

The town has been proud of its efforts to spruce up the immigrant quarters: tree-lined streets, a brand new shopping center, and even a 150-foot practice wall for rock climbers. In the aftermath of the riots, blacks and Arabs predictably claimed that the city hadn't done enough for them and that the police are racist.

France can look forward to more headaches. Four and a half million inhabitants—about 7% of the population—are immigrants, of which blacks and Arabs form a large majority. These figures do not include the children of immigrants, since those who are born in France automatically qualify for citizenship and are counted as Frenchmen. Just as they do in America, non-whites clump together in neighborhoods that quickly go down hill. Racial friction is now as French as *croissants*.

France has nevertheless not been quite as soft-headed about immigration as the United States. In 1974 it theoretically closed the door to former colonials, and it has even offered Arabs cash as an incentive to go home. Even so, it is estimated that more than 100,000 new immigrants enter the country each year to join North

African relatives already living in France.

Also unlike the United States, France has vocal and effective opponents of immigration. Jean-Marie LePen's National Front party, despite its recent origin and consistent hostility from the press, manages a solid 15% of the vote in national elections. Such a showing is enough to guarantee that the cultural and racial implications of immigration are discussed in France and not brushed aside with meaningless slogans about "tolerance" and "diversity." Nevertheless, with that curious combination of blindness and perspicacity that permits us to detect the failures of others but not our own, magazines like *Nouvel Observateur* lead with Pavlovian shouts of "racism" whenever they write about Mr. LePen.

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Some European countries are waking up sooner than others. Austria has a very small non-Germanic population, but in last October's parliamentary elections the anti-immigration (and limited government/low taxes) Freedom Party went

from 18 to 33 seats, and is now the third largest party in parliament. Support surged after its leader, Jorg Haider, coined the slogan, "Vienna must not become Chicago." He could have chosen nearly any big American city to make the same point.

It was not so long ago that the United States was an attractive model for Europeans. Those who visit America today are shocked by the crime, poverty, and dilapidation of many cities. People who, a generation ago, might have wished their parents had emigrated to America, are now thankful they stayed home.

It will soon dawn even on the socialist Frenchmen who write for *Nouvel Observateur* that America's immigration policy has been folly, not because America is a "capitalist society" intent on creating an underclass, but because the policy has ignored race. We welcome their trips to America if that is what it takes for them to understand what the anti-immigrationist Mr. LePen is saying—that an American-style immigration policy brings American-style problems. The sensible Austrians plan to avoid both the policy and the problems. ●

The Rise of the European-American

Richard Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*, Yale University Press, 1990, 374 pp., \$35.00

by Thomas Jackson

In an era in which the ethnic demands of everyone but white people are the subject of such obligatory interest, it is a pleasant surprise to find a book about the ethnic identities of Americans of European descent. And if, as the flyleaf claims, the author goes on to explore the dawning consciousness of whites as "European-Americans," the book would seem promising. *Ethnic Identity* is, in fact, a useful analysis of what white Americans think about their European origins, and the book is worth reading for that. As a reflection on rising white consciousness, it is no

more than one would expect from a mainstream university press.

The author, Professor Richard Alba, has based his book not only on general sources but on a detailed survey of white ethnic identity that he carried out himself. His primary message is simple: The American melting pot has been a roaring success, so long as its ingredients have been white. With the exception of Jews, virtually every group of European immigrants has, within three generations, become largely indistinguishable from the others. The old English stock painlessly absorbed immigrants from northern Europe, and even digested the southern and eastern Europeans

and the Irish without much more than a gurgle and a case of heartburn.

As Professor Alba points out, the ultimate test of assimilation is the ease and frequency of intermarriage. On this score, there is virtually no European group that has failed to mingle with the rest. Three quarters of the marriages of white people today cut across lines of European nationality. Indeed, as the author argues, at this rate the very notion of European ethnicity is blurring.

Only Jews, with an intermarriage rate of only one quarter to one third, resist the final step to assimilation, and this resistance weakens only slightly in succeeding American-born genera-

tions. Jewish endogamy is even more remarkable, since a group that is no more than 2-1/2 percent of the population would normally have a very high rate of marriage outside the group, if only because of the scarcity of potential spouses. Jews also differ from other European immigrants in that their levels of education and income far outstrip those of any other ethnic group.

