggeration, but hallucination tells us that there's more to perception than meets the eye."



Jarrett addresses aspects of this huge thought as well. Under "Myth #33: The Brain Perceives the World As It Is," he breaks the news that we're actually living a self-created "virtual reality experience. . . . The truth is that we catch mere glimpses of physical reality." Three or four times every second, for example, you close your eyes and see nothing—a mechanism to prevent blurring when you shift your gaze. To compensate, your brain seems to backdate your sense of how long objects have been in their current locations. It takes about a tenth of a second for information to come in, but your brain hides the lag, "constantly predicting how the world probably is now based on how it was a moment ago."

Although such adjustments may sound minor, the overall illusion creates overconfidence. Jarrett quotes a sobering study that concluded that women with eating disorders who weren't especially fat or thin were unusually accurate—not less so—about how attractive their bodies would be rated by a panel of strangers. Healthy women, on the other hand, were biased in their own favor. Healthy people also can easily be induced to feel that they have three arms, or that they are floating outside their bodies. You can "hear voices" without being psychotic. The very human idea of I-know-it-like-the-back-of-my-hand is wrong: We tend to see our fingers as shorter and our hands as wider than they are. At last, some good news!

We are overconfident, too, about what passes for popular knowledge, as Jarrett reminds us, pointing out how bad neuroscience sells dubious products and causes. He weighs the research on whether the Internet is making us stupid or lonely, sugar makes kids hyperactive, girls are wired to prefer pink, and left-handed people are more introverted or creative. The answer is no.

Antidepressants are the most consumed medication in the United States, yet the idea behind them—that mood disorders are caused by lack of serotonin or some other chemical imbalance—is unproven, Jarrett and many others say.

> In truth no one knows what the "correct" levels for different neurotransmitters should be. . . . [V]arious studies have struggled to show consistently that serotonin function is lower in people who are depressed or anxious—this includes postmortem tests and measures of chemical levels in the cerebrospinal fluid of patients and healthy people. . . . [A]rtificially reducing people's levels of serotonin doesn't have a reliably depressing effect.

One drug that *reduces* serotonin—a "selective serotonin *reuptake enhancer*" (Prozac and other SSRIs are *reuptake inhibitors*)—is an effective antidepressant. Except for the most seriously depressed people, the SSRIs mostly seem to work because of the placebo effect. When I present this argument

WORLD HISTORY ARCHIVE / NEWSCOM

to my medicated friends, they say, "I'm fine with my placebo effect," and I'm sympathetic. Advocates for the mentally ill believe that biological explanations make illness more acceptable. But as Jarrett points out, that may be another myth. A growing body of evidence suggests that biological explanations are stigmatizing, possibly because people tend to see such problems as less treatable.

Beyond the placebo effect, the currently popular antidepressants may work because they stimulate neurogenesis, the growth of new neurons. Researchers have stimulated neurogenesis in rats by giving them more exciting environments and challenging learning tasks. Stress and threats diminish neurogenesis in rats. Does this mean that the problem all along was your stifling or precarious job or marriage? There's also evidence that the balance of microorganisms in your gut affects mood.

Jarrett surprised me most with "Myth #32: The Brain Receives Information from Five Separate Senses." Was I going to read that there's really a sixth sense—as in ESP? The idea that we have five senses is usually traced to Aristotle's *De Anima (On the Soul)*, Jarrett explains. He goes on to list a variety of other senses, such as proprioception (the awareness of where each of our body parts is located in space), signals from within the body (hunger, thirst, the need to empty the bladder or bowel), and the many kinds of tactile sensations (temperature, pressure, pain, and itch). There are more, including one first documented in the 19th century that struck me as utterly bizarre—yet it turns out that you, too, can develop it with practice.

Read the book to find out how. ♦

B&A

A Literary Life

Learning to read, to write, to teach.

BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

Why Not Say What Happened
A Sentimental Education
by Morris Dickstein
Liveright, 320 pp., $27.95

The title of Morris Dickstein's memoir alludes to an often-quoted line from Robert Lowell's epilogue to his last book of poems, *Day by Day*. "Yet why not say what happened?" is Lowell's question to himself as he prays for "the grace of accuracy." Dickstein, emeritus professor at CUNY Graduate Center and the author, most recently, of a cultural history of the 1930s, takes Lowell's question as a personal challenge. Why not say what happened to a man who has lived "a slightly suffocating life" in a Jewish family in New York's Lower East Side and Flushing, Queens, and who then came to maturity in the distinguished academic purlieus of Columbia and Yale? The "sentimental education," as he calls it in his subtitle, has less to do with Flaubert's dreary masterpiece than with a cultivation of the self as instanced in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," a poem Dickstein loves: "An education of the feelings as well as the mind" is what he hopes to have explored in thinking and writing about his past.

