

Brimelow Speaks!

This Season's Immigration Books

By PETER BRIMELOW

[A version of this essay appeared in the December 4, 2006 issue of *The American Conservative*.]

It's a horrible thing to say, but America's immigration disaster is looking increasingly like the other big Bush Administration production, the war in Iraq. Immigration enthusiasts still occupy all the major power centers: the mainstream media, academe (although careful examination reveals that the labor economist police battalion has been completely subverted by skepticism about immigration's value to the native-born), the leadership of both political parties. They can still launch offensives and win, at some cost, any pitched battle—exemplified this summer by the U.S. Senate's passage of S.2611, which combined amnesty for illegal aliens with an astonishing special interest wish-list that would have doubled or even tripled legal immigration, already at record levels.

But at the same time, and despite constant propaganda to the contrary, an extraordinary grass-

roots backlash has undeniably developed. This, and only this, is what has stalled the Senate's amnesty/wish-list legislation, which never even made it to conference with the House.

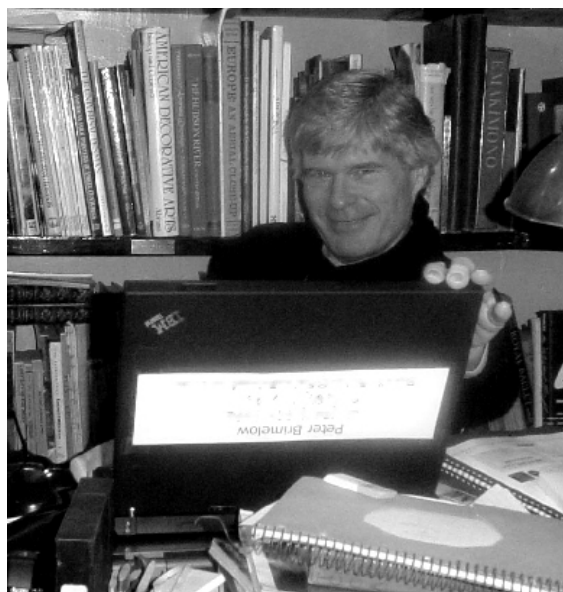
Of course, it's not over: experience teaches that the special interests benefiting from mass immigration have ways of making legislators talk—and vote. The setback, however, was stunning.

Immigration reform institutions are developing too, independent of the political establishment, in a process very reminiscent of the 1950s-1960s institutional ferment that became the late, great American conservative movement and culminated in the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan. Examples would be the internet-based lobbying group NumbersUSA, my own webzine VDARE.COM, even, among its other specialties, TAC.

But what really impresses me, as a long-time observer of the immigration reform movement, is how often ordinary Americans are now reported spontaneously organizing in their neighbor-

hoods against the transformation of their country. For example, across the country illegal alien demonstrations are now regularly picketed by anonymous citizens, something that requires real physical courage. As in Iraq, the very diffuse nature of this phenomenon makes it difficult to monitor—or, for the immigration enthusiasts, to suppress.

Four years ago, reviewing Michelle Malkin's book *Invasion: How America Still Welcomes terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces to Our Shores* in the first issue of *The American Conservative* (October 7 2002), I paraphrased



VDARE.COM founder, author and editor Peter Brimelow

Peter Brimelow is editor of VDARE.COM and author of the much-denounced Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster (Random House - 1995) and The Worm in the Apple (HarperCollins - 2003)

Tolstoy to the effect that all pro-immigration books resemble each other (triumphalist, rhapsodic about the author's forbears from Russia, fatally data-free) whereas books critical of immigration policy, are more diverse, usually specializing in quite different areas of this huge new debate, often earnestly technical.

Typical of an emerging paradigm, this remains very much true of this season's anti-immigration books. As for the pro-immigration books...well, there don't seem to be many pro-immigration books at the moment. Commercial publishers, at least the less New York-oriented smaller ones, seem to have little doubt where the country's preferences lie.



Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO)

Several of these books provide little-known detail on recent grass-roots firefights. In *Whatever It Takes*, Congressman J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ) reports that when the California city of Baldwin Park erected a monument with Mexican revanchist slogans, a local group called Save Our State demonstrated against it. In *Minutemen: The Battle To Secure America's Borders*, Jim Gilchrist and Jerome R. Corsi report that, when the tourist towns of Laguna Beach and San Juan Capistrano held parades that included illegal alien groups and Mexican themes, the Minutemen Project, famous for their volunteer patrols on the border, applied to march in Revolutionary War outfits.

All were met with threatened and actual violence as well as intense hostility from local political elites, telling evidence of the extent to which American government has become the enemy of the American nation. The Minutemen were actually blocked, to the great discredit of Laguna Beach and San Juan Capistrano. (Baldwin Park is now overwhelmingly Mexican and was just doing what comes naturally,

albeit contrary to assimilationist advertising.)

But the result seems only to be the further radicalization of the American patriotic resistance movement. For that is what this is.

Similarly, after years of being kept out of politics by a bipartisan Beltway consensus, in the 2006 election cycle the issue of immigration has spontaneously appeared in too many federal, state and local races to mention. Minutemen founder (and Minutemen co-author) Jim Gilchrist even got a remarkable quarter of the vote on a third party line in a House special election in December, support for those of us who agree with the late Lynn Nofziger, the celebrated Reagan operative, that immigration is one of those rare epochal issues with the potential to break the two-party system.

The conclusion is unavoidable: like the U.S. Army in Iraq, the U.S. political elite appears dangerously close to losing control.

Daniel Sheehy's *Fighting Immigration Anarchy: American Patriots Battle to Save the Nation* is a symbol and a symptom of this grass-roots backlash. Sheehy is a former corporate writer who self-published this collection of profiles of key immigration reformers in 2005. He achieved so much success that it was reissued in revised form by a commercial house in mid-2006.

The profiles probably aren't of anyone you've heard about, with the exception of Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO). But they explain a lot of what is happening at immigration Ground Zero.

For example, back in 1993 Barbara Coe of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform was fired by the Anaheim Police Department, where she managed the Crime Analysis Unit, because she persisted in drawing to the attention of her superiors the dramatic increase in immigrant crime. Coe is a veteran of many subsequent demonstrations



Barbara Coe

and the object of violence and death threats, which law enforcement officials never seem to be able to do anything about. Her group has repeatedly put up billboards criticizing illegal immigration, which are invariably taken down by cowardly landlords after threats of violence.

Instrumental in the victory of California's Proposition 187, which would have cut off taxpayer subsidies to illegal immigrants and which was sabotaged by Democratic Governor Gray Davis' refusal to defend it in court, she has been involved in several subsequent efforts to get anti-immigration measures on the ballot, all falling short of the required signature total partly because of the opposition, also cowardly, of California's Republican organizations. (Although Proposition 187 was what got the last Republican governor, Peter Wilson, re-elected in 1994.) Coe did, however, play a role in the recall of Gray Davis.

Coe was 70 when Sheehy interviewed her, and at work on another ballot initiative. (She's been in the headlines more recently because a Republican campaign staffer apparently used forged CCIR letterhead in a mailing warning Hispanic immigrants not to vote illegally. Typical of current debate, this drew more outrage than the fact that Hispanic immigrants notoriously do in fact vote illegally.)

Her life of obscure sacrifice is not one that appeals to many professional politicians, and even less to their media groupies. Nevertheless, it is the cumulative effect of many such lives that ultimately creates an irresistible political movement. Saint Petersburg, notoriously, is built on the bones of the thousands of serfs who labored to reclaim the land from swamp.

Coe told Sheehy that her own radicalization dates partly from watching a destitute friend enter a low-cost nursing home, where she believes poor care from the non-English speaking staff hastened his death. Documenting the devastating impact of radical demographic change on those unable to afford gated communities and private schools is a valuable contribution of Sheehy's book.

Sheehy himself opens with a lyrical account of the paradise that southern California appeared to him as a 12-year old moving there in 1964—one

year before Congress opened the floodgates with the disastrous 1965 Immigration Act—and his horror on returning a generation later to find it becoming Mexifornian urban wasteland.

