

editor of *Mondo 2000*, believes implanting chips will become a routine process. "Neuroprosthetics are . . . inevitable," he says. "Biochip implants may become part of a rote medical procedure. Interface with outside systems is a logical next step."

Such ideas emerge at a time when the concept of parent licensing (really, "baby licensing"), first promoted by the American Eugenics Society (AES) in the 1930's, is making a comeback. (Following the Nuremberg Trials, the AES changed its name to the "Society for the Study of Social Biology.")

The notion of licensing people to bear children originally was floated by Dr. Franz J. Kallmann, a German psychiatrist and member of the Nazi Party, who argued before Hitler's Ministry of the Interior in 1935 for the sterilization "of the mentally ill." Kallmann relocated to the United States in 1936—probably because he was an ethnic Jew. Once he was safely ensconced at Columbia University, however, Kallmann continued his "psychiatric genetics" work, often extolling his former mentor, Ernst Rüdin, head of Hitler's Racial Hygiene Program.

The American press sang Kallmann's praises for 40 years. In 1964, the *New York Times* ran an admiring story citing his prediction that, unless something were done quickly, the birthrate among schizophrenics would eventually surpass that of the larger society, and the ranks of the mentally ill might soon "overbalance the population." This led to American eugenicist Dr. Kenneth Boulding's proposal to require "market licenses for babies," with an emphasis on screening out parents thought "defective" or "unfit." In November 1975, the renamed AES's flagship publication, *Social Biology*, carried an article by Dr. David M. Heer enlarging upon the "Boulding Proposal." In particular, Heer enumerated methods of "enforcement" for licensing parenthood. Dr. Carl Bajema followed in the Spring issue, calling for a waiver of restrictions for prospective parents who demonstrated "genetic superiority." Bajema even recommended putting to death "unlicensed children who cannot be adopted."

This is not ancient history: This was 1975.

Today, the products of permissive child-rearing make up the largest population of individuals labeled "mentally inferior"—learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, hyperactive, ADHD, etc. People holding

politically inconvenient opinions and worldviews, but who have committed no crime, are also frequently saddled with psychiatric labels that suggest "unfitness." Now here come cyber-techies promoting biochip implants and GPS tracking as a part of rote medical procedure.

What does the ID implant have to do with baby licensing? Under a new computerized initiative called the "Program Information Management System" (PIMS), social workers nationwide are encouraging expectant parents to sign a permission form at the hospital that allows agents to go into private homes to provide parenting training—up to 50 visits annually per family. While they are at it, these "experts" also collect medical and psychological information that can be linked to future written observations about family relationships—in effect, tracking each newborn's development (as well as any attitudes) from infancy into their school and college years. But make no mistake: *Their primary mission is to assess parental "fitness."*

When we place the PIMS project alongside such parent-unfriendly projects as Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic's "Multi-site Multimodal Treatment Study of Children With ADHD," we find some very troubling prospects. With the recent increase in crime among juveniles, computerized dossier-building, and the concurrent war on parents waged by schools and various government programs, we have a recipe for technological abuse. Microchip implants, used to track, monitor, and cross-match information, could greatly enhance political screening in the name of "parental fitness." Even those who feel comfortable with the political and social winds today may not feel so warm and fuzzy tomorrow when they stop to think how fast society's mores and priorities can change in just a few years with the right promotional packages and enough surveys.

Forget, however, about banning ID implants: They are already in the pipeline. In June 1998, the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory revealed its joint project with Motorola and Packard Instrument Company to commercialize, market, and mass-produce advanced biochips "and related analytical technologies."

All that remains is selling people on the idea:

How'd you like to avoid waiting in lines for the rest of your life?

Breeze through a checkout line like you owned the place? Watch lights snap on, open doors automatically, never have to show an ID, remember a password? You wouldn't have to carry a wallet. Ever. Family and friends could find you if you were sick or unconscious. *Click here!*

B.K. Eakman, a former educator-turned-speechwriter, is executive director of the National Education Consortium and the author of Microchipped: How the Education Establishment Took Us Beyond Big Brother (Halcyon House) and Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality Through Education (Huntington House).

