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Beyond Immigration
The Political Economy of Multicultural Society in Europe

By David Coleman

Immigration to Europe: A Late 20th Century Novelty

In the last 30 years Britain and other western countries have been transformed by Third World immigration into multiracial and multicultural societies. Governments and electorates have come to accept, with varying degrees of grace, the permanence of Third World settlement and therefore of a new degree of racial diversity in their population; that is, differences in color and appearance. Naturally, the immigrants also brought with them their own ethnic distinctions in religion, language, family relationships and way of life. Most wish to preserve them.

European countries have no wish for further mass immigration, which in the early 1990s has risen once more to very high levels. Indeed, until the revival of immigration to Europe in the mid-1980s, it was assumed that net migration from non-European countries would decline and that the main task facing Europe was to integrate immigrant populations which were increasingly, if reluctantly, accepted as settled in Europe. "Temporary workers," now joined by their families, had turned into permanent populations of foreign origin. Now the revival of (mostly unplanned) immigration has pushed immigration control to the top of Europe's political agenda and sharpened discussion on the integration of growing immigrant populations.

There is widespread agreement that those who have arrived, and their descendants, must be protected from discrimination and helped to participate in wider society. It has been more difficult to decide what further policy initiatives are appropriate. An earlier view was "assimilationist," assuming the fullest integration of immigrants and minorities, and the return of those disinclined to assimilate; an approach followed to some extent in Germany and Switzerland. In recent years, "multicultural" approaches have gained ground — notably in the Netherlands, Sweden and less overtly in the UK — to help immigrant populations to preserve their own languages, cultures and traditions in parallel with those of the host societies and thereby accept the rise of a culturally and ethnically corporate society. In the 1990s, such policies are in their turn encountering more resistance from Europe's electorates, if not from its elites. A third option is to adopt a color-blind policy which regards such differences as essentially a private matter in a polity where rights are tied solely to citizenship rather than to membership of any ethnic subdivision. This remains, at least in theory, the position in France.[1]

Diverse attitudes to these questions reflect diverse immigration histories. On the Continent, immigration from the edges of Europe, and then further afield, started in the late 1950s. It was often encouraged by employers, with the blessing of governments, to meet specific short-term labor shortages. No country except possibly France regarded itself as a "country of immigration." Instead, the "guest-workers" would return home once their employment or contract had ended. Unemployment could thus be avoided during the inevitable economic downturn. It was not imagined that families would join the workers in Europe, or even would wish to do so. Such recruitment of guest-workers was most elaborately organized in Germany and Switzerland. Other countries such as France and the Netherlands also recruited workers from outside Europe, although many entered informally or illegally and had their positions regularized later. Perhaps half the foreign workers in France entered in this way, for example.

Immigration to Britain started earlier, in 1948. It

was not organized by government. There was some direct recruitment by the National Health Service, British Railways and others; not more than 10,000 and possibly not more than 5,000 in all.[2] Most immigrants came to no particular job.[3] While this migration is often thought to have had beneficial consequences, at least in the short run, its advantages were not given a high priority at the time and have never been thought worthwhile repeating. Its economic role was hardly mentioned in the Attlee cabinet discussions on stopping immigration in 1950, or in the debate on the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act[4] which attempted to limit the inflow for the first time.

Immigration to the UK from the Commonwealth was driven by economic opportunity in the UK, by pressures at home, and facilitated by cheap transport, colonial links strengthened in the war and above all by the absence of any entry controls on British subjects (Commonwealth citizens). Such free entry had some parallels in the free or easy entry to France and to the Netherlands of residents of some of their overseas territories, but not on the same scale as to the UK, where almost all non-European immigration was of this kind.

European Responses to Immigration

Primary mass immigration, which stopped all over Europe after the first oil shock of 1973, has not been deliberately resumed. Most (legal) labor migration from non-EU countries occurs through a work-permit system involving mostly skilled or professional workers, although Germany has resumed a limited form of trainee guest-worker migration from Eastern European countries.[5] Popular unease at the problems associated with immigrants is widespread and has been much sharpened by recent increases in the numbers of asylum claimants and other immigrants. Most European governments and electorates do not share the view — still popular in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — which welcomes the increase in population and potential labor force arising from continue immigration. European industry now needs fewer low-skilled workers and is projected to need fewer still.[6] Unemployment among existing immigrant workers is usually at least double that of the local population.[7]

Secondary immigration has continued on a large scale, on the Continent as in Britain, because large numbers of dependents have continued to enter, contrary to the original guest-worker idea. This "family reunification" migration is now being substantially supplemented, and indeed overtaken, by "family formation" migration of large numbers of immigrants entering for purposes of marriage. These marriages are often arranged with suitable spouses following the customs of the immigrant societies. It is clear that the right of access to Europe given by such a match is an extra attraction. In the 1990s, up to a third of immigrants to Europe have been asylum claimants. This is a major new channel of primary immigration. Although fewer than 10 percent are granted refugee status, almost all claimants (and their dependents) remain in Europe.[8] For the most part, asylum claiming is regarded as a form of economic or betterment migration, in some cases essentially the continuation of illegal immigration by other means.

