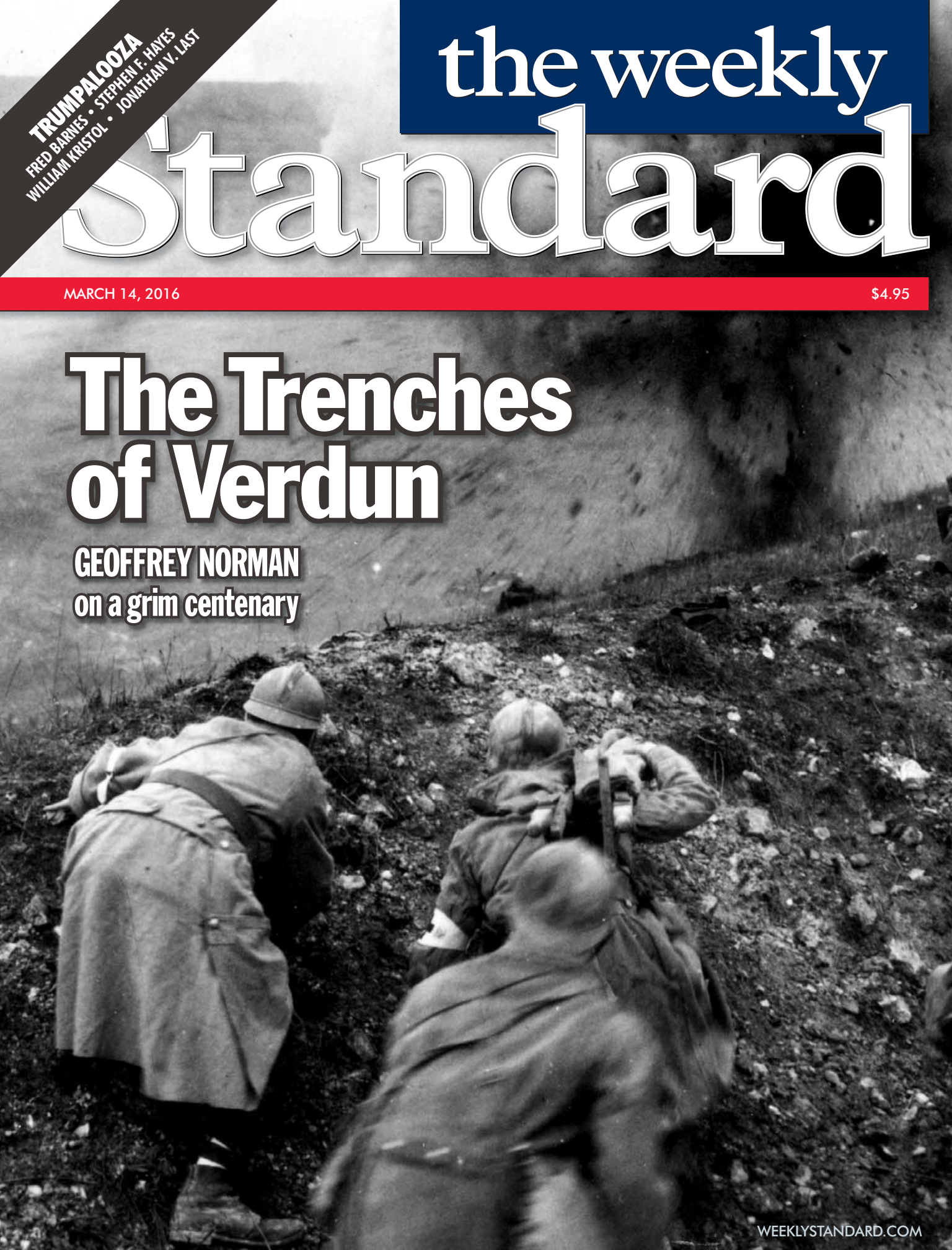
the weekly Standard

TRUMPALOOZA
FRED BARNES • STEPHEN F. HAYES
WILLIAM KRISTOL • JONATHAN V. LAST

MARCH 14, 2016 $4.95

The Trenches of Verdun

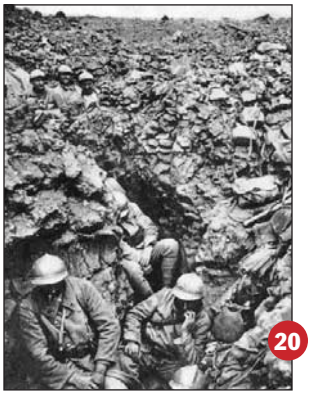
GEOFFREY NORMAN on a grim centenary



WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

Contents

March 14, 2016 • Volume 21, Number 26



COVER: GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY / GETTY IMAGES

We're Trying Hard Not to Laugh

The Scrapbook is time and again reminded that one of the occupational hazards of covering politics is *schadenfreude*. As unsympathetic as political creatures are, it's always better for your soul to derive satisfaction from watching someone succeed than to take delight in their failure.

However, watching Chris Christie drop out of the presidential race and become Donald Trump's most prominent surrogate has tempted us more than once into an unholy glee at his expense. Perhaps if Gov. Christie had not so energetically broken an earlier, explicit promise not to support Trump, we would try harder to cut him some slack.

Further, as much as Christie's confrontational style could generate exciting political dialogue, he was always walking a rhetorical tightrope between tells-it-like-it-is and bullying. Now that Christie has thrown his, ahem, weight behind Trump, who is as dependent on insults as he is on oxygen, sympathy for Christie is harder to come by.

In observing Christie's recent public appearances, it's been impossible not to notice that while his mouth says "Trump for president!" every other part of his body is screaming that he's made a huge mistake. At a campaign rally on February 27, a hot microphone caught Trump dismissing Christie and telling him to go home, even as it appeared Christie wanted to remain on stage. The next day Christie did an interview on *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*. Normally, the famously pugilistic Christie never backs down, but when forced to defend Trump's record, Christie spent nearly 10 cringe-inducing minutes awkwardly trying to change the subject.

LUKE SHARRETT / BLOOMBERG / GETTY

Then on Super Tuesday, after introducing Trump, Christie stood awkwardly behind him on the dais through the entirety of Trump's remarks and press conference, looking so shellshocked and dead-behind-the-eyes that multiple major news outlets wrote reports focused almost exclusively on his dejected facial expression. At the *Washington Post*, Alexandra Petri penned arguably the most immortal line of the 2016 campaign so far: "His were the eyes of a man who has gazed into the abyss, and the abyss gazed back, and then he endorsed the abyss."

By the next day, the *New York Times* was asking, "What, you might ask, could be worse than a thoroughly failed presidential candidate returning home as a lame-duck governor to a $10 billion budget deficit and a recalcitrant legislature?" (Hint: It involves being a barnacle on the hull of the SS *Trump*.) And the *New Hampshire Union Leader*, which gave Christie its coveted primary endorsement, went so far as to retract it. "Boy, were we wrong," wrote the paper's publisher. "Rather than standing up to the bully, Christie bent his knee." The *Times* further reported that Christie, who prides himself on his rough-and-tumble Jersey attitude, was "taken aback by the depth of the vitriol over the past few days."

We won't go so far as to say Christie *deserves* vitriolic attacks, but he should have expected them. We always thought Chris Christie was a better man than the one who just sold his credibility and principles for 30 very classy pieces of silver. ♦

The New Prohibitionists

It's now illegal to buy cigarettes in San Francisco unless you're at least 21 years old, thanks to a new ordinance approved unanimously by the city's Board of Supervisors. San Francisco is, of course, legendary as a city open to any number of alternative lifestyle choices and feel-good pharmaceutical activities, among them behaviors that come with no small measure of health risks. The anything-goes vibe has been cultivated for decades and is fiercely defended by the pleasure-seekers who flock to Baghdad-by-the-Bay. It's not the sort of place one expects to find restrictions on adults and their activities.

For example, just imagine the outcry if, in the name of protecting the health of the young, the city tried to limit consen-

sual sex to those 21 and older.

But the city's hippie-dippy laissez-faire attitude falls by the wayside when the drug in question is nicotine. "Our city has a history of taking on major industries in the name of public health," harrumphed supervisor Scott Wiener, who sponsored the age-restrictive ordinance.

Legislation, big and small, is also in the works regarding cannabis. California—a trailblazer in medicinal marijuana—has fallen behind Colorado, Washington, and Oregon when it comes to "recreational" marijuana. Loath to miss a trend, California is gearing up for an effort to legalize cannabis outright. San Francisco wants to be prepared to help in the sensible proliferation of quality pot-shops with pleasing signage and has set up a "task force" to help craft weed-friendly zoning rules. Who created the task force? Supervisor Scott Wiener.

Wiener is typical of our times, an age of bizarro-world bluenoses. Soft drinks used to be the teetotal stuff prohibitionists demanded; now soda has replaced demon rum on the new prohibitionists' list of moral hazards. Sugar is bad, and so too salt and fat—unless they're used in farm-to-table-locally-sourced-hardwood-smoldered bacon.

But most curious is the ongoing crusade against tobacco. For decades we've been told that cigarettes kill, and yet as the noose around Big Tobacco's neck is pulled ever tighter, state after state is loosening laws against smoking marijuana. The only good tobacky, it would seem, is wacky-tobacky.

Smoking must be stamped out! Unless you're smoking to alter your consciousness—in which case, like, who are we to harsh your buzz, dude? ♦

Just don't let them catch you with a cigarette.

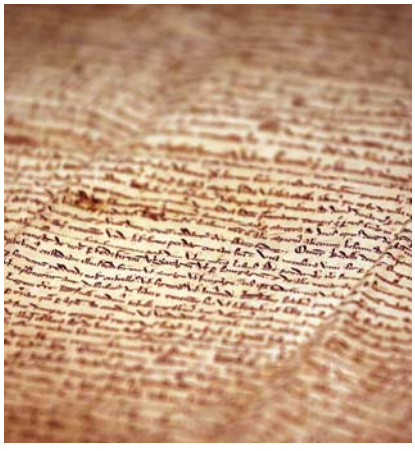
JUSTIN SULLIVAN / GETTY

God Save the Vellum

The cockles of The Scrapbook's reactionary heart were warmed this past week by some news from England. On second thought, make that our "traditional" heart; but the news was still good.

For nearly as long as laws have been made and recorded in England, they have been written or printed on vellum, a heavy, highly durable, and nearly indestructible parchment made from calfskin. All acts of Parliament are printed on vellum—as are many Torah scrolls, commemorative volumes, and diplomas. Part of the reason the actual Domesday Book (1086) and Magna Carta (1215), for example, can still be seen and read is because they were written on vellum.

As might be expected, vellum is not cheap, and there is only one firm left in England that manufactures it. Accordingly, it was announced in February that, beginning in April,



Magna Carta: a tribute to vellum's longevity

the laws of England would no longer be recorded on vellum but on "high-quality" archival paper, at an annual savings to British taxpayers of approximately $113,000. Archival paper is, indeed, of high quality, and designed to last about 500 years. But a mere half-millennium still falls well short of vellum's lifespan, and there is no comparison between bland archival paper and vellum's historic elegance.

This being England, once the House of Lords announced the end of the vellum era, there was an immediate and vociferous public outcry against the prospect, including from members of Parliament. Which, in turn, prompted Britain's paymaster general, Matthew Hancock, to move a few budgetary eggshells around and find the money to pay for vellum. The Scrapbook, as might be expected, is ecstatic.

This is not because The Scrapbook is unaware of the source of the funds—the hardworking taxpayers of Great Britain—but because some things in life, including in government, are worth the expense. Governments here and everywhere have a distressing tendency to spend colossal amounts of money to dubious ends while practicing economy where it doesn't really matter. Nor, for that matter, is The Scrapbook steadfast against change. In this instance, preservation of the history of the world's oldest democracy is the issue, and the best way to do it happens to be the old way. ♦

the weekly Standard
www.weeklystandard.com

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in March, fourth week in June, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington D.C. 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005.

BPA WORLDWIDE

IMAGE: NEWSCOM

Booking It

I'm a speed reader—a *certified* speed reader, certified ever since I was in junior high school and passed a genuine speed-reading course. An *Evelyn Wood* Reading Dynamics speed-reading course, no less.

Yep, the grande dame of speed reading herself told me I read well over a thousand words a minute. Well, no, actually it was just someone in her Reading Dynamics company who told me so, back when I was a teenager, as he shook my hand and gave me a flimsy diploma with my name misspelled on it. Still, whenever I get a little down, whenever storm clouds gather round, I remember my speed-reading certificate, and the bounce comes back to my step. How could I stay sad, knowing that I can read the half-million words of *War and Peace* in less than a day—and still be able to tell you what the book is about? (War, mostly, and a little peace. In Russia.)

I'm still not sure why, exactly, my parents enrolled me in that evening course. But I know they were worried that I spent too much time reading instead of, you know, doing the dishes and mowing the lawn. So maybe their notion was that if I could speed read, I'd need fewer hours to finish the books I was reading—and so would have time for, you know, doing the dishes and mowing the lawn. What they forgot is that text is endless, a well that never runs dry, and finishing one book at high speed just means that readers are quicker to pick up the next.

I'm also not sure why I went along with the idea. I was a cynical child, suspicious of grand schemes, and if ever anything looked like hooey, it was the Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics program. Just by learning how to slide your finger down the page, you can double your reading speed! Triple it! Average college-level readers get through 200 to 300 words a minute with reasonable comprehension. But through the wonders of speed reading, you can manage 700. Easy.

Except you can't. I was always a pretty fast reader, and Wood's introductory test showed me reading around 400 words a minute. When I finished the Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics course, I could whip through books at the rate of 1,200 words a minute—but "whip through" isn't the same as "read," and it took me two or three years to discover how to read again. *Actually* read, instead of speed-skimming.

DAVID SEMPLE

Poetry turned out to be the key for letting go of the mad desire to skim. All speed-reading courses aim at eliminating both vocalizing (the slowest form of reading, where you speak the words to yourself as you read) and auditizing (a slightly faster form, where you hear the words in your head as you move your eyes along the text). But I'd become fascinated with the work of Robert Lowell—convinced, in my adolescent certainty, that *Lord Weary's Castle* was the only true way to write American verse—and the trouble with poetry is that it reads like bad prose if you don't speak it or hear it. Lowell's poetry maybe most of all.

For that matter, we can't speed read the philosophy of Plato, the theology of St. Augustine, or the fiction of James Joyce—anything where the higher-order concepts or the arrangement of the words needs attention. Speed reading necessarily involves a kind of subtraction: a reduction of attention to nothing but the main track of the words as they barrel on toward the conclusion. It's like the bullet train to Tokyo: a reasonable way to travel, if you aren't much interested in the scenery.

Still, these days, I find myself surprisingly grateful to Evelyn Wood. Her Reading Dynamics course ruined a few years of reading, but eventually I learned to have different speeds, like the different gears of a car, as I read. There's a low gear for poetry, a medium gear for serious prose, and a high gear for running through most genre fiction. Plus, of course, the highest gear, still maybe at 1,200 words a minute, for most committee reports, blog posts, and *New York Times* stories: anything where the way things are phrased isn't particularly significant.

And maybe that's the best way to think of the skimming technique that speed-reading courses offer: It's a great way to get through text—if all you want to do is *get through* text. A great way to read words if, you know, the words don't actually matter.

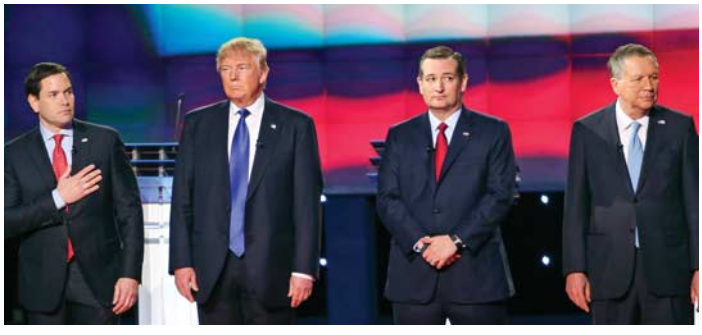
Joseph Bottum

the weekly Standard

Our Ides of March

Soothsayer: *Beware the ides of March.*
Caesar: *He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass.*

Donald Trump is no Julius Caesar. At best he's kind of a comic-book version of a Caesarist-wannabe. Had he been born two millennia ago as Donaldus Trumpum, he would have dodged the Gallic Wars, hired a ghostwriter to pen a memoir about them, and spent his time producing entertainments for the circuses while hatching schemes to deprive hardworking citizens of their bread. But the Ides of March may help determine his electoral fate, as they marked the end of Caesar's temporal one.



