

"domestic Marshall Plan" to rebuild rotting cities.

No matter how these demands are couched, they are little more than schemes to take money from white suburbanites and give it to non-white city-dwellers. In some cases, city officials are straightforward about it. The black mayor of Hartford says that the city's boundaries must be redrawn so as to include white suburbs. This would "share the burden" of looking after Hartford's burgeoning, non-white welfare population. In New Jersey, blighted cities like Trenton, Newark, and Camden are eyeing their white neighbors for potential mar-

### Who is White?

All population figures in this story are taken from the 1990 census, which makes it very hard to tell who is white. The census breaks every city's total population down into white, black, Asian, American Indian, and other. Hispanics are listed separately, with the note that they can be "of any race." (Has the census bureau really run across Hispanics who are Asian?)

Thus, Los Angeles is reportedly 53 percent white, and 47 percent other races, for a total of 100 percent. *In addition to that*, it is 40% Hispanic! What, then, is the real white population of Los Angeles? The only way to get a reasonably accurate figure is to subtract Hispanics from the figure for whites. This is how we have calculated the white populations of cities.

Hispanics who report themselves to be black should actually be subtracted from the black figure rather than the white figure. Also, a small number of American Hispanics are Spaniards or descended from Spaniards and really are white. Unfortunately, the census doesn't tell us how many there are of either group. The vast majority of Hispanics are essentially Amerindian. To the extent that we have subtracted those who are actually white or black (or Asian!) from the group that the census bureau calls "white," we have understated the percentages of whites in city populations.

riage partners. Hundreds of years after they were drawn, some black officials claim that town boundaries reflect racial prejudice.

If there is something on the horizon that will save America's cities, there is

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no indication of what that might be. So long as cities keep turning black and Hispanic (an Asian influx can be a different matter), they will continue to deteriorate.

### A Nation Without Cities

Sociologist Charles Murray suggests that our cities could become more and more like Indian reservations: alien territories, largely supplied from the outside. If this happens, cities will cease to play the central roles in commerce, culture, and society that they have played in every nation for thousands of years. Helped along by better telecommunications, America is on its way to becoming a nation *without cities*.

Except for the rich, who can afford to live in the expensive, white, urban enclaves that

remain, many American cities are already becoming unlivable. Crime, bad schools, incivility, filth, and the hostility of non-whites are more than most are willing to put up with for the benefits of city life.

As they flee the city, whites are increasingly cut off from an entire manner of living. The texture of life that can come only from an urban concentration of work, leisure, culture, and friendship is no longer available to them. Walking as the obvious means of transportation—to work, to a concert, to a restaurant, to a friend's house—is out of the question.

A decorous and graceful urban existence was once common for whites. To read any American novel of city life that is set in the 1950s or earlier is to enter a different world from that of the present. A civilized life in the city is still possible for Japanese, Germans, Swedes, Swiss, and the French. And it is still possible in a few American cities that have kept their white majorities.

But for most of the country, our dead and dying cities are a vivid advertisement for the coming "diversity" that we are supposed to be embracing with such excitement. Some time near the middle of the next century, the white population of the United States is projected to drop below the 50 percent mark. A trip to New York—or to New Orleans or Detroit or Miami—is a trip into the future. ●



## The Late Great American Public School

**F**orced integration was the death-knell of America's urban public schools. Virtually every major city went through the same turmoil of court cases, white flight, and the subsequent collapse of public schools. In Indianapolis, where desegregation lawsuits have dragged on for 28 years, the public school population has dropped by half and has scarcely any whites left. In Boston, which went

through a particularly bitter battle over busing, the white student population dropped from 60 percent in 1972 to 24 percent in 1988. In Chicago, only 12 percent of public school students are white.

With few white students left to live up to them, teaching standards dropped. With few white parents to organize them, parent activities withered. In Oklahoma City, ten years

of busing pushed the white student population from 75 percent down to 47 percent, and the number of Parent Teacher Associations from ninety-four to fourteen. All across the country, parents of all races who wanted to get involved in their children's education found it much harder when the school was many miles away.

Eventually, there were so few whites left in many school systems that students were being bused for crazy distances to maintain racial "balance." Many city school districts now spend a quarter or more of their budgets on transportation.

In some jurisdictions, it is not only the students who are assigned to schools on the basis of race. Teachers are likewise pushed around the district to meet racial quotas and to provide same-race role models.

As student performance declines, the job of big-city school superintendent has become one of the most thankless in the country. The job is an impossible one. According to current, official thinking, if the students in overwhelmingly non-white urban schools perform poorly, it can mean only that they are being badly taught. When the students continue to do badly, year after year, reform after reform, the school superintendent walks the plank.

Kansas City has run through seven superintendents since 1972. In late 1990, Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, In-

dianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Columbus, and Washington were all looking for superintendents. Since so many of the students are non-white, there is enormous pressure to hire non-whites, which only narrows the field and makes it more likely that candidates will get the job because of race rather than ability.

Many American public schools are worlds apart from what today's adults knew as children. More than 50 school districts, including those in Houston, Miami, and Philadelphia



have had to ban telephone beepers because they were so frequently used for drug deals. Dress codes have been enforced in schools in Detroit, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and New Haven because students were assaulting and even murdering each other to steal fancy clothes. Close to 300,000 American high school students are physically attacked *each month*. In 1987, 338,000 American students admitted that they carried a handgun to school at least once. One third of those admitted that they carried one *every day*.

In New York City, a few worried parents dress their children in \$500 bullet-proof vests before they send them off to school. Police warn that such expensive clothing may stop bullets but it will also attract thieves. The city has assigned police officers to ride in designated subway cars so that students will know where they can ride without being attacked. The school system spends \$29 million every year on *armed guards* — \$29 million that is not spent on laboratory equipment, band instruments or field trips.

The west coast is well on its way in the same direction. One junior high school in Los Angeles recently built a concrete wall to stop stray bullets from flying into the playground. At 1,800-student Jordan High School in the black section of Los Angeles, there are no less than 13 security guards, two police officers, one parole officer and several administrators who patrol the place with walkie-talkies. Every day, a workman checks the school's walls, and paints over provocative graffiti that could start a gang battle. Violence is so bad that the school has opened classrooms in a nearby housing project so students needn't risk their lives by coming to school.

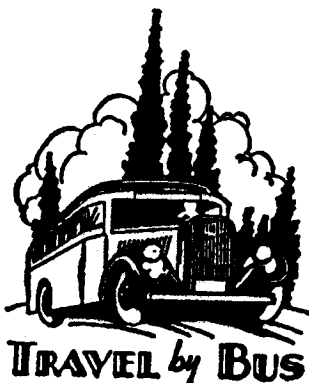
No other nation in the world expects children to study under such horrifying, shameful circumstances. Public schools would be reason, all by themselves, for whites to leave America's cities. ●

## Why do we Have an Underclass?

Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1991, 410 pp., \$24.95

reviewed by Thomas Jackson

In *The Promised Land*, Nicholas Lemann tells several interwoven tales. One is about Mississippi sharecroppers who migrated to Chicago during the middle decades of the century. Another is about the bungled policies of President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty." Binding them together is Mr. Lemann's attempt to understand why the United States has a black underclass that probably lives in greater



squalor and desperation than any other people on earth.

The book's perspective is the by now standard one that pins most of the blame for black failure on white racism, and it leads to a call for an "ambitious wave of new programs" that will bring the underclass into the American mainstream. Nevertheless, *The Promised Land* is by no means a simple rehash of the liberal clichés of the 1960s. Mr. Lemann does not gloss over the failures that stemmed from