

words. As I say, freedom, security, identity, democracy. Nobody can criticize them. Nobody can come at you and attack you on those ideas. They are saleable.

"Perhaps one day, once—by being rather more subtle—we've got ourselves in a position where we control the British broadcasting media, the British people might change their mind and say, 'Yes, every last one must go.'

"But if you offer that as your sole aim to start with, you're gonna get absolutely nowhere. So, instead of talking about racial purity, we talk about identity."

This public-relations strategy has been quite successful. The BNP has managed to do fairly well in winning seats on town councils in many parts of Britain, especially where immigrant populations are high. These councillors have seldom been very effective once elected, but their election shows that there is now a significant number of disaffected voters prepared to defy or ignore taunts of "Nazi," so discontented are they about their neglect by the major parties. In elections for the European Parliament, conducted on a low poll and on a proportional representation system that, unlike normal British Parliamentary elections, favors minority parties, the BNP has just won two seats, its first serious electoral success.

As a result of this, Griffin was recently invited to appear on the BBC's principal national political debate program, "Question Time." In the eyes of most viewers, he made a fool of himself almost every time he opened his mouth. But in the eyes of others, he was treated unfairly and denied the chance to make his case. His career is not over yet.

For actual conservatives opposed on principle to multiculturalism and mass immigration and desiring radical cultural and moral change, Griffin's party is a major nuisance and quite possibly a disaster. It is exactly what the liberal

Left wants and believes a conservative movement to be, and exactly what it ought not to be—bigoted, ugly, disreputable, and tainted by past sympathy for Nazis and Fascists. And, alas, its crude, opportunistic simplicities appeal to the resentful victims of the liberal consensus.

It is easy to make two mistakes about such movements. One is to overrate them and to broadcast panicky Brechtian warnings about the rise of a new Nazism. The other is to underrate them and assume that they will get nowhere. In the current state of British politics, when the official Conservative Party is

now almost wholly in the hands of multiculturalists, moral relativists, globalists, and political correctness, there may soon be room for a new formation that rejects these ideas on respectable, civilized grounds. But if no such new grouping emerges, and if our shaky economy takes another nasty turn, Nick Griffin's rough beast may have a future of some kind—and not a pleasant one. ■

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Colonial Gingrichburg

By Newt Gingrich

The American Conservative is privileged to publish this excerpt from Newt Gingrich's latest volume of historical fiction, coauthored by Chase Madar.

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT. Gen. George Washington thought he had never been so drenched as his boat plied the ice-choked Delaware River toward Trenton to make a desperate surprise attack on the Hessian troops of King George. Even for December, it was unseasonably horrid weather, with rain turning into sleet turning into snow.

No, it was definitely not the best Christmas ever this year of 1776. With morale dangerously low, how could his troops, sick, ragged and undersupplied, ever defeat the British and their ruthless mercenaries?

"Excuse me, General sir?" said a voice redolent of bold, game-changing ideas. "May I have the floor?"

The speaker was Lt. Crispus N. Ginnutt, a citizen-soldier and nut farmer from

Georgia. In all the 13 colonies, a more loyal patriot could not be found.

Though no longer young, Ginnutt still possessed fine good looks, with nary a hint of a paunch nor surplus chin wattle. He was gifted with such charm and vigor as to make all the maids blush in their bonnets, though wenching did not accord with his famously strict moral compass, and neither for that matter did lying, accepting bribes, wagering on games of chance, drinking spirits, misusing tax-exempt funds, nor gazing on the naughty pictures sold by General Lafayette's troops, especially not on the Sabbath.

Crispus Ginnutt's square and manly head was framed on three sides by an indomitable mane of silvery hair, and his eagle eyes were browed with rich ebony tufts. His high tenor voice, oft praised for its silken amiability, did pierce the squalling night as if ringing out in an enthralled meetinghouse.

"General Washington, sir, it seems the

problem with this military campaign is a lack of big, positive ideas to get this young nation moving again. Allow me to float three innovative policy solutions that are long overdue.

- Replace the three-cornered hat with more efficient uni-cornered hats and mandate that haberdashers use the time and labor saved to run workhouses for war orphans, for the manufacture of nutcrackers, nut brittles, and nut hatches for export.
- Divert resources from this War of Independence into a national War on Hemp—for the sake of our children, this is one challenge we can't ignore.
- Take what I call a more holistic approach to religious tolerance, requiring Quakers, Shakers, Deists, and Unitarians to affirm their faith in a more mainstream, traditional form of Christianity (of their own choosing, of course) that is less offensive to decent Americans than their current belief systems.

"Folks, if all these years of colonial rule have taught us anything, it's that real problems require real solutions!"

"Lieutenant, you are a haversack stuffed full of clever schemes," said George Washington with great enthusiasm. "Carry on," implored the General. "That's an order!"

"Thank you, General. I'd like to suggest some bold, strategic innovations that will energize the troops—and the nation.

- First, eliminate wasteful spending on the Continental Army's field hospital bureaucracy and replace it with a personalized, individual-responsibility-based system that encourages the avoidance of typhus, gangrene, and bullet-wounds through a comprehensive

wellness program further incentivized by tax credits and flogging.

- Second, it is imperative that we conquer the Nubian duchy of Timbaktu (partnering with the Prussian Empire and the Kingdom of Fiji) and fast-track it to become the 14th colony. Make no mistake, our national security depends on it."

At this, the General interrupted. "Er, very well, Lieutenant Gingnutt, but might it not be wiser to avoid entangling alli—"

But the words did not leave his mahogany dentures, for just then did the squall toss a cold wet wave into General Washington's face, as if God in His wisdom wanted the Georgian citizen-sage to continue his counsel for the guidance of this young and blessed nation.