Perhaps the first thing to note about his book is how much Dickstein must have enjoyed writing it, confronting his past and turning it into a satisfying story. His enthusiasm and high spirits are pervasive, whether he is remembering postwar block parties on Henry Street, a few blocks from the East River, or studying the Talmud at the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School, where he stayed through the 12th grade, "at first perfectly content, then . . . increasingly restive, and finally in continual rebellion." But the rebellion was never total. He continued to live with his parents in Flushing while an undergraduate at Columbia, and, as an observant Jew, kept kosher for long afterwards. When he and his wife (referred to as "L") are tempted by Parisian cuisine, L breaks kosher with a baguette *viande froide* while Dickstein remains chaste, still following the rules of a way of life that had "nurtured and sustained" him.

His undergraduate years at Columbia, which he describes as "a college full of brilliant teachers and ravenous students," were of special interest to me, as I had, in a single year of graduate study there, observed what Dickstein accurately calls the "rough-and-tumble classes" customary at the college. Even the least rough-and-tumble of professors, Lionel Trilling, whose undergraduate class I audited and about whom Dickstein writes with penetration, had the challenge of putting up with, and probably enjoying, the questioning and irreverent students. (This was before the late 1960s, of course, when irreverence became the fashion.) Trilling, who, to Dickstein's perception, "seemed to be of two minds about everything," took it upon himself to provide an alternative mind to the single-minded ones in his classroom.

Dickstein took the course that Trilling famously wrote about in his essay "On the Teaching of Modern Literature." But when Dickstein later read Trilling's essay, he was shocked by how it distorted the class as he remembered it. Trilling had claimed that, when confronted by the "abyss" of modern writers like Joyce, Kafka, Eliot, and Proust, the students took it all too easily in stride, writing capable papers that seemed untouched by the assaultive genius they had encountered.

For Dickstein, however, the essay

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was a caricature of the actual, combative class that had found—or at least, in which Dickstein had found—those writers "as unsettling as they had been to [Trilling's] generation almost forty years earlier."

The portrait of Trilling, along with similarly sharp ones of Dickstein's other professors—among them Jacob Taubes, Peter Gay, F.W. Dupee, and Sidney Morganbesser—made this reader feel that, however one might put on rose-colored glasses in viewing the academic classroom of five decades ago, Dickstein's education at Columbia College was the real thing, perhaps even a thing not to be encountered again.

Some of the most engaging pages of his memoir concern the year he spent in England at Cambridge, after passing his oral exams for the Ph.D. in English at Yale. Cambridge proved a relief from what he calls "the dull throb of professional training" that characterized graduate work at Yale. At Cambridge, the main figure in his education was the just-retired F.R. Leavis, who had been invited by Clare College, where Dickstein lived, to help undergraduates prepare for the "dating" section of their exams. Leavis's single and notorious method was to confront students with unsigned, undated passages: paragraphs and lines from English writers, which the students would attempt to place historically and give reasons for their decisions. They were aided, and usually corrected, by the master, who not only knew the answers but could furnish compelling stylistic and moral reasons for why the passage belonged in one period rather than another. Dickstein also read Dickens with Leavis, who at that moment was revising upward his opinion of the novelist he had early patronized as an "entertainer."

When Dickstein brashly introduced himself to E.M. Forster while Forster was peering into the River Cam, the novelist invited him to visit him in his rooms at King's College. About to leave Cambridge, Dickstein never took up the invitation. But earlier he did call on John Gross (a fine critic, once editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*), responding to what he thought was a warm invitation, only to be turned away rather brusquely—from which he concluded that welcoming Englishmen don't always quite mean what they say. In one of the few less-than-worthy but forgivable things he does in this memoir, Dickstein later encounters Gross and "cuts" him with a "deft British slight."

