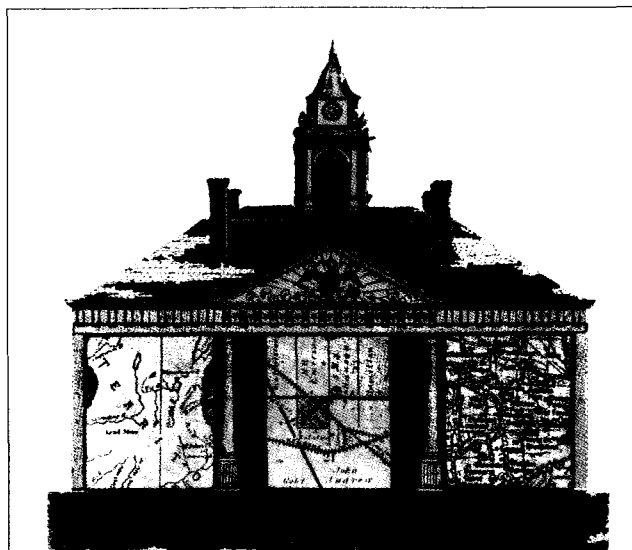


Free Immigration or Forced Integration?

by Hans-Hermann Hoppe



The classical argument in favor of free immigration runs as follows. Other things being equal, businesses go to low-wage areas, and labor moves to high-wage areas, thus effecting a tendency toward the equalization of wage rates (for the same kind of labor) as well as the optimal localization of capital. An influx of migrants into a high-wage area will lower nominal wage rates. However, it will not lower real wage rates if the population is below its optimum size (and surely the United States, as a whole, is well below its optimum size). To the contrary, if this is the case, the produced output will increase and real incomes will actually rise. Thus, restrictions on immigration will do greater harm to the protected domestic workers as consumers than whatever such restrictions might gain them as producers. Moreover, immigration restrictions will increase the “flight” of capital abroad (the export of capital which otherwise might have stayed), causing an equalization of wage rates (although somewhat more slowly) but leading to a less than optimal allocation of capital, thereby harming world living standards.

As stated above, the argument in favor of free immigration is irrefutable and correct. It would be as foolish to attack it as to deny that free trade leads to higher living standards than protectionism does. It would also be wrongheaded to attack the case for free immigration by pointing out that because of the existence of a welfare state, immigration has become, to a significant extent, the immigration of welfare-bums, who, even if the United States is below the optimal population point, do not increase but rather decrease average living standards. For this is not an argument against immigration but against the welfare state. To be sure, the welfare state should be destroyed, root and branch. However, the problems of immigration and welfare are analytically distinct problems, and they must be treated accordingly.

The problem with the above argument is that it suffers from two interrelated shortcomings which invalidate its uncondi-

tional pro-immigration conclusion and/or which render the argument applicable only to a highly unrealistic—long bygone situation—in human history.

The first shortcoming will only be touched upon. To libertarians of the Austrian school, it should be clear that what constitutes “wealth” (well-being) is subjective. Material welfare is not the only thing that counts. Even if real incomes rise because of immigration, it does not follow that immigration must be considered “good,” for one might prefer lower living standards and a lower population over higher living standards and a denser population.

The second shortcoming will be the focus here. With regard to a given territory into which people immigrate, it is left unanalyzed who, if anyone, owns (controls) this territory. In fact, in order to render the above argument applicable, it is—implicitly—assumed that the territory in question is unowned, and that the immigrants enter virgin territory (open frontier). Obviously, this can no longer be assumed. If this assumption is dropped, however, the problem of immigration takes on an entirely new meaning and requires fundamental rethinking.

For the purpose of illustration, let us first assume an anarcho-capitalist society. Though convinced that such a society is the only social order that can be defended as just, I do not want to explain here why this is the case. Instead, I will employ it as a conceptual benchmark, because this will help clear up the fundamental misconception of most contemporary free immigration advocates.

All land is privately owned, including all streets, rivers, airports, harbors, etc. With respect to some pieces of land, the property title may be unrestricted; that is, the owner is permitted to do with his property whatever he pleases as long as he does not physically damage the property owned by others. With respect to other territories, the property title may be more or less severely restricted. As is currently the case in some housing developments, the owner may be bound by contractual limitations on what he can do with his property (voluntary zoning), which might include residential versus commercial use, no buildings more than four stories high, no sale or rent to Jews, Germans, Catholics, homosexuals, Haitians, families with or

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without children, or smokers, for example.

Clearly, under this scenario there is no such thing as freedom of immigration. Rather, there exists the freedom of many independent private property owners to admit or exclude others from their own properties in accordance with their own unrestricted or restricted property titles. Admission to some territories might be easy, while to others it might be nearly impossible; in any case, admission to the property of the admitting person does not imply a “freedom to move around,” unless other property owners consent to such movements. There will be as much immigration or nonimmigration, inclusivity or exclusivity, desegregation or segregation, nondiscrimination or discrimination based on racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, or whatever other grounds as individual owners or associations of individual owners allow.