MICHAEL CIAGLO / GETTY IMAGES

On March 15 we pass the halfway mark in votes cast and delegates selected in the Republican presidential nominating race. On that historically momentous day, we have the first two of nine winner-take-all contests, Florida and Ohio. If Trump sweeps those, he is the likely (though not certain) nominee. If Trump loses both, he's very unlikely to be the nominee. If the states render a split verdict, we go on with a competitive race between the Caesarist-wannabe and the real Republicans (in both senses of the word).

Where does the race now stand? Voters in 15 states have weighed in, as we write after Super Tuesday, accounting for fewer than 30 percent of the delegates that will ultimately be awarded. Trump has won about 34 percent of the votes cast to date, leading Cruz at 28 percent, Rubio at 22 percent, and Kasich at 7 percent. This has translated into Trump's winning about 46 percent of the delegates so far, to Cruz's 32 percent, Rubio's 15 percent, and Kasich's 4 percent.

These trends probably won't change much in the contests over the coming week—which will bring us to the fateful primaries of March 15. Then, 367 delegates will be selected, the second-biggest haul of any day (after Super Tuesday), with 99 of them in Florida and 66 in Ohio awarded on a winner-take-all basis. Marco Rubio is a senator from Florida. John Kasich is the governor of Ohio. They need to be given a clear chance to defeat Trump in their states—which means Ted Cruz and Kasich should not contest Florida, and Cruz and Rubio should step aside in Ohio.

This seem may seem a bit unfair to Cruz, who has to yield in two winner-take-all states, but it isn't. While Rubio and Kasich perforce focus their time and resources on victory in their home states, which is necessary both to stop Trump and to continue their own campaigns, Cruz can hunt delegates in North Carolina, Missouri, and Illinois, all of which also promise substantial delegate hauls. Cruz has as much stake as Rubio and Kasich in stopping Trump, and the only way that happens is if Trump loses Florida or Ohio—and preferably both.

If the Ides of March go well, Cruz, Rubio, and Kasich can and will battle on, both against Trump and among themselves. There will be many acts to follow, with twists and turns in the plot. After all, Shakespeare dispatches Caesar near the beginning of Act 3, and important things happen after that. We won't test the reader's patience by further developing the analogy between our politics and Shakespeare's play, though readers are invited if they wish to compare our candidates to the famous conspirators—Rubio to the high-minded but at times ineffectual Brutus; Cruz to the wily Cassius, he of a lean and hungry look; and Kasich to Trebonius, who plays a minor but key role in making success possible.

We emphasize that, of course, our Ides of March is an election day, not, as in Rome, the culmination of a conspiracy. Conspiracies are what happens when a republic has already decayed, and they do not save the republic. We are fortunate that the fate of our republic remains in our hands—and right now especially in the hands of the voters of Ohio and Florida. Let them choose wisely so that, at the end of our drama in July in Cleveland, the chairman of the Republican convention will bang the gavel and say,

So call the field to rest; and let's away,
To part the glories of this happy day.

—William Kristol

Storm Clouds

There has been much talk about the rupture, collapse, and/or abandonment of the Republican party as the result of Donald Trump's rise. The most interesting and serious comment came from Senator Ben Sasse, who declared that if Trump becomes the GOP nominee, "conservatives will need to find a third option." "Political parties are not families," Sasse wrote in an open letter. "They are just tools. I was not born Republican. I chose this party, for as long as it is useful."

The question, then, is whether Trump could make the GOP cease being useful. And the answer is: It depends.

NEWSCOM

What it depends on is the true origin of the Trump insurgency.

There are two opposing analyses of the roots of Trumpism. The first is that Trump is, like Barry Goldwater and George McGovern before him, waging a civil war for the soul of a party. In this view, Trump is channeling a previously dormant, but now growing, set of priorities and resentments from a segment of the Republican party. In time, his worldview will become the senior partner in the party's coalition, replacing the conservatives who came before him. This interpretation of Trumpism holds it is just another phase in the natural evolution of a political party.

The other interpretation is that Trumpism is not the product of evolution, but rather the result of a perfect storm: Trumpism has resulted from a unique confluence of events. First, we had a historically contentious election in 2000 that polarized our politics. Then came the terrorist attacks of 9/11, two wars, and a deep, prolonged recession. This was followed by the election of the most radical and authoritarian president since Woodrow Wilson. The problem with Barack Obama wasn't just the nature of his policies, but the manner in which he broke the political compact by forcing them through—either on straight party lines or via executive action. In the winter of 2016, you could argue, America is facing, for the first time, a stretch of four presidential terms in which the country has grown continually worse off.

That's the macro. At the micro level is a Republican primary with two subtle but uniquely disruptive features: (1) For the first time in the modern era, no candidate entered the race as the heir apparent. (2) The field was the largest in the modern era, with 17 candidates, at least 11 of whom were serious, viable contenders. These two facts provided an opening for an insurgent that has never before existed in a GOP primary.

Then there's Jeb Bush. Although he saw himself as the natural heir, Bush had no real claim with voters in the way previous runners-up—Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bob Dole, John McCain, and Mitt Romney—did. Instead, he seems to have provoked an auto-immune response from Republican voters who were disconcerted by the idea of an unprecedented third president from the same family. Bush also distorted the financial aspect of the campaign. Normally, big-money donors are smart money, seeking out the candidate with the best chance of winning. In the case of Bush, the big-money donors seem to have been motivated more by loyalty to the Bush family than cold-eyed calculation.

The donor fealty deprived other would-be frontrunners of resources and armed one of the least-viable candidates with an enormous financial weapon. Bush and his affiliates then chose to use this Death Star not to target Trump—who led the race beginning in August—but Marco Rubio, who was bouncing around between third and sixth in the polls.

There are probably a dozen other major factors, including: the party elite's decade-long attempt to circumvent the base on immigration; the total victory of identity politics and political correctness not just on the left, but in mainstream culture and the corporate world; the willingness of broadcast media to donate thousands of hours of airtime to Trump without challenging his assertions or asking critical questions; the psychological conception of the race as a series of "lanes," which, while in some respects useful, paralyzed rival campaigns from targeting Trump until after Nevada.

In this second view of Trumpism, absent any one or two of these contributing factors, the rise of Trump is not replicable. Trumpism—the brew of immigration restrictionism, nationalism, and nascent authoritarianism—would not have arisen in 2016, or 2018, or 2020. You probably can't say the same for conservatism and Goldwater in 1964 or liberalism and McGovern in 1972.

Which brings us to the question of the Republican party's future. If Trump *is* like Goldwater or McGovern—that is, if he is at the head of a movement winning a civil war within the party—it makes sense for conservatives to begin planning to leave the GOP. It would signal that the party itself is changing in ways that conservatives cannot—or at least should not—countenance.

However, if Trump's rise is more akin to a perfect storm—an unlikely convergence of forces, events, and personalities—then conservatives should not yet be ready to throw over the party. Instead, they should fight for it. Vigorously. In Florida. In Ohio. On the convention floor in Cleveland, if need be. Accidents of history can be reversed. Storms can be weathered. And the Republican party is not on an inexorable trajectory to becoming the property of Donald J. Trump.

At least not yet.

—Jonathan V. Last

Sassing the Donald

Who does Senator Ben Sasse think he is?

BY MARK HEMINGWAY

Who is Ben Sasse? A lot of people seem to be asking that question these days. The junior senator from Nebraska has been in office just over a year, and even people on Capitol Hill still don't know who he is. It's well after 9 P.M. on Super Tuesday, and Sasse is watching the election returns in his office in the Russell Senate Office building when a security guard barges in and asks for his ID. Sasse smiles and amiably says, "I'm the senator," only to have that explanation met with an awkward silence. It takes the security guard a moment to decide the 44-year-old guy sitting on the floor is telling the truth. Sasse is young enough he doesn't look like a senator, and he doesn't exactly put on airs—he frequently makes TV appearances wearing a University of Nebraska warm-up jacket instead of a suit.

Until recently, Sasse's low profile was deliberate. He didn't speak on the Senate floor for nearly a year after he was elected so he could observe and generally get a sense of how the institution worked. But it's unlikely that Sasse is going to enjoy obscurity much longer. When he did finally speak last November, Sasse delivered an impressive stemwinder about the dangers of the growing "administrative state," that is, the problem of Congress ceding its legislative power to unelected bureaucrats in the executive branch (see Fred Barnes's "Sasse Finally Speaks," Nov. 16, 2015). The following month, Sasse delivered another Senate address on the abuse of executive authority. Sasse, a Yale Ph.D. in history and former professor, managed to take abstruse, but nonetheless vital, constitutional issues and make them resonate in plain language. The speeches were met with acclaim from Senate colleagues of both parties.

Following the December 2 terror attack in San Bernardino that killed 14 people, Sasse flew there to deliver a short speech. It was in part a pointed response to President Obama, who had used the terror attack to push gun control and express concern about a backlash against Muslim Americans. On the face of it, a nobody Republican senator's piggybacking on a national tragedy to criticize a Democratic president should have been a spectacularly ill-advised bit of political theater. But Sasse's speech was uploaded to YouTube, and once again, his obvious sincerity struck a chord. "We are at war with militant or jihadi Islam, but we are not at war with people who believe in the American creed, which includes the right of everybody of every religion to freely worship and to freely speak and to freely assemble and argue," he said. "We will win this battle, but we will not win it without reaffirming our core values."

Since then, Sasse has played many variations on this theme of asking Americans to think deeply about our national values and how they relate to our founding documents. He says he is trying to encourage "cultural catechesis." The result is that, over the last four months, Ben Sasse has arguably received more uniformly positive media coverage than any other national politician. That's an especially impressive feat for a socially conservative Republican from a flyover state.

The problem for Sasse is that he's

JASON SEILER

Mark Hemingway is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

now in a bit of an awkward transitional phase. People have abruptly moved from asking "Who is Ben Sasse?" to "Who does Ben Sasse think he is?" The proximate cause of this shift is the same person who has disrupted the tenor of every recent political debate: Donald J. Trump.

Excepting the other presidential candidates, Sasse, who currently ranks 99th in seniority in the Senate, is the most prominent Republican officeholder courageous enough to regularly and publicly criticize Trump. As Trump's political fortunes rose, Sasse was perturbed by Trump's thoughts on one of the defining issues in Washington. "It's very possible that he could, even in the midst of his deal-cutting, try to run a crazy executive unilateralist agenda," Sasse tells The Weekly Standard. "He's talked about Obama as a model and said he's 'paved a new way.'" Indeed, in his December speech on abuse of executive power, Sasse was at pains to insist that his opposition to Obama was on constitutional grounds, not partisan ones. The fact that he's leveling the same critique against the GOP frontrunner would seem to indicate he means business.

But his critique of Trump hasn't stopped there. Sasse is an especially savvy user of social media, and in January, he went on Twitter to politely but pointedly ask Trump about a host of issues, ranging from Trump's flip-flops on the Second Amendment to his praise of single-payer health care to his boasts about affairs with married women. After the Twitter barrage, Sasse went to Iowa to campaign—not for any particular candidate, as he made appearances with Rubio, Cruz, and Fiorina, but simply to stump against Trump. Just before Super Tuesday, he circulated a characteristically thoughtful Facebook post urging people to oppose Trump. "Do you believe the beating heart of Mr. Trump's candidacy has been a defense of the Constitution?" he asked. "Do you believe it's been an impassioned defense of the First Amendment—or an attack on it?"

Judging by the delegate count so far, Sasse's arguments aren't slowing Trump down much. But they are having an impact. When Trump took questions from the press following his victory remarks on Super Tuesday, he was specifically asked about Sasse's declaration that conservatives shouldn't vote for Trump if he becomes the nominee. Trump responded with the usual bluster and called Sasse "a loser."

Sasse, who was sitting in his office on Super Tuesday watching this happen on live TV, listened to Trump's response intently. But when asked if he had anything to say about Trump's name-calling, Sasse simply said "No" and went back to signing notes to constituents.

It's clear Sasse wants his opposition to Trump to be seen as principled, rather than personal. But if Sasse is going to be the only Republican out on this limb, a comparison of the two men is probably unavoidable. And it's one that Sasse, who is in many ways almost the anti-Trump, shouldn't be afraid of.

Trump is an heir to a New York real estate fortune with multiple business bankruptcies and marriages. Sasse is a self-made man from small-town Nebraska who's succeeded at nearly everything he's tried, and he's tried a lot of things. Sasse's career has seen him engage in three different fields—private equity, government, and academia—to great success. After rising through the ranks in the Bush administration, he became one of the most sought-after health care policy experts in the country, and a college president at age 37, to name just a few highlights.

When Sasse ran for Senate, he went from a virtual nobody, who was actively opposed by both the state and national GOP establishments, to winning every Nebraska county but one in a competitive three-way primary. A father of three, he has been married to only one woman, whom he nursed back to health after she had an unexpected and debilitating stroke at a very young age.

Aside from their respective biographies, politically speaking, the two men are vastly different in that one at least has the capacity to be a transformative political figure and the other is Donald Trump. All of the talk about Trump upsetting the political order centers on his confrontational and vulgar discourse. But will rhetorically giving D.C. the middle finger actually do anything to fix American politics? One of the interesting things about Trumpism is that the supposed revolt against the establishment has had little to no effect on incumbents. Trump has not inspired any high-profile primary challenges to GOP officeholders like those in 2014; Trump may have captured 43 percent of the vote in the Alabama primary, but old bulls such as Alabama senator Richard Shelby are cruising to victory.

And as an idea guy, Trump's not even third-rate. After Marco Rubio humiliated Trump for repeating one idea for health care reform over and over at the February 25 debate, Trump's campaign was forced to release a detailed health care plan on his website. The general consensus is that the plan is unoriginal and unserious.

By contrast, underneath Sasse's Nebraska-nice façade is a guy who's actively embracing radical ways to blowtorch D.C.'s sclerotic institutions. "The Republican party doesn't have any identity," Sasse says. "Trump could attack it because it was rotten. The Republican party leadership isn't about anything big."

Sasse, by contrast, does have some big ideas. After idly lamenting how Trump narrowly bested Marco Rubio in Virginia on Super Tuesday, Sasse mutes Fox News and outlines his latest thought experiment: "I've been playing with the idea of proposing a constitutional amendment for retention elections. When you have Congress at an 11 percent approval rating, and you have incumbency rates of 90 percent, obviously what that tells you is that there's no campaign finance reform that's going to make people vote against their own interest. There should have to be an election, just straight-up, it should simply be a public election—do you want your congressman and senator back or fired?" he says. "A standalone yes or no question. It's 51 percent of the people wanting you back against no one. 'Throw the bums out' would win constantly right now. That'd be great. Functionally, it would get you more than term-limits."

He continues, "What that would really do is not create the radical chaos of all these people losing, it would create all sorts of people running for office with a purpose. They would run for the purposes of solving a big problem like an entitlement crisis by essentially prepledging to be in Washington for one term. I think it has the potential to be transformative of the electorate and expand the pool of lay governance."

But before he can get around to hatching constitutional amendments, Sasse is pretty occupied sounding the alarm about Donald Trump. The following evening, Trump supporters would show up at a speech Sasse was giving to the D.C. GOP and attempt to shout him down.

And there are plenty of Trump supporters in Nebraska who are not happy with their senator. As one prominent Nebraskan recently told Sasse, "We thinking people get what you're doing, but just as your friend, shut up."

Sasse insists he feels good about what he's doing. "I've been talking to a lot of Nebraskans, and many people just say, 'I couldn't ever vote for that guy, so now what am I going to do?' And then they ask what I'm going to do," he says. "I couldn't conceive of ever voting for him. So why not say it now, if there's a chance it would make a difference? That's what leadership is, right?" ♦

No Trump

Why I can't support him.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Donald Trump walked onto the gilded stage at his Mar-a-Lago resort on Super Tuesday with the air and confidence of a magician.

"I am a unifier," he said.

Ta-dah!

Moments earlier, Trump's famulus, Chris Christie, made a similar claim: "He's bringing the country together."

The irony is deep. Christie's campaign slogan was "telling it like it is." He lost largely because Donald Trump has overwhelmingly won the support of voters who want a candidate to "tell it like it is." And both men took to the stage on the biggest night of the primary season and tried to trick voters into believing something that isn't true.

