

492,000 people were granted amnesty, and in 1990 the figure was 880,372. The Immigration and Naturalization Service expects that more than 2,000,000 illegals will eventually be granted amnesty under the law.

In both 1989 and 1990, about 70 percent of the people given amnesty were Mexican. This helps account for the very high figure for Mexicans in Figure 3. Amnesty effectively quadrupled Mexican immigration for that year.

What has been a huge gift to Mexico has hardly been a bargain for us. The state of California, which got the largest share of amnestied illegals, discovered that its newly-legal residents had an average of four years of education and that 80 percent did not speak English well enough to hold a job. These former law-breakers can now sponsor immigration of relatives they left behind in Mexico.

At the same time, the fact of having once granted amnesty suggests that the United States could very well grant it again in the future. Mexicans certainly seem to think so. The border patrol reports a sharp increase in ap-



prehensions of entire families trying to make the crossing together. This is a departure from the usual pattern of illegal immigration by unaccompanied men. Generally, illegals bring their wives and children only when they intend to settle permanently.

Disappearing America

Whether by design or by accident, the United States of previous decades

is disappearing. The "diversity" that is replacing it is said to be a blessing for the whites who would otherwise have to live only with their own kind. Curiously, only white people appear to be qualified to receive or appreciate this blessing. No non-white nation is said to be plagued by a troublesome homogeneity that must be put right by importing people who are as different as possible from its current residents. If the United States were sending its poorest, least educated people to Japan or even to Mexico, no one could trick the Japanese or the Mexicans into "celebrating diversity" or thinking they had been "culturally enriched."

The second part of this article will describe some of the adjustments America is making as it sheds its European past and becomes a Third-World country. Joseph Fallon lives in Rye, New York.

The Immigration Policy That Might Have Been

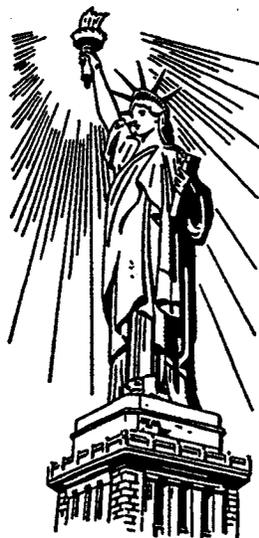
by Lawrence Auster

The author of *The Path to National Suicide* replies to our August review by Lynne Richards.

The critics of a racist view of immigration usually dismiss it as "bigotry." AR is pleased to present an unusual and welcome addition to the debate: a dissent from the racist view that is both thoughtful and well argued.

Lynne Richards' main complaint with my essay, *The Path to National Suicide*, is that I don't call for a total exclusion of non-Europeans from future immigration, even though, as she points out, the logic of my argument about the threat to America's cultural identity seems to point in that direction. It is a rare and heady experience for me to be criticized for being too soft on immigration. However, Miss Richards' question is a fair one and deserves a thoughtful response.

What is at issue is the sort of society we desire to live in. But that immediately raises the question of the gulf



between the ideal and the possible. The political philosopher Leo Strauss has written: "The legislator is strictly limited in his choice of institutions and laws by the character of the people for whom he legislates, by their traditions, by the nature of their territory, by their economic conditions, and so on. His choosing this or that law is normally a compromise between what he would wish and what circumstances permit." (Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy*, p. 86.)

For Miss Richards (as well as for the classic political philosophers), one of the conditions of the ideal society is that its members be sufficiently homogeneous so as to identify with its traditions and be able to carry them forward. The multiracialism resulting from recent immigration, as well as the biracialism embedded in our history (not to mention the pan-European multiethnicism brought about by earlier waves of immigration), mean that the sort of homogeneity that Miss Richards regards as ideal is long since past. But that doesn't mean that the ideal of cultural homogeneity is irrelevant. The ideal is still the means of judging and guiding the actual. Keeping in mind the goal of achieving the best possible society, the practical question becomes: given our existing situation, to what extent can we approximate the ideal and preserve as much of a common heritage as is possible?

The issue is further complicated by the fact that the ideal of homogeneity is balanced by the desirability for a certain degree of variety and cosmopolitanism. After all, we are not the tiny city-state of the Greek

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philosophers (where a tight-fitting homogeneity makes sense) but a nation-state of 250 millions. Strict ethnic homogeneity among such a vast population, even if it had ever existed, might get to be an awful bore.

