

the MEL GABLERS'
Educational Research Analysts
Newsletter

Inside:
Busting
U.S. History
Textbook Taboos

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People's Control Over Textbooks At Stake

TEXAS' ELECTED SBOE FENDS OFF FOES, WINS FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

Unlike most states, Texas' State Board of Education (SBOE) is elected, not appointed. Its 15 members receive no pay, and have no staff apart from the state education bureaucracy. Yet they have much influence. They decide what Texas textbooks should say. They decide if submitted textbooks measure up. Publishers then sell Texas textbooks nationwide. Since 1995, the "Goals 2000"-driven assault on Texas' elected SBOE has been *relentless*. Board control over textbooks remains mostly intact today, however, and we think the tide has turned.

In the 1990s, very competent Texas conservatives increasingly won seats on this democratic panel. Publishers who addressed their concerns, often sold more textbooks in local adoptions. The education establishment fears this exercise of conservative power, because it knows that rank-and-file classroom teachers are far less politically correct than the professional groups who misrepresent them. Shall public education be run by *appointed masters over* the people, or by *elected servants of* the people? You can easily see the elitist nature of liberalism here.

**"If God be for us,
who can be against us?"**
— Romans 8:31

Texas' elected SBOE is too popular to replace with an appointed Board outright, so recent legislative proposals have tried to gut its powers. One would have ended SBOE approval of textbooks, letting California dictate what they say. Others would have weakened Board control of the Permanent School Fund (PSF), which finances textbook purchases. (The elected SBOE has managed the PSF better than appointees managed the Permanent University Fund.) Also, when SBOE conservatives debated policy with liberals, the press carped at their "bickering."

Meanwhile, in the late 1990s, heroic SBOE conservatives went from strength to strength, attacking anti-intellectualism in textbooks. They killed a bid to exclude traditional methods of teaching Math. They nixed a plan to substitute an enhanced pro-big government slant in Social Studies, for emphasis on benefits of free enterprise. In Science they supported excellent rules on evolution that the ACLU knows are constitutional and has never challenged. They raised decodability of first grade Readers from at least 51% to 80%, a big victory for phonics.

**"... we are more than conquerors
through Him [Jesus Christ] who loved us."**
— Romans 8:37

Can the Board still *prohibit* things in textbooks like unwholesome violence, or blatantly offensive language and illustrations, or group stereotyping? SBOE conservatives had a setback here. Liberal legislators – propped up by a liberal ex-attorney general's flimsy legal opinion – misread the new Texas Education Code to claim the Board had lost this right. Conservative lawmakers deny that was their intent. With political redistricting and some key turnovers in office, another legal opinion or legislative clarification should soon confirm this important SBOE power.

The education establishment detests elected SBOEs. Its bigotries need a monopoly in textbooks because they cannot compete on their merits with other ideas. Liberals would rather *drop the subject* than *tell both sides* of an issue. As the next three pages of this newsletter show, conservative input on textbook content enriches the subject-matter base, providing objective grounds to reform *student testing* and *teacher training*. We salute magnificent Texas SBOE conservatives – true saints! – with whom it will be an honor to spend eternity.

half-truths selective disinformation false editorial stereotypes

Viewpoint discrimination and *special-interest advocacy* fill U.S. History textbooks.
Contrasts are stark between **WHAT THEY SAY** and WHAT THEY CENSOR.

RED MAN HERO, WHITE MAN ZERO

Ample sympathetic coverage on the *losers* of the Indian wars – Geronimo, Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph; no attention to the *winners* of these wars – Generals Nelson Miles and George Crook

Generals Nelson Miles and George Crook had distinguished military careers. Both served ably as Union officers in the Civil War, Miles being wounded four times while seeing action in every major battle but one that the Army of the Potomac fought. Both received the thanks of western state legislatures for pacifying many Indian tribes in difficult campaigns from Montana to Arizona during the 1870s and 1880s – the toughest being against Geronimo, whose raids settlers said killed 2500 people.

SPITE FOR NEW ENGLAND PURITANS

Description of New England Puritanism at its worst (e.g., the Salem witch trials) but not at its finest (such as the work of John Eliot)

From a Pequot Indian, Puritan minister John Eliot (1604-90) learned the Algonquin language, into which he translated the entire Bible, for whose publication the English chemist Robert Boyle ("Boyle's Law") raised funds. Eliot preached in their own tongue to the Indians, "one of whom, very aged, inquired whether it was too late for such an old man as he to repent and be saved." To remove them from their pagan environments, Eliot settled his Christian Indian converts into 14 "praying towns," from which 24 Indians went as missionaries to their own peoples. Eliot steadfastly opposed their persecution by hysterical colonists during King Philip's War. His saintliness was legendary in his own lifetime. Indians and whites alike mourned his death. *They that turn many to righteousness [shall shine] as the stars for ever and ever* (Daniel 12:3).