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Professor Alba is candid enough to contrast the otherwise rapid and essentially uniform assimilation of Europeans with the very different experiences of other racial groups. Hispanic immigrants, for example, do not show anything like the same patterns of education, income, and intermarriage as Europeans, even after three generations and more, and blacks are even less a part of the American mainstream. To his credit, Prof. Alba refrains from the usual bromides about how these groups can be expected to be absorbed eventually, just as Poles and Italians have been.

The United States has lost the old conviction that all newcomers must be made over in the same Anglo-Saxon image. Were this ever even theoretically possible for non-European immigrants, the disrepute into which the very effort has now fallen guarantees that assimilation will not take place.

As for white ethnics, the findings of Prof. Alba's own research are always interesting and sometimes surprising. The widespread notion of the third generation trying to reestablish the ethnic identity that the previous generation had tried so hard to leave behind is apparently a myth. Interest in one's European origins can reawaken in members of any generation, but European ethnic identity declines steadily over time. Italians and Irishmen cling to their European-ness more firmly than others but they, too, eventually melt into the pot.

Another finding that runs counter to popular belief is that an interest in European ethnicity increases with education. Despite the common view that “working-class ethnics” are the staunchest remnants of Europe-in-America, according to Professor Alba it is the best educated who cultivate an interest in their European origins.

Professor Alba also reports that it is women who are the guardians of European ethnicity. Without their determination to cook the foods and observe the celebrations of their ancestors, an occasional outburst of European sentiment from the father is unlikely to have much effect on children. Nevertheless, Professor Alba finds that in the case of ethnic intermarriage, when the husband insists on keeping his own ethnicity, his wife is likely to oblige. Swedish wives learn to cook ravioli and English ladies learn Irish jigs to please their husbands. In mixed marriages, children are more likely to identify with only a single ethnicity, and this is likely to be that of the father.

Nevertheless, in all cases, Professor Alba's research demonstrates what everyone knows to be true—that European ethnicity is receding dramatically. Americans of European origin now tend to have what can be called “symbolic” or “voluntary” ethnicity. For the most part, their European-ness is something that is more a decoration than an essence, and is something they may deny or claim entirely as it suits them. European ethnicity has become so symbolic and so voluntary that virtually any white person can appropriate most any part of it for himself. Professor Alba quotes a notice from an Albany newspaper that sums up what European ethnicity now means in America: “The German-American Club of Albany will observe St. Patrick's Day with a dinner-dance on March 19.”

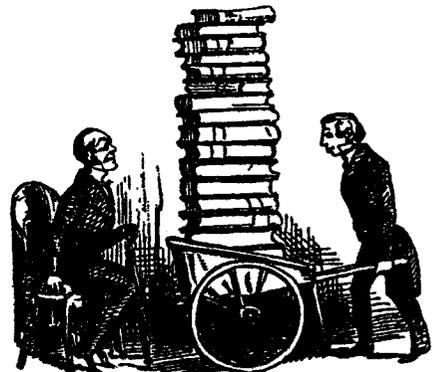
Though Professor Alba does not explore this, a similar ethnic merging is taking place among Hispanics and, to a lesser degree, among Asians. Just as the musicians in a “German” band are as likely to be English, Irish, or even Czech as they are to be German, the members of a Salsa band may well be a mix of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Central Americans. Despite the current fashion of pooh poohing the

melting pot, it has hardly gone out of business; there is simply a separate pot for each race.

It is in this context that Professor Alba hazards a few timid observations about a dawning pan-European ethnicity. As non-white immigrants pour into the country, and as old country identifications wane, whites increasingly see that the contours of the new melting-pot identity match those of the frontiers of Europe. Though Professor Alba anticipates a broad European-American ethnicity, he seems to be confused about what this means: “An attraction of finding common ground as European Americans is that it avoids the obvious pitfalls of a merely racial identity as ‘whites’.” Since the “pitfalls” of such an identity are so “obvious,” Professor Alba never explains what they might be.

We are told that since a European-American identity is made up of the remnants of “symbolic” ethnicities, it is likely to be weak. Here again, in trying to distinguish between European-American identity and white consciousness, Professor Alba may be fashionable but he is mistaken. The racial fault lines in this country are only widening. As Poles, Hungarians, and old stock Dutchmen find that their interests are not those of blacks, Hispanics, or Filipinos, it will become increasingly clear that the culture uniting European-Americans cannot easily be separated from race.

Professor Alba is right to acknowledge the decline of old-country ethnicity and has an inkling of what will replace it. But the European-American identity he describes will arrive with far greater strength and with far more consequences than Yale University Press is likely to concede ●



O Tempora, O Mores!