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

South of the Border

by V. Groginsky

After decades of outward socio-cultural differences and political animosity, North America's two United States—north and south of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo—are becoming more socially homogenous than some would care to admit.

Mexico's economic disparity has been the most extreme in all of Latin America, a social stratification described by George Baker as "equivalent to the dimensions of the caste system of India." The turn of the millennium has brought Mexico to the crossroads of change, vacillating between the First and Third Worlds. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) offered the possibility of expanding productivity, manufacturing, and exports. An end to the 71-year political monopoly of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (institutionalized, but hardly revolutionary) and the overwhelming election of Vicente Fox Quesada to the presidency heralded the possibility of substantive political and socioeconomic change in a country hampered by inefficiency, corruption, nepotism, ineptitude, indifference, and unaccountability.

Whereas the first round of globalism saw the flight of U.S. manufacturing to its southern neighbor (and, with it, the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of



Russell Gorden

Alicia Gonzalez enjoys her three-year-old daughter Catalina's fascination with a bubble.

working Americans and the destruction of local and regional economies), Mexico is now experiencing the same flight—to the East. One economist commented that the *maquiladora* (assembly) sector was “all but dead” in Mexico, as an overvalued peso and a lack of sound government economic policy, coupled with security concerns and quality-control problems, drove foreign firms to seek better conditions elsewhere, particularly in China. Mexico has negotiated more free-trade agreements than any other country. NAFTA could have led to a boom in foreign investment in local production and allowed Mexico to use legal and technical loopholes to act as a backdoor to NAFTA markets in the United States and Canada. Yet, rather than seize the opportunities presented by preferential trade status, a unique geographic position as a regional gateway, and the northward flight of Latin American capital from drowning Argentina, Mexico's economy has stalled at the intersection, blocking traffic. In 2002 alone, the foreign business ventures that are downsizing or pulling out include Daimler-Chrysler,



Russell Gorden

Children of four families pick through garbage at Chiapas' largest trash dump. Sifting through rotting animal carcasses and maggot-infested organic matter, the families scrounge glass, metal, cardboard, paper, and plastic to sell to middlemen—earning enough to survive.

Volkswagen, Phillips, and Guess.

The reasons for Mexico's current dilemma are varied: the effects of global recession, the inheritance and failings of the current administration, and the limitations of multiparty democracy. The overwhelming victory of Vicente Fox was based, in no small part, on his sweeping campaign promises of better government and an improvement in living standards for the poor and the shrinking middle class. “The promise of change by Fox impacted the majority of the populace,” commented Ariel Gonzalez Jimenez, a leading political columnist for the newspaper *Milenio* and editor of *Milenio Weekly Magazine*, “but the injustice, impunity and corruption remains exactly as it was before. Mexico is not changing.”

The first half of Fox's term yielded few, if any, tangible results across the socioeconomic spectrum. Fox's appointment of (Princeton- and University of Paris-educated) “ex-communist” Jorge G. Castaneda as minister of foreign relations has made Mexico a vassal of the U.S. State Department, after years of neutrality. Some observers believe that Fox's administration would rather throw its lot in with the single global hegemony than manage the complexities and uncertainties of neutrality and independence. After the events of September 11, Castaneda was quoted as saying that “The U.S. has the right to act in revenge in whatever way they feel like”—a comment that quite possibly qualified Mexico as fair game for U.S. adversaries and that led to calls for his resignation across the domestic political spectrum.

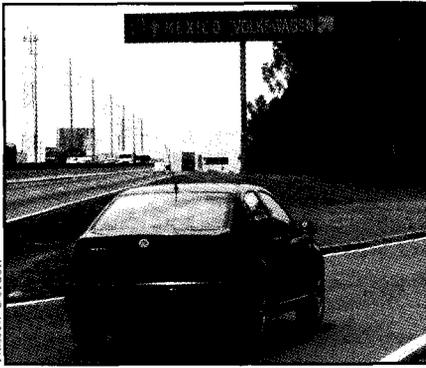
A highly visible example of the Fox administration's political floundering is the stalled project to build an international airport in San Salvador Atenco, outside the capital. The existing airport serves