One way to approach this problem is to imagine what a good immigration policy in 1965 *might* have been, if our legislators had been thinking of achieving a good society instead of just responding to humanitarian cliches. At this point I hope I will not shock readers of *American Renaissance* when I say that, *in principle*, I like immigration. There is truth in the saying that immigrants bring welcome energy and a fresh appreciation for our institutions. In 1965 I, along with Sen. Sam Ervin, might have favored a cautious reform of the national quota system (not its total elimination, as was the case) to allow in small numbers of previously excluded, non-European groups — enough perhaps to add to the cosmopolitan mix of our metropolitan areas, but not enough to pose any threat to the overall character and identity of this country.

That is, by the way, what the 1965 lawmakers *thought* they were getting: Sen. Hiram Fong of Hawaii said at the 1965 hearings that under the new law Asians would never surpass one percent of the U.S. population. A moderate number of select individuals of various races could easily have been assimilated into this country while providing a certain enlivening variety. But of course that's not what we got. We have already gone so far beyond an assimilable demographic mix, not to mention a sane population policy, that the question arises whether we

can afford to allow in any more immigrants at all, let alone non-Europeans. In other words, in "ideal" circumstances I would have favored a small amount of non-European immigration. But we are not in ideal circumstances.

Miss Richards asks of me: "What are the necessary qualities and qualifications for becoming the sort of American he wants for fellow citizens?" With regard to the problem of national identity, I think the main qualification for citizenship should be the capacity for what sociologist Milton Gordon calls "identificational assimilation," i.e., for the adoption of the cultural and political heritage of the host people *as one's own*.

We must remember that this is not a mathematically precise formula that can be determined in a laboratory, but a rough truth to be arrived at by political experience. If we were to apply such a formula with absolute strict-



ness, then the only "good" citizens would be the lineal descendants of the 18th century Americans, and all the immigrants since the 18th century (except perhaps those from England) would be seen as a falling-off from the original American type; I assume such a criterion would seem too exclusive

even for most readers of *American Renaissance*. If we applied a somewhat broader, "Northern-European" perspective, then the pre-1880 Americans — including the then-despised Irish — would be the "real" Americans, and the 1880-1920 immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe would be seen as the fatal departure from the true America.

Now it cannot be denied that each immigrant group brought significant changes to this country; Germans in the 19th century turned puritanical Sunday into a family fun day; the entry of Catholics and Jews resulted in the secularization of our formerly Protestant school systems; and so on. But we need to recognize that, as unsettling as some of these changes were, they oc-

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curred within an overall continuum; the basic spiritual and institutional framework of this nation remained largely intact. The standard of identificational assimilation, *to a sufficient degree to provide for essential social continuity*, was tacitly (if roughly) followed throughout our entire history up to the 1960s. For example, despite some grumblings, the Germans and Scandinavians were not seen as a serious threat to national identity. Jews, Italians and Slovaks were perceived as more foreign; and such concerns inspired the Americanization movement in the World War I era to help ensure that the newcomers would adopt this country's heritage. When anxieties on that score persisted, because of the ongoing huge numbers of European immigrants, immigration was sharply curtailed in the 1920s — a step that helped advance the assimilation of the Southern and Eastern Europeans who were already here. Asians, in the meantime, had been virtually excluded from the U.S.

The result of all of the above was a society consisting of an Anglo/Northern European majority, Southern and Eastern European minorities, and an even smaller sprinkling of non-

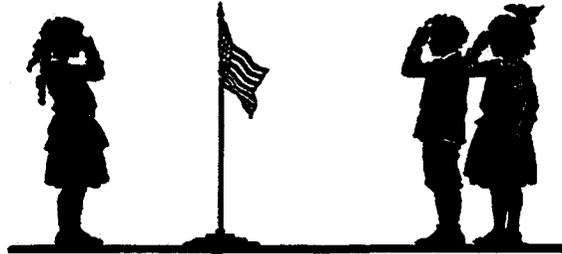
Europeans, as well as our historic black population. This was the way the U.S., partly by choice, partly by chance, sought within the context of immigration policy to maintain its cultural integrity. It is only with the open immigration era beginning in the 1960s that the criterion of identificational assimilation has been cast aside; the resulting experience with multiculturalism and other social disorders clearly indicates that the massive and growing presence of diverse Third World peoples is not compatible with the survival of our national and civilizational heritage.