SOCIALISTIC SCENARIO

Unequal distribution of wealth in the 1920s caused the Great Depression. Most people did not earn enough to buy the goods produced. New Deal taxing and spending soaked the rich and redistributed wealth to boost consumer demand and restore prosperity.

Artificially low Federal Reserve interest rates in the 1920s led businessmen to overexpand, leading to the crash. The New Deal borrowed private funds, or created new money through the Federal Reserve, to cover its deficits. Borrowing merely shifted consumption from the private to the public sector, bringing no net gain. Creating money caused overproduction, which had led to the Depression.

MONTEZUMA ... TRAGIC FIGURE?

Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortes repaid Aztec ruler Montezuma's hospitality and courtesy by arresting and humiliating him, eventually getting him killed by his own people, whom greedy Spaniards then decimated.

Stereotypes of white Spaniards as oppressors and Aztec people of color as victims always censor Aztec cannibalism against fellow Indians, and may also omit Aztec human sacrifice. Cortes' Indian allies insisted Montezuma was faithless. In fact Montezuma vacillated between cordiality and treachery. Before they met, he ordered his proxies to entrap, ambush, and annihilate the Spanish; failing which, he denied involvement and congratulated Cortes' bloody victory. Montezuma "took counsel of his fears, not his inclinations." Cortes was never the coward.

POVERTY: SUPPLY AND DEMAND

LBJ's "Great Society" poverty programs bridged the gap in America between the affluent "haves," and the "have nots" mired in "structural poverty."

The more you *subsidize* poverty the more you *get* of it. If "the system" causes poverty, welfare is a "right" and dependence is permanent.

SUBTLE ANTI-GUN RIGHTS BIAS

The Second Amendment says the right to keep and bear arms shall not be *taken away*.

In its Anglo-American historical context, the original intent of the Second Amendment was to arm the people (i.e., the general militia), not just the select militia, as the last line of defense against tyranny; and to protect that right not just against abrogation, but against *infringement*.

CENSORSHIP OF DISCREPANT VIEWS

The New Deal did not end the Depression, but it did create needed jobs until WWII brought real recovery.

Consumers buy less at higher prices. Employers hire less at higher wages. New Deal bids to prop up wages and prices delayed recovery. During a depression, they should fall to market levels, to maximize employment and purchasing power.

"ROBBER BARON" ORTHODOXY

With their high rates and poor service, early transcontinental railroads best exhibited the anti-social ethic of laissez-faire capitalism.

Overbuilt through federal aid beyond lines of settlement, these railroads served areas where shippers were still too few to attract competitive carriers. James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad, built wholly with private funds, charged lower rates for better service without going bankrupt.

IN DISPRAISE OF FREE ENTERPRISE

Creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887 was a good thing. Cutthroat competition by unregulated railroads was causing market chaos, through unfair rebates and long-short haul rate differentials.

The economics of railroading justified rebates and long-short haul rate differentials. Rebates were how railroads competed for business. Railroads have high fixed costs but low variable costs. Carrying big shipments long distances is cheaper per unit mile than carrying small shipments short distances – hence the long-short haul rate differences. "Cutthroat competition" helped create national markets and lower prices. The ICC protected "competitors" from competition by holding rates up.

POLITICALLY CORRECT ERROR

In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) the Supreme Court declared the federal Indian Removal Act of 1830 illegal, but the U.S. removed the Cherokees and other Indians from their lands anyway.

ALLEGED COLONIAL RACE WARS

The Pequot War (1637) and King Philip's War (1675-76) pitted the English on one side against Indians on the other.

Indians fought on both sides in each war. Narragansetts, Niantics, and Mohegans fought alongside the English in the Pequot War. After that war, some surviving Pequots were distributed as war prizes among the colonists' Indian allies, who so mistreated them that in 1655 the Connecticut government resettled them under more humane white rule in two villages in old Pequot territory. Descendants of those Pequot captives fought for the English in King Philip's War.

MINIMIZING ESPIONAGE

Emphasis on Senator Joseph McCarthy's lack of proof of spying; silence on new evidence from the Venona project

RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION MYTH

Except for race conflict due to white bigotry, Radical Reconstruction had few defects.

