

When Immigration Becomes Migration

by E. Christian Kopff

“San Pietro si fece la barba prima per sé e poi per gli altri.”

(“Saint Peter shaved himself first and then other people.”)

—A proverb from Lazio, near Rome

L'invasione silenziosa. L'immigrazionismo: risorsa o complotto?

by Alberto Carosa and Guido Vignelli
Rome: Il Minotauro; 159 pp., €13.00

Americans believe that they are unusual. They use the word “unique” as a term of praise so often that it has lost its status as a superlative and now means “very good.” This feeling is so pervasive in the United States that scholars have even coined the phrase “American Exceptionalism” to describe it. The policies of Global Free Trade and Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, however, are forcing Americans to confront conditions that face the rest of the world. Pat Buchanan was right to devote several chapters of his recent bestseller, *The Death of the West*, to intellectual and population trends in Europe because we have much to learn from taking seriously the problems of Europe and its peoples.

The Silent Invasion. The Politics of Immigration: Resource or Conspiracy? begins by mentioning the events of September 11. Its Italian Catholic authors, Alberto Carosa and Guido Vignelli, devote thoughtful pages to the implications of that terrible day. As they note, however, the problems raised by immigration existed before then. In an interview in the *International Herald Tribune* (February 2, 2001), Samuel Huntington called mass immigration “the central question

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of our times” and explicitly linked “immigration, instability and terrorism.” The Harvard professor did not have access to memos that escaped President Bush. He simply foresaw the likely results of consistent policies.

Defenders of immigration in the United States treat it as another aspect of American Exceptionalism. The United States, they say, is unlike other countries because it is a nation of immigrants, dedicated to a proposition and enriched through the magic of free trade. The historic American republic, however, was shaped by the traditions of English common law, classical republicanism, and Protestant Christianity. The Founding Fathers viewed the religious wisdom and political freedoms they valued and fought for as legacies handed down from the distant past. (In addition, the wealth and stability created by the wizard Pro-

tectionism is rapidly disappearing now that his magic wand has fallen into the hands of his sorcerer’s apprentice, Global Free Trade.)

Immigration fanatics cry for open borders in Italy just as frenetically as they do in the United States. Americans suspicious of the catastrophic nature of that policy will be well advised to get their hands on *The Silent Invasion*. Both authors write with admirable vigor and clarity, and their two essays are well-delivered punches to immigration’s jaw. Carosa’s “Immigration: Myth or Menace?” is a fine example of investigative journalism, backed up with convincing stories and citations. Vignelli’s “The Politics of Immigration: A Project to Tribalize Europe?” shows the coherence of the forces in favor of mass immigration, despite their theoretical disagreements. He refutes their notions with a profound knowledge of traditional ethical theory and Catholic social doctrine.

Immigration confronts Italy with challenges similar to those that America faces. Muslims in Italy, like Mexicans in the United States, come to stay and take over. Islam, Carosa points out, lays perpetual claim to any country or parcel of land it once possessed. When a community gives Muslims permission to build a mosque, it is giving up that land forever, under Islamic law. Osama bin Laden has called the Christian liberation of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella “the tragedy of Andalusia.” Muslims expect to get it back, and Islamic immigration into Europe through Spain and Italy means this is no impossible dream. In the United States, franker Mexicans talk of doing to California and the American Southwest what Sam Houston and Davy

Crockett did to Texas: move in and take it over. This is not immigration; it is migration, as Carosa says.

The right and left counterpunches of the immigration lobby are the argument from economic inevitability and multiculturalism. As Edward Abbey put it, "conservatives love their cheap labor; liberals love their cheap cause." By "conservatives," of course, Abbey meant economic reductionists and free-market extremists, not people who view the market as a valuable tool to defend and promote nations and traditional geographic and religious communities.

Capitalists, nationalists, and localists can work together against the traditional left. This is clearer in Italy than in the United States, because each group has its own party. The leftist coalition that ran Italy and promoted mass immigration through most of the 1990's was dominated by communists, who had changed the name of their party to the "Democratic Party of the Left." The rightist coalition that now governs Italy is dominated by a real (and very successful) businessman, Silvio Berlusconi, with the support of the nationalist National Alliance and the localist Northern League. Berlusconi listens to his allies and has worked to limit immigration. He even had the nerve to praise Western civilization openly, thus drawing upon himself the wrath of the leaders of the European Union. The nature of American political parties makes clear distinctions and significant compromise more difficult. If American capital-

ists and nationalists each had their own party, George Bush would be negotiating openly with Colorado congressman Tom Tancredo, exchanging, for instance, fast-track privileges for a freeze on immigration.

