

impact of high immigration levels, and particularly of uneducated, unskilled immigrants, on the prospects of poor citizens, on our population growth rate, on the environment. His treatment of the six ethnic groups may leave the impression that all immigrant groups can make it in the United States — and be a net asset for the nation — if we facilitate their acculturation to America rather than perpetuate their original cultures through multiculturalist policies and affirmative action. But the main cur-

rent of the book drives home the idea that some cultures are more progress-prone than others and that some immigrant groups do better than others.

The need for disaggregation by ethnicity or national origin of the immigration flow is an important contribution to the immigration debate. Disaggregation will help to explain Francis Fukuyama's pro-immigration stance (Japanese immigrants have done extremely well in America) in contrast to the anxious stance of Richard Estrada

(Mexican immigrants have *not* done very well). And Sowell correctly defines the dilemma with which his analysis leaves us: "... domestic ideological agendas may make it impossible to be selective in admitting immigrants from different nations, leaving as alternatives only loss of control of the border or restrictive policies toward immigrants in general." Probably the best that can be realistically sought is a new policy that stresses the skills, education, and financial resources of immigrants. □

## America's 'Republics'

### Book Review by David Payne

Michael Lind begins by distinguishing between 'nation-states,' which are political entities, and 'nations,' which are cultural entities. Thus, although the nation-state of Poland did not exist for some time in the 18th century, the Polish nation continued to exist, and now exists once again as a nation-state as well. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was a nation-state, but was never a nation. Instead, it was composed of many different nations. There was never a "Yugoslavian people."

There is an American nation, according to Lind, which did not begin with the nation-state called the United States,

---

*David Payne teaches ethics and philosophy at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey.*

but some time before that. "A real nation is a concrete historical community, defined primarily by a common language, common folkways, and a common vernacular culture" (p.5). Lind argues that the American nation should not be defined in terms of race and religion, but rather in terms

---

### The Next American Nation — The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution

By Michael Lind  
New York: The Free Press, 1995  
436 pages, \$25.00

---



of language and culture. This view he calls "liberal nationalism," and acceptance of it leads to a different view of the American past, for it disavows the democratic uniqueness or essential superiority of the Ameri-

can nation along with the use of such ideas for engendering patriotic fervor. "One should cherish one's nation, as one should cherish one's family, not because it is the best in the world, but because, with all its flaws, it is one's own" (p.10).

There have been three republics so far in American history, and Lind argues that we need a (bloodless) revolution to usher in a fourth. These republics are described as follows:

#### I. The First Republic: Anglo-America

The First Republic is composed of the Anglo-American race and the Protestant religion due to the original majority composition of the founding fathers. Federal Republicanism was the political creed — an almost non-existent federal government, with political parties based on loose coalitions of "courthouse gangs" such as Tammany Hall,

etc. Irish, Jews, and blacks, all were effectively excluded from this nation.

The first republic was held together by what Lind calls the first grand compromise. This informal, extraconstitutional device had two parts: first was the custom of admitting one slave state for every free state (sectional balance of power); second was the fact that all national parties accepted the legitimacy of slavery (since each party had a Southern wing). "The electoral success in 1860 of the Republican party, the first purely sectional political party (Lincoln did not receive a single Southern electoral vote), signaled the repudiation of this bargain by a majority of Northerners" (p.37).

The grand strategy of the first republic was the enlargement of the empire of liberty — manifest destiny, a mission from God to expand the nation of virtuous, republican, Protestant Anglo-Saxons, a master race possessed of the true principles of government and religion. It was shaped by the disproportionate influence of the Southern Planter class, who saw themselves as the heirs of English aristocracy; but it turned out to be a rickety federation that collapsed as a result of its own successful expansion. This in two senses: first its successful expansion brought the slave vs. free state controversy to a head; but second, and more importantly, the physical expansion of the nation meant that it had to be filled with people. In this sense the first republic was destroyed by massive European immigration.

