

exist: critics just complain that it is bigoted to mention them.

For those troubled souls who are both orthodox and heterosexual, seminary life can often turn into a struggle to confront or, at best, to ignore the circus in progress around them. Many heterosexual men are approached and hit on by gay colleagues and superiors, sometimes to the extent of full-scale sexual harassment. When not describing the powerfully charged sexual ambience of the seminaries, Rose tells mind-numbing stories of the theological extravagances of these institutions, where New Age lunacies and feminist theological [*sic*] excesses are given full license. Conversely, pious devotion to Mary or the Eucharist will assuredly mark a man as a reactionary troublemaker. According to Rose's informants, the only orthodoxies that count in such a setting are the extreme liberal political ideologies of seminary authorities, whose minds have not moved on significantly from the era of the Equal Rights Amendment and solidarity with the Sandinistas. Seminarians soon realize that as far as their superiors are concerned, "whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the [liberal] Faith; which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Outside the Democratic Party, there is no salvation.

Is it any wonder that "good men" have no incentive to enter the pink palaces, no reason to recommend them to their brothers and friends, and often succumb to the deliberate pressures to force them out? One of Rose's most striking points is that when seminaries do follow orthodoxy, and do take a dim view of sexual hedonism, they find no shortage of vocations whatsoever. The model example in this country alone is Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Conservative-headed dioceses like Rockford and Omaha have few problems producing vocations, while a vocations crisis is in full spate in liberal fiefdoms like Milwaukee and San Francisco. For Rose, the lesson is simple: "Orthodoxy begets vocations." America's seminaries

just don't have to look the way they do at the start of the third millennium. They don't have to be gay dating services.

In a warped way, though, the very failures of the seminaries lay the foundation for longer-term successes, or at least, the success of Catholic ultra-liberals. The fewer seminarians there are, the fewer newly ordained priests, the more obvious it is that Catholic vocations are in crisis, and that the Church can only be saved by accepting the spiritual gifts of gays and women. If you oppose these innovations, or assert the merits of clerical celibacy, then you must be consigning the nation's Catholics to a future largely free of priests under the age of seventy. Equally, the scarcer the priests, the stronger the case that liberals can make for a revolutionary shift in Church authority in the direction of lay power, the louder the calls for a New Reformation. This change would be ratified at a radical "Third Vatican Council," on the lines that radicals have been dreaming of for the past thirty years. In this sense, the corruption of the seminaries is no mere accident but rather a critical stage in the subversion of the Catholic Church in America. It is precisely the "death wish for the male celibate priesthood [that has] created an artificial priest shortage."

Rose's book is avowedly polemical, and we can argue about the details of his case. I, for one, would quibble with his subtitle, since, on the basis of the recent crisis of sexual abuse, "corruption"—or at least incompetence—seems to afflict prelates of all ideological hues. Yet in identifying an authentic problem, and exploring its roots, Rose has performed a magnificent service with implications for many other denominations beyond the Roman Catholic Church. In short, *Goodbye, Good Men* is one of the most significant works written in decades about the political and social realities of modern U.S. Catholicism. ■

Philip Jenkins is a Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University. His most recent book is The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity.

[*The Worm in the Apple: How the Teacher Unions Are Destroying American Education*, Peter Brimelow, HarperCollins, 296 pages]

Fat Hands in the Education Cookie Jar

By Robert Holland

IT WOULD SEEM to be the sort of insult the Surgeon General would love: "They're extraordinarily fat, for a start." That's how Peter Brimelow, long-time journalistic critic of the National Education Association (NEA), begins *The Worm in the Apple*. His fitness assessment is based upon observing the masses attending an annual convention of the NEA, where an alarming proportion of the 9,000 teacher-union-reps from public-school districts all over the USA "wobble and waddle ... with thighs like tree trunks, bellies billowing, jowls jiggling."

No, Brimelow does not offer scientific data comparing the body-fat percentages of teacher-union delegates to those of an American population often scolded for its general corpulence; nor does he show how an NEA conclave necessarily is fatter than, say, a gathering of defense contractors or insurance salesmen. But then this is not another book for the long fitness shelf at the local Borders. Yes, there is a literal point to be made about the incongruity of NEA activists preening as models of perfection for American schoolchildren when they exemplify sloth. The super-sized body of the NEA Representative Assembly is illustrative, however, of the more damaging hoggishness of the teacher unions—the 2.6-million-member NEA and the million-member American Federation of Teachers (AFT)—as they throw their weight around within the government-school monopoly.

All unions aspire to achieve a monopoly of labor within their industries, but

in the private sector, competition generally prevents that from happening. As Brimelow points out, however, public-sector unions are monopolies operating on top of monopolies, and so they have extraordinary power—particularly since 1960 when JFK, in exchange for union support, issued an executive order authorizing collective bargaining for federal employees, a precedent followed a year later by the AFT's winning collective bargaining rights for New York City teachers. Stung by the competition, the NEA ousted school administrators and morphed into a militant teacher union by 1970. Compulsory attendance laws add yet another monopoly to the mix because parents who cannot afford private school for their kids (or who lack the means or confidence to school them at home) are obliged to accept the government-provided service that is hugely influenced by the union agenda.