In Italy as in the United States, the majority of the population wants reasonable limits on immigration for a variety of reasons, ranging from protecting their jobs to protecting their culture to protecting their lives and property from crime. (Vignelli has good sections entitled "From Illegal to Criminal" and "Immigrant Crime and Ethnic Civil War.") The forces ranged against the majority are strategically placed. They include "cheap labor" capitalists, leftists who hate Western civilization and want to see it replaced by a utopian multicultural regime, and religious leaders. Carosa has a solid but brief paragraph entitled "A Sorry Note: The Church's Responsibility." Vignelli devotes much of his essay to Church leaders who advocate policies that would overwhelm Italy and its traditional Catholic culture. In 1991, Roger Cardinal Etchegaray wrote,

now that the European community is preparing to open its internal boundaries, it would be crazy [*insensato*] to turn Europe into a comfortable fortress closed in the faces of the immigrants and refugees that are pressing against its doors.

In a speech delivered on May 26, 1990,

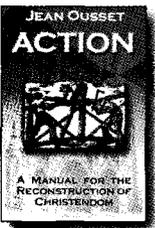
Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, archbishop of Milan, declared that mass immigration from poor (and often non-Christian) nations is desirable because it would

reverse the decadence of consumerism now active in Western Europe. . . . The West must transform the welcoming of immigrants into racial, cultural and religious integration, favoring the rise in Europe of a multiracial and multicultural society.

Cardinal Martini's vision of morally superior immigrants arriving to rescue Western Europeans from "consumerism" is a constant theme of sacerdotal immigrationists. In 2000, Fr. Antonio Mazzi, a frequent speaker on Italian television, repeated the argument. "I would rather talk to believers of another religion," he told the press, "than those who believe only in money and consumerism." If immigration is so likely to sound the death knell of consumerism, it is strange that so many capitalists and E.U. bureaucrats are in favor of it. While capitalists claim that immigrants are driven from their homes and families by economic necessity, Cardinal Martini, Father Mazzi, and their American counterparts predict that immigrants will save Italians from consumerism and teach Americans, by their good example, to be better family men. It seems to me that they would set a better example by staying with their families in their own countries instead of hawking sunglasses in front of the Castel Sant'Angelo or flipping burgers in fast-food joints in the United States. Neither capitalists nor priests are ashamed to repeat over and over again their two contradictory mantras for immigration.

Vignelli responds to these Church leaders by reminding them of basic principles of Catholic social doctrine, which go back to Plato and Aristotle, *suum cuique* and *prima sibi caritas*: "to each his own" and "charity begins at home." Giving away your children's patrimony to strangers is not Christian charity. "According to the natural law as interpreted in the light of the Western juridical tradition," Carosa explains, "the universal right of emigration is valid to the degree that it is compatible with the universal right of social residence on your own land." Immigrating to—"invading," if you will—a land that is uninhabited or partially inhabited by nomads is different

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from invading “a nation like Italy with a precise and homogenous cultural identity created in 27 centuries of western, and then Christian, civilization.” Don Baget Bozzo, writing in *Il Giornale* (April 8, 2000), explained the problem:

For some time the Church’s magisterium has not been speaking with the rigorous language of tradition, on which the Church’s social doctrine is founded. The result is a popular conviction that in order for a political position to agree with Catholic principles it must consider the right of emigration to prevail in the name of need over the right to live on your own land.

Some Catholic leaders have spoken out against the perversion of the Church’s social doctrine. Msgr. Alessandro Maggolini wrote in 1998 that “there is no human right to invade Italy and no duty for Italians to allow their country to be invaded.” Giacomo Cardinal Biffi, archbishop of Bologna, created a stir on September 12, 2000, by writing that

The criteria for admitting immigrants can never be just economic. It is necessary to concern oneself seriously with saving the nation’s own identity. Italy is not a deserted land, without history, without living and vital traditions, without an unmistakable cultural and spiritual physiognomy, to be populated indiscriminately, as if it were not a model legacy of humanism and culture that must not be allowed to disappear.

