

by Samuel Francis

Will Europe Survive?

The recent emergence in Western Europe of increasingly successful political parties based on opposition to Third World immigration and the utter failure of such parties to appear in the United States raise the question posed in the headline of this column. Most Americans of sensible political views have assumed for the last century that Europe was a goner, a political and cultural basket case that had to be pulled out of the straits of history by massive infusions of American treasure and blood in two World Wars and throughout the Cold War. Now, it seems as though it is America that will succumb to mass immigration and the cultural and racial extinction it promises, while, in Europe, there is at least a glimmer of political resistance to that fate.

The most obvious glimmer, of course, is in France, where Jean Marie Le Pen, after three decades of crusading against immigration, placed second in the French presidential primary in April, only to fall victim to a globally orchestrated campaign of vilification and demonization that clearly made it impossible for him to win more than 18 percent of the vote in the general election in May. Nevertheless, the major consequence of the Le Pen balloon was not what happened in France but what occurred in the Netherlands. There, the result of the vilification of Le Pen was the outright murder, one day after the French vote, of Pim Fortuyn, the man who was, more or less, the closest analogue to the French political leader.

The Fortuyn murder (by a left-wing crackpot) tends to make conspiracy theories obsolete. No one need speculate any longer that some secret cabal of the ruling classes orders assassins to eliminate troublesome political figures who just won't shut up or go away. All the ruling classes have to do is launch precisely the kind of vilification against such figures that the entire European and American press vomited at Le Pen (or, earlier, against his counterpart in Austria, Jörg Haider, or, around the same time and to a somewhat lesser degree, against Fortuyn himself). It is now well known to everyone that there are so many nuts al-

lowed to roam at large through European and American society that the proper sort of vilification campaign can be relied upon sooner or later to trigger one of them into eliminating the designated figure. Some friends of Pat Buchanan wondered in 1999, when he was being vilified in the American press in much the same way, if that was the real purpose; whether it consciously was or not, it remains a small miracle that Mr. Buchanan—or, indeed, M. Le Pen or Mr. Haider or any such leader in Europe or America—remains alive today.

Of course, Mr. Fortuyn, an open homosexual of Marxist background, was not really similar to M. Le Pen except in his opposition to immigration. Mr. Fortuyn was notable for having once wisecracked, when subjected to the ritual accusation of "racism," "Don't call me a racist. I know more about Moroccan boys than anyone at this table." Mr. Fortuyn's case against immigration was that Islam is, as he called it, a "backward religion" that had missed the Enlightenment and was utterly incompatible with the tolerance of homosexuality and liberated womanhood that now pertains in all Western countries. He was obviously entirely correct about this, though whether his is the most compelling reason to oppose massive Islamic immigration into Europe is another question. It certainly has never been M. Le Pen's main objection.

A traditional and devout Roman Catholic as well as a French nationalist, M. Le Pen is probably as close to being a Gallic Pat Buchanan as any European can be. What is distinctive about him is that he is not in the monarchist-proto-fascist tradition of Charles Maurras, nor (as columnist Jonah Goldberg stupidly wrote) "nostalgic for the Vichy government," nor even that he has nursed resentments about the loss of Algeria for the past 40 years. M. Le Pen preaches no doctrine, threatens to overthrow no governments, and denounces no demons, despite the false smears that he is an "antisemite." *Washington Times* editor Wesley Pruden wrote what is perhaps the dumbest line ever penned about M. Le Pen (and there have been entire libraries of dumb lines written about him) when he remarked on



April 23 that

All that the first round of voting actually demonstrated was that 17 percent of the voting population stand with a man of anti-Semitic beliefs. This is even reassuring if we can take the Le Pen vote as credible evidence that only 17 percent of Frenchmen hate Jews. Most of us thought it was a lot more than that. Burning synagogues has become the latest fad in the nation that regards itself as the arbiter of fashion.

Of course, the dozen or so recent synagogue burnings in France have nothing to do with M. Le Pen or his supporters, and, indeed, the French nationalist is well known (and virtually unique on the European right) for being pro-Israeli. The attacks on Jewish targets in France have been the work of the very Muslim immigrants against whom M. Le Pen has warned these many years, even as dullards like Mr. Pruden have chortled about how mass immigration means cheap nannies and exotic restaurants.

The larger point is that, while leaders like M. Le Pen oppose immigration because they want to preserve the France of Joan of Arc, leaders like Mr. Fortuyn oppose it because they seek to preserve the Europe of Elton John. Although it's by no means clear that the latter is worth preserving, it may be that those Europeans who want to preserve it will prove to be more numerous and more decisive in European politics than those who, like M. Le Pen, harbor far more conventional conservative and right-wing goals. The reason is that the political culture of the right-left polarity, and especially the side that M. Le Pen represents, seems to be pretty much defunct, while the neither-

right-nor-left nationalism of Mr. Fortuyn (rather similar to that of Jörg Haider and several other anti-immigration nationalists across Europe) seems to be rising.

