

More Infamous Immigrants

Countering the argument that all immigrants will surely 'enrich' the United States

by Joseph E. Fallon

Studies by both Professor George Borjas of Harvard University and Professor Donald Huddle of Rice University document the negative economic impact which massive Third World immigration is having on the United States. Huddle says the cost of this immigration to U.S. taxpayers is \$51 billion a year and this is projected to rise to nearly \$70 billion a year over the next decade. Immigration is depressing wages, resulting in a loss of \$133 billion to U.S. workers each year, and the annual displacement of over two million U.S. workers from their jobs. Immigrants receive \$1.4 billion more in Social Security benefits than they pay into the fund, as well as an additional \$3.3 billion in Supplementary Security Income (SSI). Between 1982 and 1994, the SSI program experienced a 580 percent increase in immigrant recipients, while the overall welfare rate for immigrants is 50 percent higher than for the native born.

Unable to dispute this data, the pro-immigration lobby justifies the continuation of such massive immigration by reciting the names of individual immigrants who have "enriched" this country. While the "enrichment" argument is irrelevant to any discussion of the economic effect of Third World immigration on American society, it is also completely specious. As James S. Robb noted in his article, "Infamous Immigrants: Here's Proof All Newcomers Aren't Albert Einsteins" (THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, Vol. VI, No. 1, Fall 1995), the

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pro-immigration lobby cites the names of only famous immigrants, not the infamous — Albert Einstein, but not Al Capone.

This paper expands on Robb's work by listing twenty-one more infamous immigrants. There were many more to choose from. All of the following biographical sketches are abridged and paraphrased accounts taken from the *Dictionary of Culprits and Criminals* (The Scarecrow Press, 1986) by George C. Kohn.

Lou Blonger (flourished: 1880s-1920s) was a French-Canadian-born Colorado swindler. Starting his career as a saloon owner in Denver, Colorado, he established the largest confidence ring in United States history. By the 1920s, Blonger had 500 con men working for him across the country defrauding victims out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. His ring remained untouched for decades because of payoffs to the police. The swindling of J. Frank Norfleet, a Texas cattleman, out of \$45,000 in 1920 precipitated the downfall of the Blonger empire. For the next four years, Norfleet, who was a retired sheriff, pursued the con man who had stolen his money and did not rest until he saw him imprisoned. After that J. Frank Norfleet turned his attention to exposing the entire confidence ring. Blonger and hundreds of associates were arrested and imprisoned. Lou Blonger spent the rest of his life in prison.

Al(phonse) Capone (1899-1947) was an Italian-born Chicago gangster and murderer. Nicknamed "Scarface" because of the three scars on the left side of his face which were the result of a knife fight, Capone grew up in Brooklyn. In 1920, he moved to Chicago and became a hit man for the gangster, Johnny Torrio. One of Capone's first assignments was to murder "Big Jim" Colosimo, Torrio's own business partner. Seizing control of the Torrio mob, Capone organized crime in Chicago into a business monopoly. Soon his operations in bootlegging, gambling, prostitution, and

racketeering were taking in \$110 million a year. Undisputed king of the Chicago underworld, Capone had seven members of the rival "Bugs" Moran gang machine-gunned to death on February 14, 1929 in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. For years, Capone was never convicted of any crime thanks to the influence of the many corrupt politicians he had bought. Then in 1931, he was finally convicted of income tax evasion. Capone served only eight years of an 11 year sentence. Paroled early because he was suffering from severe syphilitic paresis, he retired to Florida. Al Capone died there on January 25, 1947 from complications of bronchial pneumonia and a stroke.

Juan Corona (born: 1934) is a Mexican-born California mass murderer. A labor contractor, he was convicted in January 1973 of murdering 25 farm workers during 1970 and 1971. The mutilated bodies of his victims had been found in peach orchards and along a river in Yuba County. He was sentenced to 25 consecutive life terms. Five years later, while acknowledging that Corona's guilt "although circumstantial was overwhelming," a state court of appeals ruled he did not have an adequate legal defense. Since he had been diagnosed in 1956 as a "paranoid schizophrenic," the court declared Corona was entitled to an insanity defense. A new trial was ordered. In 1982, after a seven month trial, Juan Corona was once again convicted of all 25 murders.