Based on what I have said so far, it would appear that no further non-European immigration should be allowed. However, I do not believe, given current realities, that an exclusion of all non-Europeans, strictly on a racial basis, is morally desirable or politically possible. America is no longer the homogeneous society it was in the 19th century, when it simply took its Caucasian character for granted and acted accordingly (e.g., the Chinese exclusion acts). In today's racially mixed society one could not argue, in principle, for total racial exclusion without invoking the sort of explicit racist ideology that views race *qua* race as the supreme and defining idea of political life.

The inner form of our common Western culture—the very basis of liberty under law—is the love of transcendent values higher than race or state. According to the Western philosophical tradition, it is the hierarchic order of man's natural constitution—of his natural wants and inclinations—that supplies the basis for natural right. (Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, p. 127.) I would argue that man's natural need for membership in a cohesive and continuing community is one level of that hierarchy; and relative racial homogeneity is undeniably a factor in such cohesiveness. There is thus a universal right, proceeding from nature, to preserve one's own particular society. But the racial/national aspect is not the highest aspect of the constitution of man's being.

The potential danger of racist thinking, evident in its more extreme manifestations, such as Nazism and

Afrocentrism, is that, by making an idol of race, it cuts man off from the transcendent—from God, from universal moral principles, from our common humanity. Moreover, as I just indicated, it is only within the larger constitution of being that man's



more particular needs and values, such as the national, can find their true meaning and justification.

It is thus a great mistake to blame Christianity (as some rightist thinkers do) for today's globalist ideologies. Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan is a story of brotherly love between like-minded individuals, not a prescription for the massive and coercive blending of entire nations. Indeed, Biblical religion is one of the very sources of the American nation. We should thus defend our way of life from the threat of Third World immigration, not on the basis of a racist ideology (with its reductive—and potentially demonic—view of man), but on the basis of an appeal to our cultural particularity, and which we, like any other nation, have a natural right to protect.

Returning to the issue at hand, I see two possible approaches to the problem Miss Richards has posed. The first is to reduce the total number of immigrants to a much lower number (say 200,000), while eliminating ex-

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tended-family preferences and introducing a more equitable proportion of European immigrants relative to the total numbers. This would reduce the

annual influx of non-Europeans from the 1.5 million we are currently receiving to something under 100,000. From a restrictionist point of view, surely this would be a scarcely-hoped-for deliverance.

The only practicable basis for achieving the total exclusion of non-Europeans that Miss Richards desires could not be racial, but environmental. This would mean excluding all Europeans as well, i.e., ending all immigration—an approach that has the advantage of cutting through the invidious race issue (and avoiding the sort of “numbers game” that Miss Richards dislikes) by simply excluding everyone. From an environmentalist, population-growth and quality-of-life perspective, as well as from a cultural perspective, this may be a plausible position to take, at least as a temporary measure while America gets its cultural and economic houses in order.

It has been argued that such a drastic reduction or total cessation of immigration, even if not formally justified in racial/cultural terms, would still be understood to be aimed at non-Europeans and would thus create difficulties regarding the status of non-Europeans already here. I do not see that as an insuperable problem. The immigration restrictions of the 1920s were aimed at keeping out further influxes of Southern and Eastern Europeans. Yet those groups, far from suffering any legal persecution, continued to thrive and become part of this society throughout the 20th century.

I fully recognize the paradoxical quality of the argument I have presented here, as well as its possible futility. It may well be that America has already become racially too diverse to be able to preserve and recover its common tradition on the cultural, non-racist basis that I have proposed. But we must try. The only alternative, as immigration and multiculturalism proceed apace, is a deepening descent into the hell of ethnic tribalism. ●

Lawrence Auster is a freelance writer living in New York City. The Path to National Suicide is available for \$3.00 from the American Immigration Control Foundation, Box 525, Monterey, VA 24465.

Scribbling While Rome Burns

David Rieff, *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*, Simon & Schuster, 1991, 270 pp., \$20.00

reviewed by Samuel Taylor

This book is not what its title suggests. It is not about the millions of non-white immigrants who are turning Los Angeles into a city that is no longer recognizably American. It is not about Salvadorans, Koreans, Mexicans, or Ethiopians. Instead, it is about white people; how they live, and what they think—when they do think—about immigration. For author David Rieff, a New York City free-lance writer, the waves of aliens are a looming presence that is as obvious as it is uninteresting. He does not even bother to tell us how many Third-Worlders now live in Los Angeles, much less how many illegal immigrants are on welfare, or in jail, or have babies in city hospitals.

