

New Immigrants 'Seek Ascendancy' in U.S.

by Samuel Francis

Despite the success of California's Proposition 187 in creating immigration reform as a national issue and despite the issue's emergence in opinion polls in the last two years, immigration has not even blipped on the political radar screens of the 1996 presidential election. It was not mentioned in any of the presidential debates, and the new immigration bill just passed by Congress seems likely to put the issue to sleep for another political cycle.

But don't imagine that just because the political elites don't want to deal with it, immigration has died. One group that keeps pushing it are the immigrants themselves and the vast lobbies they have assembled. This week [October 12] they descended upon Washington, D.C., to flex their biceps for even more immigration.

The Latino and Immigrants' Rights March was not quite as massive as last year's Million Man March, but both of them are cut from the same cloth of emerging racial consciousness. That note was trumpeted by one of the marchers' leaders, junk journalist Geraldo Rivera.

"We've always allowed

Samuel Francis is a nationally syndicated columnist. Reprint is by permission of Tribune Media Services.

regional and cultural differences to separate us," Mr. Rivera intoned. "What you're seeing now is the beginning of the 21st century in terms of Latino-American activism. I think from now on Washington will be confronted with a group that puts aside the differences of whether or not they came from this or that island or this or that state in Mexico."

Whatever island they came from, what they are now is Latinos, La Raza, a people that increasingly sees itself and defines itself in opposition to and distinction from Americans. Hence, they sported flags of Cuba, Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru, Argentina, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, among others, and even an occasional American flag. Hence also, the banners they bore, what they want is not less immigration but more.

That means an extension of amnesty for illegal aliens and repeal of laws that "discriminate" against aliens getting more than their fair share of welfare — that is, the immigration law just passed. If the Latino March on Washington proved anything, it is that these are people serious about their own identity and interests, so serious that they are not daunted by calling for the repeal of laws passed only a few weeks ago and the rejection of whatever "bipartisan

consensus" our elite fondly imagine they have crafted.

It is exactly in such tactics and rhetoric that the real meaning of mass immigration reveals itself — the gradual but ever-quicken replacement of one people and its civilization by another. Say what you will about the economic effects of immigration on jobs, its impact on the environment and government spending, its contributions to crime and unemployment, nevertheless its inescapable meaning lies in the challenge to the historic culture of the American nation.

In a brilliant new book on the historical and cultural meaning of immigration, Chilton Williamson, senior editor of the Rockford Institute's magazine, *Chronicles*, makes this clear. Unlike most recent writers on immigration, Williamson does not consider the policy dimensions of the immigration phenomenon but rather its deeper implications for our national way of life.

"It is an imperative of every human culture," he writes, "to seek ascendancy over those others with which it is juxtaposed. The most dramatic example of cultural aggression and usurpation in the United States is Miami, where the 'Anglos' have been displaced — culturally, linguistically, economically and politically — by the 'Hispanics,' and the fact

of their subordinate status is regularly impressed upon them by their successors. It may be true that immigrants do not intend to impose their cultures on the native population, but nevertheless they do so when they can. Other times they *mean* takeover, directly and without apology. 'Racism' itself is not a European invention; only the term for it is."

The new ascendancy is clear in the literal displacement of races in places like Miami, which has changed from being more than 90 percent white in 1960 to less than 10 percent white in the last census. But it is also clear in the gradual, but ever-quickenning, change of cultural symbols, language and myths that redefine the nation as the creation of a new people.

"El Dia de la Raza" — "The Day of the Race" — as the Latinos called their march, showed that its participants are not operating on the same wave length as the elites that quibble over the policy-wonk aspects of immigration. For the elites, immigration is an embarrassing subject to be papered over with a new bill or two and lots of oratorical tomato sauce about "a nation of immigrants." But for the nation of immigrants themselves, it is a triumphant yell of solidarity and ascendancy, by which they mean to get themselves someone else's country. □