the world's largest city with only one functioning runway (the second is kept on permanent reserve for the presidential jetliner). The residents of San Salvador Atenco are overwhelmingly poor *campesinos*. Instead of launching a publicity campaign to explain the potential benefits (particularly jobs) of the new

airport to the residents, the government orchestrated a heavy-handed land grab—initially offering one dollar per square meter of land and, after opposition, raising it to a mere seven dollars. No relocation compensation, no alternative housing—nothing. In the resulting violent stand-off, local residents barricaded the zone with commandeered fuel trailers, dug trenches, and battled government security forces with rocks, machetes, and Molotov cocktails (made from looted Coca-Cola bottles, a poignant symbol, since Vicente Fox is a former director of the beverage company). The local rebellion was met with police and military repression, which worsened the violence. “The government couldn't even negotiate with *campesinos*,” remarked Gonzalez Jimenez. “Nobody even bothered to explain to the locals the potential benefits that they could derive. This presidency has no political ability, not for dialogue”—not even to construct an airport.

That said, President Fox cannot be held accountable for all of Mexico's current shortcomings. He has faced continuous stonewalling in the Mexican Congress on his economic, political, and social reforms. In addition to partisanship from the PRI and PRD, representatives from Fox's own Partido Accion Nacional have opposed his legislation, exacerbating the “*divid-et-empire*” of his political rivals. Mexico City's populist chief of government, Lopez Obrador of the PRD, rules the world's largest city with such incompetence, myopia, inefficiency, and corruption that his tenure could only be described as Perónistic. Many Mexican public officials and legislators would rather sacrifice the national interest for their own short-term benefit and pass the blame to the opposition.

The case of former president Carlos Salinas Gotari is itself proof of the continuing impunity of power, hidden behind the façade of a multiparty democracy. While Salinas is accused by various sectors of looting state assets, he has never been officially indicted. When asked by a Mexican journalist in the United States what he did with all the money, Salinas evaded the question with Clintonian panache. Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda—formerly a virulent critic of Salinas—dined with him in Brussels in May, which Castaneda first denied and then was forced to admit under scrutiny from the press. Some analysts have concluded that the rendezvous was a scouting probe by the Fox administration to seek a polit-



Russell Gordon

Volkswagen is reducing operations in Mexico, while expanding in China. Here, a Volkswagen leaves the highway to Mexico, exiting at the VW plant.

ical alliance with the still-powerful Salinas. The former president comes and goes at will from the nation he robbed, under protection of state bodyguards, with full pension, and, apparently, with little justice to fear.

As happens in the United States of North America (as the United States is known here), changes in administration in Mexico bring changes in social policy, bureaucratic processes, and budgets—but at a *burro*-cratic pace. As Gonzalez Jimenez noted, “before, with the PRI, you paid a bit under the table, and the job got done. Now, the officials make you get down on your knees to beg—and it still doesn’t get done.” In Harvard’s Global Competitiveness Report 2000, Mexico ranked last out of 75 nations for the amount of bureaucratic procedures required to start a small business (ten) and the number of days required to complete the procedures (90). Under the current regime, “*burocracia modernizada*” has gone from inefficiency to paralysis and resulted in a shadow economy.

While the Fox administration has had victories in the regional fight against narco-trafficking (including the arrest and death of leading traffickers from the Tijuana and Juarez cartels), Mexico’s human-rights record remains poor. Political executions (perhaps drug related) and a blurred line between police and criminals in kidnapping-for-ransom, armed robbery, and drug trafficking have continued to sully Mexico’s image as a stable business environment. Mexico now ranks behind only Colombia in commercially motivated kidnappings worldwide. As President Fox is discovering, ingrained cultural and social attitudes and systems cannot be changed merely by changing executive leadership. A year after Mexico’s top human-rights investiga-

tor, Digna Ochoa, was found shot to death in her office, law-enforcement investigators are still prominently circulating the hypothesis of suicide—even though she was killed by two bullets.