Hazel Dukes It Out

Hazel Dukes is the president of the New York State NAACP. She was recently named as the \$110,000-a-year head of the New York City Off Track Betting Board, largely because she is black and is a friend of New York's black mayor, David Dinkins.

Last fall, she complained in a radio interview about waiters, "who not only aren't black, but can't even speak English." When it was suggested to her that this sounded anti-Latino, Miss Dukes replied that she wasn't referring to Latinos. "I'm talking about another nationality," she said. "Latinos can speak English." Asked what nationality she had in mind, Miss Dukes thought for a moment and said, "Ecuadorans. I don't know what they are [but] I know they're not Hispanic."

There was considerable hooting from New York's Hispanics, but Miss Dukes remains securely in her job, thanks to protective coloring. Any white city official who said anything so "insensitive" on the radio, and then replied to questions with such colossal ignorance would be very quickly gone. Mayor Dinkins concluded that Miss Dukes' remarks must have been inaccurately reported.

An instructive comparison with the Dukes case is that of Dan Landes, a bureau chief in the New York City DA's office, who lost his job last spring because of a single word. He once complained to colleagues that his office was swamped with work because of a large number of "schvartze burglaries and robberies." "Schvartze," which is Yiddish for black, is thought by some to be derogatory. It is, of course, *infra dig* to refer at all to New York's black crime wave, but Mr. Landes would probably still have his job if he had spoken of "African-American larcenies."

Blame It On Whitey

A recent *New York Times* poll reports that 29% of all blacks think that the US government may have

developed the AIDS virus in a laboratory and is deliberately using it to infect black people. Sixty percent of all blacks think that the government could be deliberately ensuring a supply of drugs to blacks.

In the face of massive education campaigns about both drugs and AIDS, much of it directed at blacks, it is pitiful that so many believe their government is trying to kill them. One wonders how they explain affirmative action, set aside contracting, minorities-only scholarships, tax-breaks for minority broadcasters, and all the rest of the preference industry.

Any black who believes that the United States government is deliberately supplying drugs to blacks and trying to infect them with AIDS will believe any anti-white theory. It would be hard to find a more vivid demonstration of how determined blacks can be to blame all their failings on white people.

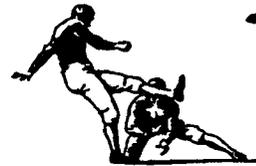
Arizona Speaks

The people of Arizona recently voted down a proposal that the state declare a holiday on Martin Luther King's birthday. This, despite the fact that the pro-holiday forces had the support of virtually every official, newspaper, and commentator in the state. The defeat of the holiday shows, once again, how radically different public opinion is from published opinion.

We suspect that the people of most states would vote the same way if they had the chance. Ever since Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays were lumped together to make "Presidents Day," there is not a single other American whose birthday is marked by a national holiday. That Dr. King should have been a womanizer, a plagiarizer, and perhaps a communist sympathizer gives some Americans doubts about the holiday.

Nevertheless, groups all over the country are thinking of ways to punish the people of Arizona for their decision. Although "tolerance" is the national watchword, those who yell

about it the loudest are the last to practice it. About 40 convention groups have canceled their plans to meet in Arizona, at an estimated loss to the state of \$30 million. NFL Commissioner, Paul Tagliabue, says he will recommend that the 1993 Super Bowl not be played in Phoenix, as now planned, because of the vote. Student activists are agitating to get their football teams to boycott the Copper Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl, both held in Arizona.



When colleges participating in the Fiesta Bowl were each offered a peace offering of \$100,000 to be used for scholarships for non-whites only, it at least sparked debate on the subject of race-based financial aid. Now that it has been officially established by the Department of Education that private scholarship money can be set aside for blacks only, we presume it is legal to set aside money for whites, too . . .

Ethnic Purity Panel

Hispanic firemen in San Francisco claim that it is unfair for people of Spanish descent to be getting affirmative action and racial promotion benefits. They think that benefits should go only to New World Hispanics, and have proposed an Ethnic Purity Panel to make sure that no Spaniards enjoy racial preferences. "I don't know what their culture is, other than what I read in *National Geographic*," complained one of the advocates of ethnic purity. "They live a totally white life."

Black Pharaohs

As has now been widely reported, black education "experts" have been mounting an increasingly strident campaign for an "Afro-Centric" school curriculum. The theory is that