## II. The Second Republic: Euro-America

The next phase of American history is dominated by a north-eastern elite that coalesced during the Civil War — a war which made the fortunes of those in the Gilded Age and the political careers of the government leaders that followed. This new national ruling class was almost exclusively Anglo-Protestant, and set itself up as an aristocracy on the British model (in many ways more so than the Southerners had). The second republic was clearly based on a policy of White Supremacy.

Lind stresses how mass immigration changed the American nation. "The evidence suggests that the restriction of immigration in the 1920s increased the rate of assimilation among European-America groups. 'By drastically limiting the volume of European immigration,' one scholar has noted, 'the restrictive policy adopted in the 1920s accelerated the Americanization of those groups which had come earlier.' By 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected the first Irish-American Catholic president of the United States, Ellis Island was a ruin. Only when it was effectively shut down did Ellis Island, along with the Statue of Liberty, become an idealized symbol of a (Euro-American) 'melting pot.'" (p.85).

Protestantism was still the accepted religion of the second republic. Catholics and Jews were accepted, but only at a price: the Catholics had to give up the notion that theirs was the true universal church, and the Jews that they were a chosen people in

terms of ethnicity rather than belief. The political creed of the second republic was "federal democracy." This was a nation that presumed to lead the world into a democratic millennium. But such was not to be. Although more highly successful in its own right, achieving economic and then geopolitical primacy within the space of a few generations, white supremacy was so interwoven into the American fabric that it could not be removed without unraveling the nation itself — which is exactly what happened.

## III. The Third Republic: Multicultural America

This is the present republic which began with the Civil Rights movement encouraging race neutrality, but has ended (as the founders lost control) with the triumph of group-consciousness and racial preference programs. Multiculturalism is neither merely an educational philosophy nor merely a proposal or possibility—it is the de facto orthodoxy of the present American regime.

Multicultural America is not a successful republic. To date there is no political creed of the third republic, i.e., "there is no generally agreed upon account of what the American community is, or how its place in the world or history should be conceived" (p.98). In essence, there is no popular support — no majority of Americans behind it. Multicultural America is divided into five arbitrary race categories, which are to be seen as permanently distinct communities. Those who criticize this categorization are, by definition,

racists who wish to turn back the clock to the era of white supremacy.

The third republic is dominated by a white overclass, described by Lind as “a small group consisting of affluent white executives, professionals, and rentiers, most of them with advanced degrees, who with their dependents amount to no more than a fifth or so of the American population” (p.100).

There are two important trends in modern Multicultural America, both bad: the proliferation of racial preferences and the decline in average wages and benefits. Both of these serve the collective interests of the white overclass. Racial preferences are invoked because they tend to co-opt the potential leaders of black and Hispanic dissent, by creating a dependent (and small) non-white overclass that has the values of the white overclass. [Marx: “The more a ruling class is able to assimilate the most prominent men of the dominated classes, the more stable and dangerous its rule.”] Such preferences are also much less costly “to affluent whites in general and the business class in particular, than expensive universal programs designed to improve the education and standard of living of the bottom half of the population, of all races. Compared to color-blind liberalism, racial preference is *cheap*” (p.179).

The decline in wages and benefits is nothing less than a war waged by the overclass against the transracial middle class American. This includes “forcing American workers to compete with exploited workers

in Third World sweatshops, low-wage legal and illegal immigrants, and a rapidly growing pool of temp labor whose members lack job tenure, benefits, or union representation” (p.101). The result? stagnant or falling incomes for the majority, rising incomes for the overclass. The real middle class is not the two-car suburban elite, but rather the high school educated, economically insecure salaried class, whose members make up more than two thirds of the U.S. population. They are “non-unionized, at-will employees, lacking a four-year college education, paid by the hour, who can be fired at any time, and have few or no managerial responsibilities” (p.152).

