

by Samuel Francis

Will Europe Survive?

The recent emergence in Western Europe of increasingly successful political parties based on opposition to Third World immigration and the utter failure of such parties to appear in the United States raise the question posed in the headline of this column. Most Americans of sensible political views have assumed for the last century that Europe was a goner, a political and cultural basket case that had to be pulled out of the straits of history by massive infusions of American treasure and blood in two World Wars and throughout the Cold War. Now, it seems as though it is America that will succumb to mass immigration and the cultural and racial extinction it promises, while, in Europe, there is at least a glimmer of political resistance to that fate.

The most obvious glimmer, of course, is in France, where Jean Marie Le Pen, after three decades of crusading against immigration, placed second in the French presidential primary in April, only to fall victim to a globally orchestrated campaign of vilification and demonization that clearly made it impossible for him to win more than 18 percent of the vote in the general election in May. Nevertheless, the major consequence of the Le Pen balloon was not what happened in France but what occurred in the Netherlands. There, the result of the vilification of Le Pen was the outright murder, one day after the French vote, of Pim Fortuyn, the man who was, more or less, the closest analogue to the French political leader.

The Fortuyn murder (by a left-wing crackpot) tends to make conspiracy theories obsolete. No one need speculate any longer that some secret cabal of the ruling classes orders assassins to eliminate troublesome political figures who just won't shut up or go away. All the ruling classes have to do is launch precisely the kind of vilification against such figures that the entire European and American press vomited at Le Pen (or, earlier, against his counterpart in Austria, Jörg Haider, or, around the same time and to a somewhat lesser degree, against Fortuyn himself). It is now well known to everyone that there are so many nuts al-

lowed to roam at large through European and American society that the proper sort of vilification campaign can be relied upon sooner or later to trigger one of them into eliminating the designated figure. Some friends of Pat Buchanan wondered in 1999, when he was being vilified in the American press in much the same way, if that was the real purpose; whether it consciously was or not, it remains a small miracle that Mr. Buchanan—or, indeed, M. Le Pen or Mr. Haider or any such leader in Europe or America—remains alive today.

Of course, Mr. Fortuyn, an open homosexual of Marxist background, was not really similar to M. Le Pen except in his opposition to immigration. Mr. Fortuyn was notable for having once wisecracked, when subjected to the ritual accusation of "racism," "Don't call me a racist. I know more about Moroccan boys than anyone at this table." Mr. Fortuyn's case against immigration was that Islam is, as he called it, a "backward religion" that had missed the Enlightenment and was utterly incompatible with the tolerance of homosexuality and liberated womanhood that now pertains in all Western countries. He was obviously entirely correct about this, though whether his is the most compelling reason to oppose massive Islamic immigration into Europe is another question. It certainly has never been M. Le Pen's main objection.

A traditional and devout Roman Catholic as well as a French nationalist, M. Le Pen is probably as close to being a Gallic Pat Buchanan as any European can be. What is distinctive about him is that he is not in the monarchist-proto-fascist tradition of Charles Maurras, nor (as columnist Jonah Goldberg stupidly wrote) "nostalgic for the Vichy government," nor even that he has nursed resentments about the loss of Algeria for the past 40 years. M. Le Pen preaches no doctrine, threatens to overthrow no governments, and denounces no demons, despite the false smears that he is an "antisemite." *Washington Times* editor Wesley Pruden wrote what is perhaps the dumbest line ever penned about M. Le Pen (and there have been entire libraries of dumb lines written about him) when he remarked on



April 23 that

All that the first round of voting actually demonstrated was that 17 percent of the voting population stand with a man of anti-Semitic beliefs. This is even reassuring if we can take the Le Pen vote as credible evidence that only 17 percent of Frenchmen hate Jews. Most of us thought it was a lot more than that. Burning synagogues has become the latest fad in the nation that regards itself as the arbiter of fashion.

Of course, the dozen or so recent synagogue burnings in France have nothing to do with M. Le Pen or his supporters, and, indeed, the French nationalist is well known (and virtually unique on the European right) for being pro-Israeli. The attacks on Jewish targets in France have been the work of the very Muslim immigrants against whom M. Le Pen has warned these many years, even as dullards like Mr. Pruden have chortled about how mass immigration means cheap nannies and exotic restaurants.

The larger point is that, while leaders like M. Le Pen oppose immigration because they want to preserve the France of Joan of Arc, leaders like Mr. Fortuyn oppose it because they seek to preserve the Europe of Elton John. Although it's by no means clear that the latter is worth preserving, it may be that those Europeans who want to preserve it will prove to be more numerous and more decisive in European politics than those who, like M. Le Pen, harbor far more conventional conservative and right-wing goals. The reason is that the political culture of the right-left polarity, and especially the side that M. Le Pen represents, seems to be pretty much defunct, while the neither-

right-nor-left nationalism of Mr. Fortuyn (rather similar to that of Jörg Haider and several other anti-immigration nationalists across Europe) seems to be rising.

