

wasn't for lack of trying to aid the anti-choice candidates through illicit means. Long after the election, the union was fined for failing to report almost \$105,000 in campaign-related expenses.

One of the commonest ways the teacher unions and their allies use illegal or unethical means to push their elec-

numbers of students over the past century (one teacher per 30.5 students in 1930, compared to one teacher per 16.5 students in 1998.) And never mind that the mass of evidence establishes that crash programs to reduce class sizes do not result in gains in student achievement. Rather, they only succeed in

SCHOOL CHOICE IS WHAT THE AUTHOR DEEMS THE KRYPTONITE THAT COULD HALT THE SEEMINGLY POWERFUL TEACHER TRUST IN ITS TRACKS.

tion agenda is expropriating school facilities and supplies for political purposes, even stooping to send campaign flyers home in children's backpacks. The Landmark Legal Foundation has filed complaints with federal election officials detailing NEA concealment of political spending. The NEA even refuses to report as a political expense the \$70 million annually spent on its UniServ directors, even though UniServ agents engage in plainly political activities like organizing PACs and campaigns to elect "pro-education" candidates, which almost always translates to Democrats who will vote the NEA line unflinchingly.

Brimelow carefully analyzes the evidence of the past 35 years that there is indeed something rotten in the heart of American K-12 education. He does not contend that the teacher unions are the only cause of the deficiencies, but he does argue persuasively that they are prime culprits. Again, Brimelow blames the Teacher Trust's hoggishness in consuming educational resources without any return in increased productivity. Since the publication of the *A Nation at Risk* critique of the educational system 20 years ago, inflation-adjusted per-pupil spending has increased 45 percent, yet measures of overall student and school performance remain stuck on mediocre. Nevertheless, one of the main "reform" planks of the teacher unions entails massive hiring of more teachers to reduce class size—never mind that the government school system has employed ever more teachers compared to its

padding the roles of the teacher unions, which is why they so avidly support class size reduction.

School choice is what the author deems the kryptonite that could halt the seemingly powerful Teacher Trust in its tracks. In a chapter devoted entirely to choice, he demonstrates how the hysterical reactions of NEA and AFT leaders to any and all voucher proposals betray their awareness of the threat to their monopoly power. To choice advocates, however, Brimelow offers a cautionary note: if the NEA and AFT ever conclude vouchers are inevitable, they will begin to make a concerted effort to organize private school teachers. That would be consistent with the Teacher Trust's long-time rule: "If you can't beat 'em, make 'em join."

In a concluding chapter, Brimelow offers a 24-point "wish list" of actions that could loosen the Teacher Trust's death grip on education. He offers his wishes without regard to their political feasibility. Clearly in many cases, Democrats and "moderate" Republicans would block overt action to bust the Trust. Wish No. 1—a federal antitrust statute to forbid teacher union dues percolating up from the locals to the national unions—would probably not get far. Other wishes might not be so far-fetched, however. Paycheck Protection, laws giving union members the right to withhold the portion of their dues going to political causes, is something that enjoys widespread public support. His final wish is: Abolish the U.S. Department of Education. "The NEA wanted

this federal toehold. *Chop it off.*" This is, however, wishful thinking. When Republicans had the power to press that action on tenth amendment grounds, they lacked the will or ability to follow through. Now, GOP leaders boast of how much they have increased spending for this bureaucratic Leviathan, while Democrats lament that the outlays are not nearly enough.

This impressively documented and highly readable book should help raise awareness of how the exercise of raw power by greedy unions is depressing the quality of elementary and secondary education in the USA. Every parent and school board member should have a copy. ■

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[*Made In Texas: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics, Michael Lind, Basic Books, 201 pages*]

Messing with Texas

By Samuel Francis

MICHAEL LIND'S WILLINGNESS to buttress what the establishment Left wants to believe (and wants the rest of the country to believe) is perhaps one explanation for his sudden splash into celebrity only a few years ago, but surely not the only one. His first full-length book, *The Next American Nation*, was a learned and cleverly argued interpretation of American history that comprised the ideological foundation of the author's "liberal nationalism," a creed he has served up in most of his other books as well.

Of the three Lind books that I have read, all, including his latest, display the same flashes of brilliance and often ingenious talent of spying historical and cultural patterns that no one else has detected. All of them also suffer from the

same flaws: his efforts to push cultural, political, and historical realities into the convenient categories he has discovered, even when they don't fit, and a steady, harsh, almost obsessively angry polemic directed against a standard set of the author's favorite targets: conservatives (neoconservatives in particular); the American South, especially its Celtic manifestations; and religion of almost all species (especially "supernaturalist" Christianity). In *Made In Texas*, Lind not only trips into the same fallacies but also eagerly seizes the opportunity offered by the administration of George W. Bush to clobber the same targets.