Finding this to be an outrageous abuse of power, Brimelow feels no obligation to abjure name-calling—e.g., “covens of cranks”—or to camouflage his observations in academic murk. Although wordsmiths may tire of his technique of using incomplete sentences to deliver his punch lines, the very strength of his work is that he does not write like a policy wonk but as the financial journalist who (jointly with Leslie Spencer) first pounded the NEA in 1993 with the memorable and much photocopied *Forbes* exposé, “The National Extortion Association.” He candidly hopes *The Worm in the Apple* will follow in the muckraking tradition of Ida

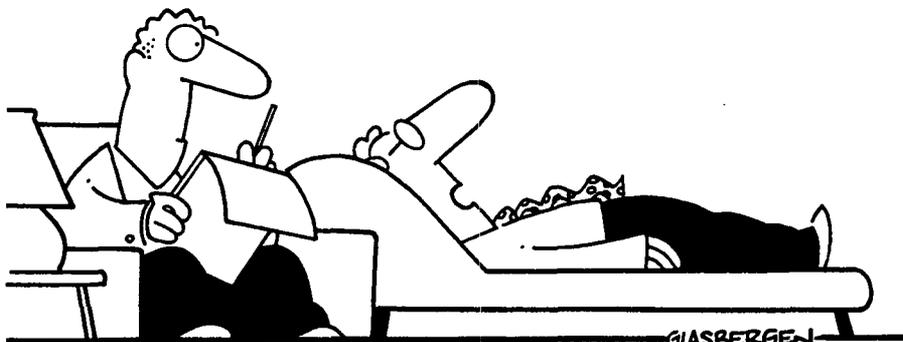
Minerva Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil* (1904), which set off alarms about the unbridled power of national corporations and paved the way for the anti-trust movement. Whether or not his book achieves equivalent success in busting what he terms the Teacher Trust, Brimelow exposes truths about the perverse influence of the teacher unions that the establishment press routinely ignores.

It is not hard to figure out why porcine greed leaped to the author's mind. The book is filled with maddening examples. The NEA and its affiliates extract from the average teacher some \$500 a year in unified dues that school administrations helpfully subtract from their paychecks. Using this loot exceeding \$1.25 billion a year, the leaders of the Teacher Trust are extremely generous—to themselves. Some state affiliates have dozens of officers drawing more than \$100,000 a year (Michigan had 75 in a recent year; Indiana, 40). The big dogs of the NEA live even fatter: in 2002, the NEA's top three officers pulled down a combined \$616,000 in salary, plus \$544,000 in cash allowances and travel. The staff perks at state and national levels fairly scream Fat City. Cadillac health care coverage is widespread: 100 percent prescription drug, 100 percent hospital room and board, unlimited dental benefits—the kind of security an average working stiff could only dream of having. NEA executive officers receive paid travel for a “companion” to the annual convention, as well as one international event per year. On and on the perks roll: credit cards, phone cards, interest-free car

loans, child care, gym memberships, and even incarceration pay if the staffer is jailed in the course of conducting union business.

Union officials sternly resist merit pay for effective teachers, pay supplements for those in hard-to-fill subjects such as math, science, and special education, and bonuses to attract bright newcomers to teaching. Their opposition is not based on what is best for education but what will feather their own nests. Staff compensation is tied to raises bargained for the entire faculty, the bad and the good alike. Particularly rich was the reaction of Washington Teachers Union president Barbara Bullock when the District of Columbia school superintendent proposed to boost starting teacher salaries 11 percent, to \$30,000, to attract worthy candidates during a teacher shortage. Bullock shot that down, asserting “[I]t's not fair for the teachers who have been here, paying their dues, working hard, not to get more money also.” News that broke after Brimelow's book went to press calls into question how concerned the leaders of the WTU were about fairness to dues-paying members of the teacher union. Bullock, now the ex-WTU chief, is one of the subjects of an FBI investigation of an alleged conspiracy in which the union's top officials used more than \$5 million of members' dues to purchase such goodies as a \$25,000 mink coat, a \$57,000 Tiffany sterling silver set of 288 pieces, and a \$13,000 flat-screen TV. The parent AFT has taken over the WTU in an attempt to remedy the scandal.

Outright embezzlement of union dues may not be common, but stealth in the use of such funds for political purposes is. Election laws require that political expenditures be publicly reported, but the teacher unions act as though they enjoy a special exemption. In Milwaukee, the local NEA affiliate endorsed a slate of anti-voucher candidates in the 1999 school board election, hoping to jettison the successful program there using vouchers to foster school choice for inner-city children. All five of the teacher union's candidates lost, but it



“My boss sent me to a mind mapping workshop and now I can't refold my brain!”

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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-

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

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

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