Asked in an interview with *Newsweek* just before his death, “You dislike the term ‘right-wing’ to describe your program. Why?” Mr. Fortuyn replied, “There is no longer a distinction between progressives and conservatives. People are thinking in a non-ideological way. . . . In my program there are elements of left and right.” Indeed, despite M. Le Pen’s conservatism and allegiance to the political right, his own success has, in large part, been the result of his ability to combine elements of the left (mainly a commitment to working-class welfare and economic-security policies) with his nationalist appeal and thereby wipe the socialist Maurice Jospin off the political map. In Calais, the largest French city under Communist control, where a Party member has held the mayoralty since 1973, Le Pen came in first in the presidential primary, and the Communist candidate, fifth, “with much of his lost vote apparently going to Le Pen,” as the *Washington Post* reported.

What enables such parties—not only in France, the Netherlands, and Austria but in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, and perhaps in Great Britain, where the British National Party won its first local government seats this spring—to win working-class votes is not that they can outbid more conventional parties of the left in pandering to demands for more welfare, health care, etc., but that all the usual Republican Party blather about “free enterprise” and the “free market” is simply absent from their rhetoric, and they don’t need to run from it when appealing to working-class voters. That allows them to dwell on the issue that really drives their success: immigration and the crime, threats to jobs, educational problems, and general cultural inundation it causes. It is precisely because both the Republicans in this country and most of the “alternative parties” of the right that occasionally (or, should I say, perennially) challenge it cannot seem to emancipate themselves from such rhetoric that they never go anywhere.

The inevitable result of the rhetoric of Economic Man is to convince working-class voters that the candidate is merely a shill for business interests and that whatever noises he makes about protecting the average man and woman are designed merely to snare their votes. When

such conventional Republicans as Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and the Bush clan imitate populist noises for that very purpose, the result is to confirm what the voters already suspected, and the ultimate consequence is that what could and should have been an almost irresistible and invincible means of mobilizing a mass following for a serious right-wing political force has been ruined through its cynical exploitation by cheap politicians.

The apparently indissoluble union between the forces of the American political right and a rhetoric of Economic Man that never appealed to anyone but businessmen and their well-paid journalistic parrots and today only frightens and alarms just about everyone else is one reason a nationalist right cannot emerge in the United States. A second lies in our political system and its lack of the proportional representation that most European democracies enjoy. The substantial fragments of the electorate that parties of the “right” (if that’s the proper term for them) in Europe have been able to win allow the parties’ leaders to gain public office, remain in the public eye, and build on their accomplishments. Our system, allowing only a winner-take-all result, forbids that.

But the third and perhaps the most important reason the American right has failed to form an alternative to the deadheads of the GOP is that many on the American right are deadheads themselves who really don’t want anything more than to keep out of office the political figures whom they have been persuaded to hate the most. Almost everyone who worked in any of the Buchanan campaigns has told me repeatedly that what he heard incessantly from conservatives who refused to support Mr. Buchanan during all of his campaigns was that “we just can’t afford to let the Democrats win.” Having petrified itself by concocting the most labyrinthine, terrifying, and implausible conspiracy theories about Mr. Clinton, his wife, and the drug-smuggling, murdering, sex-crazed camorra he brought to Washington, the mainstream right failed to define any serious political issues with which it could attack its foe. Immigration, free trade, global crusading, pandering to racial minorities—every measure or policy that Mr. Clinton supported, the right has adopted. Its only objection to him was that he was a crook and a sex fiend, and if the Democrats were successful at proving

nothing else, they easily showed that Republicans were not much better on either count.

The brute truth is that most of the good folk who compose the American right (certainly its leadership) simply have no understanding of how to create, organize, publicize, and maintain an effective political party that is neither a pale shadow of the Grand Ole Pirates they have just abandoned nor a political version of the church of their choice, where they can listen forever to their favorite sermons and rehearse eternally their banal hymns to bourgeois virtues and the dogma of Economic Man. If the American right wants or would even be attracted to any political vehicle that offered more than that, there is simply no evidence for it in its entire history since the New Deal era.

Eventually, there may appear on the American political scene a party able to do something like what M. Le Pen, Mr. Fortuyn, and Mr. Haider, to name only the best-known figures, have done or are trying to do. Eventually, those parties in Europe or parties descended from them may accomplish what they are seeking—an end to the mass immigration that now clearly threatens to overwhelm the populations and civilizations of the continent. If they or we can ever accomplish that goal, there will be plenty of time—and plenty of disposition—to splinter and recombine in new political configurations that can fight, bicker with, and even shoot each other to their or our hearts’ content. If neither they nor we do accomplish it, then there won’t be time—or purpose—for much of anything, and whatever political quibbles arise will be among a new people entirely alien to those few wretched Europeans who descend from us and have managed to survive what mass immigration creates in place of what Europe’s new nationalism is trying to conserve. c

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by Scott P. Richert

Ethnic Cleansing

Family traditions often get started by accident—especially, perhaps, those that center on food. On the second New Year’s Eve after we were married, my wife and I found ourselves trapped in our apartment in Vienna, Virginia, victims of a freak snow and ice storm that made the Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., streets downright dangerous, especially since no one in the area knew how to drive in such conditions. While we both had weathered far worse growing up in Michigan, we decided not to risk our lives but someone else’s, and so we ordered Chinese delivery. (To salve our consciences, we tipped very well.) At the end of the meal, one of us conceived the sappy idea of breaking our fortune cookies open at midnight, and by 12:01 A.M. (disappointing fortunes notwithstanding), it was probably inevitable that we would do it all again the next year.