And Terry Anderson, the anti-immigration black radio show host (KRLA-870 AM and nationwide on the RBN network), shows Sheehy his once-black neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles and says:

Thirty illegal Hispanics live in that three-bedroom house across the street...That house behind my house had lots of rabbits in the yard. They're raised for food. The other house behind mine had roosters...They have their parties and play their music loud...The black family next door can't take it so they move. Well, who's going to buy the house next to these loud people? It's another Mexican family...And that's how they take over a neighborhood—house by-house, block-by-block...nobody wants to live next to them, and it's not for racial reasons, it's for cultural reasons.

Anderson rightly points out that city officials could stop this by enforcing zoning regulations. But they don't, apparently for political reasons.

All of which is very depressing. But it should actually be more depressing for the immigration enthusiasts. What it means is that, when and if the some version of their wish-list legislation is passed, their political problems will be not ending but just beginning. The more immigration, the more backlash.

As Patrick J. Buchanan writes in *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*:

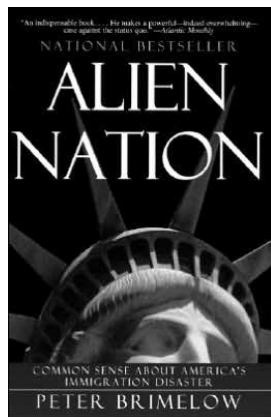
Our great cities will all look like Los Angeles today. Los Angeles and the cities of the Southwest will look like Juarez and Tijuana. Though we were never consulted about this transformation, never voted for it, and have protested against it in every poll and referendum, this is the future the elites have prepared for our children.

Which, of course, is a recipe for revolution. But my conclusion, from careful if not loving study of immigration enthusiasts, is that they quite genuinely have never thought about this inevitable outcome. Either they really believe their own Kumbaya claptrap or (as is frequently the case with die-hard adherents of putrefying orthodoxies) they just aren't very bright. Or both.

And it's fatally easy for immigration enthusiasts to stay in their state of denial. Buchanan's *State of Emergency* is the most intellectually ambitious synthesis of immigration arguments since (he said modestly) my own 1995 *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster*, which Buchanan acknowledges with his characteristic generosity and which he in effect has updated and replaced. (Well, except maybe for some boring economic stuff.) *State of Emergency* has been a huge success: on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 7 weeks with some 175,000 copies in print. Yet it has received virtually no print reviews—no *New York Times*, no *Wall Street Journal*, not even *National Review*, which has decayed into a mixture of neoconservative orthodoxy and Republican boosterism since Bill Buckley fired editor John O'Sullivan for publishing nativists like me.

My paranoid sense (sometimes justified—see previous sentence) is that what Buchanan calls “the elites” are now shaken by Americans' immigration insurrection. Their instinctive reaction: to suppress debate. Hence no reviews at all—in marked contrast to Buchanan's other recent books. (Similarly, at VDARE.COM, we've noticed a sudden jump in webfilters denying our readers access at work and in public places on the grounds that we are a “hate” site.)

Needless to say, I don't think that some cabal met somewhere and sent out the word that Buchanan's arguments were not to be engaged. I think it's more a matter of collective psychology—



what Joe Sobran, looking at liberal intellectual lockstep, has called the “hive.”

At least, I think I think that.

This suppression would have been very effective 15 years ago. But to a significant extent, the combination of the electronic media, the internet and Amazon.com has allowed Buchanan to bypass the would-be gatekeepers, as other conservative authors have been able to do.

So in this way too, the immigration issue is slipping out of the American political elite's control.

This instinct to suppress debate goes to the heart of the Bush Administration. Incredibly, J.D. Hayworth reports that when he raised with Bush *consigliere* Karl Rove some doubts he had about the Social Security totalization agreement with Mexico, which allegedly co-coordinates both countries' social insurance systems, Rove “became somewhat exasperated and spluttered”—in a *private meeting*, to an *elected official of his own party* —“You just don't want to help brown people, do you?”

The real question, of course, is whether the Bush Administration wants to help Americans.

