

Glad To Be of Use

by Samuel Francis

*“Sate with power, of fame and wealth possessed,
A nation grows too glorious to be blest;
Conspicuous made, she stands the mark of all,
And foes join foes to triumph in her fall.”*

—George Crabbe, *Theibrau*

**The Next American Nation:
The New Nationalism and the
Fourth American Revolution**
by Michael Lind
New York: The Free Press;
436 pp., \$23.00

In the last year, Michael Lind has emerged as the new *wunderkind* of American political discussion. He was the subject of a full profile in the *Washington Post's* Style section last summer, and *Newsweek's* July 31 cover story on the “overclass” was drawn on a concept central to the book under review here. The most noticeable of his many articles in the last year or so was probably his analysis in the *New York Review of Books* of the writings of Pat Robertson, in which he not only argued that Robertson and his Christian Coalition were indeed anti-Semites, as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has claimed, but renounced his own earlier allegiance to the political right for failing to follow his lead in repudiating Robertson's supposed hidden anti-Semitic and homophobic agenda. The self-abasing apologetic that the Coalition's Ralph Reed gave before the League shortly afterward may have been precipitated by this article. Lind's analysis of Robertson was immensely useful to the Anti-Defamation League's attack on the Christian Coalition, and his article appeared just in time to prevent the ADL's own ammunition from blowing up in its face.

But it is *The Next American Nation*

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that is so far the capstone of Lind's reputation. Contrary to the neoconservative champions of what he calls “democratic universalism” and American “exceptionalism,” and consistent with arguments made in *Chronicles* over the last decade, Lind argues for the existence of a real American nation, defined mainly by a common culture and language, rather than by race or adherence to a creed of universal rights. His case for a common nationality also involves a critique of

contemporary multiculturalism, which rejects a common nationality as a mask for Eurocentric racial and cultural hegemony.

Nevertheless, while recognizing the fact of a common nationality throughout American history, Lind's American past is a succession of three regimes or “republics” that express the interests and values of the different population strains and classes that created them. The “First Republic,” which he calls “Anglo-America,” persisted from the adoption of the Constitution to the Civil War and reflected the power of its largely Anglo-Saxon or “Anglo-Germanic” people. The “Second Republic,” or “Euro-America,” flourished from the Civil War to the civil rights era of the 1960's and represented the dominance of a non-Anglo-Germanic, but still European, population. The “Third Republic,” or “Multicultural America,” is the regime in which we now find ourselves, as mass non-European immigration and the emergence of nonwhite racial, cultural, and political consciousness force changes in the distribution of power and wealth, as well as in national cultural symbolism.

Each of these eras or republics is distinguished by a particular ruling class—the first by its largely British-descended agrarian and mercantile elites that saw themselves as the heirs to ancient Anglo-Saxon and Germanic traditions of republican liberty; the second by its industrial capitalist elite that depended on mass labor and, therefore, mass European immigration; and the third by what Lind calls, in a *term d'art* he has already popularized, “the overclass.” Each republic was also characterized by “its own consensus, its own threefold national

formula, describing the national community, the civic religion, and the political creed,” each of which also reflected the interests of the rulers of the regimes. “Federal republicanism,” essentially aristocratic and decentralist and drawn from British Old Whig political doctrine, was the defining political creed of the First Republic; “federal democracy,” based on a larger and more centralized national state and more directly democratic, was the political ideal of the Second Republic; and a multiculturalist democracy revolving around the “group rights” enshrined in affirmative action, multiculturalist curricula, and racially gerrymandered electoral districts characterizes the Third Republic.

Lind’s morphology of American history (a caricature of Clyde Wilson’s richer analysis) is just a bit too cute, and it can be criticized for its casual lumping (or separation) of diverse figures, ideas, and forces.

Although he insists throughout on common language and common culture rather than race as the basis of nationality, it is really racial and ethnic consciousness that distinguish Lind’s three “republics.” The first two republics in his historical scheme were both explicitly racialist in their public ideologies. The First Republic, as Lind describes it, was virtually proto-Nazi, with Thomas Jefferson wrapping himself in the myth of the Anglo-Saxon race and the discovery of the unity of the Indo-European (or “Aryan”) languages in the late 18th century providing a rationale for the doctrine of Anglo-Germanic supremacy. The Second Republic was no less racialist, though it modified the doctrine of Anglo-Saxon supremacy to one of merely white supremacy, restricting the immigration of nonwhites but allowing the entry of Europeans and their assimilation into the national economy and mythology. The Third Republic also revolves around race, perhaps even more explicitly than the first two, except that white supremacy is rejected and scorned, while the “empowerment” of nonwhites is exalted.