The left was shocked when the Vatican not only refused to repudiate these statements but allowed Angelo Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican secretary of state, to issue a statement calling Biffi’s words “wise, very wise.” Leftists had every reason to be surprised. Pope John Paul II has consistently spoken in favor of a natural right to migrate—for example, in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, “Man has a right to leave his native land for various reasons—and also the right to return—in order to seek better conditions of life in another country.” The Pope’s October 1989 address at Yankee Stadium seemed to many a call to America to permit a policy of mass immigration amounting to open borders. In his encyclical *Ecclesia in America*, he wrote,

The Church in America must be a vigilant advocate, defending against any unjust restriction the natural right of individual persons to move freely within their own nation and from one nation to another. Attention must be called to the rights of migrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration.

There is enough room in this statement to allow John Paul to escape by the skin of his teeth the charge of repudiation of the Church’s traditional social teaching, but ordinary Catholics take away from words such as these the notion that the Pope is defending “the right of migrants and their families . . . in cases of non-legal immigration.”

Cardinal Martini is not the only ecclesiastical spokesman for multiculturalism, which, as Carosa and Vignelli point out, is an integral part of the left’s assault on Western civilization. The Committee on Migration of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops says, in their *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, that “The church embraces the rich diversity of this immigrant nation—what some call its ‘multicultural’ reality.” A footnote to this sentence explains, “The call for ‘incorporation’ articulated in this letter . . . is not a call for ‘assimilation.’”

They are speaking on good authority. In his address for World Migration Day, July 16, 1985, John Paul II said,

The immigrant members of the church, while freely exercising their rights and duties and being in full ecclesiastical communion in the particular churches, feeling themselves Christians and brothers toward all, must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy and spirituality and particular traditions are concerned.

As Carosa and Vignelli show, the Catholic Christian Democrats who governed Italy from the late 1940’s to the late 80’s set up a situation that the communist-dominated governments of the 90’s exploited to expand immigration into Italy. The Catholic welfare organization Caritas continues to work for increasing immigration despite its own devastating statistics about the negative consequences Italy is suffering from the poli-

cies it advocates.

Carosa and Vignelli demonstrate that open-border attitudes are not supported by Catholic social doctrine. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is quite clear on the role of nations in the divine economy:

After the unity of the human race was shattered by sin God at once sought to save humanity part by part. The covenant with Noah after the flood gives expression to the principle of the divine economy toward the “nations,” in other words, towards men grouped “in their lands, each with [its] own language, by their families, in their nations.” . . . It is intended to limit the pride of fallen humanity united only in its perverse ambition to forge its own unity as at Babel.

Catholics in Italy face a difficult choice: Do they follow the Bible and their Church’s traditional social doctrine regarding immigration, or do they reject both to follow the clear implications of the words and actions of the U.S. bishops, Cardinal Martini, and Pope John Paul II? They cannot have it both ways. Unless the next Supreme Pontiff is Giacomo Biffi (*magari!*), Italians who remain loyal to their nation are naturally going to look with suspicion upon a hierarchy that holds the same positions on immigration as the Italian “former” Communist Party and the *Wall Street Journal*.

LIBERAL ARTS

WHEN MEXICANS ATTACK

“EX-MEMBER OF THE LATIN KINGS REVEALS WHAT LIFE IS REALLY LIKE GROWING UP IN ONE OF THE NATION’S MOST NOTORIOUS GANGS.

“Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15-October 15.”

—from a press release by the
Chicago Review Press

The Moral Economy

by Tobias Lanz

**The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture,
and the Community of Life**

edited by Eric T. Freyfogle
Washington, D.C.: Island Press;
256 pp., \$40.00



The decline of the household economy is one of the most significant economic changes in post-World War II America. Unfortunately, it has received relatively little attention. Professional economists find it trivial compared to the workings of large-scale institutions and global economies, while the average American sees only a positive development that has meant greater mobility, money, and freedom from menial labor. However, the seemingly benign death of the household economy has produced serious social ills. *The New Agrarianism* makes the connection between them explicit. Once human labor is removed from its ancient objects—the household, the community, and the land—a social pathology of cynicism and destruction ensues. To overcome it, modern agrarians advocate more socially intimate ways of living and working, ways that are also resource-efficient and aesthetically pleasing.

