

# IMMIGRATION WITHOUT ASSIMILATION MEANS DISPOSSESSION

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## **America Extinguished: Mass Immigration and the Disintegration of American Culture**

Samuel T. Francis

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*Reviewed by John Attarian*

Over a million immigrants, virtually all non-white, enter America every year, and well over thirty million have arrived since 1970. Americans are taking this unprecedented flood calmly. Apparently they believe that these newcomers will assimilate—conform to American culture, folkways, and mores—just as their own immigrant ancestors did in the 1840s, 1890s, and 1910s, and that America will digest them without ill effects.

Not so, retorts paleoconservative columnist Samuel Francis, a penetrating observer of politics and culture. In this collection of columns written in 1998–2001, Dr. Francis argues persuasively that assimilation is not happening and that as a result, immigration is starting to radically transform America, with whites being dispossessed of economic, social, and political power, and of their culture too.

Studies, including a Center for Immigration Research and Education study in 1982 and a Census Bureau report in 1992, have pointed out that if current trends in non-white immigration and fertility continued, American whites would be a minority by about 2050. They have elicited little notice, much less alarm. Most Americans believe that race does not matter and that cultural differences will vanish as the newcomers become like us.

Mainstream conservatives and libertarians have a deep faith that insists that immigrants will assimilate. These people—Linda Chavez, Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Ben Wattenberg, and so on—typically argue that American identity is not

grounded in race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, or religion, but rather in a set of “propositions,” such as equality, entrepreneurship, “family values,” and so on. This reductive approach, Francis rightly observes, does not try to prove that “real assimilation, as understood by sociologists and anthropologists, was taking place,” but seeks to water down “the meaning of the concept of assimilation itself—and of America as a distinct, historically articulated culture as well.”

But if the “right” dilutes assimilation, liberals simply disdain it. They laud immigration as providing “diversity,” the real purpose of which, Francis bravely and rightly observes, is “to destroy whiteness.” Liberals forsake the image of the melting pot for the “salad bowl,” in which different groups will preserve their unique identities and perspectives. But salads are not famous for cohesion.

Dr. Francis excels at spelling out what assimilation is and why it matters. Many immigrants, he acknowledges, do assimilate and many others do so partially. But he makes the crucial point that assimilation itself admits of degrees. Minimal assimilation entails merely things like wearing blue jeans and eating fast food. Deeper assimilation involves adopting not only conventional American dress, speech, and the like, but also “cultural attitudes toward a multiplicity of kinds of behavior and the cultural norms that govern them.”

Bad as the new “American” practices of genital mutilation and witchcraft are, Dr. Francis rightly deems them less important than “the more fundamental and less tangible form of non-assimilation” regarding beliefs about the appropriate use of violence, the individual’s relationship to the group, and so on. These beliefs are part of every person’s basic outlook. Francis keenly observes that “precisely because most human beings simply don’t know what their attitudes on such matters are and have never consciously thought them out, they are not easily discarded at the borders of whatever country a person leaves and enters.” Therefore, they clash with the views of the host population. This explains why almost all multicultural or multiracial societies have had either authoritarian rule or instability. Achieving a consensus outlook in such societies is difficult. If neither authoritarian rule nor consensus exists, Balkanization follows: “physical fragmentation of a common political unit into its component ethnic, racial, and regional parts.”

Dr. Francis seconds George W. Bush, an immigration enthusiast, in seeing America as a melting pot, not a salad bowl, but points out that “the melting pot has been possible at all only because what was melted in it was never very different in the first place.” The overwhelming majority of immigrants until recently had a macro-level resemblance to the people already here: white, mostly Christian, with European folkways, institutions, and morals. “Since they were largely homogeneous to begin with, it’s not all that surprising they formed one nation that has retained that homogeneity until recently.” Unfortunately, the homogeneity no longer exists. Most of our recent immigrants are radically different from America’s host population, so assimilation is far more difficult.