Entry into the professional class, as opposed to the salaried class, is controlled by two institutions: [1] prestigious universities, who control, by tuition costs, those who enter, and [2] state systems of professional accreditation. Lind refers to these as the “primogeniture and entail” of the white overclass. Thus the American Bar Association sets the standards for lawyers, which includes long and expensive college training, making such a profession difficult for the underclass to attain (without help from the ‘big house’). Add to these the high cost of campaign financing and you have insured that the overclass maintains political power as well. Is all of this just another conspiracy theory? No, Lind does not claim that the overclass has a conscious agenda. It is simply to their benefit to act as they do to preserve their favored status.

The underclass is also kept in line by maintaining high levels of immigration. “During the years that the political class has been almost unanimously in favor of present or higher levels of legal immigration, an overwhelming majority of Americans of all races have favored restriction, a fact that speaks volumes about the alienation of the American ascendancy from the majority’s interests and concerns” (p.207). Mass immigration helps the white overclass mainly by its tendency to drive down wages for working class and working poor Americans.

The religious ethic of the previous republics has been replaced in the third republic by the ethic of authenticity. You are an authentic individual if you know in which of the five racial categories you belong, and you conform to the standards of that group. “To find yourself, you need only find your ghetto, and adopt its politics, its style of dress, and its approved beliefs about the world and humanity. Having done so, you can then demand that society at large recognize your individuality — that is to say, your abject conformity” (p.123). Anyone who believes that multiculturalism promotes a radical individualism is sadly mistaken. “Identity politics is meekest conformity, masquerading as anarchic rebellion” (p.124). Even the official black American culture is a construct. There is almost no African culture among black Americans, and so it had to be created. Indeed, the very idea of an ‘African identity’ is absurd — it is an identity itself constructed by

non-Africans.

This is all made worse with immigration. "Like the racial preference system, today's policy of legal mass immigration emerged from the Civil Rights Revolution as an unintended consequence of what was intended to be a modest reform" (p.131). This mass immigration contributes to the rapid growth of groups eligible for racial preference benefits. "One wonders what James Farmer, the patron saint of quotas, would have said, if he had been told, in 1960, that by boycotting Northern corporations until they hired fixed numbers of black Americans, he was inspiring a system whose major beneficiaries would ultimately be, not only well-to-do white women, but immigrants and the descendants of immigrants who, at the time of his struggles, were living in Mexico, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala" (p.135).

#### IV. The Fourth Republic: TransAmerica

The political creed of the fourth republic would be Liberal Nationalism. American liberal nationalism is the theory that America is more like Poland than Yugoslavia. "There is a transracial American nation which, like the Polish people, would continue to exist, even if the American nation-state, the United States of America, were wiped off the map" (p.259). What identifies an individual as a member of the American nation is [1] a common language — "There is more to the national culture than the national language, though the language is

both the primary index of nationality and its major means of transmission" (p.265)—[2] common folkways, and [3] common knowledge. These are what make for an American — not race, religion or political philosophy. In fact, in abandoning race as the basis of nationality, liberal nationalism must place more emphasis on common language and culture. "Common sense on this subject tends to be warded off by ritual invocation of the cliché that we are 'a nation of immigrants.' In fact, the United States is not a nation of immigrants, and never has been. At no point in American history have people born abroad constituted more than a minority of the U.S. population. If 'the immigrant experience' defines what it means to be an American, then the overwhelming majority of Americans, sad to say, have missed out on the experience" (p.286).

The end of racial labeling should be accompanied by the abolition of all racial preference policies. Black leaders have squandered their money and clout. Now it is time for real solutions. The true minority problems are [1] active racism, which must be neutralized by rigorous enforcement of antidiscrimination laws; [2] barriers to entry in the economy and politics which must be dismantled by sweeping legislative reforms with respect to how business is done and how elections are carried out in the U.S.; and [3] acquired disabilities (the culture of poverty) which must be battled by liberating denizens of the ghettos and barrios from those en-

vironments. Racial preference is irrelevant to all of these solutions. In fact, it is dangerous since it lulls many into thinking something is being accomplished when it is not.