The new millennium has hardly brought an age of enlightenment to U.S. social or foreign policy, either. The last several presidential administrations have been wracked by government and corporate corruption, from the savings-and-loan bailout to Enron, WorldCom, Halliburton, and the eternal War on Terrorism. Big government, united with corporate interests, has slowly eaten away at the inheritance of the nation, converting richness to untenable debt and making a mockery of “American values.” Baby boomers often note with indignation that *Made in the USA* is no longer an assurance of quality; “customer service” has become infuriatingly automated and unaccountable; and corporate loyalty—in both directions—no longer exists. Does this sound a bit like Mexico? At least in Mexico, the family is still paramount, and quality of life holds precedence over macroeconomic indicators. In Mexico, people work to live, not *vice versa*. In the United States, family and community take a backseat to corporate expedience. No wonder the social fabric is as fragile as a mummy’s bandages.

The much-polarized debate over U.S. immigration policy—specifically, Mexican immigration, legal and illegal—has raised questions concerning the definition of American society, its cultural make-up, and its moral responsibility to protect its citizens and resources. Unfortunately, the polarity of the debate has left policy at a virtual standstill.

Uncontrolled immigration is a serious problem for the United States; Mexicans may not be. The Mexican migrant workforce makes a significant contribution to the economy of America, and the benefits to Mexico in both economic and cultural terms cannot be overestimated. Leading strategic analyst Ben Works has raised the issue of the socioeconomic benefits to both Mexico and the United States of normalizing immigration procedures, and he believes that U.S. involvement in regional economic and social development could actually increase U.S. security:

Under the present system, illegal immigrant workers infiltrate the US and take the bottom-rung jobs that citizens disdain . . . we get motivated people, the risk-takers who



Russell Gordon

The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico. In Chiapas on December 12, millions of pilgrims come from hundreds of miles, many carrying icons, riding bicycles, and even arriving on their knees.

will bust their guts at our least-desired jobs, in order to build a future for themselves, to build families and to help the folks back home.

And they are social conservatives, rooted in religion, family ties, and tradition. And it is time to formalize those functions. . . . a “guest worker” status will spread prosperity and order. . . . I suspect that if we frame development . . . and controlled immigration as a simultaneous equation, [some] will be more disposed to consider a reasoned view of developing our backyard.

Regularizing immigration policy—not necessarily by “legalizing” undocumented immigrants, but by standardizing the procedure to regulate, control, and tax—would eliminate the expenditure of a hermetically sealed border; stop the human suffering, exploitation, and deaths of undocumented immigrants; add to the economies and cultural strengths of both nations; and, ultimately, bolster U.S. national security. Whether corporate and governmental America chooses to follow Mexico’s example in preserving the cultural richness and family values that sustain a society, or whether American society will continue to be eroded by its own failings and slide further toward the Third World, remains to be seen. No one, however, can say that we haven’t been forewarned. And we will not be able to blame our problems on the Mexicans.

V. Groginsky is an American working in Mexico.

MUSIC

Music for Southern Independence

Tim Manning, Jr.

For the Past, the Future, the Truth

by Basic Gray

Panama City, Florida: Larry Smith and Nat Rudolph; 47 min., \$15.00

Confederate Spirit: The Great Songs of a Proud South

Produced by Pat Baughman and Pat Patrick

Nashville, Tennessee: Pearl Trax Studios; 56 min., \$15.00

The Gray Ghosts of Heaven: A Musical Tribute to the War for Southern Independence (Past-Present-Future)

by Robert Lloyd

Fort Myers, Florida: New World Enterprises; 48 min., \$15.00

Every form of original American music in the 20th century began in the South: bluegrass, country, western, jazz, blues, rockabilly, and rock 'n' roll. Even rap, pop, and heavy metal have been successful because they, in some way, use or imitate a Southern musical element. These styles, if they can be called that, started out as small clusters of unknown musicians who managed to create their own subcultures in which they could market their talents.

Most alternative musicians never see success. One style, however, that has risen in popularity over the last 15 years is "neo-Confederate" music. Hundreds of musicians tour the South playing nothing but Confederate War songs—in music shops, country stores, pickin' parlors, barns (for dances), recital halls, civic centers, schools, historical and political ceremonies, living-history events, and war reenactments. Some of them even find themselves on NPR, C-SPAN, or in documentaries.