The argument is that Texas, or at least one cultural-political pattern in it, has taken over the country through the persona of George W. Bush, his Christian Right allies, and a Republican Party controlled by fellow Lone Star rangers Dick Arney, Phil Gramm, Tom DeLay, and Dick Cheney. With a little help from the brains provided by the neoconservative Jews of the northeast, the Texas mafia has plotted a cowboy crusade against Iraq and other Arab states, permitted the country to be flooded with illegal immigrants to supply cheap labor, and, out of subservience to Texas oil and agribusiness interests, gutted all the environmental policies constructed by previous administrations. In addition to war-mongering, greed, and reckless disregard for nature, the Bush gang is also racist, and while no special manifestation of that sin comes easily to mind, Lind throws it in anyway to complete the picture he is trying to paint.

The Texas Mr. Bush and his cabal represent is symbolized by the city of Waco. It is in Waco that Baylor University, a Southern Baptist center, is located, there in 1916 that Jesse Washington—a black teenager who confessed to raping a white woman—was burned alive and there that the Ku Klux Klan in 1923 held a public parade of some 2,000 members. It was in Waco, too, that David Koresh and his Branch Davidians nested, and the city is thus doubly notorious, "first for the ritual public burning of Jesse Washington and then for the apocalyptic immolation of

David Koresh and his cult." The relevance of the heart of darkness that festers in Waco ought to be obvious enough, as the city is only 18 miles from Crawford, where President Bush has a ranch. If you think that Waco, Crawford, and the demons that seem to reside around them are all that Texas has to offer, be not deceived. As Lind makes clear, Waco and Crawford are not really in the West at all, "but in the Deep South."

There is another Texas, one that shines in Lind's eye as a kind and gentle land, not settled by Anglo-Celtic Southern Protestants whose ancestors "had been conquering and expropriating other ethnic nations for centuries," but by German and Scandinavian pioneers, who made friends with the Indians, collected large libraries, cultivated orchards, and in general just loved mankind. It was out of this "German-Scandinavian" Texas that one of Lind's heroes, Lyndon Johnson came, as did the author himself.

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ANGLO-CELTIC LOWLIFES HE DESPISES.**

Lind, you see, is from Texas, and in the preface to his book he spends nearly three pages telling us all about his ancestry and why they have little to do with the Evil Texas. It soon becomes clear that in spite of a good deal of erudition in Texas history, geography, folklore, and politics, much of what he might have imparted to his readers is soon immersed in a fog of ideological-political bias, social snobbery, and personal resentment. At every opportunity he delivers a few more insults to the Anglo-Celtic lowlifes he despises.

"While the Waco/Crawford area is infamous for its violent religious fanatics and its shocking lynchings," he writes, "the [German-settled] Hill Country has long been a haven for mavericks of all kinds—the very sort of people who are not welcome among many of George W. Bush's neighbors," and in contrast to the utopian German-Scandinavian areas of peace-loving orchard-keepers,

In the regions of Texas infused with traditional Southern culture ... deviance in political views, religious belief, behavior, or even dress could—and sometimes still can—subject one to ostracism, verbal harassment, physical beatings, or even murder. A small-m maverick in the vicinity of the present-day Johnson ranch could always be certain that his life and property would be secure. Throughout most of the history of Texas, a maverick living near the present-day Bush ranch could not be sure about his safety.

This sort of bitter characterization of the conservative, Confederate, fundamentalist, and mainly Anglo-Celtic Texas he hates—"a toxic by-product of the hierarchical plantation society of the American South, a cruel caste society in which the white, brown, and black majority labor for inadequate rewards

while a cultivated but callous oligarchy of rich white families and their hirelings in the professions dominate the economy, politics, and the rarefied air of academic and museum culture," on the one hand—and the "modernist" or "cosmopolitan," Unionist, secular, and mainly Germanic-Scandinavian Texas he coos over—"a society eager to embrace the Space Age and the Information Age ... led ... by a visionary and earnest elite of entrepreneurs, engineers, reformist politicians, and dedicated civil servants, many of them self-made men and women from humble origins ... a broadly egalitarian meritocracy, not a traditional social order stratified by caste and class" on the other—continues without surcease throughout the first two chapters and is a steady refrain in most of the remainder. Lind's inability to let it go for even a moment is at first offensive in its determination to issue the meanest

and most sweeping generalizations he can imagine about an entire population group and its culture but soon becomes merely tiresome and at last comically predictable and childish one-sided.