It may be that my appreciation of the academic aspects of this memoir is biased because of my own, in many ways similar, education. (D.H. Lawrence appealed to both of us as an aid in supplanting the "deeply implanted repressions" of our upbringing.) But such pages work because of the nearness and concreteness—the words are I.A. Richards's—that may guard against sentimentality.

Morris Dickstein

Too many of Dickstein's responses to writers, places, and works of art are prone to more abstract and potentially sentimental formulations. In his travels he "fell for Paris at first sight." In London museums he "fell in love with the British Romantic painters . . . with the tempestuous Turners at the Tate Gallery, teeming with a wild energy." He is "humbled and uplifted" by the Sistine Chapel. Reading Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" "unfailingly brought tears to my eyes, tapping into a deep well of bittersweet recollection." In Florence, he and his wife "lost themselves in the paintings at the Uffizi Gallery." For days they "breathed in the sculpture of Michelangelo and Donatello, the spirituality of Saint Francis, the designs of Brunelleschi." In the 1960s, "The Beatles, Dylan, and the Stones came as a revelation" to this high-culture adept, while he read and taught Blake, "awed by his seemingly child-like lyrics."

In passages like these, the question "Why not say what happened?" may admit of a less than affirmative response and bring to mind Henry James's warning, in his preface to *The Ambassadors*, of "the terrible *fluidity* of self-revelation." This is likely to occur when Dickstein writes about Walter Pater-like adventures of the soul among masterpieces. It also comes out in his habit of referring to "colorful new friends" at Columbia by identifying them with only a first name or first name plus initial, as in "Sam" or "David R." It's hard to get interested in "Marshall," who is "as rotund and rubicund as Sam was lean and pallid," though I would like to know more about Marshall's girlfriend, "the darkly voluptuous but emotionally unstable Rita, an exotic but deeply troubled young woman." There is also a question of how much the narrator's physical difficulties bear recounting: an attack of dysentery in Rome, other problems with the digestive tract, fear of an ulcer, or a "brutal cold."

He takes us on a whirlwind trip through the 1960s: the polarizing effects of Vietnam, the Columbia riots of 1968, the Kennedy assassinations, and other disasters. Meanwhile, he taught at Columbia and, having finished his dissertation, found himself gravitating "toward more public forms of criticism—toward literary journalism and cultural commentary," which he practiced effectively

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in the pages of *Commentary* and *Partisan Review*. Put up for tenure by his colleagues in the Columbia English department, he was turned down for what looks like no good reason, but he eventually found a happy home at Queens College. Yet the book ends with a heartfelt salute to Columbia for having been formative in shaping "an education of the spirit." Leaving the place produced mixed emotions, but also "an underlying exhilaration, a heady whiff of maturity." If the sentimental education has concluded itself, what he hopefully calls "the god of new beginnings" may take charge. ♦

B&A

High Standards

The Great American Songbook, in and out of fashion.

BY MICHAEL NELSON

Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart (1936)

Bob Dylan and Annie Lennox have each released standards albums recently, joining a long procession of contemporary singers that extends back to Willie Nelson and his 1978 *Stardust* album and includes Rod Stewart, Linda Ronstadt, Carly Simon, and, in the finest and most improbable effort of all, British pop king Robbie Williams, with *Swing When You're Winning* (2001). Such albums invariably are described as "Sinatra music," because, in nearly every case, Frank Sinatra recorded what became the standard version of these songs. Dylan, whose not-bad *Shadows in the Night* (2015) consists entirely of Sinatra music, says that Frank Sinatra "is the mountain you have to climb, even if you only get part of the way there. . . . Nobody touches him. Not me or anybody else."

The B-Side
The Death of Tin Pan Alley and the Rebirth of the Great American Song
by Ben Yagoda
Riverhead, 320 pp., $27.95

Ben Yagoda rightly devotes the cover of his new book to a 1950s-era photograph of Sinatra singing in a recording studio. Then he wrongly makes Sinatra a relatively minor character in his story. You'll read a lot more about songwriters like Jay Livingston and Ray Evans than you will about Frank Sinatra here, and you may find yourself wondering why.

Yagoda is best at describing the technological changes that shaped popular music during the first half of the 20th century. Until records were invented, songs entered homes in the form of sheet music. Because they were sung by families gathered around the piano, tunes had to be easy to play and lyrics easy to remember. Home music became professionalized with the invention of the phonograph. With singers and instrumentalists competent to handle hard-to-play melodies, and harmonies now supplying the music, composers such as Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, and George Gershwin embraced the new opportunity to write sophisticated songs.