Frank Costello (born: Francesco Seriglia) (1891-1973) was an Italian-born New York gangster and racketeer. During the Prohibition era, he ran profitable gambling and bootlegging operations. In the 1930s, Costello was a founding member of the national crime syndicate. By the 1940s, his operations grew to include gem smuggling. To insure the continuation of his criminal enterprises, Costello bribed police, judges, and politicians. His downfall began in 1951 when the U.S. Senate Crime Investigating Committee labeled Frank Costello the "Prime Minister of the Underworld." Escaping an assassination attempt in 1957 by rival mobster Vito Genovese, Costello was shortly afterwards convicted and jailed on charges of conspiracy, contempt, and income tax evasion. After being released from prison, Frank Costello "retired" to Long Island where he died on February 18, 1973.

George Engel (1837-1887), **Adolph Fischer** (1859-1887), and **August Spies** (1855-1887) were German-born anarchists who immigrated to the United States in 1870s. They joined the labor movement and agitated for improved working conditions. Spies was editor of the German-language anarchist newspaper, *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Workers' News). On May 4, 1886, seven policemen were killed and seventy others injured in a bomb explosion at Chicago's Haymarket Square, when a meeting organized by anarchists to protest police tactics at a McCormick-Harvester plant turned into a riot. Eight men were arrested for inciting the riot and for the subsequent deaths. All were found guilty. Engel, Fischer, and Spies, along with Albert Parsons, were hanged on November 11, 1887. Of the remaining defendants, one committed suicide, two had their death sentences commuted to life, and one received a 15 year prison sentence.

Sigmund Z. Engel (flourished: 1900-1949) was a European-born swindler. Posing as a wealthy gentleman, he would court and marry women,

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young or old, unmarried or widow, then abscond with their money. Engel first ran his confidence game in London, Paris, and Vienna. Then, in 1917, to avoid arrest in Europe, he emigrated to the United States where he continued to run this scam for the next three decades. He was finally arrested in Chicago in June 1949, convicted of grand larceny, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Engel admitted to marrying at least 200 women and swindling them out of nearly 6 million dollars.

Dorothy (Dolly) Gee (born: Chang Hor-gee) (1897-1978) was a Chinese-born California embezzler. In 1901 she had immigrated as a child to the United States, along with her father and family. After operating a successful shoe store in San Francisco, her father became an officer of the French-American Bank in Oakland, a subsidiary of the Bank

of America. Dorothy began helping her father solicit Chinese accounts for the bank in 1914. After 1929, she assumed responsibility for his ledgers where he had recorded his entries in Chinese characters. During the next 30 years, Dorothy was so successful in bringing Chinese business to the bank that she was frequently honored as the “first woman banker in America.” In 1963, she admitted that for the past fifty years first her father and then she embezzled more than \$300,000 from the bank. Sentenced to five years in prison, Gee was released after 16 months and lived the remainder of her life in anonymity in San Francisco’s Chinatown.

Vito Genovese (1897-1969) was an Italian-born New York gangster, racketeer, and murderer. During Prohibition, he ran narcotics and prostitution in Manhattan for his boss Charles “Lucky” Luciano. By the 1930s, Genovese had successfully risen to director of the national crime syndicate by murdering his mob rivals. Fleeing to Italy in 1937 to avoid arrest for the murder of the gangster, Ferdinand “The Shadow” Boccia, he soon seized control of the Italian black market and smuggled narcotics into the United States. With the end of the Second World War, Genovese returned to the United States, succeeded in having the murder charge against him dismissed, and in 1957, after a six year campaign of assassinating his principal gangland rivals, became undisputed head of the Mafia. In 1959, he was imprisoned in the Atlanta penitentiary for smuggling and selling narcotics. Able to run organized crime, even order dozens of murders, from his Atlanta prison, Vito Genovese was eventually transferred to Leavenworth prison where he died of a heart attack.

Jake Guzik (1886-1956) was a Russian-born Chicago gangster. He began working for Al Capone in 1922 and soon became Capone’s financial adviser and most trusted lieutenant. Later, he successfully managed the mob’s finances. Guzik insured the continuation of mob operations by making large payoffs to corrupt police and politicians. These bribes earned him the nickname of “Greasy Thumb Jake.” Guzik, who bragged that he never carried a gun, died of a heart attack in a Chicago restaurant on February 2, 1956.

Samuel Insull (1860-1938) was an English-born securities manipulator. Immigrating to the United States, in 1881 he became the secretary to Thomas

A. Edison. In 1902, after having directed operations at several of Edison’s electric companies, Insull was placed in charge of Chicago Edison and, in 1907, formed the Commonwealth Edison in Chicago. Quitting his job to do consulting work for other utility companies and to start his own business, the Middle West Utilities group, Insull became a multimillionaire by the 1920s. However, he fled to Europe in 1934, after disclosure of his financial

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manipulations resulted in his companies’ collapsing, and his investors losing \$750 million. Samuel Insull died in Paris in 1938 possessing only \$1,000 in cash, but owing \$14 million in debts.

