

Financial journalist Peter Brimelow came to the U.S. from Britain by way of Canada. His nonprofit organization Center for American Unity and online journal VDARE.com showcase articles on immigration policy and related topics. In our Fall 1998 issue we published this speech given at a Foundation Endowment conference on “The Multiculturalist Revolution: Lessons Our Children Learn” held at Windsor Castle.

Immigration's Impact on Education and Multiculturalism

by Peter Brimelow

There are three caveats to this subject that I would like to start with.

The first is that, although I am a senior editor at *Forbes* magazine, my views on this subject of immigration are my own and in particular don't reflect the views of Steve Forbes, who as you all must realize is already running full time for President. He, in fact, thinks the direct opposite. He would go to open borders if he could. There's a very serious servant problem in the horse country of northern New Jersey where they have their estate.

And I'm actually not joking about this. Immigration, you know, above all else in the U.S., is a class issue. You can't show that it benefits the native born in aggregate — that is the consensus among economists who've studied the issue, a somewhat surprising consensus which I'll discuss in a minute. You can't show it benefits the native born in aggregate, but you can show that it makes substantial

Peter Brimelow is a British-American financial journalist who has been an editor of many publications, including the Financial Post, Forbes and National Review. He is author of Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster, which deals with immigration policy and the influx of illegal aliens as well as legal immigrants, and The Worm in the Apple in which he discusses the adverse effects of public education and teachers' unions on American youth. Visit his website at www.VDare.com.

redistribution between the different classes of the native born, maybe two to three percent of GDP transferred from labor to capital. In other words, the people who are hurt by immigration are typically blue collar workers and I believe particularly the blacks in America. The people who've benefitted are the owners of capital and the upper-middle class, and this determines the course of the debate.

I used to make this crack about Steve and his estate out in Far Hills when I was on the road with my book three years ago. One of the things they do at *Forbes* is every year they have a party for what they call the veterans — these are people who've been here more than five years. They all go out to Malcolm's old house and admire his motorbike, which is enshrined in his bedroom in a big lucite box — this is true — and you get fed lasagna on paper plates and things like that. It reminds me very much of the tenants' ball — my great-grandparents were tenant farmers, and on rent day they used to have a ball for the tenants and that's what it is like.

I was out there two years ago at this thing and a big man approached me with an open shirt, a huge fellow, and he asked me was I Peter Brimelow and I cautiously admitted that I was. He said, “Oh good, because when I realized you were coming I went back to get your book,” and he produced a copy of *Alien Nation*, a hardback copy, and he wanted me to sign it. He was a worker on Steve's estate, so this is an amazing thing. He's a man who's an estate worker, very concerned about immigration into his country, and here is Steve, on the other hand — and Steve's a very fine fellow I must hasten to add — completely on

the other side of the question. He's in favor of endless amounts of immigration. He just won't focus on the issue.

The second caveat I would make is that this is a new issue, immigration. It's an issue which didn't exist in the U.S. prior to the 1965 Immigration Act. Between the 1920s and the 1960s there was a period when there was almost no immigration at all into the U.S., one of many such periods, incidentally, extending right back into the colonial period. Immigration has not been continuous in American history, and that's actually what's helped assimilation: these periodic pauses.

Anyway, because this issue didn't exist before the late 1960s, most of the people who are currently in positions of authority in politics and journalism and so on, were mature adults — well, at least *adults* — before the issue really took hold. Most people are not capable of grasping new ideas after they're about 21 or so, some people not at all, of course! And a lot of them are just not up to speed on this question.

For example, Reed Larson must be familiar with this: I've often had people say to me, "Well, immigrants are a good thing because they undermine the labor unions." And in some sense that's true,

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although I think the evidence is that the more recent Hispanic immigration has gone very ardently pro-union. But even if it were true, that's like saying we've got rats in the house so we are going to burn it down — the house is worth more than exterminating the rats in this instance.

Many Americans are still in the stage of saying

immigrants are fine people. Americans are very nice to immigrants. I can testify about that having immigrated myself and I agree with them on that. Immigrants often *are* fine people. I mean, look at me, what would *Forbes* do without me? I think I'm worth at least half a balloon, maybe the hot air! But that doesn't alter the aggregate question of whether the post-1965 immigrant flow is good for the U.S. or not.

And the third caveat I want to make is that, of course, as you all realize, it's a law of American political life that anybody who says anything about immigration policy is going to be denounced as a racist and a xenophobe and a bigot and all these good things. The people who are in favor of current immigration policy have been able to suppress debate on this topic for 30 years with these charges, and they intend to go on doing it. But you know *The Wall Street Journal* is always telling us that immigrants do dirty jobs that the natives won't do, and here I am!