Contemporary agrarianism builds upon a long tradition of agrarian radicalism in Western history going back to ancient Greece. In recent times, agrarian thinkers have represented a wide range of political and philosophical opinion. Whether from right or left, however, they have virtually always operated outside the political and intellectual mainstream. Throughout the 20th century, agrarianism has been strongly identified with social and cultural conservatism. Eric Freyfogle, in his Introduction to *The New Agrarianism*, reviews the last several generations of agrarian thought, making ample reference to the contribution of the Southern Agrarians, the English Distributists, and such latter-day agrarians such as Richard M. Weaver and M.E. Bradford. Like their forebears, contemporary agrarians are deeply conservative with respect to economics and community life. They are also suspicious of social engineering and progressive views of history.

Naturally, their view of social change is incremental rather than revolutionary. However, modern agrarians spend less time than their predecessors did in describing the virtues of past agrarian civilizations: Theirs is a more practical response to the contemporary problems of urbanism, industrialism, and consumerism. As such, they are less political than older generations of agrarian writers. They are also less inclined to defend agrarianism in the name of Western civilization and its religious and cultural traditions.

The pieces assembled in this book represent some of the best agrarian writings of the last dozen years. Many of the writers are farmers, others scholars and teachers, but almost all are experienced practitioners who live the life they preach. Freyfogle has collected 15 essays on a wide range of topics, from the virtues of agrarian life to practical issues. The first section, which accounts for almost half of the book, is the most substantive. Beginning with a piece by Scott Russell Sanders, who profiles agronomist Wes Jackson and his pioneering work on a type of sustainable agriculture patterned on native biocommunities, this section introduces the reader to agrarian ideas expressly designed to be put into practice in a world dominated by big business, big government, and the consumer culture. In a similar vein, small-scale farmer Gene Logsdon points out the fallacies of “bigness” in agriculture, explaining that it has nothing to do with efficiency but is, rather, all about power. Logsdon’s own practices have consistently shown that small operations are more efficient and more ecologically sound than larger ones. Environmental-studies professor David Orr concludes the section with a critique of the modern city, in which he advocates better design as a means of creating more sustainable ways of living. This requires not only new practices but a whole new set of concepts. Unfortunately, Orr argues, the language to disseminate agrarian ideas and others promoting an ecologically sustainable agriculture has not been fully developed, especially when compared to the powerful vocabularies that have grown up around sex, technology, and consumerism.

Section Two, presenting critiques of modern industrial culture, is summed up by environmental historian Donald Worster in his concluding piece, “The Wealth of Nature,” in which he debunks

historian Lynne White’s now infamous argument that Judeo-Christian civilization is responsible for modern environmental problems. Instead, Worster sees their root in a materialist philosophy that had its greatest expression in the ideas of Adam Smith. Worster’s way out of the materialist morass, although vaguely stated, is a return to a more holistic and spiritual way of life. The book ends with accounts of people who have lived successfully as agrarians, the most illuminating being that by Amish farmer David Kline, who provides impressions of his own life, which is based on simplicity, faith, and hard work. The book’s most poignant essay, however, is Wendell Berry’s “The Whole Horse,” a rejoinder to Allen Tate’s famous “Half a Horse” metaphor in *I’ll Take My Stand*, in which Tate laments the abstraction and spiritual incompleteness of modern society. Berry emphasizes that the whole horse can only come into being in an agrarian culture. He also reiterates one of the Southern Agrarians’ main points: Agrarianism is not just about agriculture; it is the economic counter to industrialism. Berry ends with a paradox, asking why conservatives and conservationists are not closer allies since both groups are deeply passionate about defending what is most severely threatened by modernization: traditional society and the natural world in which it struggles to survive.

While the main focus of all of these writers remains the family farm, they are concerned more broadly with the separation of *all* work from the home. It is not just farming but virtually every economic activity that has been abandoned as a family enterprise—from cooking and cleaning to sewing and child-rearing. Thus, it is no accident that, with its collapse as a unit of economic production, the household has been transformed almost completely into a unit of consumption. Once self-reliant, the household today is dependent on the market for its very survival. In this economy, work is no longer a spiritual or ethical pursuit but a means to wealth and status. (For most Americans, it is simply a way of increasing consumption.) The tragedy, of course, is that people must now spend more and more time working away from home in order to maintain their consumption levels. Many do not even eat at home anymore; home has been reduced to a rest stop where we watch television and sleep.

The consumer cancer affects nature as well, from the obvious despoliation of