Note that none of this, not even the most exclusive form of segregationism, has anything to do with a rejection of free trade and the adoption of protectionism. From the fact that one does not want to associate with or live in the neighborhood of blacks, Turks, etc., it does not follow that one does not want to trade with them from a distance. To the contrary, it is precisely the absolute voluntariness of human association and separation—the absence of any form of forced integration—that makes peaceful relationships—free trade—between culturally, racially, ethnically, or religiously distinct people possible.

In an anarcho-capitalist society there is no government and, accordingly, no clearcut distinction between inlanders (domestic citizens) and foreigners. This distinction comes into existence only with the establishment of a government, i.e., an institution which possesses a monopoly of aggression (taxation). The territory over which a government’s taxing power extends becomes “inland,” and everyone residing outside of this territory becomes a foreigner. State borders (and passports), as distinct from private property borders (and titles to property), are an “unnatural” (coercive) institution. Indeed, their existence (and that of a domestic government) implies a twofold distortion with respect to peoples’ natural inclination to associate with others. First, inlanders cannot exclude the government (the taxman) from their own property, but are subject to what one might call “forced immigration” by government agents. Second, in order to be able to intrude on its subjects’ private property so as to tax them, a government must invariably take control of existing roads, and it will employ its tax revenue to produce even more roads to gain even better access to all private property, as a potential tax source. Thus, this overproduction of roads does not involve merely an innocent facilitation of interregional trade—a lowering of transaction costs—as starry-eyed economists would have us believe; it involves forced domestic integration (artificial desegregation of separate localities).

Moreover, with the establishment of a government and state borders, immigration takes on an entirely new meaning. Immigration becomes immigration by foreigners across state borders, and the decision as to whether a person should be admitted no longer rests with private property owners or associations of such owners but with the government as the ultimate sovereign of all domestic residents and the ultimate owner of all their properties. Now, if the government excludes a person while even one domestic resident wants to admit this very person onto his property, the result is forced exclusion (a phenomenon that does not exist under private property anarchism). Further-

more, if the government admits a person while there is not even one domestic resident who wants to have this person on his property, the result is forced integration (also nonexistent under private property anarchism).

Now add a few “realistic” empirical assumptions. Let us assume that the government is privately owned. The ruler literally owns the entire country within its borders. He owns parts of the territory outright (his property title is unrestricted), and he is partial owner of the rest (as landlord or residual claimant of all of his citizen-tenants’ real estate holdings, albeit restricted by some kind of preexisting rental contract). He can sell and bequeath his property, and he can calculate and “realize” the monetary value of his capital (his country).

Traditional monarchies—and kings—are the closest historical examples of this form of government. What will a king’s typical immigration and emigration policy be? Because he owns the entire country’s capital value, he will, assuming no more than his self-interest, tend to choose migration policies that preserve or enhance rather than diminish the value of his kingdom. As far as emigration is concerned, a king will want to prevent the emigration of productive subjects, in particular of his best and most productive subjects, because losing them would lower the value of the kingdom. For example, from 1782 until 1824, a law prohibited the emigration of skilled workmen from Britain. On the other hand, a king will want to expel his nonproductive and destructive subjects (criminals, bums, beggars, gypsies, vagabonds, etc.), for their removal from his territory would increase the value of his realm. For this reason Britain expelled tens of thousands of common criminals to North America and Australia.

On the other hand, as far as immigration is concerned, a king would want to keep out the mob, as well as all people of inferior productive capabilities. People of the latter category would only be admitted temporarily, if at all, as seasonal workers without citizenship rights (as when large numbers of Poles were hired as seasonal workers in Germany after 1880), and they would be barred from permanent property ownership. A king would only permit the permanent immigration of superior or at least above-average people (i.e., those whose residence in his kingdom would increase his own property value), as when after 1685 (with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes) tens of thousands of Huguenots were permitted to settle in Prussia and when Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, and Maria Theresa promoted the immigration and settlement of large numbers of Germans in Russia, Prussia, and the eastern provinces of Austria-Hungary. In brief, while through his migration policies a king might not entirely avoid all cases of forced exclusion or forced integration, such policies would by and large do the same as what private property owners would do, if they could decide whom to admit and whom to exclude. The king would be highly selective and very much concerned about improving the quality of the resident human capital so as to drive property values up, not down.

Migration policies become predictably different once the government is publicly owned. The ruler no longer owns the country’s capital value, but only has current use of it. He cannot sell or bequeath his position as ruler; he is merely a temporary caretaker. Moreover, “free entry” into the position of a caretaker government exists. Anyone can, in principle, become the ruler of the country.