Ominously, in many cases assimilation is not happening. "Nothing is more basic to the assimilation of immigrants in a foreign culture than learning its language," Dr. Francis rightly observes. But many Hispanics and other immigrants are not learning English—a strong sign that "they haven't assimilated and don't intend to." Indeed, special foreign-language schools for immigrant children are proliferating. Another sign of non-assimilation is the collapse in the naturalization rate. In 1970, about 90 percent of foreigners who had lived in America for over two decades were naturalized citizens; as of 1999, only 30 percent. Moreover, many Hispanics have a militant race consciousness and identify with Mexico, not America.

Why is assimilation not happening? Dr. Francis argues that mass immigration is the problem. When too many immigrants arrive at once, their language and folkways reinforced by large numbers of similar people, "they don't need to assimilate. Instead, they form their own communities and enclaves, and the surrounding society has to assimilate to them."

Yes and no. America experienced mass immigration before, with immigrants clustered in ethnic communities—Hamtramck in Detroit, for example—yet assimilation took place. My grandparents fled Armenia before World War I and came to Detroit, where an Armenian immigrant community resided. Grandma enrolled my father, born here in 1913, in an Armenian school, which impeded his learning English; he would address classmates at his public school in Armenian. One of his public school teachers told Grandma what was happening and insisted she pull him out of the Armenian school, because he would have to become fluent in English if he was going to get anywhere in America. She did, and he did. Assimilation happened in Grandma's day because America demanded it, and enforced it in institutions such as public schools, where most teachers were patriotic WASPs. Today's politically correct teachers, marinated in multiculturalism, would laud Grandma for retaining her Armenian identity, and place little Eddie Attarian in bilingual education.

But if Francis misses this point, he cites the Christians' apologizing for the Crusades and Pope John Paul II's apology for past Catholic sins, to nail why America no longer demands assimilation: "Western man no longer believes in himself or the civilization his ancestors created, crusaded for and died for." Myopic self-interest is also a factor. Both major political parties treat our exploding, ill-assimilated Hispanic immigrant population not as a national problem but as a voting bloc to be pandered to. California Republicans even deny funds to white candidates in favor of Hispanics. Both Al Gore and Bush have addressed Hispanic audiences in Spanish, presupposing that they had not assimilated.

Thanks to mass immigration, America's invertebrate failure either to stop it or enforce assimilation, and the cancer of political correctness, American whites are beginning to suffer dispossession. Immigration is literally running whites out of

California. Since apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives is based on states' total populations, including non-citizens, states with high immigration are gaining seats at the expense of states with low immigration; citizens' representation suffers accordingly. The push for a California state holiday honoring Cesar Chavez, opposition to Columbus Day parades in Denver, and the de-Christianization of Christmas by nonwhite immigrants witness for "the displacement of European-American civilization and its heroes, holidays and symbols by another civilization." The seizure of white-owned farms in Zimbabwe, Francis warns, is a grim portent of what might await American whites if immigration and immigrant fertility reduce them to a minority.

Even though polls reveal solid majorities of Americans opposed to immigration, it continues, Francis rightly maintains, because it enhances the wealth and power of the elites who dominate America. Business wants cheap immigrant labor, and hang the consequences for the larger community. For example, immigrants, with the carpet industry's blessing, poured into the Georgia towns of Dalton and Gainesville, causing whites to flee the schools. Churches and unions want immigrant members. Multiculturalists and welfare bureaucrats want to import a clientele.

The elites' self-serving conduct makes it brutally clear, Dr. Francis argues, that the American people cannot look to the elites to save America from being ruinously transformed by immigration. We must do it ourselves. The electoral victory of California's Proposition 187 shows that grassroots efforts can succeed. There is still some time left, he believes, but not much. "The day is soon coming—Mexican revanchists remind us of it all the time—when the immigrants will simply be too many for any sitting politician to call for immigration controls without inviting political suicide."

Sam Francis has an enviable knack for "reading" current events to divine what they reveal about both the present and the future; the penetration to see what he looks at; and the guts to report what he sees. The result is deep insight conveyed in vigorous, readable prose. Francis puts me in mind of the journalist Jules Machefer in Jean Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints*.

*America Extinguished* is one of the best warnings about the immigration menace I have read, a powerful work of prophecy. Fortunately it's priced to reach a mass audience. Buy it, read it, buy more copies, and pass them on.

Time is short.

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