In this case, it's not just that what they're saying isn't true. It's aggressively, spectacularly false. Arguably, the single biggest story of the 2016 presidential contest has been how Trump's candidacy has divided the Republican party. Exit polls from several states that held contests earlier that day added to the constellation of datapoints: In Tennessee, 42 percent of respondents said they'd be dissatisfied if Trump were the nominee; in Georgia, it was 45 percent; in Arkansas, 50 percent; and in Virginia, 53 percent.

Trump won all these states. But roughly half of the GOP primary voters in each oppose him. This is what political division looks like. Trump's claim to be a unifier is not just specious, it's absurd.

This casual dishonesty is a feature of his campaign. And it's one of many reasons so many Republicans and conservatives oppose Trump and will never support his candidacy.

I'm one of them.

I'd never support Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders, of course, so if Trump is the Republican nominee, I'll vote down-ballot and support someone else.

Living in Maryland, one of the bluest states in the country, there's no real consequence to this decision. But beyond Trump's easy and eager mendacity, there are reasons, philosophical and personal, that he would never get my vote. I came to Washington in 1993 to work in the conservative movement. I'd interned at the Heritage Foundation and was lucky enough to land a job there after I graduated from college. With a one-year interruption for graduate school in journalism, I've been working in the conservative movement and reporting on its debates, ideas, and policies for nearly a quarter-century.

My wife and I chose to live outside the Beltway, in rural Maryland, in part so we could raise our kids somewhat as we were brought up in the Midwest. On the vanishingly rare occasions that we attend a cocktail party in Washington, it's almost always an event hosted by one conservative group or another.

I've never been much of a Republican party guy. I had a one-week volunteer job at the national convention in San Diego in 1996, working as a gofer for Haley Barbour. Three months later, frustrated by Bob Dole's timid centrism, I voted for Harry Browne, the Libertarian party candidate.

I consider myself a conservative with a strong libertarian streak. I'm for gay marriage, I'm deeply skeptical of paternalistic regulation, and I believe the tax code needs a radical overhaul—a national sales tax would be my preference. But I care most about the two issues that directly threaten the continued viability of the American experiment: national security and the debt. My views on individual politicians are shaped mainly by their positions on protecting the country and reforming entitlements. Accordingly, the most promising policy development over the past decade was Paul's Ryan victory over the GOP

TWS ILLUSTRATION / TRUMP, DARRON BIRGENHEIER

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

establishment and its determined opposition to entitlement reform and the most worrisome was Barack Obama's abandonment of the war against the global jihadist movement.

A Trump presidency would be disastrous on both scores. Trump opposes entitlement reform, and it's unclear whether he even understands the central role entitlements play in our mounting debt. Trump claims Republicans lost the presidential election in 2012 because of Ryan's reforms. "He represented cutting entitlements," Trump said last month, pointing to the selection of Ryan by Mitt Romney as "the end of the campaign." Trump has said repeatedly that he won't touch entitlements. "The only one that's not going to cut is me."

On national security, Trump says he'll be strong and frequently pronounces himself "militaristic." But he doesn't seem to have even a newspaper reader's familiarity with the pressing issues of the day. He was nonplussed by a reference to the "nuclear triad"; he confused Iran's Quds Force and the Kurds; he didn't know the difference between Hamas and Hezbollah. The ignorance would be less worrisome if his instincts weren't terrifying. He's praised authoritarians for their strength, whether Vladimir Putin for killing journalists and political opponents or the Chinese government for the massacre it perpetrated in Tiananmen Square.

To the extent he articulates policies, he seems to be an odd mix of third-world despot and naïve pacifist. He favors torture as opposed to the enhanced interrogation techniques of the previous administration—for punitive reasons—and he has called for targeting the families of America's enemies and confiscating the oil in Iraq. But he has waffled on whether the United States should be fighting ISIS at all and has said he wouldn't rip up the Iran nuclear deal.

The main reason I won't support Trump is simpler and more personal: I couldn't explain such a vote to my children.

Last summer, I was in Ames, Iowa, to cover an event hosted at Iowa State University by evangelical leaders. Although Trump had begun to climb in the polls, I was there to cover pretty much everyone else. But as he was being interviewed on stage, he made some comments about John McCain that left me—and many of those in attendance—slack-jawed. McCain is "not a war hero," Trump bellowed. "He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."

I ran to the basement of the building for Trump's post-interview press conference. I've had policy differences with McCain, but I knew well the story of his time in Vietnam. He was shot down flying combat missions on October 26, 1967. He was taken captive with a broken right leg and fractures in both arms. He was beaten and tortured repeatedly, in part because his father commanded the U.S. forces in the Pacific.

I asked Trump why he would blame McCain for his capture. He changed the subject. "I am saying John McCain has not done a good job."

When I repeated the question, Trump said, "I am not blaming John McCain for his capture. If he gets captured, he gets captured."

"Why would you say you like people who don't get captured?"

Trump responded: "The people that don't get captured I'm not supposed to like? I like the people who don't get captured and I respect the people who do get captured."

We had several testy exchanges and then I asked Trump whether he'd read any accounts of McCain's time in captivity or was otherwise familiar with his experiences as a prisoner of war. Trump's answer left me speechless.

"It's irrelevant."

It wasn't just that Trump was willing to mock the heroism of a prisoner of war, it's that he was willing to do so without any understanding of what had happened.

There would be other moments equally revealing of his character. Trump would suggest that Megyn Kelly asked tough questions at a debate because she was menstruating. He would ridicule the face of a female rival, Carly Fiorina, and then lie about it when he was caught. The man who has had harsh words for hundreds of people over the course of his campaign over even the most trivial perceived slights couldn't find the words to condemn David Duke or the Ku Klux Klan when asked three times to do so directly.

The worst of these moments may have come when Trump mocked the disability of a journalist who had criticized him. At a rally in Sarasota last November, Trump was discussing Serge Kovaleski, a reporter for the *New York Times*. "The poor guy, you've got to see this guy," Trump said, before flailing in a manner that resembled a palsy tremor. Kovaleski suffers from arthrogryposis, a congenital condition that affects the movement and positioning of his joints.

When Trump was criticized, he said he couldn't have been mocking the reporter because he was unaware of Kovaleski's condition. That wasn't true. Kovaleski had interviewed Trump a dozen times and said they had interacted on "a first-name basis for years." Trump then accused Kovaleski of "using his disability to grandstand."

This came up last Friday, as I drove my 8-year-old son to see the Washington Capitals play. I'll be gone on his birthday, covering presidential primaries, so this was an early present.

My son and his older sister have followed the campaign, as much as kids their age do, and they're aware that I've traded barbs with Trump. So we sometimes talk about the candidates and their attributes and faults, and we'd previously talked about Trump's penchant for insulting people. On our drive down, my son told me that some of the kids in his class like Trump because "he has the most points," and he asked me again why I don't like the Republican frontrunner.

I reminded him about the McCain and Fiorina stories and then we spent a moment talking about Kovaleski. I described his condition and showed him how physically limiting it would be. Then he asked a simple question:

"Why would anyone make fun of him?"

Why indeed? ♦

Present at the Creation?

When Donald Trump met Rick Santorum.

BY FRED BARNES

When Donald Trump contacted him early in September 2014, Rick Santorum suspected Trump had something specific on his mind. He just didn't know what it was. "I don't think Donald Trump does anything by accident," Santorum says. "He found an excuse to reach out to me."

The excuse was a comment by Santorum on the morning radio show of comedian Joe Piscopo in New York. When workers lose their jobs, Santorum had said, business people aren't always to blame. He hadn't mentioned Trump. But Trump texted him a transcript of the Piscopo interview with a circle around that comment. Trump added: "Come see me."

Two weeks later, Santorum dropped by Trump Tower. He was in New York on other business. His 16-year-old daughter, Sarah, was with him.

When he walked into Trump's office, he learned instantly why Trump was eager to see him. "I read your book," Trump said. The book, *Blue Collar Conservatives*, had been published a few months earlier. It focuses on the theme of Santorum's presidential campaigns in 2012 and again this season: that millions of working-class Americans have been left behind by the globalized economy and "neither party hears them."

Santorum couldn't believe Trump had read the book. "No, I really read your book," Trump insisted. "It's great." Santorum had written that Republicans should speak up for middle- and lower-income workers and their families. Trump agreed. "That's where the Republicans need to go," he said. And that's exactly where Trump has gone to build a large constituency for his presidential bid.

The book may not have given Trump the central idea of his campaign.

Sarah Santorum and the Donald at the Trump shop

But at the very least, it sharpened his thinking. In public, Trump often touts his bestseller *The Art of the Deal*. His presidential bid is "the biggest deal of my life," and its lessons guide his campaign strategy, he told the *Wall Street Journal*. Santorum's book has guided his working-class sympathies.

"He liked the idea of being concerned about working men and women who have lost the opportunity to have the good-paying jobs they used to have," Santorum told me. The meeting lasted an hour, with Trump doing most of the talking.

A major point in *Blue Collar Conservatives* is that Republicans have failed to address "the plight" of the working class. "Low taxes and lean government are good macro-economic policy, but it's hard for ordinary people to see how that policy will affect them and their families," Santorum wrote. "In recent years, the interests of the 'talk only about deficits and growth' wing of the party have received too much emphasis, and it has come at the expense of working families."

In his campaign speeches, Trump echoes Santorum's thinking. "In upward mobility, the Land of Opportunity is falling behind the rest of the world," Santorum wrote. America's decline is the premise for Trump's vow "to make America great again." In their meeting, Trump cited China and Mexico as culprits in taking advantage of America. "They're killing us," he said, a notion he often repeats as a presidential candidate.

"We need to examine our trade policies," Santorum wrote. "I am a free trader, but we have to look at the effect of free trade on the average person. . . . Are existing trade laws fair and properly enforced?" Trump would say no. He opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership treaty as poorly negotiated, unfair, and harmful to American workers.

Santorum doesn't dwell on immigration in his book, but his views are well known and Trump is generally in sync with them. "We must reduce immigration levels to the United States in order to protect American workers from foreign labor that is taking jobs that Americans could otherwise hold," Santorum has said. He doesn't advocate mass deportations of illegal immigrants. Trump does.

The meeting in New York wasn't Santorum's first exchange with Trump. In 2012, Trump appeared on Greta Van Susteren's Fox News show. He talked about presidential candidates and when asked about Santorum, Trump labeled him "a loser," citing the loss of his Senate seat in 2006.

Santorum called Trump's office the next day. Within 24 hours, Trump called back. "You called me a loser," Santorum said. Trump answered that Santorum had lost his reelection race.

What if you invest in a business deal and it doesn't work out? Santorum asked. Does that make you a

COURTESY OF RICK SANTORUM

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

loser? Does that mean no one should invest with you? Trump's response, according to Santorum: "Well, that's a good point." To which Santorum said, "Stop calling me a loser."

In the call, Trump told Santorum he was "just too conservative." Santorum stressed abortion and marriage issues too much, Trump said. "That doesn't go over in New York."

Santorum replied with an analogy Trump might understand. His talk about moral and cultural issues was like investing in a small piece of real estate, followed by a larger piece, then an even bigger one. He was building up credibility to talk eventually about national security. "That makes a lot of sense," Trump said, according to Santorum.

As their meeting in September 2014 wound down, Trump said he wanted Sarah Santorum to pick out something from his "gift shop" on the ground floor of Trump Tower. Santorum balked, but Trump said he was "too cheap." Trump prevailed. The shop consisted of Trump jewelry and other items displayed in glass cases, plus ties.

"You need a tie," he told Santorum. "Big men," Trump said, "don't wear long-enough ties. We carry extra long ties." He showed Santorum a few ties. "You pick one out." When Santorum balked, Trump handed him the ties. "Here, take all of them." When I interviewed Santorum last week, he was wearing a Trump tie, a red one.

During their meeting, Trump said he was thinking of running for the Republican nomination in 2016, but hadn't yet decided. Running would be a sacrifice for him, he suggested. He had a "better life" than a president has. He could go wherever he wanted. He could fly on his own plane. But Trump managed to overcome those apprehensions and announced his candidacy last June.

Santorum dropped out of the 2016 presidential race on February 3 after finishing 11th in the Iowa caucuses (which he'd won in 2012). As he left the race, he endorsed Marco Rubio. Trump was upset. He sent word that before backing Rubio, Santorum should have called him.

Santorum hasn't heard from Trump again. ♦

Iran's Make-Believe Moderates

Looking in vain for glasnost in Tehran.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Barack Obama and his tireless secretary of state sold the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in part as a means to reinforce Iranian "reformers," "moderates," and "pragmatists." They were always quick to add that the atomic accord stood on its own technical merits. Yet the nonnuclear dimension of the deal was no small part of the sugar that made the JCPOA more appealing. A more temperate Islamic regime, which gave first priority to the well-being of its people, would be less likely to abuse the JCPOA's weaknesses. And the accord has serious limitations: Within 8 years, the Islamic Republic can start producing advanced centrifuges; within 15 years, clerics will be free to construct as many centrifuges and enrich as much uranium as they wish. The unorthodox inspection regime that the White House agreed to, which at the suspect Parchin facility restricted the International Atomic Energy Agency to remote, robotic sampling, also suggests that the administration really hopes to see the Islamic Republic moderate over the next decade.

Hassan Rouhani

The 2016 Iranian parliamentary elections ought to be viewed as one more sign that the overarching political premise of the deal made no sense. The new parliament voted in at February's end is composed of—and again the Western nomenclature is far from ideal—radical hardliners, hardliners, conservatives, and a few tepid, nervous reformers. Real reformers, Iranian politicians and intellectuals who want to change radically the governing structure of the Islamic Republic and convert a theocracy into a democracy, were silenced, imprisoned, exiled, murdered, and banned from politics when the pro-democracy Green Movement was stamped out after the fraudulent presidential election in 2009.

What we have left in the Islamic Republic's theocratically managed democracy, in which parliament has no real power, are regime-loyal laymen and mullahs who are all Islamic revolutionaries but differ, at times strongly, on who should lead the cause and how the country's economic system should be structured. Anyone who isn't a member of the third-world-loving-please-don't-let-America-bomb-Iran-stop-the-warmongering-neoconservatives movement and has studied the Islamic Republic knows that when parliament chairman Ali Larijani, a highly intelligent, dissent-crushing, women's-rights-loathing, supreme-leader-loving, former commander of the Revolutionary Guards, allies himself with President Hassan Rouhani and his followers, the latter aren't seeking to change fundamentally the Islamic Republic. Many Westerners want to believe that Rouhani's economic preferences, which would reduce the state's heavy hand

NEWSCOM

Reuel Marc Gerecht, a contributing editor, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

in commerce and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps's monopolizing role in industry, will sooner or later lead to greater political and cultural freedom. The power of Adam Smith will triumph over Islam, so to speak.

It's a bad bet. We have seen this play before.

Hassan Rouhani and his former mentor, the clerical major-domo Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, liberalized Iran's economy in the 1990s when Rafsanjani was president and the de facto co-equal of Ali Khamenei, whom he had elevated to supreme leader in 1989 upon Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death. Rafsanjani eased up a bit on cultural expression and didn't blow a gasket when middle-class and affluent Iranian women started to add a bit of color to their clothing and push back the scarves covering their hair. Rafsanjani made a personal pitch to successful Iranian expatriates to come home and invest. Rafsanjani and his aide-de-camp Rouhani especially tried to attract European money to Iran. As Rouhani put it in 1994, "Because of the fierce competition between Europe and the United States, we must expand our relations with Europe and counter America's conspiracy." The two clerics tried—and failed—to check the growing economic and political power of the Revolutionary Guards.

However, Rafsanjani, with Khamenei, could come down brutally on those who politically or culturally pushed the envelope too far. Many intellectuals, at home and abroad, were assassinated during Rafsanjani's presidency by officers and agents of the ministry of intelligence. Rafsanjani and Rouhani, who'd been the driving forces behind that ministry's creation and had men closely aligned with them serving in its highest ranks, were unquestionably culpable for this terrorism, as they were also undoubtedly "in" on the attack at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, which left 19 Americans dead and 372 wounded. Some Iranian students believed that Mohammad Khatami, a complicated cleric who sincerely wrestled with the collision of Western and Islamic ideas, would usher in an age of reform after he succeeded Rafsanjani in 1997; Rouhani's deeply felt antipathy toward them exploded during the 1999 student protests. Rouhani, then secretary of the supreme national security council, gave a firebreathing speech threatening the students with death.