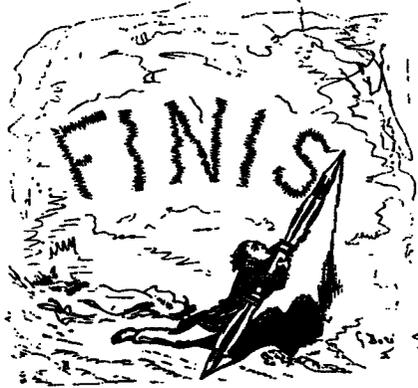
What he does do, and he does it very well, is describe what white people think about what is happening to Los Angeles. He is fascinated to find that people who have subtle, well-reasoned opinions about nearly anything else are happy to mouth slogans when it comes to immigration. Though he doesn't quite realize it, Mr. Rieff has stumbled onto one of the most appalling mysteries of late-twentieth century America: that people who live face to face with the imminent dispossession of European America have scarcely given the future a thought.

"Little Brown People"

Since Mr. Rieff is not looking for immigrants on welfare lines or in maternity wards, he finds them where upper middle-class whites find them. To the oblivious Anglo, what Mr. Rieff calls the "little brown people" appear primarily as maids and gardeners. Virtually anyone with a white-collar job can afford someone to clean the apartment, and no one with a back yard need do the mowing or pruning himself. Dirt poor Third-Worlders are delighted to work below the mini-

mum wage, and the threat of deportation keeps illegals docile.

The other point of contact with immigrants is at the ubiquitous "strip malls." Traffic in Los Angeles is so snarled and full-time house-wives so rare that white Angelenos have taken to shopping at ugly, over-priced, but convenient mom-and-pop stores that have sprung up everywhere. Blacks are not willing to put in the 60- and



70-hour weeks it takes to run them, so white Angelenos now buy beer and potato chips from small brown people who scarcely speak English.

Mr. Rieff is startled to discover how many whites think and act as if the immigrant presence amounts to no more than this. Of course, Los Angeles covers many square miles. There are huge, ever-growing tracts of it into which whites never venture. The ten-to-a-room world of rape and gang warfare that is on the TV news every night might as well be on a different planet—even though that is

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where the cleaning lady lives. The brown tide laps ever closer, but so long as whites still have white neighbors, and the only non-whites at the office are janitors, white Angelenos need never realize that they are a dwindling remnant.

What happens when they do? To Mr. Rieff's astonishment, the thinking

of whites invariably glides along well-worn grooves. One runs like this: "L.A. was great, L.A. was now full of newcomers, therefore the newcomers must be great." Similarly, he writes of the "suspension of disbelief" that makes the following kind of reasoning possible: "If L.A. was the city most open to the new, and the new was also, by definition, what was best, then the immigration, which, whatever else it was, could hardly be described as anything but unprecedented, also had to be a fundamentally good thing, however it might appear on the surface." After all, the United States is supposed to be a country in which everything always gets better, so immigration must be part of this perpetual betterment. And why would millions of people be coming from all over the world if Los Angeles weren't such a wonderful place?

Mr. Rieff is also fully attuned to the contradictions inherent in coupling trendy environmentalism to trendy "tolerance" of non-white immigrants. "One of the most perplexing aspects of conversation in ecologically minded West L.A.," he writes, "was to hear people who worried over the slightest disturbance to the ecosystem assert that as far as human boundaries were concerned, there should be virtually no constraints at all, let alone prosecution of those who were found to be in the country illegally. So sensitive were liberal Angelenos to the possibility of appearing xenophobic that they almost invariably used the term 'undocumented worker' rather than 'illegal alien' . . ."

Nor surprisingly, Mr. Rieff also finds the same defense of immigration most commonly given on the East Coast: "There was an enduring conviction, particularly among liberal Angelenos, a disproportionate number of whom were Jews, that, despite the evidence of their own eyes, the new immigration simply recapitulated the immigration of 1900; in other words the experiences of their own grandparents and great-grand-