

# Language as the Entry Point for the Debate

*Population numbers, immigration policy, culture*

by K.C. McAlpin

A few weeks ago I was listening to a story on National Public Radio about the citizen's initiative to ban bilingual education in the State of Arizona. The reporter said that the initiative's supporters were convinced that the evidence was in, that test scores proved that Arizona's bilingual education program was failing to do what it was created to do — teach non-English speaking children to speak English. So the initiative's supporters were saying the bilingual education program should be scrapped in favor of English immersion classes, which was succeeding in states like California where bilingual education had been done away with by a similar initiative two years earlier.

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the argument. But what caught my attention was the fact that when the reporter presented the other side — the supporters of bilingual education — they didn't try to defend the program by saying that it just needed better trained teachers, smaller class sizes, or billions more in tax dollars — the same old arguments we are used to hearing from the NEA. No! They said that doing away with bilingual education would be harmful because it would *cut off children's linguistic and cultural ties to their native countries*. Whether or not children learn English in American public schools is really beside the point. You see, the great fear of the multiculturalists is that these kids will grow up speaking English, forget that they're foreigners, and start thinking of themselves as Americans. That's what bilingual education is designed

to stop. It's not to teach English. It's to prevent whole generations of immigrant school children from assimilating. If you teach them English, allow them to get a good education, grow up and earn a decent living, buy a house and start living the American dream — *Watch Out!* They could end up thinking like that Hispanic quoted in the *San Jose Mercury News* story on the poll they did about Hispanic attitudes toward illegal immigration. He was a former illegal alien himself who got a green card in the 1986 amnesty, but now he wants to slam the door on illegal immigration! "You see," the multiculturalists say, "we can't trust them! Without us, immigrants might morph into patriotic Americans right before our very eyes!"

Unfortunately, the multiculturalists aren't the only ones concerned about keeping people segregated into cultural and linguistic ghettos, which are constantly growing thanks to new arrivals from abroad. The *San Jose Mercury News* also reported recently on a growing trend among California's East Indian population. The trend is for parents to send their children back to India to go to school so the children can learn about their true culture and heritage. According to the article, the chief worry of the Indian parents who do this is the fear that their daughters, in particular, might start dating when they grow up and resist the Indian practice of arranged marriages. The newspaper called the phenomenon "reverse assimilation."

Well, I have another word for it. When people settle in a foreign country with little or no intention of abandoning their native culture, or, increasingly, no intention of abandoning their native language and native political allegiance, the correct word for the process isn't "reverse assimilation." And it isn't "immigration." The correct word in the English language is "colonization," because that's exactly what it is.

I believe that the American people are increasingly aware that parts of their country are being colonized by

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alien cultures — often with the assistance of their own government — and they are increasingly upset about it. And, we should be. Do you want your grandchildren or their children to be born into a culture that imposes arranged marriages? Or live in a country torn by the kind of violent religious persecution and political violence we see in countries like India today?

That's hardly out of the question. According to recent estimates, the number of Muslims living in the United States already outnumbers the number of Jews. This colonization by alien cultures is only possible because of mass immigration. Without it the threat would disappear.

Now, I'm not here to tell you that people are worried about the loss of English as our common language. Or that bilingualism or multilingualism represent something far more troubling than simple misguided attempts to accommodate non-English speaking immigrants while they learn how to be Americans. I think you know that. I'm here to tell you that it's time to expose this racket for what it really is — the growing occupation of our land by alien cultures which, thanks to mass immigration, are thumbing their nose at the very idea of assimilation. And that means participating in the movement to preserve English as our common language and make it the language of government in the United States.

I believe that by doing so, we will unmask the enemy's true purpose, which is not immigration at all — but the colonization of our nation by any number of very different populations — populations which are very likely to be in conflict with each other on the basis of language, culture, religion, and ethnicity. A situation that will require — not coincidentally — a large, all-powerful government to keep peace between the contending groups.

Let's look again at the Arizona initiative to ban bilingual education. Arizona is considered a safe Republican State. Republicans hold both of its U.S. Senate seats, the governor's office, both houses of the state Assembly, most of the congressional seats, and almost all of its statewide offices. But in winning the state, George W. Bush got barely 50 percent of the vote there.

On the other hand, Proposition 203 — the initiative

banning bilingual education — was opposed by Arizona's top elected officials, all the state's major newspapers, the typical array of pressure groups, including notably native American groups, and was outspent nearly 10-1 in the months leading up to the election. But Proposition 203 won by a margin of 63 percent.

In Utah, where there was an official English initiative on the ballot, the situation was very similar. The state's political establishment was lined up against it, and my friend Jim Boulet of English First said that the state's major newspapers were so openly hostile to it and one sided in their reporting that they made the

*Washington Post* look like a model of objectivity in comparison. But despite all their hostility, Utah's official English initiative passed by a margin of 67 percent.

So, I think the strategy indicated by these election results is pretty clear. Americans sense that their culture is under siege and they don't like it. Language is the fault line where this battle will be fought and the official English movement gives us the rare opportunity to play offense. We can capitalize on this to force the issue wherever we can — through initiatives and laws to scrap bilingual education, declare English our official language, and overturn executive actions via the courts. In the process we will expose our enemy — the multiculturalists, we will gain allies, and create a platform to educate the public about the threat to the American way of life that mass immigration represents.

In the end, I believe, we will accomplish our goals sooner, and with less difficulty. •

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