

Liberalism and America's Immigration Policy

by John Attarian

Economism, explored earlier, is generating many of the specious arguments for immigration. However, America's other dominant ideology — liberalism — not only spawned our immigration problem, but works powerfully to prevent its solution.

Since every human group's bedrock priorities are survival and reproduction, a nation's top priority is conservative: to preserve itself as a going concern, providing a civilized environment conducive to the flourishing and reproduction of its native population. Hence the only proper criterion for evaluating immigration is national self-interest — which entails preserving domestic tranquillity and, yes, our European-based identity and way of life.

Liberalism's very nature all but precludes assessment of immigration on those tough-minded grounds. Liberalism flows from a Rousseauian view of man as a good being corrupted by bad institutions, hence

perfectible through social reform. One consequence is relentless sentimentalism, manifest in calls for tolerance, sensitivity, open-mindedness, compassion and even guilt toward others. Liberalism is, moreover, inherently expansive, holding that the broader and more indiscriminate these feelings are, the greater one's virtue and idealism. It culminates in global altruism, feeling and sacrificing for strangers who are not even Americans. Thus liberalism has consistently sided with immigrants and against restrictionists. Liberal discussions of immigration and related measures such as California's Proposition 187, invoke not American self-interest, but the plight of immigrants, even illegals, usually with tearjerking rhetoric and anecdotes.

Another consequence is commitment to impartiality, open-mindedness and universalism: one must not be "prejudiced," or "discriminate" in favor of one's own interests, kind, nation, religion, race, or against those who are different. Precisely this liberal imperative generated the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, which was intended explicitly to end the national origins quota system's pro-European tilt.¹ National interest did not require the change; today's mass immigration, and all its bad consequences, are the totally gratuitous fruits of

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liberalism.

Liberalism also disregards uncongenial realities and those who warn of problems likely to arise from adopting liberal policies. Counsels of prudence and realism have little or no purchase on the liberal mind. Thus those who prophesied that the 1965 Act would lead to an immigration explosion were dismissed.²

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By nature liberalism is also extremely critical of America. Liberals deem themselves a “civilized minority,” an island of enlightenment and sophistication in a sea of crass materialism and philistinism. As early as the Twenties, liberal intellectuals openly despised America and most Americans.³ Liberals’ primary loyalty is not to the America that is, but to the America they want. They see themselves as America’s self-appointed critics and redeemers, saving her from herself through social engineering (busing, progressive education, affirmative action, feminism, etc.). Over the decades liberal carping intensified. The virulent domestic anti-Americanism Paul Hollander chronicled⁵ was merely liberalism taken to its logical conclusions.

Moreover, liberalism usually meets opposition with intimidation, not persuasion: character assassination; epithets; accusations of lack of compassion, bigotry, sexism, racism, etc.

The ruthless application of this browbeating by liberalism’s ubiquitous enforcers in the media, academe and elsewhere makes most Americans submit to liberalism’s agenda out of sheer appeasement. Also, most of us have experienced lifelong liberal indoctrination from public schools, politicized churches, and the media. Liberalism also has powerful psychological appeals: to the desires to expiate guilt, appear virtuous, and feel good about oneself.

Then, too, as an embodied soul, man has an inherent desire for transcendence — to surpass himself and the limits of space and time. Liberalism diverts this ultimately religious sentiment to service to its favored groups, even to all humanity. Because the desire for transcendence makes us highly susceptible to expansive sentimentalism

and to appeals to self-sacrifice for larger, “higher” causes, it lends liberalism immense, insidious strength.

Importantly, liberal “idealism” chimes too with American exceptionalism — the belief that America is a nation set apart, exempt from reality’s limits and tragedies, with a national mission, not a national interest; not a home for a specific people with a unique identity, but a showcase for humanity; that our purpose is not to survive and flourish like normal people throughout history, but to show those benighted outlanders how to make an ideal society.