Lind insists that George W. Bush is a creature of the degraded culture, he describes. However improbable that may seem for a descendant of New England Brahmins, whatever the president's antecedents, he is certainly the arch-villain of the book, while the collective hero is a whole tradition that Lind dubs "Texas modernism." Its proponents include Edward House, Woodrow Wilson's adviser at the Paris Peace Conference and author of a novel advocating a Progressivist dictatorship in the United States, and continue with Lyndon Johnson himself, Ross Perot, Bobby Ray Inman, Barbara Jordan, Sam Rayburn, and John Connally. "Their goal," much like that of House's fictional dictator Philip Dru, "was a modernizing economic and social revolution from above in Texas, and their chosen instrument was state capitalism—civilian or military. They were not socialists, but they were statist," and they "were the major rivals to the traditionalists in twentieth-century Texas."

The "traditionalists," of course, are the genocidal religious neurotics whom Lind thinks have the Good Guys surrounded down at the corral. When Lind is forcing himself to be nice, they are representatives of "traditional Southern conservatism," but more often he prefers the term "reactionary." Indeed, it seems to be an unexamined article of Mr. Lind's simple faith that human history is a unilinear process involving a continuous struggle between the Good Guys ("modernists") and the Bad Guys ("reactionaries" and "traditionalists"). Lind seems to think that Progress must come, even if a small band of "modernists" needs to seize power in the state and force utopia onto the unwilling. "Texas modernism" is merely the local manifestation of the "liberal nationalism" that Lind has boomed in his other books, a "nationalism" that relies on the centralizing federal government to spon-

sor social reforms, economic growth, and progress in general.

Lind is quite right that just such a tradition exists in American history, and his analysis of who does and who does not belong to it is usually keen. It is also, of course, a tradition that, *pace* Mr. Lind, is responsible for just about everything wrong in the annals of the American nation, launching most of the wars in our history, ballooning the size and power of the federal government, and wrecking American society through state-managed social engineering and economic regulation.

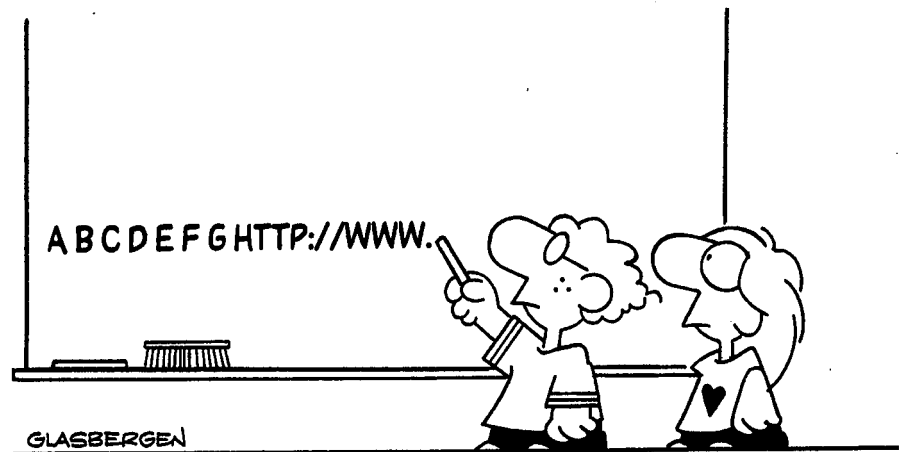
Given Lind's affection for statism, his hostility to the projected war against Iraq may seem difficult to explain—until one recalls that the war is in part the brainchild of the wicked President Bush, in league with what Lind keeps telling us are the "mostly Jewish" neoconservatives allied with the "reactionary white Southern Protestant fundamentalists." Lind does offer a brief paragraph explaining that the "Jewish hawks" are not representative of "Jewish-Americans in general" and that not all neocons are Jewish, but the paint on his picture is already dry by the time he scribbles in the obligatory disclaimers.

Despite Lind's own thinly disguised ethnic hatred of the Other Texas, his book contains quite a bit of useful information and some striking insights. His account of the neoconservative policy empire in Washington and New York is valuable in itself, as is his discussion of the Judaeophilic theology of the Christ-

ian Right as a foundation of its alliance with the neoconservatives. Lind also effectively demolishes the claim that reducing immigration will result in higher production costs and shows how free trade leads to colonial dependency on the part of those countries that practice it. As for George W. Bush, Lind has probably attributed to him a far more sinister and sophisticated character than this president possesses. The president's actual personality and character vanish as Lind stuffs them into his prefabricated bag of cultural and political stereotypes.