Lind seems unaware of the racialist implications of his analysis. He is explicit about his belief that race is an objectively meaningless concept that should disappear through intermarriage. Yet despite his denials, race keeps slipping in through the basement window as a major historical force. When he comes

to describing the common language and common culture that define the American nation, they too turn out to be racially based. The common language is plainly derived from Indo-European languages, while the common culture is derived from the cultures of European populations. Leaving aside the question of the extent to which race actually determines culture, what Lind’s own account implies is that race is the carrier of culture, if only because we tend to learn our culture from the same people, our parents and their breeding pools.

Despite its flaws, Lind’s concept of culture is considerably deeper than that of neoconservative universalists like Ben Wattenberg, who view American culture as limited to the techno-pop of Madonna and McDonald’s, getting rich quick, and invocations of civics textbook celebrations of democracy and equality for everybody. By their cultural standards, assimilation takes place as soon as an immigrant gets a job and starts watching television. Assimilation to Lind’s standards would be more difficult, but he still underestimates the persistent power of alien habits of thought and conduct, and he never seems to grasp that culture consists not merely in unique customs but in distinctive norms that define the ways in which a people is supposed to think, feel, and act.

Lind’s concept of class is as flawed as his view of culture, and it is his account of the “overclass” that, more than any other aspect of his book, has grabbed the popular imagination. He did not coin the term (Kevin Phillips, for one, uses it in one of his books earlier in this decade), but it is a useful word to describe a social stratum that lacks any other label and is now beginning to acquire its own consciousness and identity.

Lind defines a social class as a “group of families, united by intermarriage and a common subculture, whose members tend to predominate in certain professions and political offices, generation after generation.” But this definition conflates a social class (the kinship and subcultural elements) with a ruling class (the domination element); not all social classes “predominate in certain professions and political offices,” only elites or ruling classes (which are not the same thing either). Moreover, defining social class in terms of kinship and subcultures is not adequate. The members of any class tend to marry among each other, and the custom of intermarriage is not

distinctive of classes (members of the same nations, races, and religions also tend to intermarry). If the concept of class is to be useful for social and political analysis, it has to identify a set of common interests, economic, political, or social, that unite one group in distinction from others with different and often conflicting interests.

But Lind’s discussion of the overclass has little to do with his own definition of class. Despite a clever dissection of the sexual and marital habits of the overclass, which include postponed marriage and postadolescent cohabitation as a form of trial marriage, the overclass is not at all defined by intermarriage. The overclass, he writes, is “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.” Fair enough, but this definition excludes the kinship and subcultural elements of his definition of social class.

Lind’s overclass is essentially a variation of his fellow Texan C. Wright Mills’ Power Elite, though it also owes a good deal to James Burnham and the theory of the managerial revolution, from which Mills also borrowed. The overclass, Lind writes, “originated in the middle of the 20th century in the merger of the Northeastern elite [the industrial capitalists of the Second Republic] with other Anglo-American sectional elites and the assimilated, upwardly mobile descendants of 19th- and 20th-century European immigrants.” Its power is based on fraud and manipulation: “The hypocrisy and cunning of its members should not be mistaken for weakness. Machiavelli observed that one must rule either by *sforza* or *frodo*, by force or fraud. The white overclass in the United States since the 60’s has specialized in ruling by fraud.” The great fraud it perpetrates, he argues, is in claiming that it is liberal, supposedly committed to promoting social change and encouraging equality, while in reality its concessions to nonwhites are minimal. Its sponsorship of “group rights,” multiculturalism, and “identity politics” are in fact “merely America’s version of the oldest oligarchic trick in the book: divide and rule.”

The overclass, Lind argues, by pretending to support nonwhite racial aspirations, actually promotes racial polarization and keeps the races apart to prevent the emergence of a transracial

political coalition that would directly threaten its dominance. One of his basic misconceptions about the overclass is that it depends on inheritance far more than it really does. Earlier elites, he rightly points out, have depended on inheritance and have become true oligarchies as a result. He tries (but fails) to show that the overclass does the same thing. Unlike earlier elites such as the English gentry, Boston brahmins, or local and regional elites in 19th-century America, the overclass does not depend on intermarriage or inheritance, despite its members' cohabitation and eventual intermarriage and their efforts to set their offspring up in advantageous positions. Indeed, the overclass doesn't even rely on the family, which is why it tends to scorn family and kinship bonds of all kinds.