Three Essentials Points About Immigration

Now I'm going to make three central points about immigration today, three important points. The first is that it is an extremely big deal, immigration. Occasionally you get people who argue it is not big by historical terms and standards. It is. There are about 1 million legal immigrants a year and there are maybe 300-500,000 illegal immigrants net a year. That is to say, there are perhaps 3 million people crossing to the southern border every year and out of those the stock of illegals in the country rises by about 300-500,000 a year. These are large numbers by historical terms. But they're exceptionally large compared to the birth rate of the native-born American population, which is the way a demographer would look at it.

In the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, when we last saw these very large numbers, the native-born Americans were reproducing themselves at a fantastic pace, and that kind of swamped the immigrant impact. But in this century, right now, native-born Americans of all races have brought family sizes down to the point where the Census Bureau says the population is stabilizing — we're stabilized at about 270 million, absent immigration. But the government is second-guessing the American people on population size because of its immigration policy. As a result of this, by 2050 the

Census Bureau says the population will not be 270 odd million, it will be 400 million, and of those people 130 million will be post-1970 immigrants and their descendants.

This is an awfully big pig for the python to swallow. And it may be larger than that. The high series projection of the Census Bureau is over 500 million people because of immigration.

The second point I want to make about immigration policy is that it *is* a policy. It is determined by what the government does. The U.S. does not have open borders. It isn't a question that people just come in because they feel like it. The government determines the policies and specifically the 1965 Immigration Act, which kicked off this mass immigration again after a long lull. It is determinative as to the numbers who come in, which are much larger than anybody expected. It is determinative as to the skills, and because of the paradoxical way the policy works, the skill levels are much lower than they have been historically. For the first time we see an immigrant wave which is unbalanced, on aggregate less skilled than the native born. That's never happened before in American history. And finally it is determinative as to the ethnicity.

In effect, what the 1965 policy did was it suppressed immigration from the traditional areas in Europe and Canada, and it opened immigration to the Third World, or more specifically, to about half a dozen countries in the Third World (not even the largest countries in the Third World, incidentally). I mean some of them are places like Trinidad and so on — Jamaica, particularly — which have relatively small populations. About a third of all Jamaicans in the world now live in the U.S. About 90 percent of all the inflow since 1970 has been non-European.

This is having a very dramatic effect because the demographic impact is so large and because the immigration is so exclusively non-white. The ethnic balance of the country is shifting very quickly. And, in fact, by 2050 the Census Bureau projects that the white population in the U.S., which was nine-tenths of the population in 1960, will be down to about 50 percent. The Census Bureau declines to say when it's going to go below 50 percent, they're too frightened to say that, but they have been saying this for some time.

When I raise this question in meetings and so on,

people are often quite shocked and horrified, even though I'm only quoting government figures they think it's a terrible thing to raise. On the other hand, when the immigration enthusiasts are in a confident mood, they raise it themselves in a triumphalist way. They're in a confident mood right now. The President just recently gave a speech at Portland State University, weekend before last I believe, and he said in this speech exactly what I've just told you, that after 2050 there will be no majority race in the U.S. — a demographic transformation unprecedented in the

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history of the world.

And because it is unprecedented, I think that it's not incumbent on those of us who are concerned about this to explain why we're concerned about it. All we're asking is why would we want to alter the situation that exists at the moment. It's incumbent on the people who are in *favor* of this to say why they want to alter the U.S. as it exists at present, to alter it so profoundly and irreversibly.

Now, the third point I want to make about immigration I alluded to earlier. That is, that it has essentially no economic value for the native born, largely because it is so heavily unskilled. This may be shocking to some of you to hear this, but in fact it's the consensus among academic economists. It was confirmed last year by the National Academy of Science which put out a study called “The New Americans.” They estimated that the benefit to the native born of having nearly 10 percent of the workforce foreigners was maybe \$1-10 billion; in the

context of a \$7 trillion economy, it's nugatory, it's insignificant.

At the same time there was a significant welfare loss through transfer payments. In other words, the native born are paying taxes which go to support the immigrant population in various ways, and this is quite large — it's about \$35 billion a year. In some states it's extremely large, it's very unevenly spread. For example, the NAS estimated that every native-born family in California is spending \$1,000 extra *per year* in taxes because of the enormous immigrant presence in that state.

It could be different, incidentally. Immigration could make more of a contribution to the native born, if the immigrants were more skilled. But they're not, because the government policy is not selecting skilled immigrants — it's not set up to select skilled immigrants.