Democracies as they came into existence on a worldwide scale after World War I offer historical examples of public gov-

ernment. Once again, assuming no more than self-interest (maximizing monetary and psychic income: money and power), democratic rulers tend to maximize current income, which they can appropriate privately, at the expense of capital values, which they cannot appropriate privately. Hence, in accordance with democracy's inherent egalitarianism of one-man one-vote, they tend to pursue a distinctly egalitarian—nondiscriminatory—policy of emigration and immigration.

As far as emigration policy is concerned, this implies that for a democratic ruler it makes little, if any, difference whether productive or unproductive people, geniuses or bums, leave the country. They all have one equal vote. In fact, democratic rulers might well be more concerned about the loss of a bum than that of a productive genius. While the loss of the latter would obviously lower the capital value of the country and the loss of the former might actually increase it, a democratic ruler does not own the country. In the short run, the bum voting in favor of egalitarian measures might be more valuable to a democratic leader than the productive genius, who as egalitarianism's prime victim will more likely vote against the democratic ruler. For the same reason, a democratic ruler, quite unlike a king, undertakes little to expel those people whose presence within the country constitutes a negative externality (human trash, which drives individual property values down). In fact, such negative externalities—unproductive parasites, bums, and criminals—are likely to be his most reliable voters.

As far as immigration policies are concerned, the incentives and disincentives are likewise distorted, and the results are equally perverse. For a democratic ruler, it also matters little whether bums or geniuses, below- or above-average civilized and productive people immigrate into the country. Nor is he much concerned about the distinction between temporary workers (owners of work permits) and permanent, property-owning immigrants (naturalized citizens). In fact, bums and unproductive people may well be preferable as residents and citizens because they cause more so-called "social problems," and democratic rulers thrive on the existence of such problems. Moreover, bums and inferior people will likely support his egalitarian policies, whereas geniuses and superior people will not. The result of this policy of nondiscrimination is forced integration: the forcing of masses of inferior immigrants onto domestic property owners who, if they could have decided for themselves, would have sharply discriminated and chosen very different neighbors for themselves. Thus, the United States immigration laws of 1965, as the best available example of democracy at work, eliminated all formerly existing "quality" concerns and the explicit preference for European immigrants and replaced them with a policy of almost complete nondiscrimination (multiculturalism).

Indeed, though rarely noticed, the immigration policy of a democracy is the mirror image of its policy toward internal population movements: toward voluntary association and dissocation, segregation and desegregation, and the physical distancing and approximating of various private property owners. Like a king, a democratic ruler will promote spatial overintegration by overproducing the "public good" of roads. However, for a democratic ruler, unlike a king, it will not be sufficient that everyone can move next door to anyone else on government roads. Concerned about his current income and power rather than capital values and constrained by egalitarian sentiments, a democratic ruler will tend to go even further. Through nondis-

crimination laws—one cannot discriminate against Jews, blacks, homosexuals, etc.—the government will want to open even the physical access and entrance to everyone's property to everyone else. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the civil rights legislation in the United States, which outlawed domestic discrimination on the basis of color, race, national origin, etc., and which thereby mandated desegregation, coincided with the adoption of a nondiscriminatory immigration policy, meaning mandated international desegregation (forced integration).

The current situation in the United States and in Western Europe has nothing whatsoever to do with "free" immigration. It is forced integration, plain and simple, and forced integration is the predictable outcome of democratic, one-man one-vote rule. Abolishing forced integration requires a de-democratization of society, and ultimately the abolition of democracy. More specifically, the authority to admit or exclude should be stripped from the hands of the central government and reassigned to the states, provinces, cities, towns, villages, residential districts, and ultimately to private property owners and their voluntary associations. The means to achieve this goal are decentralization and secession (both inherently undemocratic and unmajoritarian). One would thereby be well on the way toward a restoration of the freedom of association and exclusion as it is implied in the idea and institution of private property, and much of the social strife currently caused by forced integration would disappear if only towns and villages could and would do what they did as a matter of course until well into the 19th century in Europe and the United States: to post signs regarding entrance requirements to the town (no beggars or bums or homeless, but also no Muslims or Jews or Catholics or Protestants or Americans); to kick out as trespassers anyone who does not fulfill the town's requirements; and to solve the "naturalization" question somewhat along the Swiss model, where local assemblies, not the central government, determine who can and cannot become a Swiss citizen.

What should one hope for and advocate as the relatively correct immigration policy, as long as the democratic central state is still in place and successfully arrogates the power to determine a uniform national immigration policy? The best one may hope for, even if it goes against the "nature" of a democracy and thus is not very likely to happen, is that the democratic rulers act as if they were the personal owners of the country, as if they had to decide whom to include and whom to exclude from their own personal property (into their very own houses). This means following a policy of utmost discrimination: of strict discrimination in favor of the human qualities of skill, character, and cultural compatibility.