Asked in an interview with *Newsweek* just before his death, “You dislike the term ‘right-wing’ to describe your program. Why?” Mr. Fortuyn replied, “There is no longer a distinction between progressives and conservatives. People are thinking in a non-ideological way. . . . In my program there are elements of left and right.” Indeed, despite M. Le Pen’s conservatism and allegiance to the political right, his own success has, in large part, been the result of his ability to combine elements of the left (mainly a commitment to working-class welfare and economic-security policies) with his nationalist appeal and thereby wipe the socialist Maurice Jospin off the political map. In Calais, the largest French city under Communist control, where a Party member has held the mayoralty since 1973, Le Pen came in first in the presidential primary, and the Communist candidate, fifth, “with much of his lost vote apparently going to Le Pen,” as the *Washington Post* reported.

What enables such parties—not only in France, the Netherlands, and Austria but in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, and perhaps in Great Britain, where the British National Party won its first local government seats this spring—to win working-class votes is not that they can outbid more conventional parties of the left in pandering to demands for more welfare, health care, etc., but that all the usual Republican Party blather about “free enterprise” and the “free market” is simply absent from their rhetoric, and they don’t need to run from it when appealing to working-class voters. That allows them to dwell on the issue that really drives their success: immigration and the crime, threats to jobs, educational problems, and general cultural inundation it causes. It is precisely because both the Republicans in this country and most of the “alternative parties” of the right that occasionally (or, should I say, perennially) challenge it cannot seem to emancipate themselves from such rhetoric that they never go anywhere.

The inevitable result of the rhetoric of Economic Man is to convince working-class voters that the candidate is merely a shill for business interests and that whatever noises he makes about protecting the average man and woman are designed merely to snare their votes. When

such conventional Republicans as Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and the Bush clan imitate populist noises for that very purpose, the result is to confirm what the voters already suspected, and the ultimate consequence is that what could and should have been an almost irresistible and invincible means of mobilizing a mass following for a serious right-wing political force has been ruined through its cynical exploitation by cheap politicians.

The apparently indissoluble union between the forces of the American political right and a rhetoric of Economic Man that never appealed to anyone but businessmen and their well-paid journalistic parrots and today only frightens and alarms just about everyone else is one reason a nationalist right cannot emerge in the United States. A second lies in our political system and its lack of the proportional representation that most European democracies enjoy. The substantial fragments of the electorate that parties of the “right” (if that’s the proper term for them) in Europe have been able to win allow the parties’ leaders to gain public office, remain in the public eye, and build on their accomplishments. Our system, allowing only a winner-take-all result, forbids that.

But the third and perhaps the most important reason the American right has failed to form an alternative to the deadheads of the GOP is that many on the American right are deadheads themselves who really don’t want anything more than to keep out of office the political figures whom they have been persuaded to hate the most. Almost everyone who worked in any of the Buchanan campaigns has told me repeatedly that what he heard incessantly from conservatives who refused to support Mr. Buchanan during all of his campaigns was that “we just can’t afford to let the Democrats win.” Having petrified itself by concocting the most labyrinthine, terrifying, and implausible conspiracy theories about Mr. Clinton, his wife, and the drug-smuggling, murdering, sex-crazed camorra he brought to Washington, the mainstream right failed to define any serious political issues with which it could attack its foe. Immigration, free trade, global crusading, pandering to racial minorities—every measure or policy that Mr. Clinton supported, the right has adopted. Its only objection to him was that he was a crook and a sex fiend, and if the Democrats were successful at proving

nothing else, they easily showed that Republicans were not much better on either count.

The brute truth is that most of the good folk who compose the American right (certainly its leadership) simply have no understanding of how to create, organize, publicize, and maintain an effective political party that is neither a pale shadow of the Grand Ole Pirates they have just abandoned nor a political version of the church of their choice, where they can listen forever to their favorite sermons and rehearse eternally their banal hymns to bourgeois virtues and the dogma of Economic Man. If the American right wants or would even be attracted to any political vehicle that offered more than that, there is simply no evidence for it in its entire history since the New Deal era.

Eventually, there may appear on the American political scene a party able to do something like what M. Le Pen, Mr. Fortuyn, and Mr. Haider, to name only the best-known figures, have done or are trying to do. Eventually, those parties in Europe or parties descended from them may accomplish what they are seeking—an end to the mass immigration that now clearly threatens to overwhelm the populations and civilizations of the continent. If they or we can ever accomplish that goal, there will be plenty of time—and plenty of disposition—to splinter and recombine in new political configurations that can fight, bicker with, and even shoot each other to their or our hearts’ content. If neither they nor we do accomplish it, then there won’t be time—or purpose—for much of anything, and whatever political quibbles arise will be among a new people entirely alien to those few wretched Europeans who descend from us and have managed to survive what mass immigration creates in place of what Europe’s new nationalism is trying to conserve. c

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