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Large-scale programs of voluntary subsidized repatriation have been organized at various times by the governments of Germany, France, Netherlands and Belgium,[9,10] with varying success. In Britain a plan to assist those wishing to return to their countries of origin forms part of the 1971 Immigration Act. It offers slight compensation and much bureaucracy. It receives no publicity from the government and operates on a trivial scale.

European Responses to Immigrant Populations

Most EC countries divide their populations simply into citizens, and foreigners of various origins. Only citizens can enjoy such privileges as voting in elections, although the Maastricht Treaty extended voting privileges in local and EU elections to foreign citizens of other EU countries. It used to be assumed that immigrants who have acquired citizenship have committed themselves to their country of adoption, will speak its language and share common aspirations and loyalties (see, e.g.[10]). Now the granting of

citizenship at an early stage of integration is urged as a means of integration, not a reward for it.

Most political and lobby-group pressure in Europe is directed toward the extension of the privileges offered to immigrant populations even if they have not become citizens,[11] and the modification of European law and practice to meet the needs of immigrant populations. The period of immigration coincided with an erosion of confidence in the traditional values of the host countries, which continues to this day. These values are in a state of flux as evidenced by declining religious affiliation, the rise of alternative family forms, high illegitimacy, and the acceptance of sexual unorthodoxy. Among the elite the superiority of Western ways is no longer assumed, indeed, often the reverse.

Multicultural Policies in the English-Speaking World

With the domestic culture and its virtues at a discount, it is natural to accept or even to encourage a "multicultural" society; one where no culture, ethnic group, language or religion has priority, but instead each develops in parallel. Such policy accepts that a federation of communities defined on ethnic lines may, and possibly should, be a permanent part of the social structure. These sentiments seem to be particularly well-developed in the English-speaking world. Australia, where such a policy was officially promulgated in 1978[12], has perhaps gone furthest down the multicultural road. The Australian policy reflected a wish to reject a British cultural dominance deemed obsolete, and instead to define a new non-British society.

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In the U.S. the position at the federal level is less clear. Until the 1970s it was assumed that American immigrants would accommodate to American society, assuming a primarily American identity, retaining only a "symbolic" ethnicity. But U.S. blacks remain a race apart despite their long presence, and recent Third-World immigrants have been more resistant to assimilation. Many can easily keep in touch with their former homeland and family members, especially in Latin America.

A policy of non-discrimination, equal opportunity or positive discrimination, initially to advance the nation's black population following the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, embraces all ethnic minorities. Equal-opportunity and affirmative-action policies in recruitment and job protection which give advantages through quotas or other devices to ethnic minority applicants and employees, have become pervasive. As an extension to that, "anti-racist" and "anti-sexist" and cognate movements have gained ground in the U.S., especially in its universities. Such militant campaigning approaches seek to eliminate actions and language, deliberate or unintended, deemed to be derogatory to ethnic (or other) minorities. They demand a constant vigilance of one's own and others' behavior and conscience.

These enthusiasms go hand in hand with vigorous local multicultural policies. For example, some states (e.g. California) adopted the use of ballots in Spanish and Chinese, although their electorates have attempted to reverse such decisions. Some states and city schools now teach children in Spanish and other immigrant or minority languages. Others (at least 20 city school systems, according to press reports) have developed multicultural or "Afrocentric" syllabuses giving prominent emphasis to the cultural and technical achievements of, for example, black African or American Indian societies. Pupils learn of the discovery of the Americas by African navigators and of the key cultural role of the black African civilization of ancient Egypt. In such schools and also in some universities, standard works of literature, history and philosophy are discarded in favor of more culturally relevant models.

Critics claim that these educational innovations will handicap ethnic minorities, making them permanently dependent on affirmative action. Anti-racist and parallel movements in universities have become anti-intellectual and oppressive, interfering with freedom of speech, forcing courses to close and academics and others to resign through the

enforcement of a new orthodoxy intolerant of a diversity of view on matters relating to race.