“Baron” Herman K. Lamm (circa: 1890-1930) was a German-born bank robber. Shortly before the First World War, he was expelled from the Prussian Army for cheating at cards and immigrated to the United States where he robbed banks. While serving time in prison in 1917 for a failed bank robbery in Utah, the “Baron” devised the perfect plan for robbing banks later made famous by John Dillinger. It consisted in first “casing the layout,” identifying how many guards and employees there were, where they were stationed, where the vault was located, etc. Then floor-plans of the bank would be drawn up, a getaway route with alternative escape routes identified would be mapped out, and the robbery would be rehearsed. Employing his plan, the “Baron” successfully robbed many banks. But during an escape attempt on December 16, 1930 his getaway car blew a tire and the “Baron” died in a shoot out with police.

“Little Pete” (real name: Fung Jing Toy) (1864-1897) was a Chinese-born San Francisco tong leader. Immigrating to the United States, by the

late 1880s he controlled a powerful Chinese tong, the Sum Yops. The tongs were organized criminal gangs. "Little Pete," as the local American newspapers dubbed him, amassed his fortune from opium, prostitution, gambling, contract killings, and smuggling illegal aliens (especially female sex slaves) into the U.S. In wars with rivals, "Little Pete" hacked to death at least 50 tong leaders while avoiding death himself by wearing a coat of chain mail and a steel lined hat. On January 23, 1897, two hired killers from China finally assassinated "Little Pete" in a San Francisco barber shop by shoving a gun down his chain mail coat and firing five shots into his spine.

Charles "Lucky" Luciano (born: Charles Salvatore Luciana) (1897-1962) was a Sicilian-born extortionist, racketeer, drug smuggler, and gangster.

"[Luciano] organized the national crime syndicate ... and exercised complete control over narcotics, prostitution, restaurant rackets, gambling and loan-sharking..."

Nicknamed "Lucky" for having survived a knife attack, Luciano in the 1920s worked the prostitution rackets in New York City for Mafia boss, Giuseppe "Joe the Boss" Masseria. During the 1930s, Luciano lived a lavish lifestyle, spending freely on beautiful showgirls and the good times. During those same years, he also organized the national crime syndicate, opened up the syndicate to non-Sicilians, and exercised complete control over narcotics, prostitution, and restaurant rackets in New York City, as well as gambling and loansharking operations along the East Coast. Convicted in 1936 on prostitution charges, he was sentenced to 30 to 50 years in prison. During the Second World War, Luciano managed to convince federal authorities that he had used his influence with the unions to end pro-Axis sabotage on the New York waterfront. In appreciation, the federal government paroled Charles "Lucky" Luciano in 1946 and deported him to Italy where he died of a heart attack on January 21, 1962.

Owen or Owney Madden (1892-1964) was an English-born New York gangster, murderer, and bootlegger. Between 1903 and 1914, as leader of the Gopher Gang which operated on New York City's West Side, he was involved in hundreds of fights with rival gangs. By the time he turned twenty-one, Madden had been arrested more than 40 times charged with robbery, assault and murder. Convicted in 1914 of the murder of rival gang leader "Little Patsy Doyne," and sentenced to 10 to 20 years in prison, he was paroled in 1923. Madden then spent the next decade in organized crime as an important bootlegger and speakeasy owner in New York City. An associate of gangsters "Dutch" Schultz, "Lucky" Luciano and Meyer Lansky, Madden "retired" from the business in the mid-1930s and moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he died in 1964.

Carlos Marcello (born: Calogero Minacore) (born: 1910) is a Tunisian-born gangster. Nicknamed "The Little Man" because of his short stature, for years Marcello claimed he was a tomato salesman earning \$1,600 a month. Later he said he was an investor and land developer. Living in New Orleans with his wife and family, Marcello has succeeded in keeping his private life and his business dealings secret for over 60 years. He has also avoided spending much time in prison. In 1930, he was convicted of assault and robbery but received a full pardon from Louisiana Governor O.K. Allen. In 1938, Marcello was convicted of selling drugs but was released from prison in less than a year. Cited twice for contempt of Congress, he escaped imprisonment on legal technicalities. The FBI believes Marcello still runs a vast criminal empire that includes gambling, prostitution, narcotics, and labor racketeering and takes in an estimated \$2 billion a year. According to the FBI, he has been able to avoid arrest, avoid deportation, and insure continuation of his criminal enterprises because he has bribed officials at every level of government. In 1980, Marcello was indicted in New Orleans for racketeering, conspiracy, and fraud. The next year, he was convicted by a federal court of conspiracy in a bribery case.