Early discs could only play one cut per side, so these writers learned to compose to an AABA form (two choruses, the bridge, then another chorus, each eight bars long), benefiting from that discipline of form as surely as sonnet writers have from theirs. Then, in the 1920s, along came radio to provide a mass audience for these records, which were often performed by big bands. Microphones, another innovation, meant that a band's singer didn't have to belt to be heard. Record makers, radio programmers, jukebox owners (they bought half of all records in the late thirties), and the big bands all placed a premium on new songs, the assumption being that no one wanted to hear (much less buy) numbers they'd heard before. Popular songs, even from movie musicals or

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Michael Nelson, Fulmer professor of political science at Rhodes College, is the author, most recently, of Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government.

the stage, generally were dismissed as ephemera: all the rage today, tossed in a drawer tomorrow.

Frank Sinatra was the young band singer in the early 1940s who figured out that modern audiences would appreciate hearing forgotten gems from old Broadway shows by writers like Porter and Kern. Recklessly, or so it was thought at the time, he left the popular Tommy Dorsey Orchestra to strike out on his own. Tenderness, not fervor, was what a wartime nation was looking for, Sinatra calculated. And so the typical songs in his early repertory as a soloist—sung conversationally, even intimately, into a microphone and played on a record or over the radio—were old Broadway compositions originally written for heartsick female characters: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (the Gershwins), for example, or "My Funny Valentine" (Rodgers and Hart) or "All the Things You Are" (Kern).

It's not too much to say that, in resurrecting them, Sinatra was inventing the whole idea of standards and, thereby, creating the Great American Songbook.

But not without a struggle. Postwar audiences, Yagoda shows, were more interested in novelty ("The Doggie in the Window," accompanied by barks) and gimmickry ("Mule Train," complete with whip cracks) than quality. Along with two busted marriages and some serious vocal problems, the new fad reduced Sinatra's clout and placed him at odds with the leading pop impresario of the day, Columbia Records' Mitch Miller. Even when Sinatra had a hit with a flaccid number like "Goodnight, Irene" in 1950 he could barely hide his disgust: "You oughta do a lot of songs like that," a disc jockey brightly told Sinatra on the air.

"Don't hold your breath," he replied.

The Sinatra who soon climbed out of the personal and musical hole into which he had both stumbled and been pushed seemed tough and rakish: a fifties-style swinger, not the sweet, girlie man of the forties. Musically, he stuck with the Johnny Mercers and Harold Arlens while cultivating a new generation of old-school songwriters, notably Carolyn Leigh and the match-made (by him) team of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Without abandoning the torch songs of his youth, Sinatra became known for bold, jazz-inflected swing numbers. Somehow, sorrow and joy seemed all of a piece when sung in his bruised, beautiful voice and in-the-pocket phrasing. Commenting on Sinatra's 1956 recording of Porter's "I've Got You Under My Skin," Roger Gilbert, professor of English at Cornell, marvels at his ability to simultaneously express "contrasting registers of desire and fear, outward bravado and inner doubt."

Technology again: Yagoda rightly notes the importance of the 33 1/3 long-playing record, which became popular in the 1950s, just in time for Sinatra to invent the concept album, comprising a dozen songs organized around a theme (lost love, as in 1958's *Only the Lonely*), a mood (nostalgia, as in 1965's *September of My Years*), or even a musical form (dance, as in 1959's *Come Dance with Me!*).

Those who love the standards can't help but be cheered by the homage that Dylan, Lennox, and their fellow rockers (even Lady Gaga) seem determined to pay to them, however imperfect their efforts. Even more heartening are the careers of, say, Harry Connick Jr. and Michael Bublé, excellent singers with rock-star appeal who chose to devote their careers to Sinatra-style music. Yagoda's claim that contemporary songwriters such as Randy Newman and Paul McCartney belong in the standards pantheon alongside Kern, Arlen, and Rodgers may not persuade most readers, but his yearning to see the torch passed to a new generation is understandable, even admirable. ♦

B&A

The Second Life

A comic bridge across the generation gap.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The writer-director Noah Baumbach has a gimlet satirical eye for the foibles and follies of the upper-middle class, which he deploys to brilliant and hilarious effect in his new movie, *While We're Young*. A childless husband and wife in their 40s, played with beautiful understatement by Ben Stiller and Naomi Watts, are content with each other but seem to be in a state of paralysis when it comes to moving forward in their careers and lives. Josh and Cornelia find themselves entranced by a boundlessly energetic twentysomething couple, Jamie (the amazing Adam Driver) and Darby (Amanda Seyfried), who possess the zest for living they feel they have lost—and who inexplicably want to be their best friends.