Some of this success can be credited to the boom of popular history; strictly historical music, however, cannot go on forever. At some point, something new must emerge—something that tells a story that people recognize as reflecting

their own experience in their own time—which, nonetheless includes a response to the popular outcry for a knowledge of our history and its virtues. A few performers, such as the Rebelaires and Stan Clardy, have been writing their own songs about the modern-day experience of Southern patriots. Unabashedly pro-Confederate, they still never move beyond grieving over what Southerners have come to know as "heritage violations"—blatant attacks of the p.c. police on anything with a Southern symbol.

A new genre of Southern music has surfaced that can only be described as music for Southern independence. Not focusing solely on Southern symbols, this genre portrays every aspect of Southern life as positive and stresses the need for letting go of the rest of America—culturally, economically and politically. These are serious themes, but there are few better guides than experience. And music is one of the purest ways to share an experience.

When I was little, my family had regular get-togethers in Greenville, North Carolina. My granddad and his five brothers would bring their guitars, mandolins, harmonicas, Jew's harps, auto-harps, fiddles, and banjos (or "banjers" as they called them). One of them would say, "Hey Joe, what key are we playin' in?" The reply: "whis-key." And without looking up or speaking a word, they would play into the early morning. Well into her 90's, my great-grandmother would hold up her dress and dance a jig that had likely not changed since it came over from the British Isles centuries before.

Such is the world that Larry Smith and Nat Rudolph's music will remind you of—the world of the English ballad. Those familiar with Old Time music know that a good Old Time song is not sung: It is spoken. Pre-bluegrass Southern vocals are nearly monotone. It wasn't until Bill Monroe that Southerners started thinking of singing as being a performance. Singing was simply a way of remembering a good story and enjoying its memory to the lively sound of good pickin'. Understanding the helpful effect that this has on listeners trying to grasp a complex story, Smith and Rudolph choose their stories wisely.

The opening track on their album, titled "Something That Lasts," is a Southern musical adaptation of T.S. Eliot's permanent things. Another track is simply called "Permanent Things." "Our Fathers' Fields" is an anthem for kith and kin, honor and land, based on the book of

the same title by *Chronicles* contributor James Kibler.

I've sung "Cracker's Last Stand" for two different parts of my family; they all immediately wanted to know how they could get the CD. Larry Smith will be the first to tell you that he's a cracker, of the pure, original central Florida variety. He intones: "Then Mickey and the Yankees came, / and that place will never be the same." In the chorus: "We salute Jeff Davis every July 4th, / we don't give a damn how they do it up north." The final verse:

Yes I'm unreconstructed and I ain't
never gonna forget
And if the Yankees don't like it,
well they ain't seen nothin' yet
'Cause Johnny Rebel's gonna rise
again, and this time he's gonna
win
So don't mess with a Southern
Man at Cracker's Last Stand

Nat Rudolph's track "Southern Man" is unadulterated Southern nationalism. Not far behind that is "When the South Has Risen Again," which Larry Smith says was inspired by a speech *Chronicles* contributing editor Clyde Wilson gave entitled "After Independence." Every song focuses on a particular experience or thought that you would expect to hear only from the most ardent of today's Southern conservatives.

The themes covered are impressive: political corruption, September 11, globalism and U.S. foreign policy, institutional failure, moral degeneracy, the sinful nature of man, and the meaning of the Confederate flag. While some have labeled Basic Gray's music as "alternative folk," it hardly embodies the typical whining that dominates the American folk music world. Their only other album, after all, was Larry Smith's *Politically Incorrect*.

Pat Baughman's and Pat Patrick's album breaks new ground as well. The first half consists of the best Confederate war songs: "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag," "The Dissolution Wagon." Between Tennessee Ernie Ford and, more recently, the success of Bobby Horton, many Southerners recognize these songs immediately. What is new, however, is the gusto with which Baughman's and Patrick's crew performs them. These vocals are exactly what you would expect to hear from the most warlike and virile group of Southernized Scots. (The album ends,