Philip Muscia (1877-1938) was an Italian-born swindler. Beginning his criminal career as a New York City food importer, he was convicted in 1909 of bribing customs officials and sentenced to one

year in prison. He was released, however, in five months with a presidential pardon. Muscia next went into the wig-making business and using false invoices swindled banks out of \$1 million. He was soon caught and sentenced to three years in prison. After his release in 1918, Muscia assumed the name F. Donald Coster and entering the pharmaceutical business, established the hair- tonic firm of Girard & Co. This company was the beginning of his most successful scam. During Prohibition, Muscia, alias Coster, obtained a federal permit to purchase large amounts of raw alcohol ostensibly to manufacture hair tonic. However, he converted the alcohol into liquor, sold the liquor to bootleggers, and became a very wealthy man. In 1926, Muscia expanded his operations by buying the well-respected pharma- ceutical company, McKesson & Robbins, and began to manipulate the stock market. Because his company survived the stock market crash and the great depression, Muscia was considered a financial wizard by many on Wall Street. In 1938, the treasurer of McKesson & Robbins discovered Muscia had swindled the company out of \$21 million. Reacting to the exposure, Muscia shot himself to death in the bathroom of his mansion on December 16, 1938.

Joseph “Doc” Stacher (born: 1902) was a Polish-born gangster and racketeer. Employing a number of aliases, he ran the gambling rackets for Abner “Longy” Zwillman in New Jersey during the 1920s. In the early 1930s, Stacher was instrumental in uniting New York’s “Jewish Mafia” and “Italian Mafia” into the national crime syndicate. During the mid-1930s, he established gambling rackets on the West Coast for gangster Meyer Lansky. During the 1950s, Stacher opened gambling casinos in Las Vegas for the mob. Convicted of income tax evasion in 1964, the authorities offered him the choice of five years in prison or deportation. Stacher immigrated to Israel in 1965.

John “Johnny” Torrio (1882-1957) was an Italian-born gangster and racketeer. He began his criminal career in New York City in the early 1900s, and earned the nickname “Terrible Johnny” as leader of the James Street Gang which was composed of pickpockets, burglars, fences, and sluggers. Torrio also worked as an extortionist for the Brooklyn gangster, Frankie Yale. Moving to Chicago in 1909, Torrio went to work for James “Big

Jim” Colosimo, the “King of Pimps,” who ran a lucrative chain of brothels and saloons. Originally hired to provide protection for those brothels and saloons, Torrio eventually began running all of Colosimo’s operations. After a falling out over a question of expanding into other rackets, Torrio had a young hit man named Al Capone murder Colosimo on May 11, 1920. Torrio and Capone made a fortune operating breweries and gambling casinos during Prohibition. Engaging in many gang wars with rivals, Torrio was severely wounded in one such battle on January 20, 1925. As a result, he turned over his business to Capone, and “retired” to Italy for three years. In 1928, Torrio returned to the United States and assumed control of a multi-million dollar bootlegging operation which spanned the East Coast. With “Lucky” Luciano, Meyer Lansky, and others, he helped establish the national crime syndicate in 1934 and sat on its board of directors for years. Convicted in 1939 of income tax evasion and sentenced to Leavenworth prison, Torrio was paroled in 1941. Known as “crime’s elder statesman,” Torrio died of a heart attack on April 18, 1957.

Giuseppe “Joseph” Zangara (1900-1933) was a Sicilian-born assassin. An unemployed New Jersey mill worker, hostile to those he termed “capitalists,” he moved to Florida in search of work in 1933. On February 15, while President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak were visiting Miami, Zangara attempted to assassinate both men while they were being driven through the streets of the city in an open car. Although his shots missed President Roosevelt, they did strike and kill Mayor Cermak as well as several bystanders. Convicted of murder and sentenced to death, Zangara was electrocuted on March 21, 1933.

As these biographical sketches show, the “enrichment” argument works quite effectively against the pro-immigration lobby. If Albert Einstein, Yo Yo Ma, and I. M. Pei can be cited to justify immigration to the United States, then Al Capone, Carlos Marcello, and Joseph Stacher can be cited with greater justification to demand a moratorium on all immigration. The accomplishments of the former in the arts and sciences decline in their significance when placed alongside the criminal achievements of the latter, with uncalculable impact on the daily lives of ordinary Americans for nearly a century. □