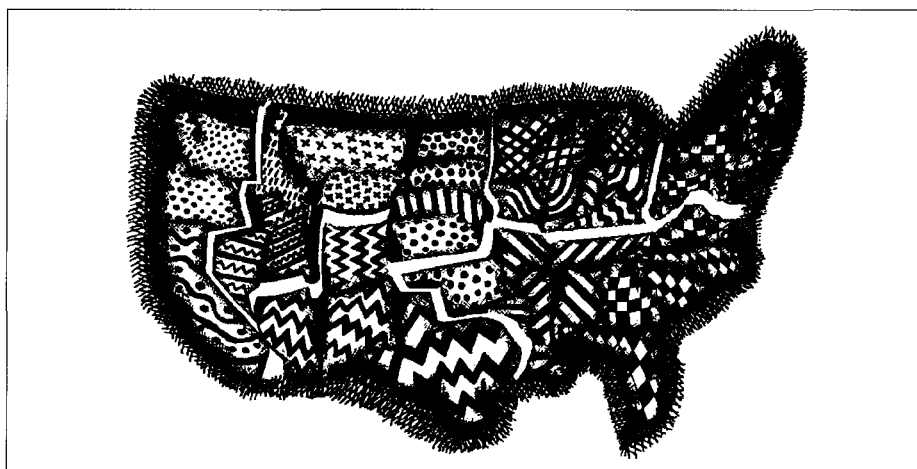
More specifically, it means distinguishing strictly between "citizens" (naturalized immigrants) and "resident aliens" and excluding the latter from all welfare entitlements. It means requiring, for resident alien status as well as for citizenship, the personal sponsorship by a resident citizen and his assumption of liability for all property damage caused by the immigrant. It implies requiring an existing employment contract with a resident citizen; moreover, for both categories, but especially that of citizenship, it implies that all immigrants must demonstrate not only (English) language proficiency but all-around superior (above-average) intellectual performance and character qualities compatible with our system of values—with the predictable result of a systematic pro-European immigration bias.

Alien Future

by Paul Craig Roberts

"A nation scattered and peeled, . . . a nation meted out and trodden down."

—Isaiah



H. Ward Streett

Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster

by Peter Brimelow

New York: Random House;
291 pp., \$23.00

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Like Romans in ancient times, Americans are losing their country to immigration, and few seem to know it. One who does know is Peter Brimelow, himself an immigrant and recently naturalized citizen. In his book *Alien Nation*, he more or less predicts that immigration is undermining social cohesiveness and has the United States on the road to breakup. Four separate regions are emerging: an Asian Pacific coast, an Hispanic southwest, a black and white southeast and northeast, and a white landlocked center. Among the culprits in the smashing of the once-fabled melting pot are the 1965 Immigration Act, uncontrolled illegal immigration, a continuous stream of immigrants without pause for assimilation, politically correct multiculturalism, which has redefined assimilation as "racist," support systems and race-based legal privileges for "protected minorities" that have made group

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identity more valuable than assimilation, and the denial of dangers posed by all of the above by experts and intellectuals across the political and ideological spectrum.

The 1965 Immigration Act abolished national origin as the basis for immigration. The national origin basis helped the melting pot to function by admitting people based on cultural ties. These are the very people whom the 1965 act discriminates against, and ever since then Europeans have been crowded out by Hispanics, Asians, and blacks. Proponents of the 1965 act gave firm assurances that it would neither raise the level of immigration nor affect the ethnic mix. For example, Senator Edward Kennedy, the bill's floor manager, stated categorically that "under the proposed bill, the present level of immigration remains substantially the same" and that "the ethnic mix of this country will not be upset." His brother Robert testified that the total effect of the bill on Asian immigration would be 5,000 more immigrants the first year, "after which immigration from that source would virtually disappear." The real number, Brimelow notes, has proved to be 1,129.7 times greater. Representative Emmanuel Celler, a Democrat from New York, did not share the Kennedys' illusions. He said that the 1965 act was designed "to

obliterate and nullify and cancel out" the national-origin basis of immigration. Whether or not the act's architects had a hidden agenda, the mathematics of the legislation was kept hidden from the American people, who had no idea that their leaders were throwing out the melting pot in favor of multicultural diversity.

The nonwhite pattern of immigration established by the 1965 act is now reinforced by extensive illegal immigration. The desperate hordes of people barging into the United States are not Europeans. The border with Mexico is porous, to say the least, but the truly alarming fact is that anyone who manages to get a toe on American soil is protected by American law and due process. That means that they are here to stay. Illegals, Brimelow reports, simply fly into New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, apply for asylum, and, because of lack of detention space, are released into the United States on a promise to present themselves at a future hearing. Few, of course, ever do. Thanks to the motor-voter law, they can acquire driving licenses and voter registration cards simultane-

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