The Dangers of Liberalism

Unfortunately, liberalism is a dangerous mentality. By putting a premium on suspension of critical judgment, submission to the demands of the “disadvantaged,” and readiness to forfeit one’s legitimate interests for their sake, liberal “virtues” undermine and destroy societies that embrace them. Enshrining “tolerance” makes the index of virtue how much dereliction, threat to one’s interests, outrage, or evil one is willing to put up with. “Sensitivity” pegs virtue to willingness to blink dereliction, even wrongdoing, and unwillingness to pronounce censure, for fear of wounding others. “Compassion” makes virtue rest on readiness to extend sloppy, nonjudgmental sympathy promiscuously. “Open-mindedness” necessarily entails receptivity to subversive notions, and weakens vigilance and critical judgment.⁶

Liberalism’s intimidation machine demands that one submit to the demands of liberals and their pet groups to prove one’s virtue; attempts to resist, to defend oneself, are proof that one lacks these “virtues” and is guilty of liberalism’s cardinal sins: bigotry, intolerance, racism, etc. Indeed, liberalism’s guilt, “ideals” and browbeating combine to make its believers practicing, self-loathing masochists, almost consciously desiring abuse and humiliation by “victims.” Liberalism calls for self-dismantlement, even self-annihilation, as proof of “virtue.”

Neither individuals nor societies can function, much less prevail in life’s struggles, without an axiomatic affirmation of their right to exist and worthiness to survive. Liberalism does not make this affirmation. Indeed, since it is all about social criticism and reform, taking a reflexively adversarial, willfully alienated, faultfinding position toward its own society, it cannot. Rather, its “virtues” and intimidation mechanism fetter survival and legitimate self-assertion to guilt. One then has a stark choice: surrender to others’ demands and

acquiesce in one's own disadvantage or destruction, or be branded by liberals as "immoral."

Thus liberalism disarms its practitioners in the face of threats or challenges from those seen as disadvantaged or radically different, and leaves them unable to say No when they should say No. As James Burnham grimly noted, "Liberalism, and the ideas, sentiments and values to which liberalism gives priority, are not well designed for the stark issue of survival."⁷

Indeed, history shows that societies dominated by liberalism are ill-equipped to defend themselves against dangers foreign or domestic. Liberal, pacifist, appeasing England could not cope with Hitler. Liberal America failed miserably at crime control. We made progress only when we forsook liberal approaches, keeping violent criminals and repeat offenders imprisoned and restoring capital punishment. Britain permitted massive nonwhite immigration after World War II and now has — just as Enoch Powell, that pariah of British liberals, predicted — an ugly race problem. Since Britain, unlike America, had virtually no indigenous nonwhite population, this running sore is entirely gratuitous, a self-inflicted wound courtesy of liberal "idealism."

Liberalism, Race, Immigration and National Interest

Thus, insofar as Americans are liberal, or swayed by liberal arguments, emoting, and browbeating, they are unable to confront the national danger posed by mass immigration. Moreover — and this is decisive — because virtually all of today's immigration is nonwhite, the immigration debate is fatefully, perhaps fatally, warped by liberal race dogmas.

On race, liberal "virtues," guilt, and moral intimidation attain peak power and intensity, amounting to religious zeal. This is partly due to irrational guilt-wallowing over slavery and nonwhite poverty, generating a belief that nonwhites' hostility is appropriate, and a mania for atonement. Liberals have, too, an obsessive desire to prove that they are not racists. Hence they disparage and penalize whites, appease and favor nonwhites, and deny or rationalize nonwhite violent crime and anti-white racism. Moreover, precisely because nonwhites are visibly, self-evidently different from whites, treating them as interchangeable with whites, indeed discriminating in their favor, is liberals' most perfect demonstration of virtue and transcendence of reality: You are different, but I will act as if the difference does not exist. In so doing, I

override reality, bend it to my will, subordinate it to my ideals, and become like God.

This is the mentality of a secular religion. One who dissents is thus a heretic, hence must be crushed without mercy.

Not only did liberalism's secular religion regarding race generate the 1965 Immigration Act and therefore the resulting problems, it makes most liberals reflexively favor the immigrants because they are nonwhite, and blink immigration's problems, such as the dangerous racial and ethnic frictions between Americans and immigrants, and among immigrants themselves, and the

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Balkanization of America. It also makes discussion of immigration in terms of national interest almost impossible. If the lying, self-serving arguments of economism ("our computer industry needs immigrants; immigrants don't displace native labor or depress wages; immigration causes prosperity") are "conservatism's" contribution to the immigration debate, liberalism's are a mawkish, cliché-ridden sentimentalism that stupefies critical thought, leaning on American exceptionalism, America's being "a nation of immigrants" (which is not true), Americans being "a people dedicated to a proposition" (ditto), and the Statue of Liberty — and a race-baiting reign of terror that virtually precludes any debate at all. Not only do liberals themselves tar immigration opponents as xenophobes, nativists, and racists, but economites routinely borrow liberalism's tarbrush, proof of its power. (See the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Detroit News*.)