Clerics do change. There are many Iranian mullahs who were once diehard believers in theocracy and the Islamic Revolution who have grown disenchanted. Most of them have been harassed, some even tortured and exiled for their growing doubts. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Hassan Rouhani or the vast majority of his supporters who won parliamentary seats in Tehran are what we might call discreet evolutionary mullahs and laymen. There is no reason to believe that the Iranian president has even a smidgen of the

reflection and self-doubt that Mikhail Gorbachev did when he attempted to save communism through glasnost.

Foreign policy analysts and grand strategists don't have to be slaves to history and read meticulously every speech and book of foreign VIPs, but they can't ignore them and gainsay the obvious. *Mutatis mutandis*, Rouhani *is* the same man he was in 1999. That he might look better than he did then is only because the Iranian political system has moved so far "right" since the halcyon days of the "Islamic Left" in the 1990s, when reformist clerics and laymen tried peacefully and democratically to introduce change into Iranian society and politics. The only ones who've really changed are the fallen heroes of Khatami's brief period of reform. They've become forlorn, desperate to see hope even in men who once literally gave the orders to jail and beat them. It is an Orwellian irony.

Regardless of what happens inside Iran, President Obama and his supporters will continue to embrace the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. They will never accept the argument that a nuclear agreement that enhances the power of Islamic revolutionaries is so politically counterproductive as to negate the logic of the deal itself. The truth: Since the second Iraq war became politically unpalatable, the vast majority of American progressives haven't cared that much about what happens inside the Islamic Republic, whether hardliners rise and moderates fall. Liberals may cite with the greatest of reverence Iranian dissidents who are praying that Rouhani 2.0 won't be as nasty as Rouhani 1.0, that his enmity towards the Revolutionary Guards will spill over into civil society and at least create buffers between their demurrals and the guards' rapacity. But for the American left, what really matters is that the United States isn't going to war over the Iranian nuclear issue. As long as that is true, Rouhani *is* a moderate. The Iranian people just need to be patient. The arc of history is on their side. Crony capitalism will eventually set them free. ♦

Justice for Juniors

How should courts deal with kids and crime?

BY ELI LEHRER

Michael Hernandez, 14, charged as an adult with killing a schoolmate, June 1, 2004

MIAMI HERALD / TIM CHAPMAN / AP

How should we treat children who get into trouble with the law? For more than a century, American attitudes have shifted between sometimes-wild extremes.

Between the 1970s and early 2000s, a system that had become too lenient arguably became too harsh. We're now seeing the start of a swing in the opposite direction, with states as diverse as Louisiana, Texas, Connecticut, New York, Florida, and Michigan considering proposals that may, at last, strike a happy medium on juvenile justice. And other states will no doubt be watching to see what happens.

Cook County, Ill., established the nation's first juvenile courts in 1899, sparking a trend that spread nationwide by the 1930s. Before that, children who committed crimes were tried no differently from adults. The early juvenile courts were loosely structured institutions that granted judges nearly limitless discretion. Offenders often had no right to counsel, appeals, or even to confront accusers. While remarkably lenient in some cases, the system often was capricious and rife with racial bias. Even youths who committed murder could sometimes find a sympathetic judge and get off with minimal punishment. Conversely, a judge who took a disliking to an offender—even one accused of a relatively minor "status offense," like truancy or alcohol consumption—could sentence the unlucky child to years in detention.

Things changed after a 15-year-old Arizona boy named Gerald Gault made a prank phone call to a neighbor and ended up with a six-year sentence in a juvenile detention center, with no right of appeal. His case went to the Supreme Court, whose 1967 *In re Gault* ruling found that juveniles must be afforded many of the rights accorded to adults in criminal courts. Other rulings and new legislation expanded these rights further, while still maintaining the concept that the juvenile justice system was to be corrective, rather than punitive.

While clearly more "fair" on its surface and less racially biased, the system that emerged was a public-safety disaster. The nationwide spike in crime that had started in the 1950s accelerated

Eli Lehrer is president of the R Street Institute.

following the *Gault* decision, with juvenile crime getting a large share of attention. In some places, even hardened 17-year-old gangsters became very difficult to punish effectively in the post-*Gault* regime.

Fed up with rising crime, and informed by a largely correct perception that family breakdown and a growing welfare state were multiplying the number of "bad kids," states got tough. Several instituted rules to exclude older teens from juvenile court altogether. To this day, 16-year-olds arrested in New York and North Carolina *always* end up in criminal court alongside adults. Seven other states do the same for 17-year-olds. All 50 states have either implemented or continued policies that allow at least some juveniles to be tried in adult criminal court and sentenced to regular prisons.

These moves to treat more juveniles like adults have brought new problems of their own. Under current law, teenagers can sometimes be placed on public sex-offender registries for life, even for the "crime" of consensual sex with other teenagers. When street gangs force 16-year-olds to commit acts of hooliganism, those initiation rituals can be punished with hard time alongside adult criminals.

Because the adult system has more real criminals than the juvenile system, children who do time in adult prisons tend to manifest far worse outcomes than those sent to juvenile facilities. They return to prison at a higher rate, commit worse crimes in the future, and complete fewer levels of education. Locking up truly dangerous teenagers for long periods may still be a net social benefit. But these probably are exceptions rather than the rule. While the annual per-detainee cost of juvenile facilities is generally higher than comparable facilities for adults, other associated costs tend to more than cancel out the differences. In one of the more comprehensive studies conducted on the topic, a 2012 University of Texas analysis found that Texas would save about $90 million a year by ending the automatic sentencing of under-18 offenders as adults.

More states are moving to address the issue. In this year's legislative sessions, efforts to "raise the age" will take center stage in states like Louisiana and Michigan, both of which propose raising from 17 to 18 the age at which the justice system treats people as adults. Louisiana's effort—which has the backing of both newly elected governor John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, and many in the Republican-controlled legislature—may be most worth watching. The proposal wouldn't limit the ability of prosecutors to seek adult charges when the circumstances warrant it. But it would restore a measure of balance to the system.

Momentum certainly appears to be on its side; a report commissioned by the legislature from Louisiana State University strongly recommended raising the age. A juvenile justice reform coalition has attracted voices that range from local Catholic bishops (a potent lobby in Louisiana) to gay rights groups. Polls suggest the effort is popular. A similar proposal has some traction in Michigan, and the Florida legislature recently came very close to approving reforms that would have limited prosecutors' ability to charge children as adults. Texas will consider similar reforms when its legislature meets again in 2017 and New York will hold hearings this month.

But there's also a danger of going too far. Some teenagers really do commit adult crimes. They should serve adult time. More than a few advocates on the left want to put a total stop to the ability of prosecutors to charge juveniles as adults. For example, Connecticut governor Dannel Malloy has suggested raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include everyone up to the age of 21. The belief that it's never appropriate to treat delinquent children as adults likely contributed to a significant youth crime wave that's only abated in the last decade or so. This doesn't mean proposals like Malloy's should be dismissed out of hand. But it does mean that they need a careful look and extensive analysis before states act.

The widespread practice of allowing children to be treated as adults in the justice system merits significant changes. But policymakers would be wise to proceed carefully. ♦

Higher Ed, Higher Prices

Why is it criminal to cut college costs?

BY IKE BRANNON

I went to a private college—Augustana College, in Rock Island, Illinois—and am grateful for having been able to do so. Doing so back then wasn't all that daunting: The tuition and room and board 30 years ago was just under $8,000, and with a $3,000 scholarship my parents found it a manageable burden.

Augustana's posted price for tuition, room, and board today is around $50,000. This is just a sticker price—paid by about as many people as pay the full list price for their new cars. In fact it's a negotiable price for all but the wealthy: The typical applicant pays a small fraction of that amount—the average figure at a college like Augustana is roughly $22,000. That's markedly more than in my day but not terribly different from what it costs to attend public colleges in Illinois—and in many instances it is cheaper than attending a public university in another state.

Ike Brannon is president of Capital Policy Analytics, a consulting firm in Washington.

The market for secondary education is very competitive for the non-elite schools. Students considering Augustana have many options, public and private, and Augustana can't expect to get enough students and revenue without discounting its tuition. But the practice raises a question: Why have a high tuition in the first place if few people pay that amount?

The reason is to extract a few extra grand from the people who can afford $50,000 in annual tuition without much trouble: Augustana probably has about a dozen such students. Most schools practice a form of price discrimination where the parents show their income and the school recommends a price for them to pay. Some haggling ensues and the two parties eventually arrive at a price they can both live with.

The downside to having a high posted tuition is that many prospective college students do not understand (and are not informed by their college counselors or anyone else) how the discount game is played, and they don't even consider Augustana or any other private school because of the high posted prices. Thus, by reducing posted tuition it may very well be possible that an Augustana could make up the money lost from a few wealthy families by boosting demand and enrollment across the board.

It's not quite that simple, though. A college that unilaterally reduces its tuition may get a one-year boost in applications and enrollment, but it quickly disappears—and then some. The problem is that people perceive a college's posted tuition to be analogous to its quality, and after the attendant hoopla from the initial tuition drop disappears, the markedly lower tuition invariably results in a decrease in applications the second year and even more the third year. University administrators refer to this as a "death spiral," and it's a common phenomenon. Hence, no one dares to cut tuition unilaterally.

The solution is simple: Private colleges should form a consortium and cut their tuitions en masse. This way, the inferiority perceptions would not arise and demand would grow across all private colleges.

There's one tiny problem with college presidents doing this: The Justice Department will try to put them in jail if they do so.

To avoid the 'death spiral' that follows lost prestige from fee cuts, private colleges should form a consortium and cut their tuitions en masse. This way, the inferiority perceptions would not arise and demand would grow across all private colleges. There's one problem with college presidents doing this: The Justice Department will try to put them in jail if they do so.

Getting soaked? Augustana College students take a Polar Plunge, March 10, 2013.

It turns out that price collusion doesn't apply only to agreements to jointly raise prices. As federal prosecutors read the law, it also prohibits agreements to *reduce* prices, even though in this instance it would do nothing but help prospective students. In fact, when the topic was broached at a meeting of university presidents the Department of Justice took it upon itself to interview the attendees of the meeting in question and threaten them with prosecution. The discussion had taken place at a public conference and was widely reported in the media—as far as one could get from a smoke-filled room.

While the Justice Department may not allow this, Congress can. Why hasn't it? It's a little complicated, of course. While it would be a natural provision to be included in the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, there's not a lot of urgency to get that done (or anything, really) at the moment. And this particular provision isn't a high priority for the committees charged with writing the legislation: The private schools with the most pull (and money) are those of the Ivy League, and Congress already gave them this power long ago. There's a somnolent trade group that ostensibly works at the behest of the private colleges but it ceased being relevant long ago. Some private college presidents make a point of talking to their local member of Congress about it when they come to Washington, but there's not much of a concerted effort to advance the cause, and that's what it usually takes to get a good idea—even one with little opposition—enacted into law.

And it's worth pointing out that public universities don't necessarily want the increase in competition that this would engender. They haven't had to weigh in on this yet but rest assured they will if it ever gets traction—and public colleges have a much bigger presence in Washington than smaller private colleges. It's tough to oppose on its merits, but little in Washington is decided on merits.

That a simple provision that would reduce the cost of college for tens of thousands of students—at no cost to the government—languishes for no good reason is a shame. In a world where Congress has little flexibility to boost spending on anything, it ought to jump at a chance to increase access to college any way it can. ♦

NEWSCOM

Battle Without End

The casualties of Verdun

By Geoffrey Norman

There is something hard, cold, and brutal about the structure. It looks like a concrete airplane hangar and rising above it is what is called the "Lantern of the Dead." The shape suggests, appropriately, an artillery shell.

When you walk around the outside of the building you find small windows, and when you look through them what you see are bones. Human bones and skulls. Piles of them. They are the remains of more than 130,000 men who were killed here and whose bodies could not be recovered or identified and so remained in the mud, blown apart again and again by artillery shells, in what was arguably the most awful battle of the First World War.

Human remains in the mud

This, the Douaumont Ossuary, is the perfect memorial to that battle, fought 100 years ago.

The aim of that battle was to win the war, which had already lasted much longer than most people expected. In a little more than a year, far more men had been killed than anyone anticipated, yet neither side was close to victory. The front ran from Switzerland to the North Sea, and there seemed to be no possibility of a breakthrough by either side. There were plans for offensives, but they were likely to accomplish only the pointless taking of a little useless ground and the killing of many more soldiers. Wire, cannons, gas, and machine guns dominated a battlefield that generals had expected to be ruled by the horse. It had become a war of attrition.

So one general gambled that with the right objective and tactics, attrition could be a winning strategy. In a long letter to his leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Erich von Falkenhayn, who commanded the German Army, argued, "Within our reach, behind the French sector of the Western Front there are objectives for the retention of which the French General Staff would be compelled to throw in every man they have. If they do so the forces of France will bleed to death."

Attrition to the limit, then.

The objective Falkenhayn had in mind was the fortified French city of Verdun, which would become a synonym for all the futility and awfulness of war. And the tactics? Nothing especially new. Just much more of the same: artillery, especially, along a very narrow front where the enemy would fight for every bit of ground. One new weapon would appear for the first time—the flamethrower. And it could be said that military aviation came into its own over Verdun.

As any good general should, Erich von Falkenhayn knew his enemy. The French Army, in the years before the war, had adopted a doctrine that stressed the offensive to a point that was virtually mystical. "To excess" was one of the army's maxims, "and even that may not be far enough." Defensive measures were regarded as something to be practiced only until a unit could once again go on the attack. There was an echo of Danton in this doctrine. *De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace*.

Audacity had already cost the French Army some 300,000 soldiers and had nearly lost the war. But the generals—most of them—still clung to the doctrine of the offense, which held, as a corollary, that any ground lost must be quickly retaken by counterattack.

Verdun, Falkenhayn knew, was an objective the French would not give up. They would defend its outer line of forts and strongholds to the last man and when ground was lost, it would become the objective of a counterattack.

This was true in spite of the fact that Verdun's military value in 1916 was, at best, negligible. It had historically been strategic, including during the reign of Louis XIV, when it was fortified by Vauban, the master of military engineering. But this had been a quiet sector, so far, in the war. After the Germans made short work of the fortifications on their way through Belgium, the French high command had stripped

STF / AFP / GETTY

Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard.

the works around Verdun of guns and men and sent them to more active sectors along the line. Fixed fortifications, being defensive in nature, no longer figured in their plans.

However, even with few men and fewer guns, the forts didn't go anywhere, and they became objectives and symbols to the French, in just the way that Falkenhayn had anticipated. They thus became death traps.

While taking Verdun would not get the German Army much closer to Paris or improve, in any other way, its military situation, in the view of the French, losing the city would be an insuperable defeat the symbolism of which might be fatal. Verdun, the last redoubt to fall to the Prussian invaders in 1870, was a sacred city. In fact, after the long battle, the single road that supplied it with the tons of matériel needed to keep up the fight would become known as the *Voie Sacrée*.

So in late 1915, when a report detailing the unpreparedness of the Verdun sector of the French line made its way to Paris, behind the backs of General Joseph Joffre and his staff, there was a minor political eruption. Joffre was the supreme commander and something just short of a military dictator. He was also a titan of complacency and a fierce defender of his prerogatives and of his reputation as the savior of France. He had nearly lost the war in the first months of fighting, but the Battle of the Marne in September 1914 had saved his reputation, the army, and, indeed, the nation.

A street in Verdun after eight months of bombing

So he took strong exception to the report on Verdun's defenses and wrote that he would not "be party to soldiers placed under my command bringing before the Government, by channels other than the hierarchic channel, complaints or protests concerning the execution of my orders."

At this point in the war, Joffre's resignation would have brought on a major crisis. So although the reports of Verdun's unpreparedness and vulnerability were accurate, Joffre remained in command, no heads rolled, and the positions around Verdun were improved by the creation of at least one new trench line and the beginning of another. It wasn't much but it turned out, perhaps, to have been adequate. One hundred years later, one marvels at the bureaucratic warfare and the defense of administrative turf. Tens of thousands dead already. More tens of thousands soon to die. And the generals and the politicians bickered over questions of prerogative and status.

Those who had warned that Verdun was both vulnerable and the objective of a massive German offensive were, of course, correct. Security on the German side of the line was tight but it was impossible to conceal, entirely, preparation for the attack, which entailed the movement of 150,000 men and more than 1,000 artillery pieces, including giant guns that fired shells weighing more than a ton.

