



⚡ **I DO NOT FEAR** ⚡  
**THE IMMIGRANT:**  
**A CRITICAL RESPONSE TO**  
**HANS-HERMANN HOPPE**  
**AND ILANA MERCER**

⚡ **PERRY DE HAVILLAND** ⚡

Immigration is an issue that often brings out the divisions amongst libertarians. There are two broad camps on this matter:

#### **WELFARE AND PROPERTY**

Most libertarians take the view that it is just a matter of free association, and thus that the state has no business preventing people from seeking opportunities wherever they are found. Within this group, most also hold that the new arrivals should not be given access to welfare or other transfer payments, taking the view that such redistributions of wealth are just theft in any case and should not be made to *anyone*, let alone immigrants.

The other camp of people with more or less libertarian views, such as Ilana Mercer and Hans-Hermann Hoppe, take the view that unrestricted immigration is actually a facet of statism, not liberty. They argue that as all property should be private, and that mass immigration only occurs when the state takes a hand to prevent people from excluding the new arrivals from housing and job opportunities in the manner they assume existing property owners would naturally choose to pursue.

The two main reasons held up by the latter group to oppose immigration are, firstly, the swamping of the freedom loving culture that is evolving towards libertarian understandings; and, secondly, that new and economically unproductive arrivals hugely increase demand on social security and welfare payments and thus lead to an increase in unjustified appropriation by the state of tax monies.

#### **SEPARATE COMMUNITIES?**

The first argument, to which Hans-Hermann Hoppe addresses himself at great length, has two main underpinnings: firstly the risks posed by a large underclass of non-assimilated immigrants, and secondly the right of 'citizen' peoples to naturally form communities of cultural affinity *and* 'dis-affinity' (i.e. to accept and reject certain types of people without being coerced by the state).

The argument goes that it is the state which "imposes" immigrants on communities, and to make it worse there is little motivation to assimilate, only for immigrants to line up for their welfare handouts and commit crimes. Additionally, without the coercion of the state, societies in their natural state have deep genetic, racial and ethnic elements which will militate towards evolving to a series of economically interlinked but spatially separated communities, presumably rather like ancient Greek city-states. Whilst the corrosive effects of welfare are undeniably true, the foundations of both these ideas are, I believe, quite false.

It is only due to active state efforts to prevent assimilation (called 'multiculturalism') that the ghettoization of sections of a society are more than a passing phase in the immigration process. Unless they are uprooted forcibly (as was the case with the arrival of Africans as slaves in North America), people do not emigrate great distances to a foreign land because they are happy with their existing way of life and culture. An Indian or Chinese family moving to Britain are not completely rejecting their original culture and family ties, but they *are* making a value judgement that life and culture is at least in some significant measure superior in their destination of choice. Thus, to argue that immigrants are intrinsically difficult to assimilate if natural social forces are allowed to work seems to misunderstand why people become immigrants in the first place.

Secondly, some like Hans-Hermann Hoppe not only have what I believe to be quite incorrect understandings of the nature of society in a modern extended order, but have completely failed to see both the implications and the dramatic effect of capitalist trade based economics on societies which interact globally. Hoppe takes an extremely non-Anglo-sphere, quintessentially German view of the nature of civil society when viewed separately from the state: at its core

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[www.libertarian.co.uk](http://www.libertarian.co.uk) email: [admin@libertarian.co.uk](mailto:admin@libertarian.co.uk)

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Director: Dr Chris R. Tame

Editorial Director: Brian Micklethwait

Webmaster: Dr Sean Gabb



**FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY**

lies a blood and soil folk, racially, genetically as well as culturally based and therefore leading to self-reinforcing communities of 'like cultures'. Thus he takes the view that were it not for the imposed integration of the state, whilst people may wish to trade with anyone, they would inevitably not freely wish to live and work in close physical proximity with different cultures and races and lifestyles. Different races, homosexuals, libertines, people who take siestas in the afternoon etc. etc. (i.e. anyone who was not a member of the Volk either racially or culturally) would be either excluded from the community of free property owning citizens altogether, or at the very least banished to enforced ghettos like medieval Jews. I do not feel I am overstating Hoppe's position (see chapter 9, "On Cooperation, Tribe, City, and State" in *Democracy – The God That Failed*, 2001, Transaction Books).

