

Letters to the Editor

EDITOR:

I write in support of your preparation [for this issue] of “The Best of Garrett Hardin.” I have admired him for virtually all of my career as a scientist. I have admired him as a person, a citizen, geneticist, philosopher, analyst, expert on population, social scientist, political commentator, ecologist, friend, and scholar. And I am not alone. Garrett Hardin has framed the arguments on environment and government, human rights and ethics, for three generations. We have unabashedly stolen those concepts and attitudes, even phrases and analyses, and used them freely in attempting to correct an errant world.

GEORGE M. WOODWELL, DIRECTOR
The Woods Hole Research Center
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

EDITOR:

I am puzzled by Dr. Samuel Huntington’s belief (*The Social Contract*, vol. XI, no. 4, Summer 2001, p.263, “Migration Flows Are the Central Issue of Our Time”) that Japan and those West European countries with declining populations face a dilemma: In order to maintain cultural integrity, they must limit immigration yet (as he sees it), they can’t because of “economic necessity.”

Perhaps he is addressing himself primarily to possible transitional problems of economic adjustment. In a country with a diminishing population, aggregate consumer demand declines along with the workforce, the reverse being true of a country with an expanding population.

But bearing in mind that in ordinary economic circumstances markets are continually having to adjust to quite rapid changes in the pattern of consumer demand, in resource availabilities, and in technologies, gradual changes in population size are unlikely to cause any serious dislocation.

More important, a reduction in the population of a developed country is hardly to be deplored on economic grounds. Certainly countries with populations as small as those in Switzerland, Norway, or Singapore are among those with the highest living standards in the world.

Indeed, as indicated in my brief article (Summer 2001, p. 256), specific advantages of a reduction in population size include an increase in land and resources

per capita, and a decrease in the amount of pollution, garbage, and traffic congestion. Moreover, with the associated decline in the volume of imports relative to exports, an improvement in the terms of trade which entails a reduction in the prices of imported goods and material is experienced.

In sum, a developed country that is enjoying a declining population is twice blessed if it is able to prevent immigration. For along with an improvement in living standards and amenity it also avoids racial tensions and cultural conflict.

EZRA J. MISHAN
Professor of Economics, Retired
London School of Economics

EDITOR:

I read with great interest Diana Hull’s article in *The Social Contract* (vol. XI, no. 4, Summer 2001, p. 279, “George W. Bush Proposes an Amnesty”). Her last paragraph on modernizing “the way we get fruit off a tree and produce out of the ground” reminded me of something very disturbing I read a while ago. In a very interesting book, *Poverty and Prosperity: Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural California*, two University of California/Davis professors write: “Critics of guest worker programs and of the immigrant-intensification of agriculture argue that labor-saving technologies and management practices exist, but that in an environment of abundant immigration labor, farmers have little incentive to use them. *Legal challenges have brought publicly supported farm mechanization research to a standstill, and agricultural engineering departments in universities around the country are downsizing or closing* (p. 2, italics mine). I couldn’t believe this when I read it and I still can’t. The very heart of democratic capitalism is letting us continually work to find a better way, and we will all be better off. This is Luddism with a vengeance. In other words, mechanizing farm work will put hordes of immigrants out of work, so let’s outlaw progress. I don’t believe it.

People like you are doing very good work, but I despair sometimes that our poor country is lost to forces we can’t control.

WILLIAM NADEAU
San Diego, California

EDITOR:

I strongly support Oracle CEO Larry Ellison's suggestion to require high-tech national ID cards — with this twist: *Only* foreign nationals in the U.S. — including those holding dual citizenship — be issued such cards, to be in their possession at all times.

President Bush could issue an executive order today mandating that all foreign nationals currently in the U.S. immediately report to designated government offices to undergo high-tech identification techniques such as iridology, DNA testing, facial mapping, etc., or be subject to immediate imprisonment, deportation and stiff fines.

The INS, DOD, DOJ, and FBI freely admit that our federal government has lost control of who is in the U.S. An ID card for foreign nationals who choose to be on U.S. soil during the national emergency would serve to protect our citizens from internal foreign enemies. And the rights of American citizens would be preserved.

TERRY GRAHAM

Boulder, Colorado

EDITOR:

We need immediate major reforms. You should be taking advantage of the 9/11 tragedy by highlighting the illegal status of the terrorists on your web page. In fact, the whole effort of the immigration reform movement ought to be to leverage its efforts onto the big wave of anti/illegal/alien sentiment that is now occurring throughout our nation. Illegal alien terrorists can get drivers' licenses, credit cards, and pilot licenses now! The public won't put up with this, but you have to broadcast these issues that are not getting much media [attention].

Reliable sources have indicated that nearly all of the terrorists involved in the September 11 attacks were illegal aliens. They shouldn't have even been here. Our open border policies are a joke. They desperately need reform. This 9/11 tragedy should be a wake-up call to all Americans.

Currently anyone entering the country on any type of visa — business, tourist, or student — can easily overstay their visa time. There is no enforcement mechanism of any kind. Moreover, persons entering the country illegally can also stay in this country with impunity. They can easily get government supplied housing, food, medical, and educational benefits at an equivalent — and in some cases higher — level than an American citizen. Eventually these illegal visitors can

convert their expired visas to a permanent resident card, known as a green card.

In other nations, including Japan, a person overstaying their visa would be tracked down, caught, and deported. The Immigration Authority would disseminate the database of "overstays" to every government agency. Federal, state, and local agencies working together would each have the name of the person with the expired visa in their database for possible referral to the local police.

Here in the U.S. the INS doesn't have a database that will track these scofflaws, much less share the names with local government agencies. Moreover, in San Francisco, we have a "Non-cooperation Agreement" as it applies to immigration matters. Here, in wacky San Francisco, we like to pretend that we're not part of the United States.

It used to be, during my parents' generation, that those wishing to immigrate here would have to show evidence of a clean criminal record from their native country as well as a clean bill of health. Furthermore, there was always an American sponsor who assured that this new immigrant would not be a burden to society. Now, all these safeguards are gone. We should revert back to common sense and reinstate these safeguards. For starters, we should be cooperating with federal immigration authorities by disseminating the "overstay" database to all state and local authorities, i.e., motor vehicle agencies.

Perhaps businesses like credit card companies should also have access to the database.

ADAM SPARKS

San Francisco, California

<http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/popclock>

The figure changes constantly. On October 15 at 11:58 a.m. the resident population of the United States was projected to be 285,358,855. This was based on:

One birth every.....	8 seconds
One death every.....	14 seconds
One international migrant (net) every.....	7 seconds
One federal U.S. citizen (net) returning every.....	4,381 seconds
Net gain of one person every.....	11 seconds

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Population Division, maintained by Laura K.
Yax