The French might have been overwhelmed if the offensive had been launched, as scheduled, on February 11. But fog and snow cut down visibility over the ground where the battle was to be fought. Weather was one of those imponderables of war that Napoleon cited. In this case, it bought the French some time. They continued to strengthen their positions before the human storm they knew was coming.

It began on February 21 with the most massive artillery barrage in the history of warfare. More than two million shells fell on the French along the eight-mile front. Tons of steel and high explosive—and poison gas—came in at a rate of more than 1,000 shells a minute.

The French lines were obliterated, and the units defending them took exceedingly heavy casualties. But French units put up enough resistance to slow the German infantry when it attacked in the afternoon. By the end of the week, the Germans had advanced some three miles. The battle lasted another 10 months, and the same ground would be shelled and fought over again and again.

In the early days, the French were tenacious in defense but disorganized and lacking leadership. It was perhaps inevitable that in a battle that turned so much on matters of symbolism they would leave the largest and most formidable of the forts defending the city, Douaumont, almost undefended.

Though the French high command had declared forts of negligible importance and stripped them of men and guns, Douaumont was an undeniable stronghold, a fact of which the Germans were aware, even if the French were not. Construction on the fort had begun 30 years before the great battle. It had been modernized repeatedly, as recently as 1913. It was a massive structure of concrete and steel, surrounded by moats and belts of barbed wire. Machine guns protected by turrets could bring approaches to the fort under interlocking fields of fire. The men who manned the fort were protected by its thick walls, augmented by layers of sand that absorbed the concussion of exploding shells. Douaumont was the closest thing possible to impregnable, and the German artillery had bruised but not destroyed it in the opening days of the battle. It was a stronghold around which

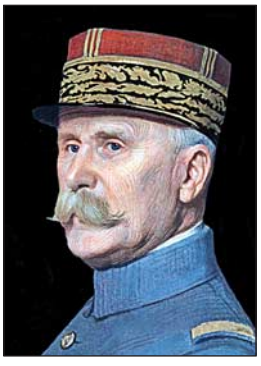
GALERIE / BILDERWELT / GETTY

French lines could be stabilized, strengthened, and held.

But it was held by only about 60 men. This was not so much a tactical decision as an administrative oversight—one that lost the fort when, on the fifth day of the battle, a single German soldier encountered no resistance as he approached. Closer and closer he walked, until he was inside the wire and on the edge of the moat. While he was working out what to do next, a shell landed nearby and he was blown into the moat. The handful of men he was leading followed.

Sergeant Kunze then found a way into the fort and eventually ran into some members of its garrison. He took them prisoner and, in time, a few more German infantrymen found their way inside to lend assistance. In a couple of hours, the great fort was taken, by accident and without resistance. This was celebrated in Germany by the ringing of church bells and a day off from school for the children. In France, the public reaction was to continue to downplay the value of the fort. But the military commanders began immediately making plans to retake it, and it became an *idée fixe*.

That recapture of Douaumont took, in the estimation of one French general, the lives of 100,000 of his country's soldiers.



Above, Philippe Pétain; below, bodies in a trench at Mort-Homme, a small ridge taken in late May 1916 by the Germans after three intense months of fighting

That was in the future. On the day Douaumont fell, it seemed the city of Verdun might also be taken. And, as a purely abstract military matter, it might have been better for the French if it had. They could have fallen back—not that far—to defensible high ground. They would not have been defending a salient as they were in front of Verdun, under fire from three sides with their backs to a self-imposed wall.

But Verdun was a sanctified city that could not be permitted to fall, as Falkenhayn had foreseen. With its defenders facing a rout, Joffre sent a new general to take command and save the day.

Philippe Pétain was one of the few relatively successful French commanders in the first months of the war. This was because he had not bought into the *attaque à outrance* doctrine that had cost the French so dearly and would continue to cost it, until the soldiers finally rebelled and Pétain would again be called upon to save the day. But that was still to come.

On February 25, Pétain's task was to save Verdun. Joffre called him to his headquarters, gave him his new command, and assured him that things were not really all that bad. Joffre never thought things were *that* bad and never let news from the front interfere with his meals or a good night's sleep. Pétain telephoned the commander on the scene and issued the order to "hold fast" until he reached Verdun.

Pétain's appointment was paradoxical in that he had long been opposed to the mystical belief in offense that infused the French high command. Among other heretical convictions, he held that "audacity is the art of knowing how not to be too audacious." He was willing to give ground when the situation required, saying that to do so was better than the loss of "several thousands of men."

In that regard, he was being tasked at Verdun with violating his own convictions. Pétain had gained a reputation among ordinary soldiers as being the rare commander who cared about them and was determined not to waste their lives in heroic, doomed attacks. He had said to the men of a unit that had been through one such attack and suffered heavy casualties, "You went into the assault singing the 'Marseillaise'; it was magnificent. But next time, you will not need to sing the 'Marseillaise.' There will be a sufficient number of guns to ensure your attack's a success."

And this was the element in Pétain's thinking that suited him perfectly as the savior of Verdun. He believed in artillery, not the bayonet.

So along with steadying his new subordinate commanders, he canceled a proposed attack meant to retake Douaumont, and he more or less assumed personal command of the French artillery around Verdun.

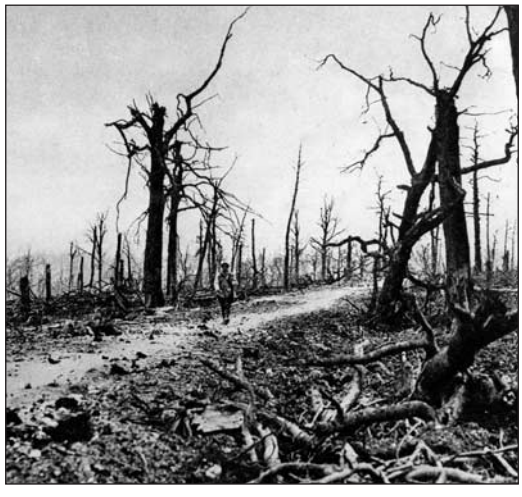
While the order to hold at any cost could be seen as playing into Falkenhayn's hands, it was also true that massive and effective French artillery would make the very small battlefield as deadly for the Germans as it was for the French. In Pétain's hands, the French artillery did, indeed, become effective, and the battle became one of almost constant shelling. It has been estimated that over the course of the battle, the two armies fired some 40 million artillery shells.

What this did to the ground around Verdun is still

IMAGES: PRINT COLLECTOR / GETTY (TOP; FROM ANN RONAN PICTURES)

evident today. Shell hole overlapped shell hole, and there was no small plot that had not been turned over, perhaps several times. The shelling blew men to pieces and then blew the pieces apart. As the battle went on, the ground became mud mixed with fragments from the corpses of men and horses. In one day, 7,000 horses were killed. A French doctor described the battlefield as a place where "one eats, one drinks beside the dead, one sleeps in the midst of the dying, one laughs, and one sings in the company of corpses."

As Pétain's control firmed up, the German Army launched fresh attacks. These gained ground, but slowly, taking, among other objectives, the little town of Douaumont, near the fort. When a commander on the scene ordered a counterattack, on March 4, Pétain countermanded the order. In the official accounts of the battle, this marked the end of its first phase, and the "what ifs?" are seductive.



Above, French stretcher-bearers remove casualties; below, a road destroyed by artillery bombardment

Falkenhayn had gotten what he wanted, a battle in which the French were willing to sacrifice all. The objective was not to take Verdun, but when Fort Douaumont fell, the opportunity was there. The French were in retreat and near-panic. There was looting in the town of Verdun, where drunken deserters roamed the streets.

But Falkenhayn had not forced the issue, Pétain had taken command, and the battle had gone on. Now it was Falkenhayn who could not give it up. He could not afford to lose, but he could not bring himself to go all in, either.

His subordinates had wanted to attack on both sides of the Meuse River, which bisected the French line of defense. He overruled them, on the principle of conservation of forces. Attacking on both banks would require too many men. But the Germans who were attacking on the eastern side of the river were vulnerable to flanking fire from French artillery on the western bank.

So the front was extended to both banks of the Meuse. The principal objective on the west bank was a hill called, fittingly, *Mort-Homme*—Dead Man. The Germans finally took the hill, but not until the end of May. The battle grew larger and remained indecisive. An exercise in pure attrition.

And by now, Pétain had been relieved of direct command by Joffre, who desired a more offensive-minded commander and was perturbed by Pétain's constant requests for more troops. Joffre had other things in mind for whatever troops were available. There was a big offensive in the works, a joint operation with the British on the river Somme. It was to accomplish the long-desired breakthrough. It was scheduled for the first of August.

The general who took over from Pétain was an artillery specialist, Robert Nivelle, as confident as Pétain was skeptical, and as politically polished as any general has ever been. Nivelle's chief subordinate was General Charles Mangin, who was the purest expression of the offensive spirit. Winston Churchill wrote of Mangin that he was "reckless of all lives and of none more than his own. . . . Mangin beaten or triumphant, Mangin the Hero or Mangin the Butcher as he was alternately regarded, became on the anvil of Verdun the fiercest warrior-figure of France."

As the German advances slowed and finally stalled in the summer, the great Somme offensive was launched a month early, after Joffre's pleading with his British allies. If the attack did not begin soon, there would be no French army, Joffre insisted with uncharacteristic emotion. It was being blown up and ground into the mud of Verdun.

The British took 60,000 casualties—20,000 dead—on July 1. That was the first day of a battle that was to last until late in the fall. The German Army could not both defend on the Somme and attack at Verdun. So it went over to the defense, and the French, under Nivelle, with Mangin as his instrument, assumed the offensive.

Nivelle had devised a new artillery scheme called a "creeping barrage." The infantry would advance behind a wall of exploding shells that moved ahead of them at a fixed schedule. Previously, artillery fire had been lifted entirely or moved far ahead of the infantry once the ground assault began. The new scheme worked, and Mangin took ground and won victories until, finally, in December, the ultimate and symbolic objective, Fort Douaumont, was retaken.

IMAGES: GETTY (TOP, PHOTO12 / UIG; BOTTOM, ULLSTEIN BILD)

After 10 months, the battle ended on more or less the line that had been in place when it began, one million casualties earlier. Of those, perhaps 400,000 were killed.

It was a battle, in the end, with no winners. It was, in a superficial sense, nothing more than another of the many pointless slaughters along the Western front between 1914 and 1918. But it was also one of the most consequential battles in history.

Verdun ruined the French Army and, arguably, France. As the "victor" of Verdun, Nivelle moved up to replace Joffre. He was sublimely confident that he had found a way to break the deadlock on the Western front.

Nivelle proposed a new offensive, this one in an area north of Verdun and south of the Somme. The tactics would be those that had succeeded at Verdun, particularly the creeping barrage, and Mangin would be in command of the leading troops. Nivelle liked to talk, and he had explained his plan for breaking the stalemate and winning the war at dinner parties in Paris and London, where he was warmly received. He had charm and spoke perfect English.

Woods on the shell-scarred site of what once was the village of Fleury, near Verdun

The Germans were thus well aware of his plan and prepared for Mangin's attack, which came in the spring of 1917 and failed with heavy casualties. Nivelle had promised that if the attack were not immediately successful, it would be halted, and his men would return to their trenches. But after the initial failures—and some 100,000 casualties—he pressed the attack, pushing French troops to the limit and, then, beyond, until at last . . . they mutinied.

There had been warning signs at Verdun. Troops there, in the last days of the battle, had taken to bleating like sheep as they marched toward the front line. They had, again and again, been thrown carelessly into attacks that had no chance of success. Now they were refusing to go back into the line and into the attack.

Nivelle was relieved, with Pétain appointed in his place. He was the only general the soldiers trusted with their lives. He was also exhibiting the first symptoms of the defeatism that would eventually consume him like a cancer.

But he was the indispensable man in France's time of need. He steadied things and gradually brought order and discipline back to an army in which almost half the divisions had shown symptoms of what was euphemistically called "collective indiscipline." Some 500 men were brought up on charges and sentenced to death, though fewer than 50 were executed. There is still uncertainty about the episode. The French covered it up very effectively, for understandable reasons of security in the beginning and for reasons of pride and shame, one assumes, after that.

The French Army did return to the fight under the command of an increasingly reluctant Pétain, who wanted to wait on the Americans and let them do a share of the fighting. He was the hero of Verdun but the battle seemed to have wounded him in spirit as it had so many of his men.

Still, they loved him. He, of all their commanders, cared about them, making sure they received the minor comforts of regular leave and rations of wine and edible food. And not wasting their lives.

When the Great War ended, France was on the winning side, and Verdun was the battle it chose to remember and exalt. Marshal Pétain was the hero of that battle. The lesson that France chose to learn—and that Pétain preached—was that the nation's hope lay in defense. The irrational faith in audacious attack was replaced by an equally rigid reliance on fixed fortifications. The example of Fort Douaumont led to the building of the Maginot Line behind which France would be secure when the next war came.

The Germans, of course, took away a different lesson from the stalemate at Verdun and developed armored warfare, panzer attacks, and blitzkrieg.

After the war, the ground where the great battle of Verdun had been fought was rehabilitated to the extent possible. There were unexploded shells everywhere, miles of rusting wire, thousands of bones and fragments of bones.

These were collected and placed in the great ossuary for which Pétain laid the first stone in 1920. In September 1927, he returned to light the "perpetual flame of remembrance."

On the 50th anniversary of the battle, it was thought his body might be buried there, according to his wishes. Charles de Gaulle, who had served under him and been wounded and captured at Verdun, hoped this could be done. But it was politically impossible, even for someone with de Gaulle's strength of purpose.

As much as he was the savior of Verdun, Pétain was also the man who had surrendered France to Germany and Hitler. He was the collaborator in chief, and after Germany had been defeated, he was tried for treason and sentenced to death. He was 90 years old. His sentence was commuted to life in prison and he died in 1951. Like so many thousands of his compatriots, he was a casualty of Verdun.

As was France. ♦

ULRICH BAUMGARTEN / GETTY

Why They Hate Exxon

The crusade to kill fossil fuels

By Rachelle Peterson

In January the *Los Angeles Times* reported that California attorney general Kamala Harris is investigating ExxonMobil for securities fraud and violation of environmental law. Harris hasn't confirmed this, but leaks from her office say they are building a case on the premise that Exxon (back in the 1980s before its merger with Mobil) downplayed the risks of global warming. The idea is that Exxon knew global warming to be real but hid its knowledge, propping up share prices by giving investors false confidence and blocking profit-hobbling regulations. Harris follows in the footsteps of New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman, who subpoenaed Exxon in November on a similar quest.

Bill McKibben

The investigations are based on the observation that Exxon took some steps, such as raising the level of its off-shore drilling platforms, consistent with the possibility that global warming might cause sea levels to rise. But Exxon has billions of dollars tied up in its oil exploration and extraction. The mere fact that the company may have taken precautions against a remote danger doesn't mean the company believed the risk to be likely, let alone certain (any more than buying life insurance means one expects to die soon).

And how, one might also ask, could Exxon have had knowledge of a catastrophic rise in ocean levels when that catastrophe hasn't even happened? Scientists who invested heavily in predictions of steeply rising sea levels have been scrambling of late to explain why the oceans have only crept up at the rate of 2.2 millimeters a year (a pace far below what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change once confidently said would come to pass).

The investigations, in other words, are clearly political. Is it a coincidence that California AG Harris happens to be running for the Senate seat being vacated by Barbara Boxer's retirement? Smearing Exxon has its advantages, among them the sort of publicity that prosecutors crave. But perhaps more appealing, going after oil companies wins the support of a newly important political bloc—campus climate activists who might accurately be called the McKibben Left.

Bill McKibben is the godfather of revamped environmentalism, among the hottest topics at today's colleges. McKibben's environmentalism is not an aristocratic concern for pristine gardens unsullied by the smokestacks of the working class, but, instead, a populist rage that denounces elites for their oppression of nature and blue-collar workers alike. The ideological blend of these ideas is "environmental justice," the theory that racial minorities and other disenfranchised groups disproportionately suffer from smog, neighborhood landfills, warming temperatures, and the looming rise of the oceans.

Which isn't to say that McKibben himself isn't one of the elite. A Harvard grad and onetime editor of the *Harvard Crimson*, he went on to write for the *New Yorker* and now holds an endowed professorship at Vermont's Middlebury College. But he wears the cloak of humility well. He sat with Occupy Wall Street in New York. He speaks in *Oil and Honey*, one of his dozen-some books, with deep esteem for country beekeepers. He adopted Bernie Sanders's motto as his own: "#NotMeUs." Admirers consider McKibben a hero. A cynic might call him a demagogue.

