

# Trump Answers the Call for Change

by Conrad Black

The Orlando tragedy, following on the controversy over Donald Trump's accusation of bias against a judge of Latin American descent in the Trump University case, which itself followed right on the heels of a big week of primary wins for Hillary Clinton, has naturally roiled the race for the presidency. As both national party conventions are now foregone conclusions, the campaign has effectively begun without slaking the modest curiosity over who the vice-presidential nominees will be. The more venerable among us remember when the conventions contained an element of suspense and were held in the last half of August, and the campaign began on Labor Day. The Democrats kicked off on that day with a mighty gathering of the UAW in Detroit's Cadillac Square. Since those days, about ten quadrennial elections ago, all races for the nomination have been resolved in the spring; the automobile industry has been dispersed, partially deunionized, and radically refinanced; Detroit has almost died as a city; and the Cadillac has lost most of the goodwill in its trademark. (The square and the car are named after the explorer.)

The fact that Mrs. Clinton defeated Senator Sanders in California by 12.6 percent of the vote (about 440,000 votes) indicates that the traditional Democratic coalition called the party a night just before the witching hour and unexcitedly climbed aboard the Clinton campaign bus just before it limped into the terminal. Bernie gave it a good try, but as the future, he was passé. He bought completely into the climate-change myth, not only to attract the traditional conservationists and most demonstrative anti-pollutionists, but to exploit the hijacking of the ecological movement by the defeated and rebranded Left. The market economy carried

conventional opinion under Reagan and Thatcher and gained from the collapse of international Communism and the rise of capitalist China, and the Left fled into the control of what used to be the Sierra Club, Ducks Unlimited, bird-watching societies, and bicycling legions of net-waving butterfly collectors. Ecological militancy is the child of this awkward coupling.

Sanders bought the students and youth generally with his promise of free university tuition and a straight write-off of a trillion dollars of student loans, probably the greatest electoral bribe since some followers of Francis Townsend half-seriously suggested throwing money out of the windows of low-flying aircraft all around the country in the mid 1930s. The Sanders economic-justice plan, massive tax increases on the wealthy with the proceeds distributed among those most in need, was not new, but hasn't been advocated with such vehemence before in a presidential race except by third-party hopefuls such as Henry Wallace and Huey Long. Only the inexperienced would imagine that such a measure could achieve anything except a flight of capital and rich people, and paroxysms of ingenuity in technical tax-avoidance.

What may prove to be the most consequential, as well as the most original, of the main Sanders proposals was his call for a clean-up of the justice system. The 99 percent prosecution success rate, 97 percent without trial, is a scandal and mockery that shames every American, and there are 49 million official felons in the country, approximately a fifth of all adults. (This includes unstigmatizing offenses such as DUI and disorderly conduct decades ago, but it is still an alarming figure.) This huge echelon of the electorate and their families could be mobilized, as African Americans, women, and non-heterosexuals have been mobilized. If Sanders kicks off such a change in American society, he will have rendered an immense service, where only complacency has reigned for decades.

In any case, the Sanders campaign is over; approximately half the Democrats opted for radical change, as did a third of the Republicans, led by Senator Ted Cruz. Hillary Clinton held the fort in the Democracy by moving as far to the left as she could, as slowly as she could, without jeopardizing the outcome. Donald Trump prevailed in the GOP by using his status as a celebrity outsider and an Archie Bunker comedy-candor presentation, leavened by his status as a billionaire and occasional evidence of his higher education, such as his insertion of the word "presumptive" when appropriate (almost none in the media knew what it really meant); and by seeming to be somewhat radical in the declarative ferocity of his critique of some immigration and some trade agreements. Mrs. Clinton prevailed despite intense heat on her for alleged illegalities and widespread speculation that she could be criminally indicted at any moment.

Mr. Trump is not another milquetoast Republican trophy-in-advance on the Democratic nominee's shelf like Romney and McCain and Bob Dole and others, and has returned fire at Mrs. Clinton with deadly accuracy. His achievement, in taking over his party from the outside in a tidal wave of primary votes, has been unprecedented, and his artfulness in satisfying the unsuspected demand for profound change by his vaudeville routine and strictures on immigration and trade have, though stylistically very different, replicated FDR's marshaling of public anger in the Depression against mythical and unnamed groups, "economic royalists, malefactors of great wealth, war profiteers," etc. He preserved the moral unity of the nation and gradually focused public hostility on America's real enemies, the Nazis and Japanese imperialists. As I wrote last week, it has been no small achievement for both candidates to keep their parties more or less in the middle of the spectrum with such strong magnetic attractions from outside the mainstream.

The past week has naturally been very tumultuous. The

Democrats were concerned that Trump was making unsuspected progress in defanging and uniting the Republicans, whose elected officials had been so hostile to him. The Democrats ramped up the Trump University issue through their more reliable media partisans. Mr. Trump judged that that issue had to be neutralized now, even at short-term cost in the polls, and singled out the presiding judge. His explicit imputation of an ethnic motive was extremely inelegant, and irritatingly delivered, with robotic repetition of his plan for a wall on the Mexican border. Most of his followers seem to have bought into his explanation, though the delivery was so artless it cost him from five to ten points in the polls. Surely he could have achieved the same objective without being so laborious and heavy-handed.

Initial reactions were so negative among swing voters that RealClearPolitics, probably the most authoritative readily accessible source for interpretation of unfolding political events, ran a piece on June 13 claiming that Trump subconsciously realized that he was not up to the job of president and wished that that cup would pass from him. This wins the grand prize to date among all those fatuous journalistic efforts to celebrate and explain the long-delayed collapse of the Trump phenomenon.

While the consequences on the presidential campaign of the horrible tragedy in Orlando are not yet clear, it would be surprising if Trump were not much closer than the Democrats to the central majority of public opinion with his call for a vastly increased campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL) at its source in Iraq and Syria. The Obama-Clinton regime terribly misplayed its options by abruptly departing the first and fumbling the latter with inaction compounded by the infamous redline fiasco. There can be no doubt that the Republican nominee will make them pay for it. In the aftermath of the massacre, the president waffled on about gun control

and Mrs. Clinton proclaimed her solicitude for the gay community and called for the Arab powers, especially Saudi Arabia, to take sterner measures against terrorists and their sponsors.

Trump recorded again the refusal of the president to link terror to Islam and debunked the Clinton message by reference to the \$25 million the Clinton Foundation had received from the Saudis. He also revealed again, as he has so often (but the best is yet to come), the rot in the underbelly of the whole Clinton-Bush-Obama stewardship of the post-Reagan era. It has been a whole generation that most Americans now regard as tainted by political venality and opportunism, though all the principals have had their better moments. Bernie Sanders and Ted Cruz made essentially that point in terms considerably harsher than Donald Trump has employed. The Republican leadership learned the hard way that they were standing on a bridge that had no connection to the rudder or propeller of their ship.

The Democrats, having with the utmost difficulty seen Bernie Sanders off the end of the plank, are about to learn that, as in Mrs. Bill Clinton's disastrous attempt to play the feminist card against Donald Trump, the old game of mousetraps for the delectation of a partisan media, and platitudinous carpet-bombings of inclusiveness and unity and the rest of their shopworn pieties, will not cut it again. It is time for a real change and everyone knows it except the detritus of both parties, their bedraggled media groupies, and the most aggrieved commentators, right and left. The people think otherwise, it seems.