What Lind wants for the future is simply the triumph of "Texas modernism" forever and ever, with the federal government managing American society and the economy in such a way as to redistribute the urban underclass away from the "coastal rim" of the country throughout the rural heartland and to construct a "high-tech infrastructure" throughout rural areas. If nothing else, such a state-managed program of demographic and economic redistribution would gut the Evil Texas and its analogues in other states that Lind loathes so much. Had he been able to overcome whatever demons seem to haunt him, Lind might have written a far more useful contribution to American political-cultural analysis. Sadly, he has not. ■

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With Corporal Daphna in the Golan

As of this writing, the guns have not begun to roar, so I'll lighten up a bit and tell you about the last time the jet-set was in the Golan Heights, during the Yom Kippur

War of 1973. Back then, I was employed by the oldest morning newspaper in Greece, the *Acropolis*. In fact, I was the *numero uno* correspondent of *Acropolis*, probably because I was the only Greek journalist who could write in another language.

On the first Sunday of October, I had gone to the Athens Tennis Club for a hit when I was called to the telephone and told to go down to the newspaper. My boss at the time was owner and publisher Nassos Botsis, a tall, elegant 75-year-old lecher who made most rock stars seem celibate by comparison. Botsis was rich but always in debt because of his gambling, and he loved women, nightclubs, and the dissolute life. Needless to say, despite the age difference, we were fast friends. That morning, when I arrived at the paper, the editor handed me a Telex card and asked me if I was ready to fly to Egypt.

The day before, Egyptian troops had thrown pontoon bridges over the Suez Canal and had crossed into the Israeli-occupied Sinai. Simultaneously, Syria had attacked the Golan Heights. Israel was fighting on two fronts, and things looked bad. The Arabs, I figured, had closed their airports, and, in any case, covering a war from the Arab side is a losing proposition. (You're locked into a basement and allowed out only to be given Arab communiqués announcing victories.) On the other hand, Israel was waiting for all the reservists who were outside Israel proper to fly home. So I told the editor that it would be smarter

to fly to Israel instead of Egypt. He agreed. Botsis was against it, but once I told him that Israeli women soldiers were very sexy in their uniforms and that if Israel survived I would set things up with couple of lieutenants and he could fly down and join me, he agreed with alacrity. His last words to me were, "Make sure they're young and that they wear uniforms."

I managed to get on an El Al flight that was full of reservists and took an old karate buddy of mine, Jeff Jansz, along as a photographer. Once in Tel Aviv, I contacted my friend Joe Fried, then writing for the *New York Times*, whom I had met in Vietnam and who had shown me the ropes around Saigon and Da Nang.

WE WERE YOUNG BACK THEN, AND WE HAD FUN. WAR WAS DIFFERENT, AT LEAST COVERING IT WAS.

Joe told me to go to Beit Sokolov, the press center, to establish my credentials and to rent a car. Having done all that, I checked into the Hilton and went to the bar ready for a good night's fun before the expected bang-bang of the morrow.

That is when I saw the strangest of sights. It was from a Hollywood movie, or better yet, a Hemingway story filmed by Hollywood. There was Alix Chevasus, all suntanned and soigné in a khaki uniform last worn by a Bengal Lancer, or perhaps by Stewart Granger in "King Solomon's Mines." His desert boots

were Gucci. (For any of you who have never heard of him, Alix was a famous playboy back then. He has since retired and lives quietly in Paris.) Next to Alix stood a man in a Lacoste shirt whose face looked awfully familiar, and next to him was one of my oldest and closest friends, Jean-Claude Sauer, a war photographer for *Paris Match* (now also retired) who may or may not have committed adultery with the beautiful wife of a South Vietnamese air marshal and vice president. All three were cheerfully celebrating.

After the initial greetings, Jean-Claude introduced me to the man in the tennis shirt, who turned out to be Group Captain Peter Townsend, the Battle of Britain hero and the man whom Princess Margaret fell rather hard for after the war. Townsend was there to report for *Paris Match*, while Alix had decided to fly down with Jean-Claude after a heavy

night of drinking at Regine's in Paris. Jean-Claude got the call from the magazine in the club and dared Alix to come along. That one of the greatest tank battles in history was taking place never seemed to have entered their minds. I found it odd but agreed to take them with me the next day.

Early the next morning we drove towards the Golan. After Tiberias, the Golan rises forbiddingly. We could hear heavy artillery pounding the junction town of El-Kuneitra. It was the fourth day of the war, and the Israelis were