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# Trump's Last Stand for White America

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*Roger Cohen, New York Times, October 16, 2020*

Less than 20 days. It has been a long, hard road to this election. I see fearful faces, those of tormented migrants at the Mexican border, and hate-filled faces, those of the white nationalists in Charlottesville chanting, “Jews will not replace us.”

Donald Trump has been all about the fear of replacement, or as it's sometimes called, “[the great replacement](#).” His has been the stand — I am tempted to say the last stand — of whites against nonwhites.

Of America-first nationalists against migrants; of straight people against L.G.B.T.Q. people; of the gunned-up against the unarmed. Of Trump against all those he believes would *replace* the likes of him.

All means have been used — lies, brutality, incitement. But fear has been Trump's main weapon. Fear, which depends on pitting one group against another, is the currency of the Trump presidency. It is therefore no surprise that the America that is about to vote is probably more fractured than at any time since the Vietnam War.

“The great replacement” is a phrase generally attributed to a French writer, Renaud Camus, who [said](#): “The great replacement is very simple. You have one people, and in the space of a generation, you have a different people.”

That, of course, is a good definition of America.

Of its vitality, its churn, its reinvention, its essential openness. The America that Trump would deny. He wants to freeze a white America. Some strange blend of Norman Rockwell and “Mad Men,” in an imaginary United States strutting across a world pliant to its will. Behind “America first” lurks a very un-American credo.

Change can be frightening, which is what the great replacement conspiracy theory hinges on. Camus warns grotesquely of a “genocide by substitution,” the replacement of a white French and European order by Muslim hordes in a plot orchestrated by cosmopolitan elites. In Trump’s case, read a white American order replaced by brown Mexican rapists and Black pillagers.

France is worried about Muslims from North Africa. Germans were once so worried about Jews replacing them that they killed six million of them. In a world of mass migration, fear rages: Some idea of the nation will be diluted or lost!

America is particularly susceptible to fear today because the world has changed in unsettling ways. Power has migrated eastward to Asia. America’s recent wars have been unwon. By midcentury, non-Hispanic whites will constitute less than 50 percent of the population.

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