### A DIFFERENT AND BETTER RESULT

Yet I look around at London and see a very different world to that seen by Hoppe. It is abundantly clear that when the state does not enforce multiculturalism, social values will naturally evolve not to Hoppe's hypothetical future libertarian neo-tribalism but rather to cosmopolitanism, right here and right now. The only Volk of the future is the Volkswagen. When people of different cultures and races actually interact economically, the inevitable consequence is familiarity, cultural influence and ultimately miscegenation, not a regression to atavistic tribalism. One only has to walk down the streets of London to see the truth of that. Sure, areas of minority racial and to a lesser extent cultural concentration can be found in London, yet one does not have to look far to see an expanding and entirely British black and Asian population moving into the mainstream of cultural and economic life of Britain ... and not just flipping burgers and digging up roads. In racial flash points, like Oldham, it is the racially segregated low income supporters of socialist largess who exchange bricks over which community is getting the bigger handout. In less separated and less state dependent communities like Clapham in London, for instance, economics unmediated by the state leads to a very different and altogether better result.

Ilana Mercer makes several excellent points about the harmful effects of the welfare state in creating an 'acculturation' to largess. In this as in so many things she is manifestly correct. Certainly people who see political favour rather than economic interaction as the means to support oneself are indeed the 'wrong' sort of immigrant (not to mention the wrong sort of domestic 'citizen'). Such people are little more than muggers-by-proxy. However this is not an argument against open immigration on economic grounds but rather a self-evident argument against the welfare state and all other forms of democratically sanctioned criminality that falls into the 'redistribution of wealth' category.

As far as I am concerned Hans-Hermann and Ilana are free to feel distaste at the idea of the close proximity of alien cultures, races and lifestyles (clearly the case for Hoppe) but for them to then deduce that *their* sentiments are in fact what would be the 'natural, sentiments of the majority if it were not for enforced integration of the state, is not really born out by the evidence.

### I DO NOT FEAR THE IMMIGRANT

I share the view that socialist multiculturalism is in fact just an attempt to dismantle Anglosphere civil society with its dynamist adaptive nature and replace it with social, values

more amenable to state centred stasis collectivism. However again this is not an argument against immigration but against state interference in the values of civil society. In reality I am probably much *more* of a cultural chauvinist than Ilana Mercer and Hans-Hermann Hoppe are. They fear the 'other' out of fear for the fate of liberty based civil society in the face of more primitive collectivist based social values that they see as inevitably (and often incorrectly) defining Third World newcomers.

However I do not fear the cultural alien at all because it is the culture of collectivism which should be afraid and not Anglosphere civil society. I am so convinced of the seductive, viral nature of the core value of our civil society (severalty, unenumerated rights, free contract, personal choice) that unless the dead hand of the state *actively* prevents it from spreading (i.e. by enforcing 'multiculturalism' legislation), the triumph of liberty's cultural underpinnings is pretty much just a matter of time. The reason for this is that the modern dynamist technological, networked extended order is so much more economically effective than every single one of the collectivist state-centred stasis-based alternatives that all we have to do to 'win' is continue to produce the things other societies want and yet are incapable of actually producing.

### THEY WISH TO BE US

Just as Hoppe's 'Volk' based understanding of what lies at the core of society was archaic and false even a hundred years ago, it is reduced to complete nonsense by the subversive, eclectic and market driven screech of the modem, the convenience of the mobile phone and TV screens filled with The History Channel, Australian soap operas, *Star Trek*, *Monty Python* and *Baywatch* (quite possibly dubbed in Urdu) and other irresistible bourgeois banalities. Do not fear the immigrant, because freed from the baleful distortions of statism, they wish to be us. Let them try and thereby enrich us all.

The article above was first published on March 28th 2002, as a posting on **Libertarian Samizdata**, the weblog ([www.samizdata.blogspot.com](http://www.samizdata.blogspot.com)), which is edited and run by Perry de Havilland (in association with the Libertarian Alliance). On Samizdata it is referred to (and referred to a lot) by its original title of "Immigration and libertarians". (Also, the first word of the piece was originally "This" rather than "Immigration".)

The pieces linked to by **Ilana Mercer** are "A reply to Pat Buchanan", *WorldNetDaily* ([www.wnd.com](http://www.wnd.com)), January 30, 2002; and "The problem with immigration", *WorldNetDaily*, February 6, 2002.

There were no internet links to the writings of **Hans-Hermann Hoppe** in the original Samizdata posting, only the reference to his book *Democracy: The God That Failed* (Transaction Publishers, Rutgers, NJ, 2001). But see Hoppe's discussion of this at [www.lewrockwell.com/hoppe/hoppe4.html](http://www.lewrockwell.com/hoppe/hoppe4.html); and also "On Free Immigration and Forced Integration" (at [www.lewrockwell.com/orig/hermann-hoppe1.html](http://www.lewrockwell.com/orig/hermann-hoppe1.html)), and "Secession, the State, and the Immigration Problem" ([www.lewrockwell.com/orig/hermann-hoppe3.html](http://www.lewrockwell.com/orig/hermann-hoppe3.html)).