

Letter From Michigan

by Greg Kaza

They Are Coming, Father Abraham



Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush says that immigration "is not a problem to be solved. It is the sign of a successful nation. New Americans are to be welcomed as neighbors and not to be feared as strangers." In 1996, the Republican platform advocated an end to granting automatic citizenship to children born to illegal aliens. Under Bush, the 2000 platform does not mention "illegal immigration" or illegal aliens. As the Texas governor puts it: "Family values do not stop at the Rio Grande."

Yet immigration could emerge as a sleeper issue in Michigan, where freshman Republican U.S. Sen. Spencer Abraham is locked in a close race with Democratic U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's immigration panel, Abraham supported a controversial increase in the number of skilled H1B visa workers from 65,000 to 115,000 per year. He later told the *Detroit News* that even more H1B visas should be granted to noncitizens. "I know some people criticize these visas," Abraham said. "But if we can't have those workers here, you can bet they'll go to their native countries and create competition." The odds favor Abraham in November: he has the power of incumbency and a substantial fundraising advantage over Stabenow, whose main claim to fame is that she is a career politician first elected to office in 1976. The grandson of Lebanese immigrants, the Harvard-educated Abraham is likely to benefit from a crossover vote among the country's largest bloc of Arab-Americans, based in metro Detroit, who tend to vote Democratic.

Abraham's position on immigration has been criticized by the Federation for

American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which has been airing advertisements in Michigan. The FAIR ads contend that Abraham's legislation, S. 2045, would harm American high-tech workers by granting employers an unfair advantage over citizens who work in the industry. FAIR maintains that the bill contains no protection for the jobs or wages of native workers, and that it would permit employers to hire guest laborers instead of citizens and legal immigrants. Abraham's campaign has responded by calling the FAIR ads the work of "hate groups."

In 1994, Abraham was elected with 52 percent of the vote, defeating Democratic U.S. Rep. Bob Carr. The contest was a three-man race until the final ten days. Libertarian Jon Coon mounted a serious campaign based upon Second Amendment rights, blanketing Michigan with thousands of orange hunter signs. Abraham's supporters responded by airing electronic ads by rock star Ted Nugent, a staunch hunter/Second Amendment advocate. Coon still received about five percent of the vote.

This year, Abraham faces Stabenow, Libertarian Michael Corliss, and the Reform Party's Mark Forton, former chairman of the Republican Party in Macomb County, home of the Reagan Democrats. Among the candidates, only Forton opposes unlimited immigration. "If our population doubles in the 21st century as a result of immigration," Forton says, "America as we know it will not survive. We will lose our freedoms, our constitutional rights." He advocates a five-year moratorium on new immigration; making English the official language; repealing taxpayer benefits for illegal aliens, and restricting the influx of immigrants to "180,000 to 250,000 annually," the traditional norm.

Forton links open immigration to multilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT, charging that both have driven down the real wages of middle-class Americans. An autoworker for 35 years, Forton echoes Reform Party presidential nominee Pat Buchanan, who ran well in Michigan in the 1992 and 1996 Republican primaries. "Many corporations," Forton argues, "have become so immoral, so corrupt, that their first loyal-

ty is no longer to America. They would rather pay a Third World worker a dollar a day than pay a working mother in America eight dollars an hour." Abraham's policies are "bringing Third World immigrants into this country to provide a source of cheap labor for corporations that make large campaign contributions," says Forton. "It's not just the automobile industry. It's most of America's high-paying manufacturing jobs." Michigan, he believes, "needs a U.S. senator from Michigan, not California."

The Republicans are ignoring Forton; there is little evidence that he is mounting as serious a campaign as Coon did in 1994. Although immigration could still emerge as a sleeper issue in debates, it is more likely to play a factor in the 2002 reapportionment. In a clever yet overlooked essay in the September 6 issue of *Inside Michigan Politics*, editor Bill Ballenger (a former Republican state senator) writes that the "Problem is, Abraham's approach to immigration has produced two results: Michigan is more likely to lose another seat in Congress after the next Census; and the Republican party will probably lose seats in the U.S. House it now holds to new districts in the South and West that will be won by Democrats, costing the GOP its hard-won majority." Ballenger cites the work of Stephen A. Camarota, a resident at the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, D.C., who found, in a study coauthored by Texas A&M professor Dudley L. Boston, Jr., that the number of immigrants living in the United States has nearly tripled from 9.5 million (five percent of the population) in 1970 to 27 million (or ten percent) today. Seventy-five percent live in only six states, including California. To estimate the political impact of immigration, Camarota and Boston analyzed the 1990 census count and 2000 projections and then recalculated the apportionment of House seats. Industrial states such as Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania will lose seats, while immigrant-rich California will likely gain nine seats, making its electoral significance even greater.

Ballenger observes, "A cynic might opine that Abraham has already calculated that the Congressional seat Michigan may lose after 2000 is likely to be one

now held by a Democrat, not a Republican. But that's what Republicans thought would happen after the 1990 Census, and it didn't work out that way." Back then, the Michigan Republican Party chair was Spencer Abraham.