The overclass, Lind never quite seems to grasp, depends on its proficiency in managerial and technical skills (hence the importance of "advanced degrees" in his characterization of it) and their applications to organized political, economic, and cultural affairs. Its power derives from the dependence of the modern economy, culture, government, and politics on such skills. Proficiency in these skills cannot be acquired or transmitted through kinship but only by "merit," which presupposes not only intellectual abilities but also various personality traits that enable the "meritorious" to work and play well with others in immense bureaucratized organizations where following established routines and adhering to established organizational norms of thought and behavior are the minimal requirements for survival and advancement.

It is precisely because the overclass depends on merit in this sense that it objects to the other structures of reward that older elites favored. The overclass rejects (and undermines) not only family connections and inherited wealth and status but also traditional religion, morals and manners, local governmental authority and regional loyalties, and racial identity. Such institutions do not recognize managerial proficiency and personalities as the only valuable characteristics of an elite, and they permit the competition of alternative elites that could rival the overclass. The vehicle for that subversion is generally known as liberalism, the political formula of the managerial overclass today. Its liberalism and its support of nonwhite and anti-

white forces and agendas is not just a mask; it is an authentic expression of its group interests, an instrument by which it acquires and keeps power, while at the same time managing the destruction of the culture and nationality whence it arose.

Lind contrives to miss the structural interests of the overclass that liberalism serves, yet he does grasp what the overclass is doing and the costs it is imposing on American society. "The overclass-dominated political elite of both parties has waged a generation-long class war against the middle class. That class war has been waged on three fronts: regressive taxation, free-market globalism, and the new feudalism," meaning the trend toward privatization, for the benefit of the overclass, of what should be public services—police protection through private security guards, private schools, private parks and roads, a "volunteer" military, the withdrawal to the suburbs and exurbs. The result of this war on the middle class is not only the social and economic polarization of classes and races, but what Lind calls the trend toward "Brazilianization," with the real prospect of a technobureaucracy insulated from the costs of its own dominance and ruling and a middle-class society reduced to an ugly, violent, vulgar, and increasingly impoverished wasteland.

Lind's account of the overclass war on the middle class would be considerably stronger if he showed any grasp of the "culture war," which is key to overclass domination. Middle-class and traditional culture are impediments to overclass interests. Broadly speaking, it is in the long-term interest of the overclass (not of anyone else) to "managerialize" society so that all aspects of life are organized, packaged, routinized, and subjugated to manipulation by the technical skills the overclass possesses, and that interest requires the undermining of institutions and norms that are independent of, and impediments to, overclass control. Lind says nothing about the culture war, perhaps because he shares the overclass's hostility to the deeper American culture as racist, homophobic, and wrapped up in religious fanaticism.

Indeed, for all its fulminations and occasional useful insights into the overclass, and all its purported determination to expose and challenge overclass domination, Lind's book serves overclass interests. This becomes clear, not only through his fallacious insistence on the

"white" and "conservative" identity of the overclass, but also through his own description of the agenda of "liberal nationalism."

Lind does indeed reject some of the most important policies of multiculturalism, including mass immigration and affirmative action, but what he wants is the installation of the "Fourth Republic," or "Trans-America," in which racial and economic inequality will be abolished. "Nothing less than a radical reconstruction of the American class hierarchy is required to reduce the diminished but still significant correlation between class and color that is the enduring legacy of three centuries of caste law and caste politics."

That radical reconstruction is to be carried out by the national state, the prophets of which for Lind were Alexander Hamilton and his heirs, Webster, Clay, Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, and Lyndon Johnson, with Herbert Croly thrown in as a transitional prophet of what he calls the "New Hamiltonianism." The reconstruction would involve a high degree of centralization of power and central management of society and economy by the neo-Hamiltonian state. Since the culture Lind defends is the "national culture," local, regional, and ethnic variations are either unimportant or obstructive. "Why should restrictions on abortion vary between New York and Nevada?" he demands angrily. "Why should a company have to deal with entirely different rules for tax assessment in Florida and Maine? Why should a homosexual employee of IBM be considered a law-abiding citizen in Massachusetts and a felon in Alabama, to which he is transferred by the corporation he works for?"

