

Demographic Warfare

Cooking census numbers around the world

Book Review by Samuel Francis

Although Milica Zarkovic Bookman never directly discusses the ongoing massive non-European immigration into the United States and other nation-states mainly populated by European-descended peoples, what she does have to say about how different ethnic groups, races, and nationalities compete with each other for residential territory by moving into or out of that territory is highly relevant to the American and European immigration crisis. Some years ago, I used (and may have coined) the expression “demographic warfare” to describe the concept of instigating mass population movements as a means of competing for and gaining power. Although Ms. Bookman does not use the term, her book is a fairly exhaustive study of just this practice. While it is somewhat unfortunate she did not look more closely at immigration into the United States from Mexico in particular and the rest of Latin America in general as an instance of the demographic struggle for power, it is precisely because she did not do so that what she does have to tell us about other population movements becomes more clearly relevant to our own situation.

Much of what she recounts has to do with manipulating censuses as a way of minimizing or maximizing the numbers of certain groups within a state’s boundaries. By denying that a particular group exists at all, the governing authorities who run the census can effectively define it out of existence and justify policies based on the assumption that rival ethnic groups exist. By defining the group narrowly and contriving to reduce the

count of its members, the authorities can undercut the group’s claims to political representation, access to economic resources, educational and cultural consideration, or national independence. By enhancing the numbers of a dominant ethnic group, the authorities can justify increased political power and other privileges for it. Americans familiar with similar monkeyshines played with the decennial census – manipulating definitions of various ethnic identities, for example, as well as the controversy over whether to count or rely on “estimates” – will at once see the relevance of the statistical trickery Bookman describes.

Yet shenanigans with the census are only one of the weapons in the arsenal of demographic warriors that the author discusses. Others include pronatalist or antinatalist policies of the state designed to increase or decrease the numbers of particular ethnic groups and various kinds of assimilation policy intended to heighten or reduce ethnic conflicts. It is in perusing the latter sections that the American reader concerned with

immigration policy will perceive the relevance of the book to his interests.

Bookman is keenly aware that the instruments of assimilation are also instruments of power. Thus, with respect to education she writes ... “education is crucial to the concept of national integration and state-building. Since the educational system is an instrument of socialization, the curricula tend to serve national purposes.” That is quite true, of course, and the first example she offers is that of the United States, where “public schools students are expected to salute the flag daily, take courses in civics and are exposed to the President’s photograph in each classroom.” Actually, the example is rather dated; I have just read a news story recounting how a California public school has decided to drop observance of “Black History Month” because Hispanic students complained that while blacks got an

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by Milica Zarkovic Bookman
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entire month, Hispanics were getting only a single day (Cinco de Mayo). Which flag these students are expected to salute every day in their school is perhaps problematic.

If education is one instrument for assimilation, language is another.

Language is the glue that holds societies together, therefore language policy constitutes the backbone of a country's assimilation efforts ... Language is the expression of the character of a people. Indeed, when a non-titular people press for cultural rights within a dominant culture, the right to use their language is primary. Thus, the language programme is crucial because it is viewed as an instrument of history, through which the group identifies itself, and it is the symbol of the future, through which a program for the future may be formulated and executed.

Thus, bilingual education, through which the native languages of immigrants is perpetuated, may be seen as an instrument of demographic warfare that allows for perpetuating the distinct identity of immigrants and discourages their assimilation, while imposing bilingualism on native students serves to subvert the linguistic dimension of their own cultural and national identity and to dissolve the "glue" that holds their own society together. *Alien Nation* author Peter Brimelow has recently noted that there are now, according to the 1990 census, some 5 million persons under the age of five in the United States who do not speak English well. These are not immigrants but the children of immigrants, indicating the emergence of a linguistically unassimilated population within the United States. More recently, *The Washington Post* noted (Feb. 6, 1999) "the emergence of Spanish as a lingua franca of America life." The emergence of languages other than English suggests further dissolution of the national "glue" and the incipient solidification of an alternative glue that holds together an alternative society.

In addition to assimilation, demographic power tripping also involves outright movements of population, and though Mrs. Bookman discusses involuntary population movements in depth, she barely mentions the voluntary sort of movement known as immigration. Indeed, the word "immigration" does not even appear in the index, though it is clearly a means by which some ethnic groups can increase their own power and reduce

that of others. The collapse of immigration control as an issue for the Republican Party is largely due to Republicans' perception that the issue alienates Hispanics and that their party cannot win national and some state elections without more Hispanic support. Hispanic leaders themselves are also keenly aware of the power implications of Hispanic immigration.

Nevertheless, despite the absence of discussion of immigration, the book's examination of "forced population movements" remains relevant to the consequences of immigration. Thus, one kind of forced population movement is "ethnic dilution," by which "ethnic leaders resettle populations in order to dilute the population of the receiving region ... These dilutions are often couched in misleading terms to mask their true intent." Examples she offers include the Israeli colonization of the Golan Heights to dilute the Arab population there and the transfer of Romanians into Transylvania to dilute the Hungarian population of the region, but it would not have been amiss to mention Mexican immigration into the southwestern United States. It is clear that the government of Mexico refuses to control illegal immigration from its side of the border, and it may be reasonably suspected that the Mexican authorities (or at least some of them) would like to dilute the American population of the southwest in order to advance their own political agendas (including perhaps reconquest of that part of the United States). While the immigration of Mexicans is not "forced," it is not exactly discouraged either, and Bookman does mention the "unintended ethnic dilution" caused in southern Florida by the Mariel boatlift of 1980 and the arrival every year in the United States of some 5,000 illegal aliens by raft. "These migrations have unequivocally altered the ethnic ratios in South Florida." Similar migrations, as demographer William Frey has shown, have unequivocally altered the ethnic ratios in other parts of the United States where large numbers of non-white aliens have settled.

One reason native whites migrate to other regions because of immigration has to do with other aspects of the struggle for ethnic power that Mrs. Bookman describes. Thus, "harassment to induce departure" means that "people will leave their homes, their land and their jobs if conditions are made sufficiently difficult for their continued survival." Crime, racial harassment, economic competition for jobs, and different standards of conduct associated with immigration are among the

concrete reasons white Americans have fled parts of their own country in recent years. Similarly, what the author calls “cultural cleansing” consists “of ethnic groups [being] pressured into leaving a territory if the symbols of their culture are eradicated.” When Cinco de Mayo is celebrated instead of July 4th (or for that matter Black History Month) and Mexican immigrants can boo, shout down, and pit on Americans who sing “The Star Spangled Banner,” as they did at a soccer game in San Diego last year, then the symbols of one culture are being eradicated.

Quite aside from its clear relevance to the immigration issue in North America, Europe, and Australia, however, this book is a highly valuable account of population, cultural, and ethnic policies in recent history and throughout the world. An appendix of some 30 pages or more offers brief, highly factual accounts of ethnic

conflicts all over the world that serves as a useful reference tool. Her book’s main value is that it looks at migration and population in terms of power – specifically, ethnic, racial and national power – and makes clear the relationship between demography and power in ways that most political scientists and demographers have not examined. Neither, for that matter, have most Americans, and when more people on both sides of the political and ideological fence start thinking of the population movements and changes that the United States is now experiencing as phenomena that eventually will determine who has power and who loses it, who becomes dominant and who will be subordinated, then the political struggle over immigration may revive. Milica Bookman’s monograph is an excellent place to start thinking about a dimension of power and conflict that few have thought about at all.