

The Social Contract Press, parent of *THE SOCIAL CONTRACT* journal, is honored to bring back into print Jean Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints*. We do so just as the immigration policy debate has risen to new heights in the United States—indeed, across the world. We began negotiating for the rights to publish this edition long before several recent seminal events helped focus attention on the wider issues involved.

The first was the passage in California of Proposition 187, a citizen's initiative calling for an end to most social services and welfare benefits, including schooling, for illegal aliens. Fought out in the context of California's gubernatorial and U.S. senate races, this was the first time in recent decades that immigration policy played a role in actually electing or defeating political candidates.

Then there was the remarkable use of *The Camp of the Saints* in the cover article of the December 1994 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, "Must It Be the Rest Against the West?" by historians Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy. *The Atlantic Monthly* has the record for the longest continuous publication of any magazine in the United States, and is arguably one of the most prestigious. This article has done much to renew interest in Raspail's book and legitimize the consideration of its thesis; fortuitously, this article appeared just as the book was going to press.

The recent arrival on our shores of boatloads of people whose stories and conditions evoke Raspail's theme has taken it out of a theorist's realm and transposed it into real life. As I write, boats are landing on Australia's northern coast and there are reports of another 5,000 people on the high seas, headed South. The future has arrived, as indicated by the photo chosen for the cover of this edition: the *Golden Venture* beached off of Queens, New York, its human cargo standing on our shores swaddled in blankets.

The Camp of the Saints has been a controversial book in the United States since Norman Shapiro's translation was first released in 1975 by the respected publishing house of Charles Scribner's Sons. The novel alternately has been praised as a clear minded view of the future or, contrarily, vilified as "racist." Individuals have even been attacked for merely being familiar with it. We trust that with the publication of the *Atlantic* article this stage has passed.

* * *

A word is warranted about the role of a novel in the immigration debate. We humans do not seem to like our truths unvarnished. Rather than "just the facts," we commonly prefer to have them dressed up in the memorable forms of plays, poems, allegories, metaphors, fables, parables, proverbs, tragedies and satires. The poet, the playwright, the novelist, the filmmaker can present truths and open our eyes in ways that demographic analyses, comparative income studies, or social welfare

statistics never can. The storytellers can advance notions prohibited to others.

Over the years the American public has absorbed a great number of books, articles, poems and films which exalt the immigrant experience. It is easy for the feelings evoked by Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty to obscure the fact that we are currently receiving too many immigrants (and receiving them too fast) for the health of our environment and of our common culture. Raspail evokes different feelings and that may help to pave the way for policy changes. *The Camp of the Saints* takes the world population explosion and the immigration debate in a new direction. Indeed, it may become the 1984 of the twenty-first century.

We are indebted to Jean Raspail for his insights into the human condition, and for being 20 years ahead of his time. History will judge him more kindly than have some of his contemporaries.

To support the reissuance of *The Camp of the Saints* we adopt its title as the theme for this issue of **THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**. Articles include a review of the book by our Australian correspondent, Denis McCormack; a report on an interview with Raspail by our editorial advisory board member Katharine Betts, conducted while she was on sabbatical in France; a translation of a flier put out by Raspail's publisher which gives some insight into the man; a compilation by associate editor Wayne Lutton of previous reviews; a reprint of Raspail's preface to the third (1985) French edition (previously printed in **THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**, Vol.IV, No.2, Winter 1993-94); and then articles and data on the immigration-induced racial and ethnic transformation of the U.S. that is underway. All this could keep you awake at night.

Combined with our other reports and reviews we believe you will find this issue well worth an evening.

John Tanton, Editor and Publisher