Deciphered secret messages identify Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White, and may refer to FDR's personal advisor Harry Hopkins, among hundreds of WWII Soviet agents in the U.S.

IN PRAISE OF UNFREE ENTERPRISE

Without antitrust laws, predatory companies would sell at very low prices to eliminate competitors, then gouge consumers by cutting production and raising prices.

No rational firm cuts prices to eliminate competitors if that requires expanding beyond its own most profitable size. Up to this point of maximum profitability, all efficient businesses use their economies of scale to earn higher profits by selling more for less. From the standpoint of consumer welfare in free markets, the rationale for antitrust law is weak.

AWOL – U.S. COMBAT VALOR

Discussion of Mexican bravery against Americans in the Mexican War, but no mention of U.S. military exploits there

An American dragoon charge up the center against Mexican artillery helped break the line and win the Battle of Resaca de la Palma. The accuracy and almost superhuman rapidity of American artillery fire at the climax of the Battle of Buena Vista overcame the greatest odds the U.S. Army had ever faced.

This decision involved *Georgia's* right to control Cherokee land within Georgia. It did not address the *federal government's* right to remove the Cherokees from it. The Supreme Court did not forbid U.S. removal of these Indians.

ANTI-STRICT CONSTRUCTIONISM

Only loose constructionists – supporters of big government – believe in federal implied powers under the Constitution's "elastic clause." Strict constructionists – who favor less government – are a fringe group who reject implied powers.

Among the many flaws of Radical Reconstruction were taxation without representation, unfree elections, a standing army in peacetime without consent, plus juryless trials and no separation of powers under military rule in the South.

Both strict and loose constructionists believe in implied powers. But strict constructionists say the federal government (under the "necessary and proper" clause) has only those implied powers that are *absolutely* necessary to carry out its delegated powers. Loose constructionists say this clause implies powers to do anything *convenient* and *not expressly prohibited*, in carrying out delegated powers.

CONSTITUTIONALISM & unconstitutionality

in U.S. "History" textbooks

Constitutional supremacy does not mean *federal* supremacy. States' *rights* differs from state *sovereignty*. Pro-big government U.S. "History" interpretations ignore Constitutional supremacy and states' rights. They pretend there were only two options, and that the Civil War having destroyed state sovereignty, federal supremacy alone remains.

<p>These views are Constitutionally flawed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>state supremacy (decentralized sovereignty)</p>	<p>CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY (divided sovereignty)</p>	<p>These views are Constitutionally flawed.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>federal supremacy (centralized sovereignty)</p>				
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<p>Strict construction Original intent States' rights Tariff for revenue</p>	<p>Loose construction National bank Protective tariff Federal aid to internal improvements</p>					
<p>Nullification Sovereign states were final judges of constitutionality of federal acts.</p>	<p>States' rights <i>under</i> the Constitution, differed from state sovereignty <i>over</i> the Constitution. The Civil War destroyed state sovereignty but not states' rights. States' rights never meant nullification.</p>	<p>No more states' rights By destroying state sovereignty, the Civil War in effect repealed the 10th Amendment.</p>				
<p>Right of secession</p>	<p>Either secession, or its defeat, destroyed a Union in which sovereignty was divided. Can a state secede? was really the question, Where does sovereignty ultimately lie? If states could secede, they were ultimately sovereign; if they could not, the federal government was ultimately sovereign. The Constitution was silent about secession because it <i>divided</i> sovereignty: there was no Constitutional right to secede, and no Constitutional power to prevent it.</p>	<p>Defeat of secession "preserved" the Union.</p>				
<p>Black codes Southern states could abridge constitutional rights of freedmen.</p>	<p>The 14th Amendment did not restrain the states for the first time. The Constitution had always restrained the states, by prohibiting some state actions, and by delegating certain powers to the federal government alone. But until beginning in 1925, the U.S. Bill of Rights was held to restrain only the federal government, not the states.</p>	<p>Radical Reconstruction Federal government could abridge constitutional rights of Southern whites.</p>				
<p>States could issue fiat paper money. (<i>Briscoe v. Bank of Kentucky</i>, 1837)</p>	<p>The Constitution forbids states to emit bills of credit. The Constitutional Convention rejected a bid to let the federal government emit bills of credit.</p>	<p>Federal government could issue fiat paper money. (<i>Julliard v. Greenman</i>, 1884)</p>				