The answer, of course, is that Americans in New York, Nevada, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, and Alabama have rather different views regarding abortion, homosexuality, and taxes, among other matters, notwithstanding the fact that they speak the same language and share the same national culture. What never occurs to Lind is the question, why should Nevada and Alabama be "reconstructed" by the national state to have the same standards as New York and Massachusetts? Nor does it occur to him (or at least he never lets on that he knows) that such reconstruction is precisely what the overclass is trying to achieve. What Lind demands of the

overclass and the swollen federal bureaucracy it controls is the abandonment of racial manipulation and a policy of simple nondiscrimination, without preferences. Nondiscrimination by the state is unobjectionable, but Lind wants national outlawing of all discrimination, public and private, on grounds of race, gender, and sexual preference. That policy, of course, would simply intrude the national state into the management and “radical reconstruction” of independent social institutions and private firms, and would represent a massive enhancement of the overclass state.

The “national democracy” he envisions as the political ideal of Trans-America would also involve replacing the present system of congressional representation with proportional representation, which, he hopes, would diminish the power of largely European-American parts of the country (e.g., small Western states) in favor of the power of those under non-European influence (the Northeast and those peripheral states where immigration has had a major impact). Economically, while he rightly urges restrictions on corporate expatriation, he also endorses “unsubtle, crude, old-fashioned redistribution of wealth, through taxation and public spending” as well as restrictions on campaign finances and practices, abolition of “legacy preferences” at even private universities (which he sees as merely extensions of the state), and the effective abolition of professional licensing and credentialing. Not all of

these ideas are bad, but Lind’s proposal is a liberal version of national socialism, “radical reconstruction” of society and redistribution of wealth by the central state, not for the purpose of fulfilling universal rights but for the ostensible goal of strengthening the nation. As John Lukacs and I have noted, the synthesis of nationalism and socialism is the strongest political force of this century; Lind is trying to keep the synthesis alive for the next century, and to reformulate it for the political left.

But one practical problem with his vision of Trans-America is that there is no realistic prospect for it to evolve. It seems to depend on a supposititious coalition of the nonwhite underclass with the white middle and working classes that the overclass is dispossessing, and not only on a coalition but on intermarriage among the races. Since it is culture and language that are important to Lind, and since he is oblivious to race even as a subjective mode of consciousness, it never occurs to him that the emergence in the last 30 years of a nonwhite racial consciousness promises not only to prevent any such national coalition but even to aggravate antagonisms, as nonwhites become the majority and continue to invoke “white racism” as the only explanation for their own failures.

Lind is correct in his criticism and rejection of both the antinational “democratic universalism” of the neo-conservatives and the antiwhite as well as antinational multiculturalism of the left,

and he is correct that a real American nation exists and has existed since at least the time of the War for Independence. But that nation—and the culture and language that define it—are simply inseparable from the people that created them and transmitted them, and if mass immigration and low white fertility continue for much longer, that people will cease to exist and the nation they created will die with them. The overclass bears a large part of the responsibility for that protracted murder of the nation, but Lind’s analysis of the overclass misses most of what it is doing and how and why it is doing it. What he offers that class is a form of nationalism that in no way threatens its basic interests and power, a formula by which it could continue its manipulation of the country by donning nationalist garb even as it persists in managing the decline and eventual disappearance of the nation and its people. In the end, Lind’s book is, even if unintentionally, a fraud. While it purports to be the charter for revolution against the overclass, it is in fact a tract for the further entrenchment and increase of overclass power. As he tells us, following Machiavelli, the overclass “has specialized in ruling by fraud,” by using antinational and antiwhite forces for the furtherance of its own power, and if the ruling class is as wise as it is cunning, it will make good use of this book whose author has already proved himself so eager to be useful to it.

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LIBERAL ARTS

READING, WRITING, AND . . .

According to a United Press story last October, two teachers at Everett Middle School in San Francisco had their teaching licenses revoked after hosting a presentation by lesbian guest speakers who showed students how to use sex toys and perform homosexual intercourse. In an effort to restore the licenses, the school administrators may file an appeal to overturn the state’s decision. “Gail Kaufman, a spokeswoman for the San Francisco Unified School District, said the district was shocked by the ruling.”

In a related story, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported in September that Concerned Women for America has asked its members to write to their congressmen demanding that support be terminated for the National Education Association, which has officially endorsed the concept of a national Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month. The concept comes from Rodney Wilson, a St. Louis high school teacher, and was endorsed by the NEA because, in the words of its Missouri director, “surveys show a majority of Americans believe children should be taught tolerance.”

Nietzsche for Kids

by Thomas E. Woods, Jr.