Lind's suggestions for the reforms needed in the Fourth American Republic include equalizing the voting power of the classes and introducing a new social market contract. Equalizing voting power can be achieved by [1] outlawing paid political advertisements; [2] introducing proportional representation in Congress which will effectively destroy the out-dated two-party system; and [3] either eliminate the Senate or turn it into a nationally elected body. The social market contract will include: [1] restricting immigration. "The most promising way to quickly raise wages at the bottom of the income ladder in the United States is to restrict immigration" (p.320). Not only does mass immigration drive wages down, it also retards the progress of automation by making it cheaper for corporations to hire immigrant workers than invest in labor-saving technology. Lind argues for zero net immigration. [2] The social market contract also includes imposing a social tariff in the amount of the difference between American and foreign wage rates in order to avoid the flight of U.S. manufacturing that might result from restricting immigration.

The ghetto problem is one of the worst to be solved, and here Lind proposes "unsubtle, crude, old-fashioned redistribution of wealth, through taxation and public spending" (p.325)

but is vague about programs to eliminate the ghetto.

Lind points out that these and other suggested reforms may sound radical, while in fact they are conservative since they eliminate the factors within our

constitutional system that are alienating an ever growing number of Americans.

This is an excellent book, dealing with cultures, multiculturalism, nations, immigration, economics, etc. Many of

Lind's solutions may be exotic and/or idealistic, but they are, along with his analyses, nonetheless interesting, and seem to be born of a genuine compassion for the downtrodden within our society. □

## Those Troublesome Suburbs

### Film Review by Gerda Bikales

The hit movie everyone in Paris talked about last summer is not yet gone from the scene. It no longer packs them in in the large cinemas of the Champs Elysee, but it continues to be shown daily at a small theater near the Centre Georges Pompidou, headquarters for all that is new and chic and with-it. And now, "La Haine" can be seen in the United States, where it is enjoying a limited distribution to favorable reviews under the title "Hate," a literal translation.

The film opened a year ago to tremendous publicity, having won the "Best Director" award at the Cannes festival for its young director, Mathieu Kassovitz. The stark black-and-white treatment of life in the immigrant suburbs of Paris, presented in the style of a documentary, attracted immediate and sustained attention.

To tell his story, Kassovitz has chosen three protagonists, young men from immigrant families who live in public housing projects on the outskirts of the city. The movie follows them for twenty-four hours after a local disturbance and confrontation

with police that resulted in the death of a well-known neighborhood troublemaker. To give the viewer a sense of time going by, scene changes are punctuated with a digital display announcing the time of the action.

The main characters represent different worlds within the immigrant community: a wiry and voluble young Arab of North African descent named Said; Vinz, a tall and nervous Jew from a religious family of unspecified background; and Hubert, an athletic and engaging Black African. To avoid the sin of stereo-

---

**The main characters represent different worlds within the immigrant community [in the suburbs of Paris].**

---

typing, the film mixes up the usual expectations: it is the Black who is the most thoughtful and considerate in this trio, and the Jew who is the most impulsive and violent. To their credit, the actors performing these roles manage to rise above ethnic symbolism, breathing life and reality into the characters.

What is the story of "Hate?" Who hates whom? It's difficult to

say. Vinz, Said and Hubert live in an environment in which love and civility are hard to come by. They are marked by an inability to relate to their families, to their suburban ghetto community, to the wider French world represented by Paris, just a subway ride away. The film seems to be a variation on the "buddy" genre, and yet these buddies are not good at relating to one another, either. There is a lot of compulsive talk — talk for the sake of hearing oneself talk — but little communication. It is implied that the police are both the haters and the hated, yet ambiguities abound. The police are shown as truly hateful — pleasant and helpful when dealing with the Parisian bourgeoisie; brutally devoid of any notion of civil rights in their handling of these alienated young people. No less than the suspects they are roughing up, the police too are dehumanized — mindless and out-of-control. In some encounters with authority one can't really tell whether the antagonists are plainclothes policemen dressed as thugs or a rival gang of ruffians.

The story is simple: three young men from a "disadvantaged" suburb, excited by a re-