Some of you will be surprised to hear this, and you'll be asking yourselves "How come I've not read this in *The Wall Street Journal*?" The answer is, you didn't read it in *The Wall Street Journal* because *The Wall Street Journal* did not publish it. The editorial page made no reference to this National Academy of Science (NAS) report, which confirmed, in fact, the revolution which had taken place in economic thinking, in economic analysis of the post-1965 wave. They just suppressed it. It's like *Pravda*. Their behavior on this question was disgraceful, as is, in fact, the behavior of a lot of conservatives — people we could regard as our allies and in some cases our employers. (Is Jim Lucier here? Say hello to Grover for me.) Their behavior is scandalous and disgraceful in not grappling with the issue, and they try to suppress the issue in every way they can.

This is a very, very big problem for the conservative movement because immigration, I believe, is a civil war within the conservative movement and it's not one that is going to be resolved peacefully.

You may ask, how did this happen? How could the U.S. embark upon a policy which is so plainly absurd? It's sort of the equivalent of thalidomide or something, it's a policy accident. Nobody expected that this was going to happen. If you look at the colloquy at the time they passed the 1965 Act, they made the most explicit promises that none of these

things — the numbers, the ethnic shift, the skill level — that none of these things were going to happen. But they did happen. As typically occurs in politics, when you create a fact you also create constituencies that support it. In this case, the constituencies are business interests of one type or another who are under the impression that this is going to enable them to get cheap labor, and also of course various ethnic lobbies who basically want to build up their own ethnic faction in the U.S. So that's how it happened, and it's not going to be easy to reverse.

Immigration Linked to Education and Multiculturalism

I'm going to now link immigration to the overall subject of this conference which is education and multiculturalism.

The impact of immigration on education is very specific. One aspect of it is that it enormously increases the cost of the overall education system in the country. One of the curious things about the American education system is not so much the quality of the output, which is varied — there are some very good aspects to the American education system — but it is undeniably extremely expensive. The Americans spend far more per capita on education than any other country in the world. From an economist's point of view, that's an efficiency question. Should they be spending this much to get that output?

Well, one of the reasons they're spending so much is that educating children in foreign languages is extremely expensive. It costs nearly twice as much per head, per capita, to educate a child in a foreign language than it does to educate a native-born child in English. And in some areas, the immigrant impact is very large. I think perhaps a quarter of the kids in the California school system are actually being educated in foreign languages. In Los Angeles and New York they're educating in over 100 different languages. This is enormously expensive and is one reason for the enormous cost burden of immigration on education right now.

The second aspect of the impact of immigration on education which intrigues me is the impact of this on the native born. In other words, if you have a school system like you have in California with one-quarter of the kids in it who can't speak English,

doesn't that distract the teachers from the native-born kids who do speak English? And wouldn't that show up in the performances?

Well, that's a very interesting question to which there's no answer, because nobody's doing any research on it. I actually asked Diane Ravitch, whom some of you will know is a very sensible former

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professor of education at Columbia, this question. I said, "Are you aware of any research of the impact of immigration on native-born children?" And she said, "No. Not only is no research being done, but no research is going to be done on that question because nobody wants to know the answer." That is to say, the education establishment doesn't want to know the answer.

Red Larson yesterday was reading out these extraordinary resolutions that the National Education Association is always passing at its conventions. As far as I can see, and I've read them all, they've never passed anything on immigration except to say that immigrants shouldn't be discriminated against.

When I was talking to the NEA, in the days that they would let me interview them, I actually asked them once why they haven't spoken up on the question of immigration. Don Cameron was there and also the previous head of the NEA, Keith Geiger, and they were astonished. They couldn't have been more amazed than if I had hit them on the head with a wet fish — it just literally never occurred to them that anybody would even raise this question. They even said the usual "Well, we're a country of immigrants,"

you know, the basic stupid thing that people say when they're confronted with this issue.

There are teachers who are deeply concerned about this question, and I've talked at length, for example, to Ezola Foster, whom you must know is a rebel against the CTA, the California Teachers Association, and she says that teachers who complain about the fact that their classrooms are getting swamped by foreign language-speaking children are actually punished by the NEA. The NEA actually suppresses this kind of resistance from the grassroots because of its overall political agenda.

And, finally, of course, immigration is critically important to the growth of multiculturalism in the American education system. Now, multiculturalism would exist anyway. The drive toward multiculturalism exists in every English-speaking country. It exists because there are people who don't like the majority culture in these countries and want to undermine it. And in the U.S. it particularly exists because of the African-American population which, in many ways, is almost like a fetal nation. I mean it's developing in quite different ways culturally to the rest of the population and it's a very deep-seated problem for the Americans which, as it happens, immigration is simply exacerbating because it's forcing them out of the workforce.