And the answer, according to Jerome Corsi, is no. His collaboration with The Minuteman Project's Gilchrist is not the definitive account of this remarkable civilian border-watch phenomenon and its unexpected public relations success. (Corsi and Gilchrist are reportedly working on another Minuteman book.) Instead, it consists of various loosely-woven but interesting strands—some Minuteman details, interviews with Gilchrist about his admirable combat service in Vietnam, and case studies, presumably by Corsi, of various aspects of illegal immigration's impact and the authorities' response.

One of these is Corsi's widely-publicized discovery of documents apparently showing that President Bush has already committed the U.S. to a “Security and Prosperity Partnership” with Mexico and Canada—essentially extending the North American Free Trade Agreement into a “North American Union,” a full-blown common market along the lines of the European Union with free movement of capital, labor and, ultimately, pooled sovereignty.

Ironically, this agreement was reached at the very same March 2005 meeting in Waco, Texas, at which Bush notoriously dismissed the Minutemen as "vigilantes." And you can see how enforcing American law at the border must seem like a boring irrelevance if you've decided that the American and Mexican labor forces will shortly be merged anyway.

Of course, any such merger will be devastating to American workers and taxpayers—and to American democracy—but it is the sort of thing that appeals to the short-sighted corporate interests with whom Bush appears to identify. And, after all, European governments did manage to hornswoggle their very reluctant historic nations into institutional merger. It's as good an explanation as any for Bush's extraordinary systematic refusal to uphold immigration law.

There is, however, the inconvenient detail that Bush did take an oath to uphold that law. If merger is actually his hidden agenda, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that he consciously forswore himself. And this, much more than any perjury about sex, calls out for impeachment.

Like the insurgents in Iraq, America's immigration reform patriots still cannot mount main force actions. No Establishment-endorsed presidential candidate has dared to address the issue. But this leaves an intriguing vacuum for Congressman Tom Tancredo. He has become a national figure by talking about immigration and has self-deprecatingly positioned himself for a Gene McCarthy-style symbolic candidacy that could cause party managers a great deal of trouble.

Like his colleague, Congressman Hayworth, Tancredo has written an excellent book, *In Mortal Danger: The Battle for America's Border and Security*. Following the Tolstoyan rule I outlined above, Tancredo breaks real news. He provides, for example, a classic microcosmic account of the decision by bureaucrats at the Denver Public Library to convert several branches to a "bilingual" i.e. Spanish-language format, complete with mandatory Spanish for all new staff, and the relentless determination with which this revolution was carried through in the teeth of public opposition

(and, be it noted, immigrant indifference—at one "focus group" designed to foster support, only the two translators showed up).

Similarly, Tancredo notes March 2006 FBI testimony that the terrorist group Hezbollah has been implicated in alien smuggling from Mexico—striking, as he says, because the FBI buried the testimony in an annual report and also because the mainstream media, committed to the official line that only busboys cross the southern border, ignored it. This underlines Tancredo's public vow that, if a terrorist attack occurs in the U.S. because the perpetrators were able to cross the border illegally, he will move to impeach his own President.

Extreme Remedies

Extreme problems call forth extreme remedies. One of the constant themes of all these books is Hispanic activists' arrogant attitude of entitlement. Thus J.D. Hayworth reports that in 2004 Lizabeth Ramon de Harvey was arrested for smuggling recently deported illegal aliens back into the U.S. at a time when she was the live-in girl friend of Phoenix assistant police chief Silverio Ontiveros and a member of the Phoenix Police Department's Hispanic Advisory Board—*from which she refused to resign*. (The Bush Justice Department allowed her to plea-bargain a one-year probation.) This arrogance will backfire, as it already has in the case of the mass alien demonstrations earlier this year.

Hayworth laments in one chapter the immigration enthusiasts' ability to pervert the language, so that Congressman Luis Gutierrez of Illinois can seriously object to the term "amnesty" because "there's an implication that somehow you did something wrong" and the *Wall Street Journal* can regularly describe critics of illegal immigration as "anti-immigrant." But Hayworth does not mention the obvious linguistic corollary: immigration enthusiasts have no loyalty to the historic American nation. What they are doing, in fact, can fairly be described as "anti-American." And there is a single word to summarize this, which needs to be reintroduced into contemporary debate. That word is: treason. ■