And so, when we arrived in Rockford two years later, on December 27, 1995, one of my first tasks was to locate a Chinese restaurant. In a dingy strip mall on North Main Street, around the corner from our apartment, I found a little hole in the wall with six or seven tables. *I guess it will do*, I thought. *By next year, we’ll have located the best Chinese restaurant in town.* Little did I know that we already had.

The food we ate that New Year’s Eve—crab rangoon, fried rice, and black bean and garlic chicken with green peppers and onions—was not the best Chinese I have ever had, but few restaurants I have dined at have ever topped it (most notably, a Chinese restaurant on Long Island whose name I can’t recall, where I first enjoyed General Tso’s chicken—delightfully crunchy-chewy, with fiery little peppers and the lightest of sauces—and my personal favorite, the Sichuan Pavilion, on K Street in Washington, D.C.). Over the next five or so years, I enjoyed innumerable lunches and dinners with family and colleagues at the place we all came to know simply as “Mrs. Lee’s”—Lee’s Chinese Restaurant, immortalized in the small ads that we placed in *Chronicles* as a token of our gratitude for the many kindnesses that Mrs. Lee and her husband, Al, bestowed upon us.

A decade earlier, Tom Fleming had also eaten one of his first meals in Rockford at Mrs. Lee’s, when *Chronicles’* founding editor Leopold Tyrmand took him there to sample the wonton soup—the best in Rockford, Tyrmand claimed. And it was, though I always preferred the hot and sour. (If you’re ever in D.C., try the best of both worlds: Sichuan Pavilion’s hot and sour wonton soup, a sublime—and spicy—dish I have never seen anywhere else.) My children always said that no one could make white rice quite like Mrs. Lee—whose real name was Ann Wang and whose unrelenting cheerfulness and good nature are reflected in the fact that it took her almost five years to correct us.

In mid-size Midwestern towns such as Rockford, small ethnic restaurants come and go, which made Mrs. Lee’s 20-some-year run little short of a miracle. While such places might survive for generations in New York City or San Francisco, the normal pattern here is for small restaurants (often run by first- or second-generation immigrants) to blaze the way, introducing adventurous Midwesterners to an interesting new cuisine, which is then picked up by a larger restaurant (often a chain), which ditches all of the sparkle and originality of the cuisine in order to make it more palatable to a broader range of American diners. And, of course, it never hurts to make up for the loss of quality by increasing the quantity, preferably by putting the food on an all-you-can-eat buffet. (Rockford now has a Chinese-Japanese-American buffet featuring sushi—a risky proposition if ever there was one. Nine eighty-nine, no doggie bags—something for which Rover can be thankful.)

This dynamic is more proof that, to the extent that any assimilation has actually occurred in the “Great Melting Pot,” it has largely been destructive, stripping immigrants and their food of their distinctiveness and reducing them to the lowest common denominator. If there were still a true American cuisine, it could adopt the best foods and techniques and spices from other cultures and make them its own, the way that, say, Poles, Lebanese, and Vietnamese did with French cui-



sine. Instead, American chain restaurants and agribusiness conglomerates take other cultures’ food and try to make it taste like a TV dinner. And, unfortunately, they usually succeed.

Mrs. Lee’s has been gone for almost two years now, and with it not only the crab rangoon, wonton soup, and beef kow but Mrs. Lee’s insights into the local public schools and the mayor and her tips about Brazilian telephone stocks. Ann and Al were not forced out of business by their competition but chose to retire rather than battle their landlord, who wanted them to make thousands of dollars worth of improvements to their space before he would offer them another lease. The forces of homogenization, however, were closing in—a local Chinese restaurant chain, predictably named “Happy Wok,” had opened on the corner, and a Chinese buffet, predictably named “China Buffet” and featuring such traditional Asian dishes as frozen pizza and boxed mashed potatoes with canned gravy, had taken up residence in the next mall to the north. Still, I’d like to think that Mrs. Lee could have withstood the competition, perhaps less because of the quality of her food than the loyalty of her patrons and her loyalty to them—though, in the end, “the quality of her food” and “her loyalty to her patrons” may simply be different ways of saying the same thing. <c

R.I.P.

When in Rockford,

Eat at

Lee’s Chinese Restaurant

3443 N. Main Street