Liberalism's adversarial stance toward America and its European majority makes it at best indifferent, at worst hostile, to the survival of our European culture and majority population. Their disappearance is even deemed desirable. Reduction of the despised whites to a dispossessed minority — the inevitable outcome of

sustained mass immigration, given immigrants' higher fertility — will presumably liquidate whites' social, political and economic advantages, hence liquidate their power to practice "racism." Obsessed with racial guilt and self-loathing, liberalism sees this not as a national disaster to be averted, but as a consummation devoutly to be wished. Indeed, Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints* merely takes liberal race dogmas applied to immigration to their logical conclusion: national suicide.

Observe that liberals very seldom consider whether mass immigration serves America's national interest. This is not an issue for them. Rather, they care about whether immigration serves their agendas, and whether they themselves have "politically correct" attitudes about immigrants. Their only effort to align their agendas with national interest is to chant that "our diversity is our strength." Far from being legitimate anxiety for the survival of America's majority and sound grounds for immigration curtailment, concern over the loss of our European-based culture and way of life and the dispossession and biological displacement of European-Americans through immigration is "Eurocentric," "xenophobic," "racist."

Tellingly, liberal Edward Abbey was damned by liberals as a "xenophobe" for opposing immigration — for example, by a reviewer in *The Nation*, on the strength of *one paragraph* in *Down the River*.⁸ His essay "Immigration and Liberal Taboos," which attacked immigration on hardheaded national-interest grounds, was rejected by numerous liberal publications. Upon publication, Abbey was again tarred as a "xenophobe" and "racist."⁹ If a liberal opposes immigration, his ideology demands that he argue, as did Michael Lind, that immigration hurts liberalism's favored groups — organized labor, the poor, minorities. Or he may argue that immigration threatens another liberal value: environmental protection. But this will generate substantial liberal support for immigration restriction only if environmentalism trumps liberal race dogmas, an uncertain prospect.

Since our lunatic immigration policy and its negative consequences are liberalism's children, for liberals to embrace radical immigration restriction would require, in

effect, that they admit the lethal flaws of their own belief system and renounce it. This is in most cases highly unlikely. Like all ideologies, liberalism is a secular religion, adopted because it meets deep emotional and psychological needs of its believers. Renouncing it is analogous to deprogramming a Moonie.

As Thomas Fleming wrote, "Our survival depends upon our willingness to look reality in the face." Liberalism, like economism, is a mind-scrambling ideology destroying that willingness. We must renounce liberalism's lethal "idealism" of rebellion against reality, unlimited altruism and surrender, and robustly affirm America's right to exist, and with a stable identity as a primarily European country. We must make a central, honored place in our pantheon of ideals for our own survival and flourishing.

Realism and national interest is the only sane approach to immigration. The ideologies blinding us to reality have to go. €

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NOTES

¹ Lawrence Auster, *The Path to National Suicide: An Essay on Immigration and Multiculturalism* (Monterey, VA: American Immigration Control Foundation, 1990), p.10ff.

² Ibid.

³ Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), p.416ff.

⁴ For a searching critique of liberalism and its social engineering, see Paul Edward Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁵ Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad, 1965-1990* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁶ I have criticized these and other aspects of liberalism at length elsewhere. See John Attarian, "In Dispraise of Tolerance, Sensitivity and Compassion," *The Social Critic* vol.3, no.2 (Spring 1998), pp.14-23.

⁷ James Burnham, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (New York: John Day, 1964), p.281.

⁸ Wendell Berry, "A Few Words in Favor of Edward Abbey," in James R. Hepworth and Gregory McNamee, eds., *Resist*

Much, Obey Little: Some Notes on Edward Abbey (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1985), pp.9-11. See also Gregory McNamee, "Scarlet 'A' on a Field of Black," in *Ibid.*, pp.30-31.

⁹ Edward Abbey, *One Life At a Time, Please* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988), pp.1-3.

¹⁰ Michael Lind, "Hiring From Within," *Mother Jones*, July-August 1998, pp.60-63. *Mother Jones* had rejected Abbey's essay (Abbey, *One Life at a Time, Please*, p.2).

¹¹ Thomas Fleming, "A Not So Wonderful Life," *Chronicles*, July 1990, p.12.