McKibben has played a crucial role in making modern environmentalism a popular movement. His 1989 book, *The End of Nature*, was the first on global warming directed to laymen. It was McKibben who made the Keystone XL pipeline a political lightning rod. He spent the summer of 2011 recruiting anti-pipeline activists to protest outside the White House, plotting to get them—and himself—arrested. By the end of that August he and 70 others had spent a weekend in D.C.'s Central Cell Block. Then he spent the next few years all over the news.

McKibben has in recent years leveled his sights on fossil-fuel companies, denouncing them (with characteristic understatement) as "Public Enemy Number One to the survival of our planetary civilization." Nowhere has he found a more receptive audience than college campuses. There, activism-eager students steeped in the

NEWSCOM

Rachelle Peterson is director of research projects at the National Association of Scholars and author of Inside Divestment: The Illiberal Movement to Turn a Generation Against Fossil Fuels *(2015).*

romance of progressivism have no small amount of free time on their hands. They've signed up for McKibben's anti-oil crusade in droves. And these collegiate activists have mapped out a path that government officials are now following step by step.

The Exxon investigations in New York and California mark stage one in a trail that McKibben and his cohort of college students blazed. Exxon's "crimes" are its insufficient public anxiety about "climate change" and that it had the audacity to influence public policy by making (perfectly legal) financial contributions to groups skeptical of doomsday climate predictions. The investigations, in effect, require companies to embrace the so-called consensus on anthropogenic global warming—exactly what McKibben and his crew of college activists have been demanding for half a decade.

Five years ago, a group of Swarthmore College students returned from a field-trip to West Virginia determined to put an end to mountaintop-removal coal mining. They started a fossil-fuel divestment campaign targeting the Swarthmore endowment. The Wallace Global Fund and the Sierra Club tried to scale up the idea, but it took McKibben—who had recently founded the activist group 350.org with a small group of Middlebury College students—to launch a national movement in 2012. It was that summer he published "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math" in *Rolling Stone* arguing that the planet's only hope was for the oil companies to be toppled, leaving the majority of fossil-fuel reserves deep in the ground. In a national "Do the Math" speaking tour on campuses from L.A. to New York City, McKibben preached that institutions and individuals should divest themselves of oil and coal company stocks. He found a receptive audience among students, few of whom had any investments of their own, but most of whom were at schools with endowments that could be pressured to shun traditional-energy investments.

A sit-in at Harvard over divestment of fossil-fuel holdings, February 12, 2015

PAT GREENHOUSE / THE BOSTON GLOBE / GETTY IMAGES

Others took note, too. Hedge fund manager Tom Steyer wrote to McKibben and asked to hike the Adirondacks with him. By the time they came off the trail, Steyer was sold. He now donates to McKibben's activist group, 350.org. And in 2014 Steyer spent $76 million trying to make climate change an issue in that year's elections. The effort mostly failed. Only two of six Senate candidates and one of five gubernatorial candidates backed by the environmentalist movement won their elections.

But if McKibben's message failed to rouse the general electorate, it has captivated the college crowd, who expect to shift the political tide. The strategy McKibben pitched to them was to use divestment to demonize their targets, making fossil-fuel industries such pariahs that no politician would be willing to protect them. The campuses were proxy battles: Students would use their leverage to enlist their universities in the cause; universities would use their prestige to denounce fossil fuels; the modern energy corporation, rendered beyond the pale, would come to an end. McKibben called this a plan to "revoke the social license" of fossil-fuel companies, paving the way, he predicted, for the sort of inquisitions that AGs Harris and Schneiderman have since launched.

The strategy is working. By now, hundreds of foundations, pension funds, cities, and colleges have committed to divesting their portfolios of fossil-fuel stocks. Among them are organizations from the obscure (Great Old Broads for Wilderness) to the overexposed (the Sierra Club); religious groups from the fringe (Australia's Earthsong) to the mainline (the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.); and colleges from the humble (Prescott College, Ariz.) to the prestigious (Stanford, where Tom Steyer is a trustee). Last year saw hundreds of protests (450 alone on Global Divestment Day) and more than a dozen campus sit-ins—including one that ran a month at Swarthmore College and one at MIT that began in October and didn't peter out until February.

The politicians one would expect to get in line are getting in line. In September New York mayor Bill de Blasio declared he plans to de-fossilize the city's five primary pension funds—those for city employees, teachers, police, firemen, and members of the board of education. "It's time that our investments catch up" with the city's status as a "global leader" in "taking on climate change," the mayor said. "Divestment from coal is where we must start."

The New York State Assembly and Senate, too, have taken up divestment. The Fossil Fuel Divestment Act, with 21 cosponsors, would mandate the $178.3 billion New York State Common Retirement Fund jettison coal investments within a year and all fossil-fuel companies by 2020. The state comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, who is also a trustee of the pension funds, has so far declined to push for divestment but has called on ExxonMobil to assess whether the oil it drills will push the planet beyond the maximum two-degree Celsius temperature rise stipulated in last year's Paris climate agreement.

This January in his State of the State address, Vermont governor Peter Shumlin begged the legislature to send him a bill mandating public pensions divest themselves

of ExxonMobil shares. If anything, he'll get a bill to force divestment from *all* fossil-fuel companies.

These examples are instructive, because they show the power of pressure coming from youth fired up by McKibben. Shumlin once opposed divestment. Two years ago Vermont's house and senate took up divestment bills of the sort Shumlin now demands; he balked, saying it was better to keep "a seat at the table" with fossil-fuel companies rather than just cut them loose. At the time, McKibben, a part-time Vermonter, denounced Shumlin as a "slippery politician" and warned that "a couple of thousand Vermonters" who trekked to New York's People's Climate March would soon "hold him accountable to his statements." Shumlin reversed course, and now McKibben praises him for having "taken the lead" against ExxonMobil.

Among the schools promoting divestment in New York has been the Union Theological Seminary. In its announcement in 2014, Union hailed McKibben as "a driving force in the divestment movement." McKibben, in turn, declared that Union's "long ties to the city's leaders" would "have a major impact." It wasn't long before the New School one-upped Union by announcing a "Comprehensive Climate Action Plan" that included not only divestiture from fossil fuels, but a pledge to turn all its students into "climate citizens."

Colleges and universities also led the political way in California. After nine schools in the state announced they were eliminating their investments in fossil fuels, California governor Jerry Brown signed, in October, a bill requiring state pension funds for public employees and teachers to divest coal company stocks.

The California divestment mandate includes a caveat allowing public investment-fund managers to maintain their stakes in fossil-fuel companies if divesting runs contrary to "fiduciary responsibilities." This is a rare but important admission that funds divesting for political reasons can put a dent in people's life-savings. And for what? Divestment merely means that one group of investors—those fixated on the threat of global warming—sell their fossil-fuel stocks to another group of investors—those who are not similarly fixated. Divestment doesn't improve the environment, but to the extent the sell-off hurts the value of traditional energy stocks, it does mean jeopardizing the stability and profitability of retirees' nest eggs.

From colleges to cities to states to the federal government, one divestment decision leads to another. Two weeks after Brown signed the California law, the U.S. Department of Labor issued "new guidance" permitting pension managers to count environmental factors in gauging the value of an investment. State governments and federal agencies now endorse a campaign that leftist students turned into a litmus test.

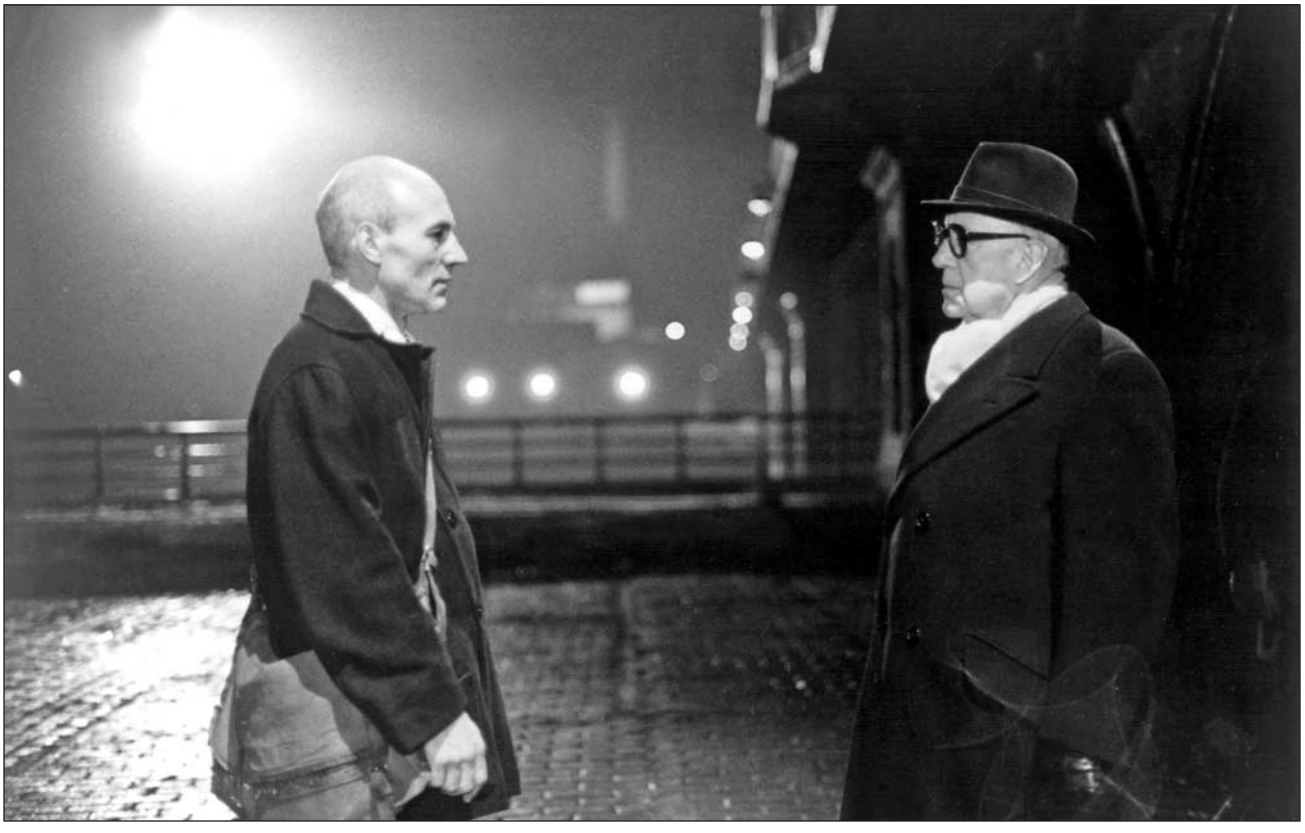
As for the Exxon investigation, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) last year proposed using the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act to investigate oil companies as criminal gangs. In October, two members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Ted Lieu and Mark DeSaulnier, both California Democrats, wrote to Attorney General Loretta Lynch asking her to investigate ExxonMobil for "organizing a sustained deception campaign." In February, three members wrote again to Lynch, asking her to open a parallel investigation into Shell. Wrote Lieu, along with Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.), "we now ask that Shell also be investigated for intentionally hiding the truth about climate change and embarking on a massive campaign of denial and disinformation." Lieu, Welch, DeSaulnier, and Cartwright have also asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to open its own investigation.

It's worth remembering where the idea of an investigation came from: a team of graduate journalism students at Columbia University. In 2014 five students and one professor launched an examination of Exxon that resulted in three articles published in the *Los Angeles Times*. Those articles, along with parallel muckraking from *Inside Climate News*, are what inspired the state investigations and the calls for federal investigations.

What do the campus activists want next? Now that the base of political support is built, McKibben is pushing his divestment acolytes to devote more attention directly to national politics, not just the campus proxy battles. He wants a blanket prohibition of drilling and mining both in the Arctic and on all public U.S. lands. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell partially satisfied his call in January when she announced a moratorium on new coal mining leases. Senators Bernie Sanders and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) would enact McKibben's vision *in toto* with legislation named for one of McKibben's slogans, the "Keep It in the Ground Act." In February Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) and 16 cosponsors introduced a companion bill in the House.

It won't end there. The students say they want divested endowments reinvested into solar and wind energy. McKibben has also said he wants to eliminate federal subsidies to oil companies, boost (already extensive) subsidies to wind and solar companies, and ban fracking—all cornerstones of Sanders's energy platform. McKibben has already stumped for and endorsed Sanders, who enjoys a comfortable lead over Hillary Clinton among the young voters McKibben has done so much to mobilize.

Such policies, of course, would leave the United States careening straight for Solyndra II—or to nationalized energy. McKibben and his college activists appear at ease with either option. Which is alarming because elected leaders are marching in lockstep right behind them. ♦



Karla (Patrick Stewart) defects to George Smiley (Sir Alec Guinness), Smiley's People *(1982).*

EVERETT COLLECTION

Through the Looking-Glass

John le Carré's cover story. BY DOUGLAS MURRAY

Biography is not an easy trade, but biographies of the living are especially deadly. A biography of a deceased person allows the author to unmask, judge, and even to dislike their subject. When it comes to the living, most life-writers must cozy up to their subjects, flatter them, woo them, and assure them their life is literally safe in their hands. So it can be enjoyable to try to guess where things have gotten sticky. I would say that Adam Sisman, author of biographies on the historians Hugh Trevor-Roper and A.J.P. Taylor, and David Cornwell, the real name of the author who writes as John le Carré, started off well, with Cornwell happy to talk about an upbringing he had already well furrowed in his own fiction. But I would guess that things began to sour and Cornwell began to clam up when his adult personal life came up for discussion. It shows.

John le Carré
The Biography
by Adam Sisman
Harper, 672 pp., $28.99

Although the book's early chapters cover the usual ground of England in that era—prep school, minor public school, national service, Oxford—they are much enlivened by the fantastical figure of Cornwell's father. Ronald ("Ronnie") Cornwell was a "businessman" whose business was finding ways to swindle other people. Not above cashing checks that incriminated his wife

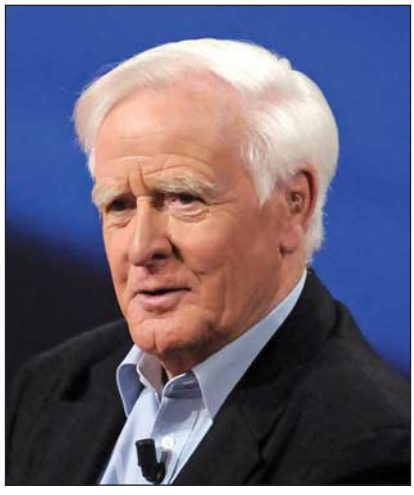
Douglas Murray is the author of Bosie: A Biography of Lord Alfred Douglas *and* Neoconservatism: Why We Need It.

or borrowing money from his young sons before disappearing, his crookedness is best summed-up by a member of his criminal fraternity who told his offspring at his funeral, "We was all bent, son," before adding admiringly, "But your dad was very, very bent." The presence of Ronnie and the absence of David's mother, who one day simply walked out on her husband and young sons, proved fine wells on which the future novelist would draw. But for his biographer they are oases after which things get slightly arid.

Once Ronnie is dead, and there are no more calls coming from faraway places requesting help with bail, the personal details begin to disappear. David's first marriage falls apart, and there is a strange *Jules et Jim* relationship with the author James Kennaway and his wife. But apart from that, the narrative of Cornwell's life soon flattens out into the boring routine of a successful writer who has become John le Carré and who doesn't want anything else to be pried into. After the success in 1963 of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, this biography soon becomes a recitation of the writing of books, publication details, summaries of critical reception, accounts of sales figures, and, finally, accounts of the casting, making, and reception of the films of the books. By the biography's end, we are being informed about contractual arrangements between le Carré and various of his publishers and also about the restructuring of certain publishing houses in the London area.

None of which is what I imagine readers would come to this book for. So what would they come for? What even makes a biography of John le Carré worth publishing? That question can be answered in a single word: "spookery." Because, of course, le Carré is a master of the higher-end of the spy genre—a genre that uniquely encourages the lowering of voices as well as a marked adrenaline-release in the male of the species. Even a drop of this stuff can have extraordinary effects on the public, and it is unarguable that not only has le Carré been one of the most commercially successful novelists of his generation, he has also given enormous pleasure to millions of readers around the world.