But of course, although multiculturalism would exist anyway, it has been enormously enhanced by the fact that we're pouring this fuel on it. We are creating these constituencies which, if given the opportunity, wish to maintain their own languages and own cultures, not out of any sort of folkloric mode but simply because they want to organize political constituencies around their language and around their ethnicity. And these constituencies are being enforced by constant immigration, further immigration.

From time to time when you're discussing immigration with people they'll say things like, "Well, all these concerns were raised before." And they often will say, "Well, Ben Franklin was worried about the immigration of Germans into Pennsylvania in the 18th century," as he was. But the point is not that Franklin was wrong, but that German immigration *stopped* in the 18th century because of the Seven Years' War and subsequently because of the Napoleonic Wars, and it didn't resume for nearly 100 years. By that time, the

Germans who'd arrived in Pennsylvania had been substantially assimilated.

Some Significant Quotes

I'm going to now read to you a number of quotes from Clinton administration officials on this subject just to show how they think, how they anticipate this issue is going to work.

The first is from Doris Meisner, who is head of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. She gave a speech about three years ago to the press in which she said, "We are transforming ourselves." I mean, she openly said it. She thinks it's a good thing. It never occurs to these people that anybody would criticize it. My question of course is: did anybody ask "we"? Did anybody ask, do "we" the American people wish to be transformed?

Here's Henry Cisneros, who was the Secretary of HUD. I think he's in jail now, isn't he?

These population dynamics will result in the browning of America, the Hispanicization of America. It's already happening and it's inescapable.

Of course, it's not inescapable. It's a direct result of public policy; it could be stopped tomorrow. But as long as Cisneros is around, it's not going to be stopped tomorrow, and unfortunately, that's not why he went to jail.

Here is Ada Deer, who has a position in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. She was giving a speech to Ripon College and she said, in 1993:

Looking ahead to the next 21st Century — this is my social worker coming out in me — and that's not far off, minority racial and ethnic groups will outnumber whites for the first time. The browning of America will alter everything in society from politics and education to industry, values and culture. And as I talk with the faculty and staff here at Ripon, they're aware of this and they're helping prepare for it.

I bet they are. What she means, incidentally, by preparing for it, is (she says) everybody in the hemisphere should speak Spanish. Of course, this is odd on its face when you think about it, because Spanish is also a European language, and a lot of the people coming from Mexico don't speak Spanish, they

speak the various Mexican Indian languages. But the common thread here is: they want to destroy the majority culture in America, which is English-speaking.

Here is Donna Shalala, who is Health and Human Services Secretary:

My grandparents came from Lebanon. I don't really identify with the pilgrims on a personal level.

And finally, a woman named Martha Farnsworth Riche, who was Director of Population Studies and was actually in the Census Bureau for Clinton, and she had said this before she went into the Clinton administration:

Without fully realizing it, we've left the time when the non-white, non-Western part of our population could be expected to assimilate to the dominant majority. In the future, the white Western majority — that's the part that used to be called American — will have to do some assimilation of its own.

So now you know.

There is a further quotation in *Alien Nation* which I prefer, and it's from Solzhenitsyn during his Nobel Prize speech on this question. He grew up in Russia, of course. He was educated as a Communist and he was specifically taught that nations should not exist. They actually had a kind of a universal nation idea of the Soviet Union, which is very similar to the universal nation idea which some neo-conservative intellectuals are pushing now, that the Soviet Union is an idea, America is an idea, that it isn't really a nation in a traditional sense, so it has no specific ethnic content.

Solzhenitsyn threw all that off. When he gave his Nobel Prize speech, at which time, of course, the Soviet Union was still rampant, Solzhenitsyn said:

The disappearance of nations would impoverish us no less than if all nations were made alike, with one character, one face. Nations are the wealth of mankind. They are its generalized personalities. The smallest of them has its own particular colors and embodies a particular facet of God's design.

Now, I think that the U.S. embodied a facet of God's design when I got there in 1970. And I'm in

favor of it staying that way.

As I said earlier, if you raise this subject, you're always going to be accused of racism and so on. But there's a counter accusation to racism. In other words, this is an attempt to transform the U.S. by deception in a way which will be profound and total and irreversible. It appears to me that that is a species of treason, what is going on. I don't mean literally that these people are committing treason, of course — any more than they mean in the same warm, cuddly sense that we're racists and neo-Nazis — but I still think it's treason. ■