While We're Young
Directed by Noah Baumbach

Josh and Cornelia neglect their age-appropriate besties, newly minted parents who keep saying "you guys need one of these" even though they know that, years earlier, Cornelia had undergone fertility treatments and two miscarriages before giving up in despair. Cornelia is even forced by a mommy friend to attend a music class for babies in which a four-person singing group performs drippy pseudo-rock songs while the children cry and the parents talk and pay no attention. The utter exactitude

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

Adam Driver, Ben Stiller

of this scene is a wonder, and is of a piece with the precision with which Baumbach aims his comic missiles at target-rich Brooklyn and then lets fly.

It's no wonder Josh and Cornelia prefer to hang around with Jamie and Darby, who are not only respectful and desirous of mentorship but who remind them what it was like to be hungry for cultural experiences of any and all sorts. Jamie and Darby's taste for artisanal pleasures involves not only food but also the use of entertainment delivery devices, such as VCRs and turntables, long since discarded by their iPhone-obsessed elders. Jamie, in particular, is a hero-worshipper of not-so-old culture and bikes around to the tune of "Eye of the Tiger," the dreadful but catchy theme of *Rocky III* from 1982. Stiller finds himself enjoying it as well, until he stops and muses, "I remember when this song was just bad."

Josh and Cornelia ditch their older friends to spend a weekend at a spiritual retreat with Jamie and Darby where the assembled seekers drink a brew called ayahuasca, start hallucinating, and reveal seemingly deep truths under the guidance of a Vespa-riding guru as they all upchuck into buckets.

This is all just great stuff, as is Baumbach's merciless portrait of Josh as a documentary filmmaker lost in the thickets of his Chomskyesque urge to reveal the inner workings of the "power elite." He has spent 10 years trying to finish a film centering on the ideas of a leftist sociologist at Columbia (played, I was startled to realize, by an amusing and aged Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary). He's devastated when his father-in-law, the great documentarian Leslie Breitbart (Charles Grodin), informs him that he's made a six-hour film that's seven hours too long.

Baumbach's work here evokes the great marital comedies of Paul Mazursky, whose *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (1969), *Blume in Love* (1973), and *An Unmarried Woman* (1978) captured both the unsettling and the amusing aspects of the social upheavals of the 1960s and '70s like lightning in a bottle. Alas, like Mazursky, Baumbach is so good at rendering his characters in exquisite comic detail he doesn't know what to do with them once he's completed their portraits. Since *While We're Young* needs some kind of plot to resolve, Baumbach grafts one onto the last 30 minutes. It's confusing and not all that credible, and it takes the movie on a tangent about the ethics of documentary filmmaking that is only worthwhile because it shows off the 70-year-old Grodin's still-astounding comic timing.

Josh's self-destructive self-seriousness calls to mind Baumbach's autobiographical masterpiece, *The Squid and the Whale* (2005), in which a teenage boy must grapple with the realization that the novelist father he worships is a pretentious loser whose severely critical worldview is simply a cover for his own failures. Josh is a better man; like Mazursky's protagonists, he means well, even when he stumbles. *The Squid and the Whale* is a near-tragedy, and it is flawless. *While We're Young* is a farce—a flawed farce, yes, but on the whole, a wonderful one. ♦

A24 FILMS

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Megan J. Brennan, Postmaster General

TO: Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee

FROM: Megan J. Brennan, Postmaster General

DATE: April 10, 2015

RE: Angelou Stamp Correction

Hi, committee members. Well, it's been quite a week here at the Post Office, as I'm sure you can imagine. I'm very proud of our staff here, but, as we all know, the mail business is more art than science, and every now and then, things get a little messy. So, in the spirit of our motto—"Neither snow, nor rain, nor" etc., etc.—we're regrouping and issuing a brand- new Maya Angelou commemorative stamp. Please help us choose which quotation to use. I assure you, these have all been vetted by our crack team of researchers here at the USPS. Just circle your favorite selection below and drop it in the mail! Thanks!