For years after becoming a full-time writer, le Carré pretended that he had been a humble civil servant in his 20s. In fact, he appears to have been recruited to do a little bit of spying on fellow students while still at Oxford before joining MI5 (Britain's domestic intelligence service) and then moving to the rather more exciting MI6 (the foreign intelligence service). In this latter role he served in Germany, where he picked up much of the atmosphere and some of the characters for his Cold War masterpieces. But he was always careful to talk around direct questions about his own involvement in the business, and not—one suspects—only for security reasons.



John le Carré (2008)

It took until the 1980s, when he had a new novel on the Middle East to promote (*The Little Drummer Girl*), for le Carré to tell an interviewer that "I have nosed around the secret world." Latterly, he has returned to evading questions on the matter, recently claiming national security reasons. But truthfully, le Carré was never at a nearly senior enough level for such concerns to still apply, and it is not as though he hasn't gone over what experiences he had in his fiction. His evasiveness on spook issues seems more likely to have occurred for the simple reason that the exciting authenticity that any connection to the secret world brings would pall if the low-level nature of le Carré's involvement were ever that clear. In any case, slight though his connection to that world might have been, it has been very good both for his fiction and for his bank balance.

The more pertinent question that now hangs over him is: Is the stuff any good? To my mind, the novels which are said to "cement" his reputation as a great writer as opposed to a great genre writer (*A Perfect Spy*, to name one) are overwritten, overlong, and underwhelming. If I am going to read a book on spooks, I am content with a real page-turning shocker of derring-do; If I wish to read a more serious novel, then I will read a more serious novel. But this is a matter of taste, and le Carré has notable defenders to whom one should listen (Ian McEwan, for instance) who have insisted—particularly in recent years as the object of their admiration has entered his 80s—that we should regard le Carré as one of our great writers and not merely as a purveyor of highly successful genre fiction.

Undoubtedly, le Carré captured something. After the certainties—not to say absurdities—of Ian Fleming's fictional world, John le Carré brought uncertainty, complexity, and an undoubted insight and depth to the spy novel. Few writers in any genre caught a central portion of the Cold War so successfully. But after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and despite his own protestations, le Carré unarguably lost his subject. As this biography makes clear, he always wanted to write novels that weren't about "the circus" (as he referred to the British end of the spying business), but when he did they were generally less well received and he went back to doing what his public wanted.

His last 25 years have not been entirely praiseworthy. Despite others' claims for his prescience, when Islamic terrorism hit the West, le Carré was writing about the horrors of pharmaceutical companies. By the mid-2000s, an undoubted crankiness crept in. His loathing of George W. Bush and Tony Blair led to him allying with the worst Socialist Workers party elements against Bush and telling an interviewer in 2005 that, because

STEFANIA D'ALESSANDRO / WIREIMAGE / GETTY

of Blair, Britain was sliding towards becoming a "fascist state." Truthfully, this strand was always there: Bill Haydon's admission of guilt in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* gave an early version of the point of view that le Carré himself ended up drifting towards: In the end, there was not so much moral difference between the Soviet Union and American capitalism.

There may be excuses for coming to this conclusion—too close a proximity to the coal-face of espionage, a youth spent in a declining power that had recently ceded its leadership role to the United States—but it constitutes an unarguable intellectual and moral failing. There is a good anecdote here of what happened when Margaret Thatcher invited le Carré to a dinner in Downing Street. The author had recently been in the Middle East researching *The Little Drummer Girl* and meeting with (among others) Yasser Arafat. Ever one to get to the point, Thatcher asked her dinner companion whether there was anything in particular he wanted to say to her. Yes, he replied: He thought that the Palestinians deserved greater sympathy from the British government. "The Prime Minister's face darkened. 'They were the people who trained the people [the IRA] who killed my friend Airey Neave,'" she scolded him.

Perhaps the crankiness is a peril of living in this literary terrain. David Cornwell saw some personal darkness and some professional conundrums. As John le Carré, he transmuted both into publishing gold. In a notorious 2008 *Sunday Times* interview—over which it is my understanding (though this is not mentioned in this book) that le Carré threatened to sue—he appeared to suggest that he had thought of "going over" during the Cold War. Of course, this was le Carré speaking late into the evening. Who knows if it is true or not? As this biography makes clear, memory and false memory, fact and fiction, were always undelineated things in his world, as they were for his father. However, unlike his father, he made something of it, and has left his biographer to do what he can—against some evident odds—with that fact. ♦

B&A

Portugal's Moment

The unlikely origins of a maritime empire.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

Portugal invented the Atlantic Ocean, the poet Fernando Pessoa once wrote—a bizarre claim that sounds a lot less bizarre once we start to ask ourselves how a small, broke, and backwater country in Europe ended up with a far-flung empire and vast system of trade. The power of European ocean travel conquered the world with amazing speed: The Spanish would range through the Americas, the Dutch would build a maritime empire begun mostly by financing trading ships, and, with the perfection of the square sail, the English would end up overseeing a quarter of the globe. But it all started with the Portuguese, creeping in their little caravels down the west coast of Africa.

We forget how little explored the Earth's oceans were before the 15th century and how rapidly they were mastered. In 1418, a Portuguese expedition funded by Prince Henry the Navigator was blown off course and discovered the Madeira Islands. A miracle, they called the shelter from the Atlantic storm they found there—600 miles southwest of Portugal but uncharted at the time. Only 104 years later, in 1522, European exploration was advanced enough for one of Ferdinand Magellan's ships to complete a 40,000-mile, three-year circumnavigation of the globe. And in-between came such Portuguese sailors as Bartolomeu Dias, the first to round the southern tip of Africa, and Vasco da Gama, the first to reach India. Christopher Columbus—an Italian sailing for the Spanish crown—would inherit the lion's share of history's notice, but he was able to travel across the ocean to the Americas only after Portugal had established the idea that the Atlantic was something to be sailed.

Conquerors
How Portugal Forged the First Global Empire
by Roger Crowley
Random House, 400 pp., $30

This is the tale that Roger Crowley tells here. The bestselling author of *City of Fortune*, about the naval adventures of Venice, and *Empires of the Sea*, about the clash of Europe and the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, Crowley is well-positioned to ask why the Portuguese, of all people, should be the ones that initiated the Age of Exploration. He's also a wonderfully lively writer—which he has to be, telling in a fast-paced and popular way the history of the time, for *Conquerors* contains little new material. These are well-documented stories, covered even in the world history courses taught in school.

Still, *Conquerors* brings alive to the reader such figures as the underappreciated Afonso de Albuquerque, the madly brave Portuguese leader who, Crowley writes, "was regarded across the Indian Ocean with superstitious awe." King Manuel I, too, leaps from the page—a man determined to extend Portuguese influence to the Pacific, perhaps most of all because he wanted to bankrupt the Muslims in North Africa by taking away from them the trade of the spice roads. For the first time in history, we had geopolitical maneuvering in the literal sense of the prefix *geo-*.

Crowley's focus is on the expansion into the Indian Ocean, just as it was

Joseph Bottum is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

for the Portuguese. The Portuguese were the first to discover and exploit the gyres of ocean winds—the "turn of the sea," *volta do mar*—that made possible central Atlantic voyages. And in 1488, Bartolomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa by sailing deep into the west before turning east toward the gap between Africa and the Antarctic, correctly guessing that a similar gyre existed in the south Atlantic. In 1498, Vasco da Gama followed up on Dias's discovery and pushed all the way to India's Malabar Coast. Even Brazil, the second great Portuguese imperial adventure, was discovered in 1500 by Pedro Álvares Cabral, who had sailed too far west in an effort to pick up the winds that would drive him back east around Africa.

The emphasis on India, Crowley claims, was driven by either economics or religion—or by both, at the dark and bloody straits where the two seas meet. Portugal had suffered from the Muslim countries' raids out of North Africa, their piracy in the Mediterranean, and their stranglehold on trade with India. The destruction of the Islamic world, Crowley notes, was always the center of Portuguese policy—sometimes to the extent that India seemed "a platform for attack rather than an end in itself." India, at the time, had settled into a kind of stylized warfare between established polities. And just as the Aztecs proved unprepared to meet the ferocity of European warfare with Cortés in Mexico in 1519, so the rulers of the Indian states were unprepared for Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor in India from 1509 until he died six years later. Albuquerque's tiny army could never have held India, but from his headquarters at Goa he expanded his reach with a military strategy based on "flexible sea power tied to the occupation of defendable coastal forts and a network of bases."

So successful was the strategy that Albuquerque carried his war across the Arabian sea and up into the Red Sea in 1513, attacking Aden and planning on sacking Mecca and Medina. He was turned back, but the expedition shocked the Islamic world and began to signal what victories at the Siege of Malta (1565) and the Battle of Lepanto (1571) would confirm: The technological advances of Europe, especially at sea, meant nothing if the world could withstand them. "Portugal's achievement," Crowley writes, "was to create the prototype for new and flexible forms of empire, based on mobile sea power, and the paradigm for European expansion. Where it led, the Dutch and the English followed."

Vasco da Gama (ca. 1500)

ARCHIV GERSTENBERG / ULLSTEIN BILD / GETTY

Albuquerque's death in 1515, followed by Manuel's in 1521, put an end to the "great crusading dream." The trade empire Portugal built sustained it for a while despite the nation's ongoing battles with the Spanish. It failed in its goal of destroying Islam, but it helped impoverish the Middle East in the coming centuries, and it certainly achieved its goal of breaking the Islamic monopoly on trade with the East Indies. ♦

B&A

Fighting Faiths

How 'religious' is religious violence?

BY MICHAEL M. ROSEN

'A group of believers from the soldiers of the Caliphate . . . set out targeting the capital of prostitution and vice, the lead carrier of the cross in Europe—Paris." Thus did the Islamic State claim credit for its terror spree in the City of Light in November, the latest in a string of murderous attacks fueled by Islam. The jihadists, naturally, observe their violent struggle against the crusading West through a Koranic lens, insistent that their texts and traditions demand no less. But will this tendency ever change? Possibly, assuming that the past is prologue. "Christianity," Heinrich Heine observed nearly two centuries ago, "has somewhat mitigated that brutal German love of war, but it could not destroy it."

Exactly how religion both foments and tempers violence has bedeviled theologians, historians, and statesmen for centuries. Now, Lord Jonathan Sacks capably wrestles with this vexing question, explores its origins in biblical sibling rivalries, and presents a creative way of reframing it—along the way offering a hopeful, if not entirely realistic, pathway to peace.

The former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and author of more than 20 books, Sacks begins with some necessary brush-clearing, including the fantasy that Islamist violence is unmoored from faith: "When terrorist or military groups invoke holy war, define their battle as a struggle against Satan, condemn unbelievers to death and commit murder while declaring 'God is great,'" he writes, "to deny that they are acting on religious motives is absurd." At the same time, Sacks rightly observes that only a fraction of global violence can be attributed to religion. Even enlightened thinkers, from Kant to Hegel to Fichte to Schopenhauer, derided Jews as "vampires," "scum of the earth"—and worse. "Philosophical antisemitism from Voltaire to Heidegger," Sacks reminds us, "is a little-known phenomenon but a devastating one."

Not in God's Name
Confronting Religious Violence
by Jonathan Sacks
Schocken Books, 320 pp., $28.95

Instead, he contends, "violence has nothing to do with religion as such. It has to do with identity and life in groups." Religion "links people, emotionally, behaviorally, intellectually, and spiritually into communion and thus community. . . . Within groups we practice altruism. Between them we practice aggression." Ground zero for such intergroup aggression is antisemitism, "the first warning signal of a world order in danger of collapse. . . . *Wherever you find obsessive, irrational, murderous antisemitism, there you will find a culture so internally split and fractured that if its members stopped killing Jews, they would start killing one another*."

Not surprisingly, such intragroup violence is most plainly showcased in the abattoir of the Levant, where Sunni and Shia slaughter each other mercilessly. But crucially, Sacks traces most forms of religious conflict to the fierce sibling rivalries recited in the Bible; Islam and Christianity reenacting the struggle between Isaac and Ishmael, Christianity and Judaism reliving the battle of Esau and Jacob.

Paul and the early Church Fathers seized the mantle of Jacob, painting un-Christianized Jews as benighted Esaus while, through the Koran, Mohammed and his followers reimagined Ishmael as the favored son while relegating Jews and Christians to the overlooked Isaac. "Sibling rivalry," Sacks notes, "plays a central role in human conflict, and it begins with . . . the desire to have what your brother has," be it a birthright, a parent's love, or God's favor.

Yet, he queries, what if these depictions of such intense intrafamily cruelty contain beneath the surface "a second level of meaning" urging us to recognize that "violence in a sacred cause is not holy but an act of desecration?" He then boldly reframes the stories of the unfavored sons Ishmael (whom Abraham loves and blesses and does not forsake), Esau (who receives ample material blessings while his younger brother attains spiritual ones), and Joseph's brothers (who repent their sin of hatred when the brother they sold into slavery, now in charge in Egypt, mock-imprisons them to play-act a role reversal)—all of which end "on a note of reconciliation, each time at a more profound level."

This role reversal is crucial to interdenominational understanding. In Sacks's view, "the message of Genesis is that love is necessary but not sufficient. You also need sensitivity to those who feel unloved. . . . The way we learn not to commit evil is to experience an event from the perspective of the victim." Specifically, he writes, "the best way of curing antisemitism is to get people to experience what it feels like to be a Jew." More broadly, Sacks asserts faith not only licenses but mandates a perspective change. He casts the Bible itself as "God's reply to those who commit violence in his name. God does not prove his love for some by hating others. Neither, if we follow him, may we."

Sacks's footing is firmest when he's interpreting biblical texts and deriving ethical lessons from them; he paints the vivid characters populating Genesis with unrivaled poise, passion, and sensitivity. His language sparkles, too, when outlining the trajectory of Jewish history in its biblical and rabbinic eras, from its bellicose origins to its quietist present and equally so when exploring Christianity's similar evolution.

Sacks is less persuasive, however,

Michael M. Rosen is an attorney and writer living in Israel.

when explaining how that transformation can be replicated today, especially by Islam. For instance, in describing how the Jews sublimated their injunction to destroy the biblical nation of Amalek into a metaphor for pure evil, both internal and external, as a "struggle within the soul," Sacks suggests how Islamists might reinterpret jihad. But are they listening? Should they be? After all, while Muslims theoretically hold the Bible in high regard, they're not bound by its teachings, let alone by a contemporary rabbi's reinterpretation. That the Jews have largely renounced violence hardly means Islamists will do the same.

If this book has a flaw, it's this: It ought to appeal to all good-hearted religious people. However, the bad-hearted religious people don't seem to be listening and the good-hearted secular folks don't really need to. Sacks concludes by urging "an international campaign against the teaching and preaching of hate," insisting on "reciprocal altruism" and recognizing that "we are all children of Abraham." Will his call be enough to turn the tide of religious violence? Probably not. Must we heed it anyway? Absolutely. ♦

B&A

String Theory

The sound of the African diaspora in America.

BY JOHN CHECK

"What sound will accompany the end of days?" For Laurent Dubois, the question admits of one ringing answer: the sound of the banjo. A professor of Romance studies and history at Duke and "obsessed" amateur banjo player, Dubois relates here a history of the instrument that is both learned and entertaining. His enthusiasm shines through every page.

He locates the origin of the banjo in Central and Western Africa, home to an array of string instruments classified as lutes. These forerunners of the banjo were alike in possessing resonators made of gourds, or calabashes, over which was stretched a treated animal skin. Strings, typically of gut, were then positioned atop a bridge to extend from the resonator to the affixed neck. One of these forerunners, the banza, is pictured and described in a couple of 18th-century travelogues cited by Dubois. He also chronicles the rediscovery, fewer than 20 years ago, of a banza in the basement of the Museum of Music in Paris.

John Check teaches music theory at the University of Central Missouri.

The Banjo
America's African Instrument
by Laurent Dubois
Harvard, 384 pp., $29.95

His account has almost the quality of a mystery story and it exemplifies the sometimes-convoluted way curators come upon their finds and how old instruments are restored and returned to public display.

