

Capitulating in the culture war

The rot in American intellectual life has reached a putrid state. Nothing better illustrates the decline in education and the ability to think than the argument over "affirmative action."

Affirmative action means privileged standing for "preferred minorities" with regard to university admissions, employment, government contracts and discrimination lawsuits.

The argument made for affirmative action is that racial minorities (or whatever favored group) deserve help and that affirmative action helps them.

The case made against affirmative action is that it hurts minorities by undermining their self-esteem and causes their accomplishments to be perceived as unearned, like the boss's son's promotions.

Minorities themselves are of two minds on the subject. Some say affirmative action is based on the assumption that their race occupies the low end of the Bell

curve. Others say privileges are the hallmark of aristocracies and signal that preferred minorities are members of a socially favored group.

The argument goes back and forth. Recently, Albert R. Hunt repeated it, perhaps for the 100,000th time, in the Wall Street Journal.

Mr. Hunt's article shows how deep the ruts are. Universities, law firms and federal judges now claim entrance privileges for blacks benefit whites as well by producing a "diverse" learning environment. There is a slight point here. Having killed off all diversity of thought, the only diversity that can be found in the politically correct left-wing propaganda mills that masquerade as universities is diversity of skin color.

The most striking aspect of the affirmative-action debate is that

neither side has any idea what the real issue is. Equality in law, the product of a thousand-year struggle, is the greatest achievement of our civilization. We are the result of a long fight to overthrow privileges based on creeds, birth and estate.

As Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan said: "There is no caste here. Our Constitution is colorblind." The Constitution is still colorblind, but numerous federal bureaucrats, federal judges, university bureaucracies, lawyers and "civil rights" activists are not colorblind. The cause of civil rights has been so perverted that civil rights now means nothing more or less than legal privileges for "preferred minorities."

Today, America labors under a caste system imposed by elites who are hostile to equal opportunity and

desirous of equal results. The caste system has been constructed to include everyone except white heterosexual able-bodied males (WHAMs).

American elites, both liberal and conservative, seem quite content to sacrifice equality in law to minority privilege. In America today, a native-born white male is a second-class citizen in law. Immigrants, both legal and illegal (98 percent are "people of color"), have more rights than a descendant of George Washington or Roger Sherman. Larry Stratton and I show in our book, "The New Color Line," how white males have been stripped of equality in law.

The putrid stench of intellectual rot arises also from the immigration debate.

It boggles the mind that the conservatives fighting the culture war

favor mass immigration of Third World peoples who are not assimilating. Indeed, as Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz recently made clear in the Jan. 24 Los Angeles Times, assimilation is now viewed by civil-rights activists as discrimination against races and creeds that are not part of the hegemonic European culture.

Assimilation is anti-diversity and anti-multicultural. As Mr. Dershowitz put it, assimilation is a way of coercing Muslims, Buddhists, and Shintoists "into violating their conscience."

President Bush might succeed in building an anti-missile defense system and invigorating our economy with a tax cut. But does it really matter? The United States is engaged in a gigantic act of self-destruction. Equality in law is no longer the guiding principle of civil rights. White males have been made second-class citizens in law. Immigration from alien cultures is exceeding the assimilation capaci-

ty of the United States. The very concept of assimilation is in disrepute as it is associated with discrimination and coercion. The vast bulk of immigrants enter the United States with privileged legal standing because of their skin color.

There is no point in fighting a culture war when the culture is already twice lost: to an immigration policy and to a civil-rights policy that believes that equality in law doesn't produce the correct racial balance in universities, employment and the professions.

The United States will continue for some time, living off its stored-up capital the way the declining Roman Empire did. But America is just as surely doomed by the utter failure of its intellectual and political leadership.

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