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Letter From Rome

by Alberto Carosa

Al Gore and the Feces-Eater



Vice President Al Gore did not bother to answer the letter in which a dozen or so prominent Italian pro-family leaders, intellectuals, and politicians called for him to withdraw his endorsement of the recent World Gay Pride parade in Rome (see "Letter From Rome," August), but he did respond to a similar message from the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. On June 1, William Donohue, president of the League, sent a letter to Gore asking him to renounce his support for the parade and urging him to demand that the event be moved or delayed, since its venue and timing were chosen to offend the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Italians do not vote in U.S. presidential elections, Americans do, and this time Gore replied. In a letter dated July 3, Gore said that he would not rethink his position. Despite his respect for the Catholic Church, he believed that the larger issue was one of "tolerance." "Just as I will stand by you whenever you are working to fight intolerance on religious grounds, I also believe we need to be tolerant when it comes to sexual orientation as well," wrote Gore.

Donohue replied that his letter to the Vice President was occasioned by the intolerance toward Roman Catholicism displayed by the leaders of the World Gay Pride march. He added that Gore is so wedded to the radical homosexual agenda that he did not bother to com-

ment on what the lesbian president of Circolo Mario Mieli, the main organizer of the event, said of the Pope: "F--- you." In Donohue's opinion, "Gore's letter demonstrates how selective his commitment to tolerance really is."

The parade, held on July 8, featured an impressive lineup of anti-Christian and communist militants. The participants ranged from the heads of the three rumps of the old Italian Communist Party and eco-terrorists to anarcho-communists and Marco Pannella and Emma Bonino, two leaders of the Radical Party and trailblazers of the homosexual-rights movement. High-ranking Muslim and Masonic representatives were also present.

Despite triumphant claims, the march was a flop. Two years of groundwork, virtually unlimited funds, favorable media coverage, and the formal support of a vast array of prominent international figures produced a parade through ancient Rome totaling only 70,000 people, according to the official figure released by Questura di Roma (Rome's police headquarters). The fact that many of the participants were simply fellow travelers meant that the actual number of homosexuals converging on Rome from around the world was much, much lower.

The media's bias could be gauged by their ridiculously inflated crowd estimates, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000. The Reuters online newswire was a notable exception; its report mentioned "thousands of homosexuals" marching through Rome. Even the official figure was probably an exaggeration: Italy's communist-dominated government openly sided with the homosexual activists.

The event's flop infuriated the parade's organizers and their leftist sponsors, who blamed their failure on an anti-parade backlash triggered by grassroots pro-family groups. The secular news-magazine *L'Espresso* reported that the gay-pride march was officially announced in early 2000 amid a calm, debate-free atmosphere, which radically changed within a few months. *L'Espresso* also noted that the confrontation between supporters and opponents of the parade had taken on crusading overtones.

The anti-gay-pride protests were made possible by the Italian parliament's failure to pass a bill outlawing any form of "politically incorrect" opposition under the pretext of fighting discrimination based on "sexual orientation." A Dutch gay-rights group demonstrated how the homosexual lobby will use this type of

legislation, by announcing plans to sue the Pope on the grounds that his harsh comments in the aftermath of a recent international gay-rights demonstration constituted an incitement to hatred and discrimination.

Walter Veltroni, the leader of the communist-rump Left Democrats, has insisted on the need to enforce a law "introducing or extending" the ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation. Veltroni's stance was echoed in even stronger terms by the president of Circolo Mario Mieli. Mario Mieli was a communist and homosexual who committed suicide when he was 31. *Corriere della Sera's* weekly supplement "Sette" has described him as an "intransigent marxist" with "an absolute sense of transgression . . . He wanted to destroy society." *La Repubblica*, a pro-homosexual paper, reports that Mieli's family was compelled to put him in a mental hospital after they found out that, in London (where Mieli had joined the Gay Liberation Front), he used to wear a fur coat with no clothes underneath and ask policemen to let him kiss them.

Mieli's most famous book, *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (1977), stressed, according to the Catholic news agency *Corrispondenza Romana*, "the importance of homosexual liberation as part of human emancipation." Mieli believed that "the full disinhibition of homoerotic tendencies is a prerequisite . . . for the establishment of communism." Mieli even considered as "enemies" those homosexuals who were reluctant to make their private lives public. Moreover, he argued that the triumph of the homosexual agenda would help bring about Marxist revolution: "the gradual liberation of the other suppressed tendencies of Eros will further strengthen the revolutionary movement."

Mieli did not simply propound these theories; he lived them. As *La Repubblica* reported, he toured Italy staging performances in which he "elegantly ate feces with his fingers and then drank his own urine, produced on the spot, in a close-up scene."

Does Gore's support of the gay-pride parade's organizers entail endorsing this "alternative" culinary habit? And does the Vice President agree with what former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell did during her concert in the Tor di Valle horse-racing complex? While singing, she was approached by a white-clad dancer playing the Pope, who knelt down and hugged her hips in a sexual posture.