The banjo, as Dubois persuasively demonstrates, came in time to be identified as an African-American instrument. Banjo-like instruments made their way to the Americas during the years of the slave trade, which reached its peak at the end of the 18th century. (A poignant detail: The auction block where slaves were bought and sold was sometimes referred to as the banjo table.) When slaves ran away, their masters would publish descriptions detailing not only their physical appearance and stature, not only the clothes they might have been wearing, but also their possession of musical skills: their ability to sing well or to play an instrument, typically a banjo or a fiddle. These descriptions, as Dubois suggests, are tantamount to "capsule biographies of enslaved individuals." His discussion is generously supplemented by quotations from former slaves who were interviewed in the 1930s as part of a project overseen by the Works Progress Administration.

One of the strongest aspects of *The Banjo* is the author's commentary on paintings in which the banjo is depicted. *Liberty Displaying the Arts & Sciences (Or the Genius of America)* by Samuel Jennings was commissioned by the Library Company of Philadelphia, a favorite haunt of reform-minded Quakers, to further the cause of abolition. An allegorical painting, it portrays Liberty as a blonde of classical beauty dressed radiantly in white and reposed upon a stool. She is surrounded by books, scientific instruments, and other appurtenances of scholarship. Shown in the foreground and background are the beneficiaries of her vast learning: a group of African Americans. Two, in particular, command Dubois's attention, one a man playing a banjo, the other an attentive child. Positioned as they are, apart from the other figures, near the horizon, they form the center of the painting:

> The banjo player is right there, at the crossroads of the land, the river, the mountains, and the sky above. No one is looking at him in the painting except an admiring boy standing behind him—and us. He is well-dressed, in a blue jacket, red vest, and white pants. The colors are no accident, and one might in fact see him as America itself.

Dubois is a good guide to this painting and to others because he is very intelligent—T.S. Eliot's first requirement of a critic—and because he is a keen and sensitive observer. His interpretations carry a high degree of plausibility; they feel both right and true.

Another strength of his book is its treatment of blackface minstrelsy, in our day, to say the least, a complex and morally freighted topic. Calling minstrelsy "the most important theatrical form in nineteenth-century North America," Dubois notes that it was especially popular in the North and that many minstrels were of Irish descent. (At the time, the Irish, in some circles, were not

'Liberty Displaying the Arts & Sciences' by Samuel Jennings (1792)

considered truly white.) So popular and lucrative was this form of entertainment that there were even troupes of black minstrels, some of whom specialized in a kind of reverse-minstrelsy in which they imitated the accents and attitudes of the Irish.

The tremendous popularity of minstrelsy partly explains the banjo craze of the second half of the 19th century. Until then, instruments were made by hand, one at a time, each "a unique piece based on traditions and prototypes but constructed for a particular musician." Mass production put instruments into the hands of an eager and demanding public. Banjo competitions were held, banjo clubs formed. A journal, *S.S. Stewart's Guitar and Banjo Journal*, was in publication for 15 years. There were banjo orchestras with instruments ranging from contrabass to soprano. Refinements of all sorts were made to brighten and amplify its tone, resulting in a flood of patent applications by inventors hoping to cash in. Dubois's brisk account of these developments is one of the highlights of the book.

Compromising his solid research, however, is a prose style that at times savors too strongly of the seminar room. Among his favorite words are "sedimentation," "imbrication," and, especially, "space." ("Cultural space," "space of anxiety and possibility," and "spaces of solidarity" are but three examples; many more, alas, could be cited.) His fondness for these and other phrases tries a reader's patience.

Here and there, too, Dubois is prone to overstatement—as, for example, when he suggests, to "purchase and learn to play the banjo was a way of becoming, in a sense, one's own minstrel." Early in *The Banjo*, describing the "silencing of the contributions of Arabic science, philosophy, and culture" that supposedly occurred in Renaissance music histories, his tone verges on the conspiratorial. On a more technical note, it would have been nice had he included a fuller description of banjo acoustics. Specifically, though told of the purpose of the instrument's body—called by some players the "pot"—we never really learn what contribution is made by the head. Perhaps Dubois, who assuredly knows this information, thought it too obvious to mention.

The Banjo concludes with a chapter devoted to a notable performer, Pete Seeger. It is easy to see why Seeger, a hero among leftists, is an attractive figure to Dubois, who in one place calls the banjo "the sound of progress, the sound of protest." But the profile of Seeger on display here gives, at best, an incomplete picture of his political commitments and their consequences (see "The Red Warbler" by Ronald Radosh in the February 10, 2014, issue of The Weekly Standard).

These cavils aside, Dubois writes with enthusiasm about the instrument he loves, an instrument that has "an amazing capacity to bring people together, in laughter and song." When he quotes some of the banjo-mad performers and promoters of the 19th century—a dazzled Frank Converse, for instance: "There was something in the sound of that banjo . . . that gave me a delight never before experienced"—one senses that they speak for him as well. ♦

THE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA

B&A

Poet in Spirit

The moral implications of Catherine Breese Davis.

BY JAMES MATTHEW WILSON

In the closing pages of Yvor Winters's *Forms of Discovery* (1968), the great poet and critic offers measured praise of the work of one of his former students. In Catherine Davis's best poems, "the matter is serious" and "the style is impeccable." Winters had long argued that poetry was an essentially moral act, an affair of rational definition and discipline of the will. For the serious poet, aesthetic form was a means of discovering the truth about reality and attuning one's emotions accordingly. Through the crafting and contemplation of the poem, he held, thought and feeling could find harmony and one could achieve self-mastery.

His words suggest that Catherine Breese Davis (1924-2002) was a modern master of this moral art.

Indeed, she was. Winters admired and anthologized her poems, as did Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson in their important midcentury collection, *New Poets of England and America* (1957). There, Davis's work stands alongside some of the greatest poets of late modernism. Donald Justice would later teach her in the Iowa Writers' Workshop and become a lifelong admirer and advocate. They all saw what few others have had a chance to see before the publication of this valuable little book: In a good number of her many chiseled, yet lively, poems, Davis demonstrates both the fruitfulness of Winters's poetic theory and the justness of his praise.

An early poem, "The Leaves," provides her most comprehensive moral evaluation of the world. It begins with an idyllic image, where the literal light of the sun gives rise to and suffuses the shadows cast by foliage; but her language soon indicates this setting is an analogy for the hypothetical divine light that creates all things, and the created beings that are, therefore, the "shadows" such light causes to be. As the romantic poets once suggested, there would seem to be a correspondence, or sympathy, between the light and shadow found in the natural world and the divine mind that is its origin.

Catherine Breese Davis
On the Life and Work of an American Master
edited by Martha Collins, Kevin Prufer, and Martin Rock
Pleiades Press, 224 pp., $12.99

But Davis rebukes this poetic seeming: "when the leaves are blown, / They go not willfully," she writes, nor do they "Ponder the light, the shade." For a moment, the natural world is less than it had seemed to be: It is merely matter, subject to the arbitrary winds of change. Nature is a flux and destitute of lasting significance. Or most of it is. "We," with our intellects, have an abiding need to "find / Some likeness for the mind."

Like Robert Frost before her, Davis introduces the romantic desire to find signs of an intelligible and loving spiritual order in the natural world only to undermine it. But in contrast to Frost, she holds that we, by necessity, search the brute material forms of that world not for an image of the mind of God—the light—but for a likeness of our own minds. Human nature is essentially poetic; it goes out in search of what used to be called "vehicles"—concrete images—to represent metaphorically the "tenors," the literal nature, of our minds.

To engage in this is not a kind of falsifying, wishful thinking; it is our chief means to self-understanding. Poetic likenesses give us stable images to define, to understand, what it means to be ourselves mere "mark[s] of change," no less caught up in the flux of becoming and dissolution than the leaves of a tree.

Davis's early poems are explicit acts of definition. Well-wrought lyrics such as "Routine," "Patience," "Discretion," and "Obsession" capture the meaning of each term with precision. "Obsession," for instance, addresses that pathology this way:

> *Tenacious, parasitic ghost,*
> *You eat my substance steadily;*
> *I who fear inanition most*
> *Meet it in you engrossing me.*

As the critical essays that follow this generous selection of Davis's poems emphasize, the poet's most obsessive theme was the experience of loss. She had no romantic mystical philosophy to obscure the ephemerality of things, but only a sense that poetic form as a moral act was the necessary means to stand, for a time, firm against the inevitability of loss. One of her several fine epigrams captures this well.

> *If you would have dark themes and high-flown words,*
> *Great albatrosses drenched in sacredness,*
> *Go read some other book; for I confess*
> *I cannot make my verses to your taste.*
> *And though they are not trifles made in haste,*
> *Mine are to those such light things, little birds,*
> *Sparrows among their kind, whose one last shift*
> *Is shelter from the universal drift.*

Poetry does not lead us after the "albatross" of the spirit, but provides a shelter, an approximation to permanence, where the mind can come to knowledge. In her sonnet sequence, *For Tender Stalkes*, Davis defines her view of the world against the theories of romantic love that emerged among the Petrarchan sonneteers of the Renaissance. In their sonnets, the beauty of a young maiden was often taken as a shadow, a figure, of the divine beauty. To love her was,

James Matthew Wilson teaches at Villanova. His latest book is The Fortunes of Poetry in an Age of Unmaking.

therefore, a stage of the soul's ascent to God as Love Itself. Davis replies:

Petrarch in secret feared he must
Die three deaths and die with the third
Indeed, to all the world be dust,
Even dust, his art . . .

The gorgeous Christian Platonism of the Renaissance is (in her view) an imaginative consolation for the fear of death. In contrast, she asks only to be able to turn fear and sorrow into classically honed lines of verse, as Catullus did before her:

Catullus brought to passion skill,
To anger wit, and eased and mended
His bruised heart and his baffled will
In waking song, when love was ended.

A Davis poem transforms loss into a kind of structured permanence, but also prepares us for what Kenneth Fields calls in this volume a "stoic" acceptance of mortality. She captures that acceptance well in her best-known poem, a villanelle called "After a Time."

After a time, all losses are the same.
One more thing lost is one thing less to lose;
And we go stripped at last the way we came.

One need not take Petrarch for a dreamer, the romantics for "high-flown," or Davis's poetry of definition for the last word about things, to admire both her work and the example it sets for the practice of the art. She demonstrates, time and again, the essential truth of Yvor Winters's claims: The writing of poetry is a quest after true knowledge of reality; it is a supple way of taking the measure of the world—and our own measure, too. ♦

B&A

Winner Take All

Polygamy is more common, and more consequential, than you think.

BY ANN MARLOWE

If you've ever wanted to know why Albuquerque strippers get significantly higher tips on days when they are more fertile—and who doesn't?—this book is for you. Like many other aspects of human behavior, it has to do with the fact that men and women both try to maximize the success of their genes, but they necessarily follow different strategies. In a state of nature, men try to impregnate as many women as possible, while women try to secure the best providers possible for their children. It's not necessary that a woman have all her children with one man, but it's generally best for their survival if children grow up with the man who fathered them. Thus, men try to become harem masters, while women try for serial monogamy.

Out of Eden
The Surprising Consequences of Polygamy
by David P. Barash
Oxford, 240 pp., $29.95

Of course, it's been a long time since we lived in a state of nature, and it's another matter whether we want to validate all of our biological impulses. But David Barash has one big theme, repeated again and again: Polygamy is the "default setting for human intimacy." Barash, an evolutionary biologist and professor of psychology at the University of Washington, outlines humanity's past and our similarities with other mammals to show that human culture incorporates both polygyny and (almost always covertly) polyandry. Along the way, he argues that serial monogamy is better than polygamy for most people. The reasons differ for each gender.

Polygamy is close to winner-take-all for males of all species: "Under polygyny, the 'variance' in male reproductive success is high, whereas the variance in female reproductive success is low." Some unsuccessful males don't get to reproduce at all, though a few will get to father many, many children. On the other hand, nearly all fertile females will be impregnated by some male.

The question, in terms of reproductive success, is whether a woman was better off being the fifth wife of a high-status man or the sole wife of an average-status man. It has to do with how many of her children survive. And infant mortality can be very alarming in polygynous households: For example, almost half of Dogon children in Mali die before the age of 5, and kids from polygamous Dogon households die at a rate 7 to 11 times that found in monogamous households. Closer to home, anecdotal evidence from the police blotter is confirmed by studies showing that the biggest risk factor for children is living with a nonbiological parent. And in a harem, all children live with nonbiological parents.

There are a lot of illuminating facts here. "When any species shows a consistent pattern of males larger and stronger than females," Barash writes, "it's a good bet that polygyny is involved." This is because bigger males tend to win out in male-male competition for mates. Males and females are around the same size in species lacking this competition. Barash has previously written on the biological basis for violence, and it's fascinating to learn that a 2014 United Nations report found that between 2000 and 2014, homicide and "acts of personal violence" killed more people around the world than wars did—about six million. This is testimony to the place of competition among males in human evolution, for almost all these murders were committed by men—and most were committed *on* men, too.

There are also some duds. Barash includes too many extended quotes

Ann Marlowe is a writer in New York.

Women embroidering in a Turkish harem; painting by Jean Baptiste Vanmour (ca. 1730)

FINE ART IMAGES / HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY

from H. L. Mencken, and his literary scholarship can be unreliable (John Calvin did not live in 18th-century Geneva!). At least one argument is alarmingly careless: In most animal species, females keep breeding until death. What's the evolutionary payoff to stopping? Barash discusses the "grandmother hypothesis," which argues that senior women help perpetuate their genes by caring for grandchildren. This may be true—but it isn't true that, in the conditions under which we evolved, "women undergo menopause at the age when their own children are beginning to reproduce." It's more likely that women began reproducing in their mid-teens in prehistoric times, becoming grandmothers in their early-to-mid-30s. The age of menopause, at 50 or so, was near death.

Barash is predictably deferential to the *bien pensant*: "The more we know about the crucial role of cooperative breeding, the more we see that 'biparental' care can be provided by a range of parent-like figures, definitely including same-sex adult partners with commitment to each other." This insistence on not giving offense might be what leads Barash to avoid one obvious topic: the effect of 1,400 years of Islam, with its official sanction of polygyny, on the cultures where it has held sway. Barash points out that only a few percent of Muslim men seem to have more than one wife. But up until fairly recent times, these would have been the richest and most influential among them.

If Barash is right to argue that children in polygynous households have a higher mortality rate, because of the stepmother effect, one could say that the richest, most successful Muslim households have not been producing children at the rate of the richest, most successful Christian households. And the wives in polygynous households, who would be expected to be the highest-status women from the richest families—who are likely to be the daughters of men who are more clever and resourceful—are not reproductively as successful as they would be if they were monogamously married. So, over the course of centuries, it's possible that the most talented portion of the population in the Muslim world has been under-reproducing.

But although Barash doesn't ask, or answer, all the questions one might want him to address, he does provide a lucid, well-organized review of the current state of knowledge about polygamy. Anyone who thinks or writes about related issues will find this a valuable guide. ♦

"Trump: Nobody's done more for equality than me"
—New York Post *headline, March 1, 2016*

An Emancipation Proclamation
By President Donald Trump

Alright, listen up. First of all, let me tell you: I love the blacks. I know the blacks, I love the blacks. The blacks are friends of mine. They're great people. So, because of that, and because many, many, many people have told me I'm a pretty great guy, I'm going to free the slaves, like, right now, okay? There, I proclaimed it. And I don't care what all those losers in the South say, and what the loser newspapers say, because I'm a tremendous guy, okay?

I freed the slaves because I love equality. So maybe you're thinking you don't want the slaves to be free, but look, I freed them, okay? I freed them, and it's gonna be tremendous. Think about it: Now, many, many people are free, and it's gonna be so much better.

You hear that, Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee? You losers. That's what I believe in, because equality and justice and whatever, that's what makes America great, okay? So shut up, all you haters out there. Just shut up. Equality is here, and it's gonna be tremendous. The blacks love me, and it's because I love equality. So stop this stupid civil war. You're gonna lose anyway, let me tell you, and then the slaves will be free anyway, so just stop already. I mean, come on. Jeff Davis? A total loser, and he sweats. Like he just got out of a swimming pool, I've never seen anything like it. Robert E. Lee? A lightweight, as I've said many times, and a choke artist. Stonewall Jackson? Believe me, you build a wall out of stone, it's gonna come down. I've built many things: walls, buildings, many, many types of things. I know what to build walls out of, okay? And stone is not even in the top 200 of my list of good wall materials. So, my point is, no more slaves, okay? So just deal with it, and stop whining.

Besides, listen, you're gonna love not having slaves anymore. I don't have any slaves, and let me tell you, it's tremendous to not have slaves. And another thing, I have a dream, okay? I have a dream. And that dream is that one day, my children won't be losers, like your