Britain Follows the U.S. Example

Many features of this U.S. pattern are now becoming familiar in Britain. The term "ethnic minority" is now used almost universally (it is little used officially in Continental Europe outside the Netherlands). There is already much emphasis on "anti-racist" programs by local governments, local education authorities and in some higher education courses, especially those training social workers and probation officers. There the depiction of Britain as an institutionally racist society is taken by some academics to be axiomatic, as if the view prevailed that racism can only be a "white" problem. In these circles an accusation of racism tends to be an answer to all arguments, comparable in moral obloquy and conclusiveness to an accusation of witchcraft in medieval times.

At the national government level, no specific policy has emerged. Conservatives might be expected to be against tribalism and ministerial speeches sometimes allude to the virtues of "one nation" and of integration, while also carefully stressing the rights of minority cultures. Occasionally, however, as at the beginning of the Rushdie affair, ministers have spoken more firmly about the need for ethnic minorities to accept the values of the host society.

The effects of legislation and public funding tend to favor multicultural development. An interventionist government cannot in practice ignore ethnic minorities once it has defined them by law. In that respect Britain is ahead of all other European countries except the Netherlands. In Britain the statutory Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was created to police the Race Relations Act of 1976. Continental countries have tended to rely more on the interpretation of existing law to counter racial discrimination and hostility, e.g. Sweden, and do not have race relations legislation on the British pattern, while others (Belgium and France) have developed it less than in Britain.

The CRE has considerable powers to inquire into cases of discrimination and to bring prosecutions. Discrimination includes "indirect" discrimination, where there is no need to prove "intent." Almost any process whereby ethnic minority populations are under-represented may be regarded as a case of "indirect" discrimination — for example failing to meet standards of English required for employment which the CRE deems to be unnecessary. The CRE constantly presses for extensions to the definition of racial discrimination. Its powers to designate statutory ethnic minorities gives them limited privileges in legislation in the courts, in job recruitment and in access to certain kinds of subsidized housing. Not surprisingly, this has generated demand for further ethnic minority designation and has greatly increased the spread of ethnic monitoring, which is now, with government support, almost universal in the public sector. The extension of the powers of the CRE tends to promote a multicultural future for Britain.

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The activities of other public agencies have similar effects. For example, until 1993 the government's Department of the Environment's Urban Program directed money specifically to ethnic minority organizations and enterprises as well as to inner urban areas where most live. The funding is handled by local authorities. Many urban local authorities share an ideology favorable to a multicultural society, seeing no need for assimilation to a "dominant" traditional culture which may indeed be regarded with hostility. They may also have noted the political advantages to be gained by targeting the ethnic vote with specially packaged and lightly monitored aid.

In this way the British government, and local authorities, have built mosques in Tyneside, Sikh temples in London, supported mother-tongue teaching in Urdu and other immigrant languages, and fostered community centers with their cultural and religious activities. Such facilities are effectively solely for the use of Moslems, Hindus, Sikhs and the black Christian churches. The stated aims of the program[13] made no mention either of multicultural development or integration, only of "meeting the needs" of ethnic minorities. Conservative Party propaganda has

frequently pilloried "loony" Labor Party inner city expenditure on such projects. Not infrequently these turn out to have been supported by the Conservative Government's own Urban Program.

Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 provides 75 percent of the extra salary costs to local authorities with high ethnic minority concentrations. Eighty percent of the £110 million in expenditures and of the resultant 12,000 jobs is devoted to education, mostly English teaching, the rest to social services, housing and business. It was initially intended to assist in the teaching of English in areas with many immigrant school children. Local authorities have used it to serve other aims, including mother-tongue teaching. However this trend has to some extent been checked, as have the activities of the Urban Program and similar programs in the Netherlands and Sweden. In 1990, its role was redefined to include "breaking down barriers" to ensure that ethnic minorities can take a "full and active part in the life of the community" and "participate fully in the mainstream of national life."[14]

"The 'race relations industry' as it is derogatorily called by its critics, is one of the growth points of the British economy."

Schooling is an obvious opportunity for the integration of the children of immigrants. Schools are also an obvious battleground for conflicting ideologies. Without publicly adopting a policy to foster a permanently multicultural society in Britain, multicultural curricula have been developed by the Department of Education and imposed by some urban local education authorities (LEAs). Mother-tongue teaching has not been generally adopted, although some LEAs have done so.[15] The new ability of schools to opt out of local authority control (a policy not adopted for multicultural reasons) may make it easy for schools controlled by ethnic minority governors to preserve traditional and religious attitudes. Muslims, for example, are keen on opportunities to minimize the influences upon girls of an open society which they regard as immoral.