The Letters of Ayn Rand
 Edited by Michael S. Berliner
 New York: Dutton;
 681 pp., \$34.95



It is a rare polemicist who makes a successful career in fiction. But in *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957)—and with all the subtlety of dropping a grand piano on her reader's head—Ayn Rand conveyed her harsh philosophy to a broad audience and gained what has invariably been described as a cult following. Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, which championed reason, egoism, and capitalism, viewed man as a "heroic figure." Anything that detracted from his proper stature it cast furiously aside. The church was thus a frequent target of Randian invective, for just as man should not subordinate his will to that of the mob, as the socialists demanded, neither should he kneel before any god.

While legendary for her ideological rigidity, Rand was not entirely without her virtues. In a collectivist age, she understood what made leftists tick. In her published work and now in her *Letters*, she acknowledged the impotence of mere economic theory against an onslaught that was fundamentally moral and ideological. And as an inveterate enemy of any kind of religion, she was acutely sensitive to the kind of secular eschatology and millennialism so common in socialist theory. (Rand thus dismissed both Christians and socialists as "mystics.") Hence her criticism of Ludwig von Mises, perhaps the greatest economist of the 20th century. She was a great admirer of Mises, to be sure, but, like Murray Rothbard, Rand denied that the economist *qua* activist could divorce economics from ethics and still hope to be persuasive. Mises "did prove, all right, that collectivist economics don't work," she wrote. "And he failed to convert a single collectivist."

But Rand took this appreciation of ideology to absurd lengths. In her per-

sonal life, even trivial events became charged with ideological significance. Her letters reveal, among other examples, a telling incident in which her young niece innocently asked her aunt and uncle to lend her \$25. An extremely reluctant Rand agreed to lend the money, with a fixed repayment schedule, along with the following warning: "If, when the debt becomes due, you tell me that you can't pay me because you needed a new pair of shoes or a new coat or you gave the money to somebody in the family who needed it more than I do . . . I will write you off as a rotten person and I will never speak or write to you again. . . . I would like to teach you, if I can, very early in life, the idea of a self-respecting, self-supporting, responsible, *capitalistic* person."

Setting aside the pros and cons of lending this particular sum, the very idea of natural obligations was utterly foreign to Rand. "No honest person believes that he is obliged to support his relatives," she wrote. "I don't believe it and will not do it." For Rand, *every* human relationship took on the character of a market transaction. She repeatedly denounced the idea, for example, that children necessarily owe their parents even respect or love. Everything in life must be *earned*. Anything else would be irrational, and therefore anathema.

Her understanding of Christianity—from her erroneous interpretation of the injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself" to her ignorant and contemptuous dismissal of Original Sin—was simply embarrassing. But to explain such things to Rand would have been a waste of time. She had made up her mind. For the most part, she evaluated Christianity not as a creed that could be shown to be true or false but as a violation of her own private ethical system. Indeed, while Voltaire believed that if God did not exist, it would have been necessary to create him, Rand seems to have agreed with Bukharin: if God did exist, it would be necessary to destroy Him.

This is not to suggest that Rand believed nothing that could be described as religious. Her outlook, as she explained in her introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of *The Fountainhead*, was one of "man-worship," a belief system shorn of religion's "man-debasing

aspects." Protagonist Howard Roark, she explained to Frank Lloyd Wright, "represents my conception of man as god, of the absolute human ideal." It is revealing that Rand's ex-boyfriend, Nathaniel Branden, now writes books with titles like *The Power of Self-Esteem* and *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*. Man-worship must be depressing work.

If Russell Kirk was correct that the conservative shuns the confines of ideology, Rand did well to disassociate herself from the conservative movement. Here was a woman who formulated a distinct ideology and, to the exclusion of all else, proceeded to order her life, down to the smallest detail, according to its demands. Her letters will stand as a curious postscript to an exceedingly strange chapter in the history of philosophy.

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Patriotic Gore

by J.O. Tate

America First! Its History,
 Culture, and Politics
 by Bill Kauffman

Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books;
 296 pp., \$25.95



This volume is particularly notable for readers of this journal for two reasons: First, some of it has appeared in these pages, and, secondly and more importantly, the truths it conveys have been a part of the core vision of *Chronicles* as, literally, a magazine of American culture. But I think too that there are certain flaws in Kauffman's version of the essential American culture—that culture, like others, having shown contradictions we might attribute more to human nature than to political theory.

Bill Kauffman deserves much credit for the good he has done in revising some of the clichés, the received opinions that,