"And if I may finish, my third point—"

- After defeating the Barbary Pirates on the North African shore, we should take possession of their hinterlands, establishing a colony of our own there to be named New Gingnutt, Gingnuttlandia, or St. Gingnutt-by-the-Sea. My personal preference is for the third option.

"Only with such NextGen leadership and forward-planning will the United States be able to compete effectively in the 19th century. Folks, the choice is ours!"

But not everyone in the heaving vessel was satisfied with Crispus Gingnutt's innovative policy solutions. One long-haired, grimy, patchouli-scented corporal could scarce contain his anti-American wrath. "How now, Lieutenant, invade the wastes of Araby? Have you gone off your nut, my dear Ging—"

But before the naysayer could finish his spiteful diatribe, Crispus had drawn his flintlock rifle and shot the man, whom he had long suspected, and no doubt correctly, of spying for the British,

and what's more, for being a catamite and a Mahometan. He dumped the traitor's corpse overboard into the icy river.

"So long—and best fishes," said Crispus, wittily, as the troops erupted into raucous huzzahs and tossed their hats high into the air.

"By gum, master Gingnutt, such bold ideas as you give tongue to do make my own pamphlets seem like so much chopped offal," exclaimed Tom Paine, who also happened to be on board. "Methinks you shall inspire many other glorious feats from this young nation! Will you someday lead it as our president or monarch or chief executive?"

Crispus Gingnutt flashed a winning but exceedingly humble smile—it was not the first time he had been so esteemed. Truly, he heard all too clearly the call to lead this young nation, which needed him so badly. On the other hand, he might be of even greater use by returning to his nut farm and selflessly hatching other innovative policy solutions for the immeasurable benefit of his country.

A vexing dilemma, with so much hanging in the balance!

Presently, General Washington's boat did furrow the ice-choked river no more as it reached the eastern shore of the Delaware, depositing crew and passengers to safety and onward to historic victory in Trenton.

And our nation has been the better for such safe passage. For the gale-tossed boat did hold within its gunwales a man of great destiny—not to mention George Washington, who was also an important figure in his own right. ■

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Dawson's Creed

The Catholic historian is all but ignored by today's academics, but his providentially informed work will outlast them all.

By Dermot Quinn

HISTORIANS COME IN ALL different shapes and sizes. The well-known ones, those mass-market storytellers we invite into our homes by way of television or bestseller, display enough variety to suit most tastes. There's David McCullough, courtly and urbane as a Renaissance bishop; Ken Burns, bearded and earnest in the required PBS manner; Michael Beschloss, bronzed and well-coiffed as a matinee star; Simon Schama, smooth and subtle. If the past is a foreign country, these are its friendly, unthreatening ambassadors, anecdotal, unflappable, fairly bursting with middlebrow sagacity. They are the bland leading the bland, and none of us is much worse for their agreeable, undemanding guidance.

Away from the cameras, less glamorous historians play their part in making the past present—graduate students, assistant professors, archivists, librarians. These are the meek who will not inherit the earth but who labor mightily hard to understand it. Not as famous or as well paid as the big shots, they are actually more important. Without them, our civic life would be a wasteland of forgetfulness, a cultural desert. They tell us who we are by telling us where we came from. They unsettle our pieties, question our assumptions. To be sure, strange ideas sometimes circulate when three or four of them get together. Their politics are often more to the Left than the Right. On the whole, though, these are serious people who

demand serious attention. Spare them a thought at Barnes and Noble. They know more than you think.

Why is it, then, that for all the variety, for all the different voices, something is not right with the way we do history in this country today? You can sniff it in the air—the divorce between the profession and the public; the sheer venom of various ideological disputes; the unending battle between naïve readings of American history in which all is white and critical ones in which all is black; the argument, increasingly tiresome, between “history” and “herstory”; the fact that readers want stories and professors refuse to tell them. When Napoleon defined history as “lies agreed upon,” he could not have known, 200 years later, that we would not even agree upon the lies. The chattering classes are chattering themselves to death and, increasingly, no one is listening.

One sign of the problem is that the work of Christopher Dawson is nowhere to be seen in this wilderness of choice. Born in 1889 and dying in 1970, Dawson has disappeared from the historical profession as if he had never graced it, and this says more about it than it says about him. He was, after all, one of those rare figures who bridged the gap between “serious” and “popular” history, a gap he considered insulting and designed to keep the public in its place. He was also, indisputably, a giant in his field: first holder of the Chauncey Stillman chair of Roman Catholic Studies at Harvard; Gif-

ford Lecturer at Edinburgh University not once but twice; prolific and powerful investigator of the relationship between religion and culture; editor of the *Dublin Review*. In his day, Dawson's works sold in the hundreds of thousands, and they were serious books for serious people, not the kind of pabulum that is popular today. Along with Chesterton, he was one of the best known Catholic converts of the middle 20th century. His tutor at Oxford ranked him alongside Lord Acton in historical genius. Cardinal Cushing of Boston, admittedly not a member of American Historical Association, called him “one of those rare human spirits who stands back from the world in which he lives and takes the true measure of time and man.”

This Christopher Dawson was a deeper thinker, a more compelling intellect, a more morally urgent voice than almost all of his contemporaries put together. Yet on whose syllabus is he found today? Have our senior professors heard of him? Our undergraduates? Our literary editors? I doubt it. That is their loss, and ours. If the profession were to rediscover him, it might rediscover itself.

Part of his obscurity, to be fair, has to do with his personality. Dawson was an English academic of a certain kind—tweedy, bespectacled, pipe-smoking, shy. His students found him friendly but formidable, impossibly well read and hard to keep up with. His readers