It is not surprising that formal policy in this area

is undeveloped. Embarrassment and avoidance have been the usual elite responses to problems of ethnicity or race in Britain[16]. Race relations are claimed to be an overriding good. It is difficult to find a vocabulary or a moral or logical framework with which to challenge claims made in its name without sounding racist or reactionary. Sensible governments avoid trouble and hand over policy responsibility to others who know what they want, notably the local authorities.

At least 120 local authorities out of 400 now maintain a permanent staff of race relations officials. The "race relations industry" as it is derogatorily called by its critics, is one of the growth points of the British economy. Ethnic monitoring and other requirements, encouraged by government to reduce discrimination, are forcing public sector, business and voluntary bodies to devote increasing time and personnel to these issues. The total number of jobs is unknown. Such public expenditure by what is effectively a new nationalized industry, with effects so pervasive, would normally have attracted the critical attention of the privatizers, the official Audit Commission which investigates the affairs of publicly funded bodies, the radical think-tanks and all the other Thatcherite revolutionaries during the 1980s. Comparisons would have been made with overseas experience; hard questions would have been posed on their purpose, benefits, work force and costs. In fact, the result has been almost complete silence.

The aims, costs and outcomes (intended, desirable or not) on domestic and foreign policy and on national unity of all this government sponsored activity need closer scrutiny and unfettered public discussion. It may be that substantial assimilation, at least among second and third generation immigrants, is inevitable no matter how much money is spent on shoring up cultural differences. Alternatively, the desire among some immigrant communities to live apart may prevail. Either way, it does not seem to be a question on which government should be indifferent or public discussion discouraged. ∎

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*Conservationists and population activists have long argued that the first step in setting
an immigration policy should be to establish a population policy: what is the maximum number
of people we <u>can</u> support over the long term, and then what lesser number do we <u>choose</u> to aim
for, to emphasize other values beyond simply stuffing our continent as full of people as possible?
Sheila Newman reports on governmental efforts in Australia to ascertain the so-called "carrying
capacity." Ms. Newman is president of the Victorian (Melbourne area) branch of AESP (Australians
for an Ecologically Sustainable Population), one of that country's main immigration reform organizations.*

Australia's Carrying Capacity

By Sheila Newman

"One Nation—Two Ecologies" is the subtitle of the recently published Australian government report entitled "Australia's Population 'Carrying Capacity'." The jacket illustration says it all, dividing the continent into a very large orange desert-dominated land and a much smaller series of habitable islands of green. The Committee for Long Term Strategies that conducted the inquiry into how many people Australia could comfortably support within and then beyond the next fifty years was an interparty one, chaired by the well-known parliamentarian and former TV whiz kid, Barry Jones. Jones has grown wiser since the heady days of the publication of his brilliant book, *Technology and the Future of Work*, where he told it as he felt it. He has since learned to hide his feelings.

It therefore came as no surprise that the report stopped just short of naming an optimum population figure, but instead gave seven scenarios (pp.144-145), three of which it rejected as extreme, and only one of which it rated as having any strong community support and which would be the least difficult to achieve: the "stable population option" — 17-23 million people. Any doubt about this was banished when Mr. Wakelin, Member of Parliament and member of the committee, let slip the following statement in Parliament on August 12, 1994: "The committee found that the most likely optimum population for Australia is 23 million" (*House of Representatives, Daily Hansard,* p.4570).

If the report is coy about its preferred population size, the facts elaborated lead the reader almost inexorably to the conclusion that in order to consolidate what Australians have, at near to current lifestyle and at present technology, population growth needs to stop. Although the report examines the possibility of a larger population with much lower resource use, the fact remains that Australia has so far been unable to manage to lower resource use and consumption with the population it already has.

When discussing the big population option, the report notes that "there are practically no suggestions as to how quality of life might improve with population growth. While there are many ways in which the intensification of land use which accompanies population growth can be argued to impair quality of life, the reverse is rarely or never argued" (p.73). In addition it criticizes the discipline of economics for restricting its focus to the short and medium term. "Economics has little to say about the economic benefits of population growth in the long term" (p.74).

Recommendation #1 makes the strong statement that "political and administrative responsibility for population and immigration must be separated" because they have different goals and because "the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is seen ... as being in the advocacy business in immigration matters and as lacking the necessary objectivity to determine population matters" (p.82).

Recommendation #10 calls for an explicit population policy and warns that "Proponents of radical change should bear the burden of proof, bearing in mind that every increase in population imposes social and environmental costs..."

Recommendations 11,14 and 15 advise that Australia should move away from its high consumer economy and recognize the impact of immigration on its indigenous population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and promote environment-sparing technological development and use, as a matter of high national priority.

The report stresses the dire need for a solid and